



**A STUDY OF HISTORICAL AND CURRENT  
DEVELOPMENT OF RUSSIAN BUDDHISM**

**Phra Aleksandr Berezin (Dhammavudho Bhikkhu)**

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
The Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(Buddhist Studies)

Graduate School  
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

C.E. 2017



**A Study of Historical and Current Development of  
Russian Buddhism**

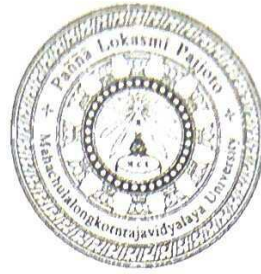
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The Graduate School of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University has approved this thesis entitled "A Study of Historical and Current Development of Russian Buddhism" in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies.

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**Data of Graduation:** March 15, 2018

### **Abstract**

This Dissertation is a mixed research, which has three objectives: (1) to study the historical processes of development and adaptation of the Buddhism in Russia, (2) to identify the main characteristic features of neoteric Buddhist communities in Russia and (3) to determine the main factors of spreading and developing Buddhism in Russia.

Regarding a research, it was found that Buddhism came to Russia in the process of incorporation into the country of Mongol people, who profess Buddhism traditionally. Because of the persistently unfavorable socio-political conditions, Dhamma was unable to achieve popularity in Russian society.

Over the past 150 years, many new phenomena have influenced the development of Buddhism in Russia. These phenomena have formed an additional format of Buddhism, namely, non-ethnic Buddhism. The non-ethnic Buddhist communities, which were studied during the research, are located in the Ural region of Russia. They refer themselves to the Tibetan tradition. However, the revealed features of the communities are of a modern nature.

In the process of studying the main factors, that influence the development of Russian Buddhism, the author analyzed government, foreign Buddhist influence, political situation, other religions, science and eminent person.

Achieving the objectives of the study allows us to create a clear picture of Buddhism in Russia, not only as a bright religious aspect but also as a profound historical process, as an ever-changing phenomenon.

## **Acknowledgements**

This Dissertation is submitted to the Graduate School at Mahachulalongkomrajavidyalaya University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy's Degree in Buddhist Studies. Author would like to express profound appreciation to the Most Venerable Professor Dr. Phra Brahmapundit, Rector of the MCU, to Dr. Phramaha Somboon Vuddhikaro, Dean of the Graduate School, to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phramaha Hansa Dhammhaso, Director of IBSC and all teachers at MCU who taught and supported me during the course of my study.

Author also expresses deep indebtedness and gratitude to Dr. Phramaha Somphong Khunakaro and Asst. Prof. Dr. Naddhira Sridee, members of the Dissertation Supervisory Committee, for their kindness. They patiently guided and carefully read all drafts, offered many insights and comments, and gave advice about the contents and the writing.

At the same time, author's deep gratitude also goes to friends and lay Buddhists who supported him during the time he studied here.

Author also would like to express deep gratitude to the writers and translators who wrote the books that he used and researched. Thanks to them, author overcame many difficulties and was able to complete the work.

**Phra Aleksandr Berezin Dhammavudho**

Dated March 17, 2018

## **Abbreviations**

- ABK – Association of Buddhist of Kalmykiya
- ASSR – Autonomic Soviet Socialist Republic
- BTSR – Buddhist Traditional Saṅgha of Russia
- BC – Buddhist center
- CBRO – Centralized Buddhist religious organization
- CRO – Centralized religious organization
- CSARB – Central Spiritual Administration of Russian Buddhists
- DC – Dzogchen Community
- FPMT – The Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition
- IDC – International Dzogchen Community
- KMPP – Kachkanar Mining and Processing Plant
- LBRO – Local Buddhist religious organization
- LRO – Local religious organization
- RACS – Russian Academy of Civil Service
- RAS – Russian Academy of Sciences
- RASS – Russian Association of Studying Sects
- ROC – Russian Orthodox Church
- USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- USU – Ural State University

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# Chapter I

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Significance of the Issue

In order to clearly present the object of this study, it is important to understand the conditions under which this object developed. The

Russian Federation is a huge space. The length of the territory of Russia from north to south exceed 4000 km from west to east is close to 10,000 km. In this multi-confessional and multi-ethnic country, Buddhists exist in account of only 1% of the population.<sup>1</sup> As previous researchers noted, they represent very unconventional phenomenon that bears small resemblance to traditional Buddhism. First of all, Buddhists in Russia are not independent, they are very actively interact with foreign teachers and publishers. In this regard, the author considers that Buddhism in Russia is able to have an important impact not only on the internal but also foreign policy of Russia. It requires focused attention and detailed research.

Archeological data allow to conclude, that the first evidence of the existence of Buddhism in the territories now belonging to Russia belongs to the VIII<sup>th</sup> century AD. They are associated with the state of Bohai, which took part in the 698-926 in Primorye and the Amur Region (Far East Russia). Bohaians, professed Mahayana Buddhism.<sup>2</sup>

On the territory of the Russian state, Buddhism has existed since the beginning of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century AD, when some of the Kalmyk society adopted Russian citizenship.<sup>3</sup> In the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, Tibetan Buddhism spread in Buryatia. Mongolian and Tibetan lamas brought it here.

In 1741, by decree of Quinn Elizabeth, Buddhism was recognized officially in the Russian Empire. In 1764, Quinn Catherine II established

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<sup>1</sup> S. Filatov, R. Lunkin, "Statistics of Russian religiosity: magic of numbers, and controversial reality", **Russian review**, No.3, (2005): p.9. (in Russian)

<sup>2</sup> E. Shavkunov, **Bohai State and monuments of its culture in Primorye**, (Leningrad: Science, 1968) pp. 30-35. (in Russian)

<sup>3</sup> S. Kuvaev, "Semantic context of Russian Buddhism", **Master's Degree Thesis**, (Department of Russian History: Ural State University), 2006, p.10. (in Russian)

the position of Pandita Hambo Lama who became the Buddhist head of Eastern Siberia and Baikal. This statement is a recognition of Buddhism as one of the state religions of Russia.<sup>4</sup>

In 1914, Uriankhai Territory (now is Tuva Republic) moved to the protectorate of Russia. In this republic, Buddhist was a long-standing tradition. Spread of Buddhism in Tuva began in the XIII<sup>th</sup> century AD. Russian authorities did not interfere in spiritual matters of the territory. In 1917, about three thousand lamas and novices lived in Tuva.<sup>5</sup>

These three nationalities (Kalmykiya, Buryatia and Tuva) made significant ethnic foundation for Buddhism in Russia.

The study of Buddhism in Russia can be attributed to the 20-30s of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, German Schmidt (1779-1847), who was a member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, published a number of Buddhist researches in German language.

Some elements of Buddhist culture became popular among the Russian aristocracy in the middle of XIX<sup>th</sup> century. In the early 50<sup>th</sup> XIX<sup>th</sup> century in Transbaikalia, there was an outbreak of typhoid fever. The lama-doctor, Badmaev (?-1872) of Mongolian nationality managed to prevent its spread by using Tibetan traditional therapy. In St. Petersburg, he was presented to King Alexander II and made a great impression on him. After that, Badmaev has made notable career and even taught Mongolian language in St. Petersburg University.<sup>6</sup>

On the 90<sup>th</sup> of XIX<sup>th</sup> century, Russian Empire drew the attention of the Tibetan government as a potential ally and protector. In 1898, the envoy of the Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso Thubten (1876-1933), and Lama Agvan (Ngawang Lobsang) Dorjiev (1853-1938) visited the capital of Russia.

Dorjiev was noted that a large part of the Tibetan elite leaning more towards the Russian Empire because Russian government allowed Buryats and Kalmyks to profess Buddhism there freely. However,

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<sup>4</sup> M. Ulanov, "Buddhism in the Russian socio-cultural environment", **Ph.D. Dissertation**, (Kalmyk State University), 2010, p.121. (in Russian)

<sup>5</sup> V. Poresh, "Tibetan Buddhism in Russia", **Modern Religious Life of Russia**, Vol 3. (Moscow: Logos, 2005), p.1. (in Russian)

<sup>6</sup> M. Saxer, **Journeys with tibetan medicine**, (Zurich: np, 2004), p. 25. (in Russian)

Tibetan aristocracy had no other political and economic ties with the territories of the Russian Empire. They did not set themselves such purposes. The thirteenth Dalai Lama tried to establish these relations, above all on anti-British and anti-Chinese basis.

Russian diplomacy sympathy to the Tibetan clergy was mostly conjunctural. Russian policy towards Tibet and the Tibetan government was just an element of the so-called great game of the two empires in Central Asia. Tibetan issue was not relevant after the English-Russian agreement on the division of spheres of influence in Central Asia, including in Tibet, which was signed in 1907.

Therefore, Dorjiev's further activities in St. Petersburg has been reduced to the formation of the first precedent of Russian Buddhist community in the capital's social elite and construction of the Gunzeychoyney temple in the Saint-Petersburg. The construction of this temple was completed in 1916.<sup>7</sup>

Apparently, the first relatively large group of Russian who showed a strong interest in Tibetan Buddhism appeared in St. Petersburg just at the beginning of XX<sup>th</sup> century. This interest was mediated by Theosophy - occultist religious doctrine discovered by Russian-born Blavatskaya.

It must be said that at the beginning of XX<sup>th</sup> century some well-known European explorers had learned much from the E. Blavatskaya such an eclectic style of storytelling, and the general outline of the perception of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism in the means of the sacred and mystic views.<sup>8</sup>

It is important to note that after reading Pali and Sanskrit texts the British people began to consider Southern Buddhism as authentic and original. It was often called *religion of reason*. Accordingly, Theravada Buddhism became the standards to which the estimations for all other forms of Buddhism in Central Asia.

After the revolution of 1917, Communists came to power. New power led rigid anti-religious policies. In the religious life of the Russia,

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<sup>7</sup> A. Andreev, **Buddha's Temple in the North capital**, (St. Petersburg: Nartang, 2004), pp. 23-39. (in Russian)

<sup>8</sup> A. Alekseyev, **Short Philosophical Dictionary**, (Moscow: Prospect, 2008), pp. 34-35. (in Russian)

crisis began and Buddhism was subjected to repression. The most severe repression occurred in the 30s. Approximately 200 Buddhist temples and monasteries were destroyed. Lamas (about 25,000) were imprisoned, were deported to the camps or were shouted. During World War 2, the entire Kalmyk people were subjected to deportation from their native territory.

After the end of World War 2, Eastern policy of the Soviet Union government was changed. It became loyal to the Buryatia Buddhism. In 1946, the organization *Central Spiritual Administration of Buddhists of the USSR* (CSAB USSR) was restored. It had existed before in 1922-1935. Ivolginsky temple was opened near the Ulan-Ude, the capital of Buryatia. Head of the CSAB USSR was Pandita Hambo Lama who was also the head of the Buryatian Buddhists. In Russia, on the territory of Buryatia and Zakaykalskiy area, two datsans were opened. These were the only active Buddhist temples in the country, so the people from other Buddhist regions (Tuva and Kalmykiya) came here to study. Nevertheless, the ability to get a full Buddhist education was impossible, because continuity of lamas' generation was broken.<sup>9</sup>

The revival of Buddhism in the Russia began in the middle of 80s during the collapse of the Soviet Union. The first community of Buddhists in Kalmykiya was registered in 1988. Altai and Tuva communities appeared in the beginning of 90s. Since that time, new temples and stupas were actively built again.

In Kalmykiya and Tuva, Buddhism actually was re-created. In addition, in Kalmykiya, it became state religion, Kalmyk President Ilyumzhinov actively financed this idea. Kalmyk clergy tries to distance themselves from the Buryats. They focuses more on the Tibetans, though inevitable contacts with the Buryats are stored on an informal level.

At the present stage of historical development of Russia, there is a growth of Buddhist culture. Nowadays in addition to traditional (ethnic) forms of Buddhism in Russia, there is a modern version of the religion. This is so-called globalized Buddhism, which is indifferent to the existing cultural and ethnic traditions, although do not break ties with them completely. Preserving the fundamental doctrinal points, globalized Buddhism adopts many modern social aspects. A distinctive feature of

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<sup>9</sup> S. Kuvaev, **Semantic context of Russian Buddhism**, p. 12. (in Russian)

Buddhist converts in Russia is a secular activity and high emphasis to meditation practice.<sup>10</sup>

Some of new communities have appeared in Soviet period. Influence of Dandaron (1914-1974) is quite noticeable in the modern cultural space of Russia. In Soviet Union, he has been active in religious and educational activities. Because of that, he was imprisoned several times. In prison, he wrote most of his works. Most of the Dandaron's disciples are now in Buryatia. Other Russian Buddhists refer to them respectfully, but distanced.<sup>11</sup>

In 1993, Geshe Jampa Tinley (born 1962) arrived to Russia. He is a personal disciple of the Dalai Lama. Since 1999, Geshe Tinley is the undisputed spiritual leader of a number of Buddhist centers of the Gelug tradition.

Another community, which unites secular Buddhists of the Gelug, is the Yelo center. It is under the spiritual guidance of a teacher Yeshe Lodoy Rinpoche. In 1993, the Dalai Lama sent Yeshe Lodoy Rinpoche to teach in Buryatia.

Majority of the modern Russian Buddhist communities were founded by disciples of Lama Ole Nydahl (born 1941) and identify themselves as Tibetan Karma Kagyu tradition. Ole Nydahl's status is the teacher of Karma Kagyu tradition. He got it by Karmapa XVI, the head of the Karma Kagyu School. The first Karma Kagyu community appeared in St. Petersburg in 1989.<sup>12</sup>

Dzogchen Communities are unconventional for Russia, but today are very significant and the typical. The first community was founded by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche (born 1938) in 1993 in St. Petersburg.

Monastic tradition is available for Russians only in Buryatian ethnic environment. Unfinished monastery, Shad Tchup Ling (Kachkanar, Sverdlovsk region) is unique attempt to develop Russian

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<sup>10</sup> M. Ulanov, **Buddhism in the Russian socio-cultural environment**, p.321. (in Russian)

<sup>11</sup> D. Garmaev, **The philosophical foundations of the B.D. Dandaron's neo-Buddhism**, (Moscow: Russian Academy of State Service under the President of the Russian Federation, 2005), pp.35-38. (in Russian)

<sup>12</sup> V. Poresh, "Russian Buddhism - how is this possible?" **Religion and Society. Essays on the religious life of modern Russia**, (St. Petersburg: Summer Garden, 2002), p.38. (in Russian)

Buddhist monastic tradition in a non-Buddhist region. Currently, four people who have taken varying degrees of religious consecration stay at the monastery. Its founder, Tenzin Dokchit (secular name Sannikov, b. 1961) studied at Ivolginsky Datsan in 1989-1995. Unlike to many other Buddhist organizations, Kachkanar community tries to rehabilitate the traditional views of Buddhism. First and foremost, they categorically express social position and participate as an active independent force in the social process.<sup>13</sup>

Equally, unique phenomenon of Buddhism in Russia is Buddhavihara community, which was founded by the Thai monk Phra Ajahn Chatree Hemapandha in 2006. It is the only Theravada community in the modern Russia, which deserves attention. The uniqueness of this community is that it has set a very wide range of tasks. Many of these tasks relates to diplomacy rather than a religion.<sup>14</sup>

It should also be noted that in Russia there are followers of Zen Buddhism. The largest group practice in this tradition is the Kwan Um. First Branch of Kwan Um appeared in 1990 in St. Petersburg. In this year, the Master Sung San accepted an invitation from President of USSR Mikhail Gorbachev. He arrived in the USSR and found his first disciples.

There is a number of features of Russian Buddhism, which needs our attention.

Format of existence of Buddhist communities in modern Russia and methods of activity is not developed yet. Many functions and relations of the communities have not yet been formalized. Therefore, the large number of vital links held by personal contacts.

Communities and individuals have access to the tradition, not by certain social institutions like monastic education, but by individual teachers. We cannot say ‘Gelug community’ but ‘community of Jampa Tinley disciples’ ‘community of Patrul Rinpoche disciples’, ‘community of Tenzin Dokchit disciples’ etc. In other words, People faced with

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<sup>13</sup> E. Suvorina, **Phenomenon of Buddhism in the Ural on the example of the monastery Shadtchupling (Kachkanar)**, (Yekaterinburg: np, 2013), p.77. (in Russian)

<sup>14</sup> **Official site of Buddhavihara**, retrieved on 09 February 2017, <http://www.buddhavihara.ru>. (in Russian)



Buddhism as adults are not able to be socialized to the monastery system through traditional Buddhist education institutions.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, the close and individual communication with a mentor was created as an alternative. This mentor provides information which is necessary for successful practice to his disciples. Moreover, he is looking for alternative models for spreading the Buddhist concept for adequate perception of teaching by specific student. This contingent of practitioners has more or less systematic knowledge about Buddhist concept.

Those who do not have regular access to his mentor often receive many initiations from different teachers, and then do not fulfill the proper practice. Moreover, now due to the Internet large amount of information that is not structured, but is directly related to Buddhist practice, which became available. Person who is not versed in the Buddhist educational tradition, after acceptance of such information often falls into a state of methodological uncertainty. As a result, today, the majority of Russian Buddhists has vague idea about holistic Buddhist practical system. They are not able to integrate received knowledge into their own practices. Often, access to the texts of a higher level is causing heavy damage to the practitioners.

It must be said that Russian Buddhists themselves do not tend to create critical descriptions of their religious and social practices. Apparently, processes of self-reflection, which is so important for any Buddhist practice, go in personal-individual level. It is not available to a collective level and do not become the property of a Buddhist or scientific community.

Thus, to date for the Russian Buddhism is a normative situation in which the newly formed communities are forced independently to perceive institutional, psychological and other practical systems of Buddhism almost at the individual level. Moreover, they are forced to modify these complexes.

Despite the above difficulties, we can say that the spread of Buddhism in Russia is very active. Two factors stimulate this process. First is a deep interest of Buddhist non-ethnic Buddhists in philosophy and meditation. The second is a wide perception of Russian and European culture by ethnic Buddhists who live in the Russian territory. Current

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<sup>15</sup> S. Kuvaev, **Semantic context of Russian Buddhism**, p.40. (in Russian)

Russian Buddhism can be considered as a notable aspect in the religious reality of Russia, which covers almost a million Russians from various social strata.

Today, Russian Buddhism can be considered a notable event in the religious reality of Russia, which covers almost a million Russians from various social strata.

Academic science has not yet developed new channels for perception of Russian Buddhist tradition. In the process of mastering it, still it will be facing with problems that could undermine its traditional conceptual schemes and views on Buddhism in Russia at all.

Comprehension of the role and position of Russian Buddhism promotes a more complete understanding of the phenomenon of transcultural space of Russian Federation.

Sociological and philosophical comprehension of historical experience and current state of Buddhism in Russia will form a coherent identity of the new ideological paradigm of Russian Buddhism.

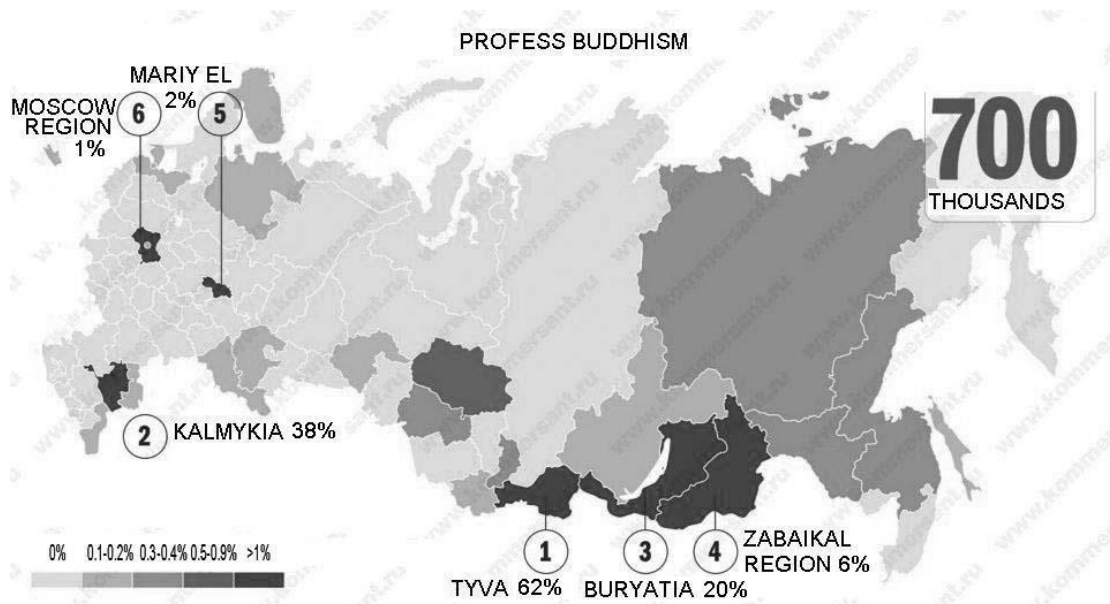
Identification process in which Russian Buddhists are involved will effectively adjust their development.

Buddhists in Russia have always been spiritually dependent on foreign influences and stimulated international relations. Therefore, the creation of a unified concept of Russian Buddhism perception opens prospects for stable international relations at a higher level.

If we consider that the total Russian ethnic identity extends to the Russian-speaking community, it becomes apparent prospect of developing and supporting a consolidated phenomenon called Russian Buddhism.



**Figure 1.1 Geographical position of Russia**



**Figure 1.2 Spread of Buddhism in Russia**

## **1.2 Statement of the Problems Desired to Know**

1.2.1 How was Buddhism developed, adopted and deformed in Russia?

1.2.2 What is the current state of associations of non-ethnic Buddhists in the Ural region of Russia, their activities, number of participants, social, ethnic and age composition?

1.2.3 What are the main factors of spreading and developing Buddhism in Russia?

## **1.3 Objectives of Research**

1.3.1 To study the historical processes of development, adaptation and deformation of the Buddhism in Russia.

1.3.2 To study the process of appearance, and the current state of associations of non-ethnic Buddhists in the Ural region of Russia, their activities, number of participants, social, ethnic and age composition.

1.3.3 To determine the main factors of spreading and developing Buddhism in Russia.

## **1.4 Scope of Research**

Scope of content related to the topic and consisted of further elements:

- a) the history of appearance, development, spreading and adaptation of Buddhism in Russia,
- b) the current state and activities of associations of non-ethnic Buddhists in the Ural territory,
- c) the number of participants, social, ethnic and age composition of associations of non-ethnic Buddhists in Ural territory,
- d) the main factors of spreading Buddhism in Russia,
- e) and the main features of Russian Buddhism.

The chronological scope of work covers the period from the XVII<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Selection of the lower limit is associated with the appearance of the first Buddhist groups in Russia. The upper

limit is determined by aspiration to trace the existence of the phenomenon of Buddhist communities in the most prolonged period of time.

The geographic scope of this study coincides with the administrative borders of the Russian Federation.

At the same time, geographic scope of second objective limited by borders of Ural region of Russia.

## 1.5 Definition of Terms Used in the Research

**Buddhologist** is a scientist who study Buddhism.

**Lamaism** is old Russian name of Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

**Historical preconditions** means the important historical events and processes, which have influence on current form of Buddhist existence in Russia.

**Globalized Buddhism** means a nominal designation of a wide range of modern forms of Buddhist communities differs from the ethnical (or traditional) Buddhism. The differences lie in the independence of the cultural traditions of Buddhism and extremely high adaptation to modern social and cultural space of globalized world. This kind of Buddhism is typical for western culture.

**Neoteric model of Russian Buddhist communities** means a form of Buddhists' unity, conditions for existence of which appear in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union (last 26 years).

**Ethnic Buddhists** are Buddhists, who profess this religion because their ethnic group belongs to Buddhism traditionally.

**Non-ethnic Buddhists** those who became a Buddhist beyond connection with their ethnicity. E. Ostrovskaya, in her researches, used the term Buddhist-convert as a synonym of the term. From author's perspective, this term is not quite precise, since it implies a transition to Buddhism from other religions, while many modern Buddhists before their conversion might not profess any religion.

**Tulku** is a custodian of a specific lineage of teachings in Tibetan Buddhism who is given empowerments and trained from a young age by students of his predecessor. High-profile examples of tulkus include the Dalai Lamas and the Karmapas.

**Kagan**, in ancient Mongolian language, means great khan. It is the leader of all khans (feudal lords) in Mongolia.

**Khurul** is a name of monasteries in Kalmykiya

**Steppe** is an eco-region, in the montane grasslands and shrublands and temperate grasslands, savannas, and shrublands biomes, characterized by grassland plains without trees apart from those near rivers and lakes in regions, which is too dry to support a forest, but not dry enough to be a desert. The soil is typically of chernozem type.

**Gelong** means a monk (bhikkhu) in Tibetan language

**Getsul means a** Tibetan monk who has only 36 vows (not 227 as bhikkhu)

## 1.6 Review of the Related Literature and Research Works

As already was mentioned, the study of Buddhism in Russia can be attributed to the 20-30s of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century. However, Russian school of Buddhology was formed only in the end of the century. Its main field of the study were classical philosophical Buddhist texts (works of Oldenburg, Minayev, Stcherbatsky, and Rosenberg) and ethnographic research on the material of people who were part of Russian Empire (researcher Kovalevsky, Hieromonk Methodius, Isakovich). After the revolution, Soviet scientists maintained continuity from the previous stage of Buddhist studies development (the most significant contributions was made by Piatigorskiy, Volkova, Myall, and Dandaron).

With the coming of the 1990s, we can mark the beginning of a new historiography phase, which, in addition to the traditional areas of Buddhologist's interest included studies among non-ethnic practicing Buddhists.

Elena Ostrovskaya in her Ph.D. thesis '*Socio-anthropological study of Buddhist secular community of St. Petersburg*' works in socio-anthropological researches among the Buddhists. It was the first such work. She conducted field investigations by the participant observation

method and interviews in communities of Karma Kagyu tradition, Rimey and Dzogchen in St. Petersburg city.<sup>16</sup>

She studied three main objects which are rituals, management, social and age composition. Objectives of her work was to describe these elements and form scientific view to these phenomena.

Ostrovskaya has defined the Buddhist taught in communities of Namkhai Norbu and Ole Nydahl as *author's version* of Buddhism because there is a dominant authority of the teacher, not the Buddha, and they study works of their teachers instead of authentic canonical texts. In addition, the researchers noted that the Karma Kagyu and Dzogchen community are qualitatively different from the Tibetan-Buddhist prototypes and built on a model of community life that have been developed and implemented for the first time in Western Europe.

Anna Ojiganova in her PhD thesis '*Eastern philosophical and religious teachings and spiritual practices in modern Russia*'<sup>17</sup> investigated the Moscow non-ethnic Buddhists. It was completed using the methods of interviewing and participant observation. It concerned practices, documents and activities of the Dharma Center in Moscow. Together with Kuznetsova, they conducted field studies at the Moscow Center of Padmasambhava.

The main objectives of the work was the creation and development of a detailed descriptive scheme of rituals and celebrations of the community. Size and community composition were similarly described in detail.

Buddhists from the center of Moscow Padmasambhava, Dharma Center and Zen Center were described as some, albeit fairly narrow range of people for whom the activity of Buddhist practice is not a superficial fad, but a special way of life.

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<sup>16</sup> E. Ostrovskaya, "Socio-anthropological study of Buddhist secular community of St. Petersburg", **Ph.D. Dissertation**, p.7-13. (in Russian)

<sup>17</sup> A. Ozhiganova, "Eastern philosophical and religious teachings and spiritual practices in modern Russia: on the example of Moscow city", **Ph.D. Dissertation**, (Department of Ethnography, Ethnology and Anthropology: Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology RAS), 2000. (in Russian)

British researcher J. Feygan in her research paper '*Buddhism in Post soviet Russia: Revival or Degeneration?*'<sup>18</sup> studied Buddhism in Russia after the collapse of Soviet Union. Using the method of interview, she highlighted several important topics: an overview of the central Buddhist religious organizations of the Russian Federation, the description of the conflict in the late 1990s, on the occasion of the St. Petersburg temple Gunzeychoyney and contacts between ethnic and non-ethnic Buddhists.

J. Fagan stated the lack of communication between Buryat teachers and of non-ethnic Buddhist neophytes. They gain knowledge about Buddhism from literature or from Tibetan mentors.

Unfortunately, it is the only non-Russian work dedicated to Russian Buddhist organizations, which was detected in the process of preparing the paper.

As we can see, many researchers pay attention to the current state of the Buddhist community in Russia. Each researcher selects the specific scope of the study and pursue a narrow target. First of all, these goals are descriptive in nature. Indeed, non-ethnic Buddhist communities is a very new phenomenon for Russia, and scientists tend to determine them using a scientific approach. However, they do not tend to create any new concept.

Research activities, the object of which is aspects of Russian Buddhism is a very useful phenomenon. It allows you to enter Buddhism in the modern Russian reality more organically. Already accumulated a sufficient number of such works, and it is now possible to perform a comprehensive analysis of Russian Buddhism as an integral phenomenon. Identification of common factors that contribute to the development of this integral phenomenon, as well as determination of its general aspects have not been conducted. Now it is not only achievable, but is necessary at this historical stage.

Also such work is necessary for the formation of ideas about Russian Buddhism in countries where Buddhism is the state religion. These aim previous researchers also did not put.

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<sup>18</sup> G. Fagan, "Buddhism in Post-Soviet Russia: Revival or Degeneration?" **Religion, State & Society**, Vol 29, No.1, (2001).



## 1.7 Research Methodology

Because of the complexity and diversity of the problems, the author intends to use a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach. Interdisciplinary research has long become a scientific reality, and its effectiveness is rarely in doubt. In addition, an integrated approach is due to the inability to study such a complex and vast phenomenon as Buddhism within a single methodological approach.

For accomplishment of the first objective, historiographical method was used as the main. Historical materials and research papers on this issue were studied. Other methods used for this objective are:

- a) The content analysis was used to work with the data of the different legislation documents, letters, reports and other documents, which have historical value.
- b) The chronological method was used to study the appearance, formation and development of Buddhism in Russia in accordance with the chronological sequence.

Sociological method was applied to determine the present situation of Buddhist communities in the Ural region of Russia. The author organized a sociological survey using Internet. It is important to note that, applying the sociological approach, the author did not resort to any sociological theories or models, but only used research methods that sociologists apply.

Ural Buddhist communities were chosen for this research. These groups of non-ethnic Buddhists have no any specific features in comparison with non-ethnic Buddhists from other regions of Russia.

During the communication with the leaders and members of communities, recordings were conducted. The methods used in this case are formal interview, free interview and questionnaire of specially composed form. Personal meeting with the informant were impossible, so communication with the respondents was carried out via the Internet. For visual communication Skype and Hangouts programs were used. Besides that, the correspondence in social networks was conducted. Many of the interviews were recorded on voice recorder.

To study the current state of non-ethnic associations of Buddhists in the Ural region of Russia, their activities, the number of participants, and social, ethnic and age composition, other methods were used, as follow:

- a) Cross-cultural method was used to identify similarities in the appearance of the processes of development and adaptation of the Buddhist community.
- b) Statistical and mathematical method was used for the analysis of questionnaires and information about Buddhists in the region.
- c) Anthropological method was required the use for creating the source base for work.

All the materials are combined in the author's personal archive (PAL). To search for informants were used the data found in the communities' sites, social network VK and traditional ways.

Most of the informants' names are not given in the text. All information (recording interviews, questionnaires, saved web pages) is stored in the personal archive of the author (the PAL) and available by prior arrangement.

Author arranged electronic data on the studied communities by directories (directory of first community is named PAL F1, directory of second community is named PAL F2, directory of third community is named PAL F3). In these directories, different kinds of information are divided into sections:

- a) Audio recording - Audio1 of the first community is PAL F1 A1 (audio 2 is PAL F1 A2 and so on)
- b) Questionnaires - Questionnaire 1 of the first community is PAL F1 Q1 (Questionnaire PAL F1 Q2 and so on)
- c) Web pages are numbered – page 1 of the first community is PAL F1 001 (page 2 is PAL F1 002 and so on)

The tables show aggregated data on carried out researches.

During the research have been conducted:

<b>Type of research</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
Interview	54
Questionnaire	39
Correspondence	162

Respondents:

<b>Gender of respondents</b>	Men	Women
<b>Age of respondents</b>	20-52 years old	25-72 years old

Analysis and comparison of the results of historiographical and sociological approaches were used to determine the main factors of spreading and developing Buddhism in Russia

Also, the content analysis and the chronological methods were applied for second and third objective same as for the first objective.

### **1.8 Expected Benefits**

a) Achieving the objectives of the study allows us to create a clear picture of Buddhism in Russia, not only as a bright religious aspect but also as a profound historical process, as an ever-changing phenomenon.

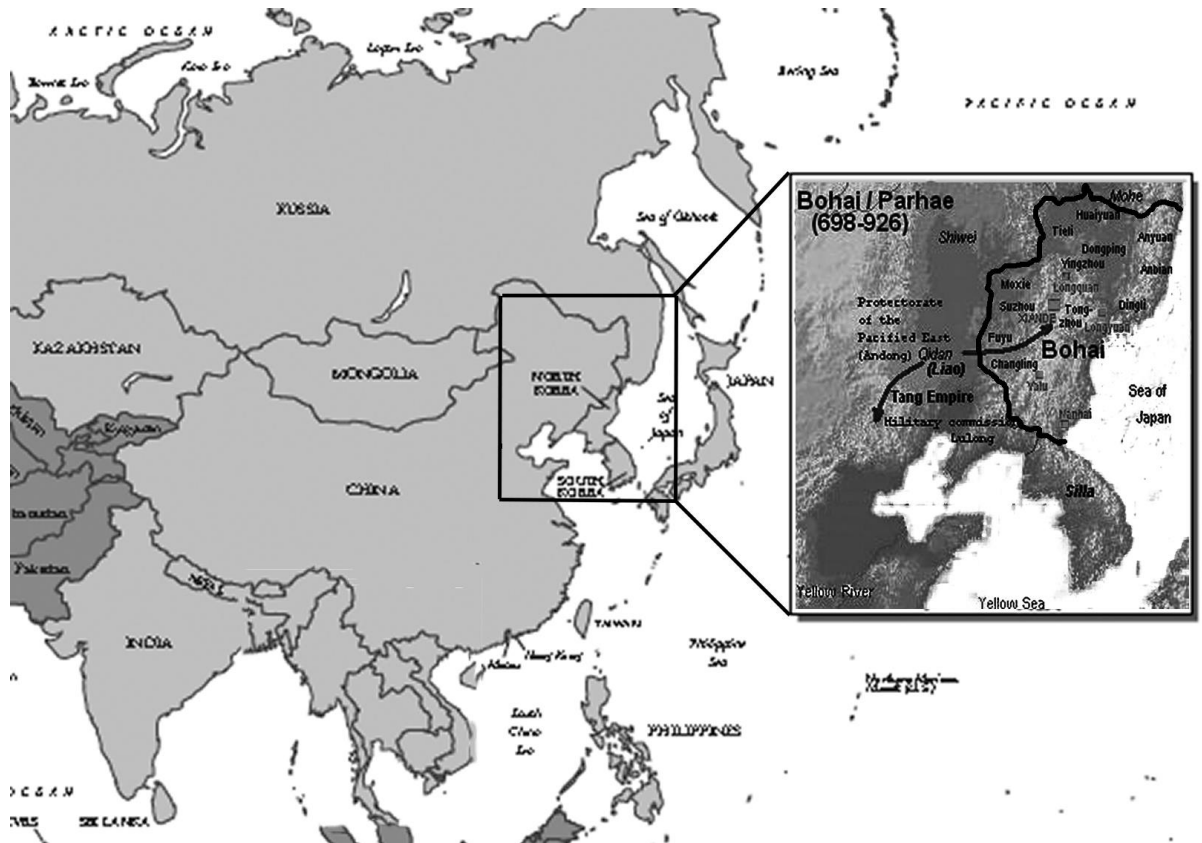
b) In this phenomenon, the main factors stimulating the development of Buddhism in Russia will be identified. It is extremely necessary for the proper incentives and control this process.

c) Finally, the researcher intends to identify unique features of Russian Buddhism, which distinguish it from other varieties of Buddhism, but which are common for representatives of the Russian mentality.

## Chapter II

### The Socio-Historical Aspects of the Spread, Development and Reformation of Buddhism in Russia

Talking about the historical evidence of the Buddhism existence in the territories, which now belong to Russia, we should mention about the state Bohai. As we can see on Figure 2.1, this country placed in Primorye and the Amur Region (Far East Russia) and lasted at least 300 years (698-926). Also, the territory of Bohai state covered part of lands, which now belong to China and North Korea.



**Figure 2.1 The Geographical Position of Bohai State**

In this state, Buddhism was the dominant religion of preference Bohai society, and part of the dependent population. The wide spread of Buddhism in the Bohai is confirmed by not only by chronicles, but also by the archaeological material.

For example, several Buddhist temples and a large number of ceramic, bronze and iron figurines of Buddha was found during excavations of the remnants of the upper capital of Bohai near Dongjincheng. In Chapshgou river valley in the Primorskiy region, two Bohai Buddhist temples have also been found and excavated. In one of them, several fragmented and one integral statue of the Buddha was found.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, this state has ceased long before the Russian-speaking population arrived to this territory, so the fact that Bohai professed Buddhism is the only archaeological evidence, it had no effect on the further development of Buddhism in Russia.

In this chapter, emphasis will be pointed on the historical and sociological aspects. In other words, the aim of this research first of all is to identify the various political, social and cultural aspects of development and existence of Buddhism in Russia in the context of the historical process.

Therefore, in observation of the spreading of Buddhism in Russia, it is necessary to note the relationship of this process with the spread of the religion among the nomads of Eurasia, especially Mongolians, who controlled the lands of present-day Russia, and held in subjection itself Russ.<sup>2</sup>

Mongolian nationalities Oyrat-Kalmyks and Buryats (currently are Russian citizens) were familiar with Buddhism before they are incorporated into the Russian state. Thus, the process of Buddhism spreading among these peoples began at the time when they were a part of pan-Mongol cultural space.

## **2.1 Establishment of Buddhism in Mongolia**

Establishment of the world religion among Mongolian nomads is a long process in which the majority of scientists has identified three main stages.

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<sup>1</sup> E. Shavkunov, **Bohai State**, p.111.

<sup>2</sup> The ancient name of Russia.

### 2.1.1 Three Stages of the Spread of Buddhism in Mongolia

The first phase began in the Hunnish period and lasted until the XII<sup>th</sup> – XIII<sup>th</sup> centuries. It proceeded on the period of decomposition of tribal relations, class stratification of nomadic society and the formation of initial state formations on the territory of Central Asia.

There is evidence of Buddhism in some nomadic powers, Turkic Khaganate and the Khitan Empire (Now Kazakhstan). During this period, because of the extensive contacts between the medieval Turkic-Mongol tribes and ethnic groups of Mongolia, the ancient traditional faiths peacefully coexisted with Buddhism, as well as some other religions, including Christianity. The culture of the Mongolian ethnic group Kerayit, which incorporates both the traditions of Central Asian nomadic civilization and elements of Christianity, became a vivid expression of the Eurasian synthesis.

At the same time, it is not correct to consider the Turkic-Mongol ethnic groups of that period as actually Buddhists, Christians, or anyone else. As T. Jumaganbetov noted, the nomads used to live in an environment where polytheism functioned.

For each aspect of their existence and for each natural phenomena and process, there were various supernatural forces, which personified in deities. Buddhist deities and representatives of other religions were built on the same row. If they did not contrary to the traditional worldview, each of them could be in different situations stronger than the old gods.

The plasticity of the Mongolian worldview of that period was the fact that the nomads, when they discovered new religious system, did not tear away it, but organically absorbed and processed. In a very short period of time, it became a part of the steppe inhabitants' culture.<sup>3</sup>

The second stage of the spread of Buddhism among the nomads of Mongolia begins in the era of Genghis Khan, and ends at the end of the XIV<sup>th</sup> century, after the fall of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty in China. It was associated with the formation of the Mongolian nationality and creation of a pan-Mongol state.

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<sup>3</sup> T. Zhumaganbetov, "Genesis of state-religious ideology in the ancient Turkic Khaganate", **Ethnographic Review**, No.4, (2006), p.157. (in Russian)

Mongolian society during this period of history was in need of religion, which would be a new regulator of social relations. Buddhism became one of these religions.

However, the leading doctrine, at least among the Mongolian elite, was still not Buddhism, but another phenomenon of spiritual culture emerged and developed in the environment of the Turkic and Mongolian peoples of Central Asia. It was the cult of the Eternal Blue Sky, called Tengrity. Tengri is the presiding deity of the Central Asian pantheon. It is deified sky, and the habitat of deities called Tengri.

It is the cult of Tengri, which was one of the early ideological systems, adapted as a state ideology. When the Turkic Ashina clan came to power, in the formation of state ideology, Tengrity was chosen. At the time of Kaspar-Kagan (573-581) it was sustained a competition to Buddhism.

The centralization of power and the formation of states demanded to elaborate the corresponding ideology that could unite the tribes under the banner of a successful leader, like Genghis Khan among the Mongols. In other words, centralization of power in the steppes required strengthening of monotheistic ideas. The vertical of power was built: at the top the One Eternal Sky, beneath autocratic leader of the nomads posed by the Sky, and still below the (topically, but not on status) is Mother Earth, inhabited by tribesmen.

In Mongolia, the Tengrity contacted with Buddhism twice. At the first time it happened in the XIII<sup>th</sup> century. At that time the perception of Buddhism by Mongolians was superficial and precarious.

A brilliant example of the subordination between Tibetan Buddhism, Mongolian Tengrity and secular power, as the victorious Mongols understood it, in 1240s, the son of Ugadei Godan demonstrated in a letter to Sakya Pandita Gunga-Dzhaltsan:

If I will keep the peace by secular law, and you will keep the peace by divine religious law, does the doctrine of Shakyamuni will spread over all the borders of the outer ocean? You Preach doctrine with a calm mind, and I will provide all that you need. Your well-being depends on me, and my well-being depends on Sky.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> S. Vira, **Mongolian historiography (XIII<sup>th</sup> – XVII<sup>th</sup> centuries)**, (Moscow: np, 1978), p.83. (in Russian)

In Mongolia, at the time of the great khans, Buddhism did not have much success. In Yuan, its success was uncertain. Tengrity should become weak for facilitate entry and establishment of Buddhist ideas among nomads. One important reason for this could be the weakness of the government.

The strong, aggressive nomadic Central Asian state did not provide a suitable ground for the preaching the Buddha's teachings. In this connection, we should quote the Tonyukuk's caution about the ancient Turkic Hagan Mogilyan idea to build in his country Buddhist and Taoist temples. Adviser Tonyukuk said that Buddhism and Taoism teach people kindness and compliance, and it is not the path of war and gaining power. Mogilyan accepted the caution and refused the idea.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the unfavorable conditions and a serious competition from the Tengrity, Buddhism has had an opportunity to spread in Mongolia as one of the recognized religions.

The state transformation in the steppe empire accompanied by the inclusion in its membership of different ethnic groups. This requires in terms of the ideology of a new unifying principle such as advanced religions.

Here it should be noted that it is the most effective to import a religion from conquered nations. In the area that the sons of Genghis Khan received, for example, they forced to adopt religion of the defeated majority of population. In this case, Islam had the greatest success.

Nevertheless, borrowing religion from neighbors was also very popular policy. In Central Asia, the sympathy of governors often turns to Buddhism. As a rule, conversion to Buddhism affects only the ruling clans of nomadic society. In this case, Buddhism has a very significant influence on the formation of government structures.

During the time of Kublai Khan, Pagba Lama developed the concept of union of the two authorities (*two laws*) - secular and spiritual. Talking about the interest of Mongolian Buddhism in political issues, this theory is the most demonstrative for Mongolia. This visibility lies in the

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<sup>5</sup> Yu Drobyshev, "Buddhism and Tengrity: confrontation or cooperation?", in Sambuyeva Ts. (ed.), **Buddhist culture: the history, source, language and art: The second Dorjiev's readings**, (St. Petersburg Oriental Studies, 2008), p.109. (in Russian)



fact of creation of a political doctrine in the form of a peculiar moral commitment.

The essence of the *two laws* doctrine lies in the responsibility delineation between secular and spiritual rulers of Mongolia. Religious hierarchy responsible only for spiritual activities without interfering in secular affairs. The secular ruler, in turn, did not interfere into the religious issues, the solution of which was provided exclusively by a spiritual head. Collectively, the activities of both leaders had to provide prosperity of a state. The secular ruler with such scheme was responsible for the peace and quiet of the country, following the human laws. The spiritual hierarch was responsible for religious welfare and religious salvation of the citizens, by following to the divine law<sup>6</sup>.

The concept of the *two laws* proclaimed the idea of harmony and interdependence of spiritual and secular power, which at the same time did not merge, but rather are combined to a kind of symphony. At this point, the Mongolian model of relations was close to the Byzantine symphony model, which did not allow dominance of one of the authorities.

The theory of the *two laws* or the two political governance principles has been the social and philosophical reinterpretation of the Buddhist median principle and the theory of the two truths (relative and absolute). The median principle is manifested in the fact that there is not allowed the predominance of any one ruler (secular or religious). The influence of the theory of the two truths is also obvious because the idea of the unity and harmony of the two truths in the socio-political views is priori used for the unity and harmony of the secular and spiritual authorities, as S. Lederhosen noted,

There is no doubt that Pagba Lama bases his political conception on the ideas of Madhyamika and, in particular, on the theory of the two truths. Moreover, he did not build it in a vacuum, but based on the works of many predecessors, starting with the Nagarjuna.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> N. Zhukovskaya, "Buddhism in the history of the Mongols and Buryats: political and cultural aspects", **Buddhist world, (Almanac)**, (Moscow: 1994), p.9. (in Russian)

<sup>7</sup> S. Lepekhov, **Madhyamika philosophy and genesis of Buddhist civilization**, (Ulan-Ude: np, 1999), p.56. (in Russian)

In the Manuals for Kagan, Pagba Lama wrote that the Madhyamika is actively used as a theoretical and philosophical basis of the state doctrine. It should be noted that the principle of the *two laws* has not remained only theoretical heritage of the Tibetan-Mongolian Buddhism, but it was widely used in practice. According to A. Kurapov,

Activation of the spread of Buddhism in Mongolia (Increase number of Buddhist monasteries, Buddhist acceptance of the secular aristocracy, and exercise of a tolerant policy towards Tibet) demonstrates acceptance of the *two laws* concept by the secular Mongolian authority.<sup>8</sup>

However, because of the tolerance, even patronizing Buddhism, Mongolians continued to be respectful to all the major confessions. In addition, the Buddhist community could effectively operate only in stable political conditions of a centralized state, which provided political and economic support to the Buddhist community. Therefore, after the fall of the Yuan Empire and the beginning of the period of state fragmentation, Buddhism in Mongolia was in decline.

The third wave of Buddhism came to the Central Asian steppe in the XVI<sup>th</sup> – XVII<sup>th</sup> centuries. The spread of Buddhism in this period was contributed primarily by socio-political factors. The new religion enshrined the prevailing social relations and contributed to political union of fragmented principalities. Buddhism, therefore, acted as a factor in political integration as opposed to fragmentation and separatism.

In addition, an appeal to Buddhism perceived as following the tradition and the memory of the former power, as the Yuan era Tibetan Buddhism was the official religion.

The main form of Tibetan Buddhism spreads among the Mongols was the yellow headdress tradition named Gelug (School of virtue).<sup>9</sup> Widespread of Gelugpa School among Mongolian peoples can be attributed to the internal characteristics of this tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Thus, the reform activity Gelug founder Tsongkhapa has been directed to restore the high social status of Buddhist monastic

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<sup>8</sup> A. Kurapov **Buddhism and power in the Kalmyk Khanate B XVII<sup>th</sup> – XVIII<sup>th</sup> centuries**, (Moscow: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2011), pp.43-44. (in Russian)

<sup>9</sup> Unlike the other schools of Tibetan Buddhism, the monks of this tradition were not red, but yellow headdress.

community. For that purpose, he has revived the tradition of monastic and philosophical teachings of Indian Buddhism. Strict compliance with monastic discipline and a serious religious and philosophical education of monks, of course, strengthened the spiritual authority of the representatives of this school.

The high status of religion in society predetermined by the Gelug fixed hierarchy and underlined sacred status of the lama-mentor. In addition, the Gelug had a strong foundation for the further spread of the schools in the form of a wide monasteries network, as a kind of cultural, educational and ideological centers.<sup>10</sup>

There is a version according to which a certain influence on the formation of the Gelug had Christian tradition. The well-known Tibetologist G. Tsybikov believed that many attributes and external grandeur of the clergy of the Gelug adopted by Catholicism.

Of course, the Gelug School has some similarity with the Catholic tradition, which can be seen in the emphasis on pious behavior and strict celibacy, in attributes and more. However, authentic sources, convincingly prove this influence, is not present in science. In addition, the Catholic tradition in this period was practically absent in Central Asia. Therefore, similarities between two different religious traditions not necessarily explained by borrowings. It is more possible that the parallel development have taken place.

Tsongkhapa in its activity has not bypassed the question of relations with the secular power. Therefore, in a letter to the Khan-Tegus Temur he refers to the concept of *two laws*, emphasizing the need for a harmonious blend of secular and spiritual principles in government. The presence of such correspondence indicates a gradual handling of the Mongols in the XIV<sup>th</sup> century to the traditional Buddhist state administration principle of the *two laws*.<sup>11</sup>

### **2.1.2 Methods of Buddhism Spreading in Mongolian Society**

The new religion quickly received support from the government, but the recognition of the Gelugpa School by the masses did not happen

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<sup>10</sup> E. Ostrovskaya Jr. **Tibetan Buddhism**, (St. Petersburg: np, 2002) p.8. (in Russian)

<sup>11</sup> A. Kurapov, **Buddhism and power in the Kalmyk Khanate**, p.46.

immediately. It was quite a lengthy process, involving an adaptation of Tibetan Buddhism to the traditional Mongolian ritualism. This adaptation was manifested in the development of neutral forms of worship and Buddhist ideas connection with centuries-old shamanic and Tengrian Mongolian traditions.<sup>12</sup>

At the same time, the bulk of people due to illiteracy were not able to learn the basic religious and philosophical concepts of Buddhism. Therefore, the rich Buddhist religious and philosophical literature was mainly intended for the clergy, who already had some knowledge. For lay people essentially it was not available.

Personal contacts of clergy and believers were needed. Therefore, the main method of the common people initiation to the Buddhist teaching was preaching, which contributed to more rapid perception of the new religion.

One of the main methods of missionary activity of Buddhist preachers in Mongolia was a wide practice of initiation to Buddhism of representatives of various social strata. Thus, in particular, the Oyrat educator Neji-Toinen often explained the hidden meaning of the secret teachings of Tantra to laymen. He proceeded from the fact that the most important thing in the preaching of Buddhism is first, to cause interest in it, and then, to maintain this interest so that it will eventually grow into a firm conviction.

Buddhism contributed to ascension of the Mongolian people to a higher level of social and civilized development: from the communal-tribal to feudal society. However, this process was inevitably associated with the breaking of both social and spiritual foundations of tribal Mongolian society and overcoming the clan fragmentation. Buddhist worldview purposefully destroyed the narrow framework of tribal and clan consolidation, which was replaced by new forms of spiritual generality of people without distinction of race, tribe, and even ethnicity.

Thus, Buddhism as a world religion was trying to neutralize the tribal and national differences, spreading its celebrations, traditions, cults, rituals, ethical values and standards of behavior.

In the course of the spread of Buddhism among the Mongolian peoples, lamas paid special attention to the struggle with shamanism. In

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<sup>12</sup> N. Zhukovskaya “Buddhism in the history of the Mongols and Buryats: political and cultural aspects”, **Buddhist world**, p.7. (in Russian)

their practical missionary activity, there were several aspects: the persecution of shamans and competition with them, destruction of the shaman cult objects, demonstration of the superiority of the Buddhist monks over shamans, replacement of the functions performed by shamans (healing, fortune-telling, divination, communication with spirits, performance of the life cycle rituals).

In the early period of Buddhism Lamas acted only with exhortations and requests. Later, based on the power and support to members of the nobility, they have also carried out the organized activities to combat shamanism.

In these circumstances, the local shamanism demonstrated rather traditional lability, which manifested in its well-timed withdrawal from their positions and a sharp narrowing of the sphere of influence. N. Zhukovskaya noted that shamanism had gradually gave way to Buddhism in those parts of social life that above all have been drawn into the orbit of the new socio-economic relations. He has reserved only a very narrow scope of ceremonial: patrimonial cults, which still remained as the former tribal unity persisted.

Shamanism and tribal relations are mutually contributed to the preservation of each other.<sup>13</sup> In this way, the first stage of Buddhism combat against shamanism was completed. In the second stage of this struggle, Buddhism acted previously by tested methods through the adaptation, transformation, assimilation of existing religious traditions. As a result, some shamanic cults were transformed into Buddhist and shamanistic hymns reworked to the spirit of Buddhism.<sup>14</sup>

Here it should be noted that in specific ethno-social conditions, cosmopolitan essence of Buddhism manifested itself gradually and based on compromises.<sup>15</sup> It partly gave way to the requirements of real life. Therefore, Buddhism could not fully overcome the differences between the Mongolian clans and nations.

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<sup>13</sup> N. Zhukovskaya **The world of traditional Mongolian culture**, (New York: np. 2000), p.95. (in Russian)

<sup>14</sup> N. Zhukovskaya, "Folk beliefs of Mongols and Buddhism (On the specifics of Mongolian Lamaism)", **Archaeology and Ethnography of Mongolia**, (Novosibirsk, Science, 1978), p.26. (in Russian)

<sup>15</sup> K. Gerasimova, **On the historicism in the assessment of cultural heritage**, (Ulan-Ude: np, 1992), pp.63-62. (in Russian)

The wide spread of Buddhism was not possible without penetration into the national consciousness, which was better accustomed to the ancient ceremonies and customs. Therefore, the most effective way to spread Buddhism was the inclusion of local shamanic cults, revising these cults and filling them with new meaning. That is why in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century Buryat scientist Dorji Banzarov considered as an important reason for the rapid spread of Buddhism among the Mongolian people the pliability and condescension of Buddhist preachers to popular beliefs.<sup>16</sup>

The process of attracting to its ranks of alien deities and spirits has been tested in Indian Buddhism. In Tibetan-Mongolian region, it was developed to perfection. To become a mass religion, Buddhism needed to become an open system, adapting local religious traditions. Therefore, Buddhism in any ethnic environment takes the form of a national variation of the world religion. For example, Tibetan Buddhism extending among the Mongols, has acquired Mongolian traits, and especially in the ritual sphere, absorbing traditional beliefs and practices, adapting to national cultural traditions, customs and beliefs, way of life of the masses.<sup>17</sup>

This demonstrates the well-known cultural pragmatism of Buddhism: there was a certain sequence in the assimilation of autochthonous traditions of Mongolian people. First, Buddhism seeks to adapt socially important rites and cults that have made sacred mechanism of everyday human behavior.<sup>18</sup> It actively involved in its ritual practice ancient rituals of the life cycle, which covered almost all life of the individual. Buddhist assimilation of everyday rituals that regulated the main stages of the life cycle and economic activity, contributed to the fact that Buddhism has become an integral part of the Mongolian nomads life.

The process of Buddhist assimilation of local tribal cults had a dual character. On the one hand, Buddhism incorporated traditional rites and rituals, acquiring a clearly defined, ethnic character. On the other hand, it left its mark on various spheres of spiritual life, filling the old cults and rites with new meaning.

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<sup>16</sup> D. Banzarov, **Black religion**, (Moscow: np, 1955), p.55. (in Russian)

<sup>17</sup> G. Galdanova, **Traditional beliefs of Buryats in Buddhism system. Buddhism: History and Ideology**, (Ulan-Ude: np, 1997), p.93. (in Russian)

<sup>18</sup> G. Galdanova, K. Gerasimova, **Lamaism in Buryatia XVIII<sup>th</sup> - early, XX<sup>th</sup> century. The structure and the social role of the cult system**, (Novosibirsk: Science, 1983), p.9. (in Russian)

Thus, in the course of Buddhist assimilation of shamanic and pre-shamanic cults, in Mongolian society a distinctive system of religious syncretism has been formed in which the old beliefs, essentially changing its function, subordinated to the goals and objectives of Buddhism.

Generally, the syncretism of Buddhism and shamanism indicates the existence of certain regularities in the interaction of the two religions belonging to different levels of social development, which later found themselves within one socio-cultural space. Shamanism is a religion that developed in the pre-class society, mainly served domestic and household needs of the people. Buddhism, with its developed system of values and abundant philosophical tradition performed primarily ideological, regulatory, moral and normative functions.<sup>19</sup>

Such syncretism of Mongolian Buddhism cult system was not the result of spontaneous convergence of diverse religious traditions. It was the result of purposeful activities of Buddhist preachers, who aimed to assimilate and transform shamanic cults.

It should be noted that a similar situation was in Russ, where existed the so-called dual faith, that is, a compromise balance of pagan and Christian elements, which is described by various authors<sup>20</sup>. There is a noteworthy statement of M. Popovich, the specialist on the cultural heritage of Ancient Russ, as follow:

...Paganism in Russ is more stable. It adapts to Christianity, hiding behind Christian cults. Its fragments survive to our times in the vestigial form. Restoration of something archaic, using a Polish or Czech folklore, is much harder than Serbian or Bulgarian, but also the latter in a much less clear and pure form, retain remnants of archaic pagan worldview than national memory Russian, Ukrainians and Belarusians.<sup>21</sup>

Typologically similar ideological representations have contributed to the syncretism of Buddhism and shamanism: the idea of the unity of man and nature, micro and macrocosm, the idea of higher and lower worlds, a belief in rebirth and the incarnation, moral personal

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<sup>19</sup> N. Zhukovskaya, **The World of traditional Mongolian culture**, p.137.

<sup>20</sup> **The introduction of Christianity in Rus**, (Moscow: Misl, 1987), p.264. (in Russian)

<sup>21</sup> M. Popovich, **The worldview of ancient Slavonians**, (Kyiv: Nauka Dumka, 1985), p.34. (in Russian)

responsibility for maintaining a harmonious balance in the universe. Therefore, the traditional worldview of the Mongolian people, which lies in the humanization and deification of the world, have not changed much<sup>22</sup>.

Thus, in the process of changing religions in Mongolian society, the total destruction of the autochthonous religious tradition did not prevail. Buddhism, extending in the new ethno-cultural environment, did not destroy the cult of nature and ancestors, which along with other factors determined quick and rather peaceful spreading of Buddhism.<sup>23</sup>

Buddhist preachers probably understood that ancient ceremonies and customs are the important traditional mechanism of social control. At the same time, by means of assimilating traditional everyday ceremonialism of the people, including it into ceremonial system of new religion, lamas purposefully smoothed the ethno-differentiating features of patrimonial religious practices and customs, as K. Gerasimova writes,

Replacing old subjects of family and patrimonial worship with their sacral cults, the Buddhist clergy created the new unified ceremonialism based on a uniform though syncretized pantheon. Without violent interruption of ethno-cultural traditions, Buddhism has managed to lay the fundamental foundation for formation of spiritual culture of new type, having introduced the new doctrine about the world and the human being.<sup>24</sup>

Researchers note that the syncretic system of religious beliefs and cults, which was finally formed, had three layers related to different stages:

- 1) Archaic national,
- 2) Shaman,
- 3) Buddhist.

It is natural that the role played by these main structurally functional levels of religious culture was unequal. The ratio of religious and ethno-cultural components also changed at various stages. However

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<sup>22</sup> G. Galdanova, **Traditional beliefs of the Buryats in Buddhist system. Buddhism: History and Ideology**, p.94.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p.100.

<sup>24</sup> K. Gerasimova, **On historicism in the evaluation of cultural heritage**, p.65.



the most steady and dominating was the process of assimilation by Buddhism of all previous layers, and this inevitably led to strengthening of a soteriological element in them.

As regards the transformation of ancient traditions, it should be noted that the most radical changes occurred to the family and patrimonial ceremonialism connected with a cult of ancestors. While assimilating this cult, Buddhism subordinated the most important mechanisms of patrimonial social life. Thus, Buddhist temples used already existing forms of a tribal community for formation of the parish and creation of new types of lamaist cult laymen association, only within monastic parish.<sup>25</sup>

The shaman cult of Ongons was also important object of Buddhist assimilation. Ongons are the family, ancestral and personal spirit-patrons. Buddhism has kept the ancient cult of family and personal patrons, having replaced the Ongons by Sakhyuusans (Buddhist doctrine defenders). In the process of assimilation, Buddhists have kept not only the form of this personal and family patron's cult, but also its social function: authorizing patriarchal and patrimonial lifestyle. Therefore, the father's Sakhyuusans protected at the same time his wife and children.

It should be noted that Shamanism and others the pre-Buddhist beliefs played a special role in formation of national specifics of Buddhism among peoples of Russia. Buddhism, being a world religion, is based on the universal principles, which are not determined by such specific factors as the race, the nation, the state. Therefore, while spreading among Mongols Buddhism acted as supranational religion. However gradually, entering interaction with autochthonic cults and other components of original culture of nomads, Buddhism began to gain rather pronounced ethnic specifics and began to be perceived by local population as a national religion.

As a result, the spreading of Buddhism became an extremely important cultural event in the history of Mongolia. Together with Buddhism the fine arts forms, such as architecture, sculpture, painting, were widely spread. Educated lamas translated into Mongolian not only religious and philosophical works, but also various treatises on art, history and natural science. Moreover, educated persons, some kind of

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<sup>25</sup> G. Manzanov, **Religious traditions in value orientations of the Buryat youth**, (Ulan-Ude: Publishing house of BSC SB RAS, 1997), p.34. (in Russian)

Buddhist intellectuals, who played an important role in literacy distribution, appeared in the Mongolian society.

### 2.1.3 Buddhism in a Political Context of Mongolia

Previously, the falling of the Mongolian Yuan dynasty in China entailed the decline of the *two laws* doctrine developed by Pagba-lama. Then, protection of Buddhist hierarchs of Tibet, sought after by the khans of the shattered Mongolia, and reciprocal protection the Tibetan hierarchs by the Mongolian khans have resulted in the revival of the *two laws* ideology as the principle of relationship of the state and church. This concept was thoroughly stated in the work *White History* by Hutukhtai Setcen Huntaidzhi, one of the most educated princes of Mongolia of the 16th century.<sup>26</sup>

Most actively, the policy of two principles was pursued by Altan-khan of Tumet, who sought for ideological basis of his imperial claims. Altan-khan choose as spiritual mentor the head of the Gelug School Sodnam Gyatso. Altan-khan has proclaimed Sodnam Gyatso the Dalai Lama, and he, in return, has received the title Dharma-king. This case reflects a certain continuity in relationship of the Mongolian governors and Tibetan Buddhism who came back to the doctrine of two principles.<sup>27</sup>

Implementation of the ideology of *two laws* was favorable to both the secular and religious authorities. This doctrine provided secular government with necessary legitimation. Therefore, for example, Altan-khan was proclaimed a reincarnation of a deity Vajrapani. Undoubtedly, it has sanctified and strengthened his power.<sup>28</sup> Besides, the appeal to political traditions of the Mongolian empire strengthened the authority of Altan-khan, as if underlining the continuity of his power. *Saṅgha*, in its turn, got political support and could rely on the help of the state.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> N. Zhukovskaya “Buddhism in the history of the Mongols and Buryats: political and cultural aspects”, **Buddhist world (Almanac)**, p.9. (in Russian)

<sup>27</sup> A. Kurapov, **Buddhism and power in the Kalmyk Khanate in the XVII<sup>th</sup> – XVIII<sup>th</sup> centuries**, pp.47-48.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. pp.56-57.

<sup>29</sup> Sh. Tsybanov, **Features Chinese and Tibetan concept of power in the Buddhist tradition**, (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg press, 2000), p.91. (in Russian)

Later the concept of *two laws* was supplemented by theocratic concept of Kagan-Chakravartin. This new concept gradually pushed the doctrine of *two laws* in the background, having strengthened the position of secular power as Kagan-Chakravartin united in himself both secular and spiritual principles. As a result, the symphony of two authorities in Mongolia has collapsed. The doctrine of Kagan-Chakravartin rejected and by that destroyed the principle of inheritance of the sovereign power, which developed throughout several centuries in Mongolia, according to which the power was inherited by the senior representative of a ruling kin.

The new concept of the power sharply intensified the centrifugal tendencies among the Mongolian khans, each of which could apply for the post of a Kagan now. Results soon followed: by 1691 almost all Mongolia (except for its extreme western territory, the independent Dzungarian Khanate) was in vassal submission of the Manchurian empire Qing.

At the same time the new doctrine was not widely adopted in Dzungaria (the Western Mongolia) inhabited by the ancestors of modern Kalmyks - Oyrats which remained loyal to the former symphonic idea of *two laws*, limiting the spheres of competence of secular power and church.

The Gelug tradition spread in Dzungaria quickly enough. The presence of centuries-old tradition of different Buddhist schools and movements has created prerequisites to further distribution among Oyrats of the Gelug School Buddhism. The quick distribution of Gelug among Oyrats was also influenced by political history of the Oyrat Union and specificity of international situation of Oyrats.

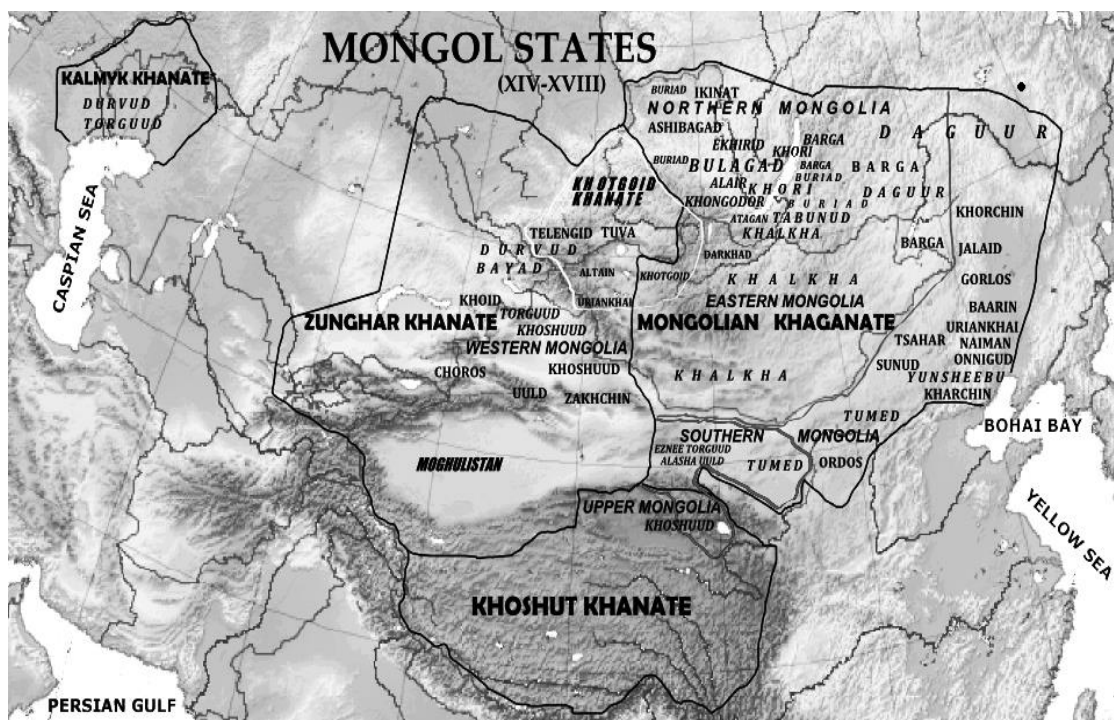
Besides, a considerable part of Oyrats consisted of the descendants of Kerayit (Torgouts and Khoshuts). Interestingly enough, the Torgout and Khoshut representatives – Neydzhitoyn and Zaya-pundit - promoted the Gelug Buddhism in Mongolia, and Khoshut Gushy-khan approved the power of Dalai Lamas and the Gelug School in Tibet.

Actually, during this period Buddhism became the major integrating factor for all the Oyrat sub-ethnic groups. A community of religious ideology, creating the basis, which helped to overcome the dissociation, promoted the strengthening of the all-Oyrats Unity idea. Buddhist preachers, who came to Oyrats, sought for support of the governors and objectively promoted the formation of a centralized state.

Such state was formed in the middle 1630s, and was called the Dzungarian Khanate. Soon after that two other large Oyrat states arose - the Khoshut Khanate in Northeast Tibet and the Kalmyk Khanate on Volga.

At the same time Buddhism, getting into an Oyrat social structure, was forced to adapt to their social structure. Thereof, it is necessary to take into account that Buddhism among Oyrats was influenced by the nomadic tribal structure.

As B. Kitinov notes,<sup>30</sup> Dzungarian Oyrats had the administrative structure, which was closely joined with a tribal social structure. Such special feature of society made it impossible for the Buddhist community of to create a uniform centralized church hierarchy. As a result, each Oyrat sub-ethnos had autonomous church structure. The similar specific provision of a monastic community in Oyrat society caused its dependence on the power.



**Figure 2.2 The Geographical Position of Mongolians in XIV<sup>th</sup> – XVII<sup>th</sup> Centuries.**

<sup>30</sup> B. Kitinov, *Sacred Tibet and militant steppe*, (Moscow: Association of Scientific Publications KMK, 2004), p.120. (in Russian)

## 2.2 Formation of Buddhism in Kalmykiya

In the 17th century, a part of Oyrats, who has moved to the territory of Lower Volga-river area, became part of Russia and assumed the name Kalmyks. This area is located on the north coast of the Caspian Sea (Figure 2.2). The Oyrats arrival to Volga was the transcontinental migration, last in the history of the Eurasian nomads from Asia to Europe. The special importance of this event is related to the fact that from now on the first large center of Buddhist culture appeared in the territory of Europe, and the representatives of this center contributed a lot in spreading of Buddhism in the West.

By the time, when Kalmyks have settled in the Lower Volga steppes these lands, which had been won in 1556 from the Astrakhan Khanate, were undeveloped. In 1609, there were successful negotiations of the Russian authorities with the Kalmyk heads. It is the start date of voluntary including of Kalmyks into Russia.

Oyrat-Kalmyks became part of the Russian state by voluntary act. Kalmyks did not aspire to conquer the territory of Lower Volga area by force of arms, and Russia did not seek to acquire new citizens by violence. This process was based on the mutually advantageous agreement, and on the Eurasian complementarity of the people.

Voluntary entry of Kalmyks into Russia has improved even more the Eurasian character of Russia. After entering to the socio-cultural space of Russia, Kalmyks did not lose their religion. In isolation from cultural and religious center of Buddhism, in an environment of different language, religion and culture, Buddhism played the increasingly integrating function.

Spreading Buddhism in the very first years was marked by the first constructions, the earliest Oyrat monastery is dated no later than 1616. Its construction is mentioned in the letter of the tsar Mikhail Fedorovich. The monastery Darkhan Tsordzhin-kit, otherwise called Seven chambers (hence the name of the city of Semipalatinsk in Kazakhstan), was located on the bank of Irtysh. According to Miller, Torgouts constructed these seven chambers.

The question concerning the schools of Tibetan Buddhism, which had followers among Oyrats, is so far still insufficiently investigated.

Based on a number of sources B. Kitinov assumed that Oyrat ethnic subdivisions were related to certain schools.<sup>31</sup>

For example, in the period of an eminence, the Oyrat heads at the beginning of the 15th century, when they united under their power all the Mongols, is considered the time when the upper crust continued to profess Buddhism. The historians state numerous facts of contacts between the Oyrat court and the Chinese dynasty of Min in religious area: invitation of missionaries, import of Buddhist literature and ritual accessories.<sup>32</sup>

At the end of the 16th century in Tibet, during the fight of Red Hat and Yellow Hat schools, a part of Mongols and Oyrats takes the side of the last. However, other Buddhist schools had their followers among Mongols.

Kalmyks also called Buddhism as Shara-uhlan-shajin (yellow-red faith) along with the common name of Buddhism, used among Mongols, - yellow faith, and there were Red-Hat schools followers among Kalmyks up till 20th century. Thus, the privileged position of Gelug in Kalmykiya did not mean its supremacy.

The congress of Oyrat and Mongolian princes and clergy in 1640 proclaimed Buddhism the state religion, as long as Shamanism devotees began to suffer from persecutions. Mongol-Oyrat laws of 1640 remained valid among Kalmyks during the whole time of existence of the Kalmyk Khanate. It is longer, than among Mongols.

It should be noted that Kalmyks fought against Shamanism successfully. However, as well as in other cultures, these early beliefs were typically included in an arsenal of Buddhism.

As a result, in the territory of Kalmykiya almost all shaman attributes were destroyed. However, the shaman tradition did not disappear completely here, but remained within Buddhist culture.

E. Bakayeva writes that the functions of shamans among Kalmyks began to be executed by the persons called Zadychi (which means doctors

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<sup>31</sup> B. Kitinov, **Religious traditions of Tibet in the history of Buddhism of Kalmyks**, (Elista: Context, 1994) p.198 – link to G. Tucci (G. Tucci, **Tibetan painted scrolls**. Vol 1, Rome: np, 1949), p.8.

<sup>32</sup> H. Serruys, “Early Lamaism in Mongolia.” **Oriens Extremus**, No.10. (1963 Oct), Wiesbaden, p.189. (in German)

or knowing people, another meaning - rainmakers) which in the confessional aspect defined themselves as followers of Buddhist religion. Up to the beginning of the 20th century, they had the right to the most honorable type of burial - cremation - along with Khans and the highest persons from church hierarchy. Moreover, Zadychi could belong to both laymen and Buddhist priests. Tradition of Zadychi, having arisen from Shamanism, during the fight against it has lost some original features, but at the same time has kept the main functions of protection of a kin, medical treatment and fortune-telling. External display of transition in the changed state of mind were lost, but the main contents: communication with a deity-patron and spirits has remained.<sup>33</sup>

However, the question concerning Shamanism among Kalmyks in general has not received a final answer. Certain information about shaman men and women is available in recordings of the travelers who visited the Kalmyk steppe at different times. Nevertheless, in literature, the information about shamans' activity appear extremely rare.

Inaccessibility of Tibet and Mongolia had as the result the weakening of contacts with these centers of Buddhism. Thereof Buddhism in Kalmykiya gained a number of specific features. Thus, the church influence on Kalmyk society was not as absolute as in some other Buddhist countries. The number of monasteries (Khurul) and monks in Kalmykiya was considerably smaller than in Tibet and Mongolia.

The explanation lies in specifics of a military-political and geographical location of the Kalmyk lands. The relationship of church and temporal power were inevitably affected by the fact that the temporal power was gradually concentrated in hands of the monocratic Khan. Therefore, the Kalmyk Khanate did not have a powerful and centralized *Saṅgha*, similar to that which arose in Mongolia.

Absence of the institute of khubilgan (tulku) of reincarnations of the highest lamas, which was widely popular in the Tibet-Mongolian region, was one of specific features of the Kalmyk Buddhism. It is explained by the unwillingness of the Kalmyk governors to strengthen the positions of church, because in the regions where this tradition existed (Tibet and Mongolia) the power belonged to Khubilgans. At the same

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<sup>33</sup> E. Bakaeva, "On the peculiarities of the contemporary religious situation in Kalmykiya (Buddhism and "initiated")" **Ethnographic Review**, No.3 (2004), p.24-25. (in Russian)

time, lack of khubilgan did not mean that Kalmyks did not accept reincarnate lamas, rather on the contrary. Some of the highest khubilgans from Mongolia and Tibet were very popular among Oyrat-Kalmyks. Besides, people regarded the most respected and reputable members of Kalmyk *Saṅgha* at the level of khubilgan.<sup>34</sup>

The Kalmyk Buddhism was characterized by the intra-confessional tolerance expressed in presence on the territory of Kalmykiya, especially during the early period, not only of the dominating Gelug School, but also of the followers of other Tibetan Buddhist schools. According to B. Kitinov, it could be the Kagyu, Nyingma and even ancient Tibetan Bon, which so far was actually transformed to one of Buddhist schools of Tibet.<sup>35</sup>

The intra-confessional tolerance was caused not only by genetic tolerance of Buddhism, but also by specific position of the Kalmyk Khanate, being in a foreign cultural environment that, undoubtedly, promoted consolidation of Buddhist traditions.

The worship in Kalmyk Buddhism also had its specificities. For example, the calendar ceremonialism of Kalmyks had its originality. Only in the Kalmyk temples there was a service on the eve of December 22, devoted to an ancient Kalmyk New Year's holiday Zul, this church service was called in official documents a service of New Year. The Kalmyk calendar starts with this holiday, and not from a holiday of the first spring lunar month, as it is done by other peoples of the Buddhist East. According to D. Damdinov, it could be the result of the influence of the agricultural Central Asian peoples.

E. Bakayeva, agreeing with the opinion on agricultural roots of winter celebration of New year, notes that the reason probably lies in the history of Kalmyks whose ancestors - Oyrats had agricultural and cattle breeding lifestyle.<sup>36</sup>

From the point of view of the author, starting the New Year from the holiday Zul, devoted to memory of the Gelug school founder –

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<sup>34</sup> B. Bicheev, **Children of the Sky — the Blue Wolves. Mitho-religious basis of forming of Kalmyc ethnic identity**, (Elista: Publishing house of Kalmyk State University, 2005), p.143. (in Russian)

<sup>35</sup> B. Kitinov, **Sacred Tibet and the Militant Steppe**, p.123-125.

<sup>36</sup> E. Bakaeva, **Buddhism in Kalmykiya. Historical and ethnographic essays**, (Elista: Kalmyk book publishing house, 1994), p.57-58. (in Russian)



Tszonkhava, can be also related to special esteem to this Saint among Kalmyks who remember the historical link of Gelug and Oyrats.

Religious factor is one of the prerequisites, which have played a certain role in the ethno-genesis of the Kalmyk people. It is known that Kalmyks were the only Mongolian-speaking ethnos in the south of Russia, and also the only Buddhists. This circumstance played the important role in forming of the Kalmyk ethnos, considering the ethno-cultural and language environment of Oyrat groups on Volga.

Their neighboring people practiced either Islam or Orthodoxy, therefore the marriages of Kalmyks with them were very limited, and that affected their assimilation. According to B. Kitinov, even Kalmyk ethnonym comprises the meaning Buddhist, and Buddhist culture was a key indicator for identification of Kalmyks. B. Kitinov notes:

The separation of Kalmyks from the all-Mongolian culture was as impossible, as its separation from Tibetan Buddhist, because otherwise Kalmyks would cease to identify themselves as Kalmyks. In the history of the Kalmyk people, there were cases when the groups, which broke away from the main, part with time, under influence of their environment, were forced to adopt Christianity, Islam or to come back to Shamanism. Thus, torn off their spiritual basis, they were dissolved in the ethnic sea of the neighbors.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore, Kalmyks' ethnic and religious identity to some extent was coincided.

Nevertheless, the efforts to keep the identity did not lead to aggression in relation to other people and religions. Despite the fact that Kalmyks took part in wars of Russia with Turkey and the Crimea, the relations between Kalmyks and citizens of Russia who practiced Islam were good-neighborly.

There is much information about political, economic and cultural connections of Kalmyks with the Muslim people of the Caucasus, the Volga region and Central Asia. Kalmyk khanate included many Muslims, first of all Nogais. There were some small Kalmyk ethnic groups practicing Islam. All of them got on with Buddhist Kalmyks rather peacefully. Kalmyks and Nogais subject to Kalmyk Khanate often

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<sup>37</sup> B. Kitinov, **Buddhism in identification processes among Russian Buddhists**, (Moscow: Publishing house of Institute of Sociology RAS, 2008) p.178. (in Russian)

roamed together, and also made joint military campaigns. Even when the Khanate was eliminated and Nogais got independence from Kalmyks many Nogais, as is reported, willingly appealed to justice of Kalmyk leaders.<sup>38</sup>

In general, among the people of Eurasian Oyrat states Muslims usually prevailed. In B. Kitinov's opinion, successful advance of the Oyrat-Mongolian troops in Central Asia and Southern Siberia, their settling in the conquered areas resulted in many respects from the thought-over policy concerning the conquered areas, to culture and life of local population. Islam was never pursued in Oyrat states (however, as well as any other religion which representatives did not try to propagate among Oyrats). Oyrat khans highly appreciated scholarship and spirit of enterprise of Muslims and often gave them important missions.<sup>39</sup>

As for the relationship between Buddhist church and the state authorities in the Kalmyk steppes, it should be noted that the doctrine of *two laws*, or the union of two authorities formed in the Mongolian Buddhism was consistently put into practice during the existence of the Kalmyk khanate.

The clergy, relying on Buddhist ideology, has legitimated the social relations and the political status of the Khan, forming tradition of sanctification of the Khan power by the spiritual authority of Dalai-lama.<sup>40</sup> Obtaining the khan title from Dalai-lama himself was perceived by the people as blessing on governing the Khanate and indicated the confirmation by the highest spiritual authority of the Khan's right for government.

It resulted in sacralization of the Khan power, which was objectively necessary as Kalmyks lived far from other Buddhist regions. In its turn, secular authorities actively patronized Buddhism as a legitimating and integrating force.

During the existence of the Kalmyk khanate, the position of *Saṅgha* changed depending on power of secular authorities. Under the strong, centralized lay authority, *Saṅgha* in the Kalmyk Khanate played

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<sup>38</sup> **Russian History: Russia and the East**, (St. Petersburg: Lexicon, 2002), p. 178. (in Russian)

<sup>39</sup> B. Kitinov, **Sacred Tibet and the militant steppe**, p.128.

<sup>40</sup> A. Kurapov, **Buddhism and Power in Kalmyk Khanate in XVII<sup>th</sup> – XVIII<sup>th</sup> centuries**, p.211.

mainly supporting legitimating role. Therefore, for example, the reign of Ayuki-Khan was the period of a certain internal political stagnation for the Buddhist church of the Khanate. At the time of weakening of the Khan power *Saṅgha* interfered rather actively in domestic policy of the state, trying to implement Buddhist socio-political concepts.

The Buddhist clergy of the Kalmyk khanate took an active part in establishment of political and cultural ties of the Kalmyk state with Dzungaria and Tibet in order to unify the Oyrat khanates under the Tibetan ideological patronage. At the same time Kalmyk Buddhist clergy, contacting to Russian administration and legitimating their system of contracts, also took part in formation of political relations between the Kalmyk khanate and the Russian Empire.

The year 1771 is a tragic year in the history of the Kalmyk people. Its major part (about 30 thousand nomads' tents, or about 150 thousand people) headed by Ubashi-Khan moved in the direction of Dzungaria, but few reached it. Ubashi-Khan had taken with him his library and relics, which later were stored in specially founded temple of Kalmyks in China. 11 thousand nomads' tents remained on Volga.

After leaving of the major part of Kalmyks to Dzungaria, Buddhist positions in Kalmykiya weakened, because the majority of khuruls and lamas had gone together with those nomads. Each Ulus (community) began to elect its own Supreme Lama instead of the uniform spiritual leader.

By the end of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century Kalmykiya had only 14 monasteries. Therefore, in order to keep their positions, Kalmyks began to call each of temples the monastery (and thus the term khurul - the monastery – has gained a new, wider meaning), and 106 khuruls were already mentioned in the official data dated by 1836.

Pre-Buddhist cults began to revive again. At the same time, people who practiced them not only did not oppose themselves to Buddhism, but on the contrary identified themselves with it. It was probably caused by anti-shaman clauses of Mongol-Oyrat laws of 1640, which remained valid among Kalmyks.

In 1771, under the decree of the Russian tsarina Catherine II the Kalmyk khanate was obliterated. The Kalmyk steppe gradually came under the administrative management of the Astrakhan province.

In general, two moments characterize the policy of the Russian government towards the Buddhist question in Kalmykiya. On the one hand, it was supposed that the Buddhism has to serve the state needs and pursue the policy of the central power by means of the church administrative structures operated by the state departments. On the other hand, Buddhism had to be gradually replaced by Orthodoxy.

Because of specially adopted laws of the Russian state, Buddhist *Saṅgha* of Kalmykiya has acquired a clear centralized structure, which differed from the religious organizations in other Buddhist countries. In 1825, 1834, 1847 a number of Provisions on management of the Kalmyk people were passed, and according to them, all religious power concentrated in Kalmyk Lama's hands. The Buddhist hierarch was appointed by the Senate with the consent of the Ministry of state property, and, therefore was actually an official in system of state administration.

The Russian authorities also applied measures to reduce the influence of Buddhist church and attract Christian mission. These plans provided establishment of a united control of the number of monasteries and clergy. Nevertheless, rationing measures progressed slowly. During discussion, various instances made the most different suggestions, up to reduction of quantity of khuruls by five times. However, the final version adopted in 1847 officially approved 67 regular khuruls: 25 big and 42 small, each of which had to have respectively 36 and 18 clergymen.

Only in the 1860s, certain measures for reduction of number of temples were carried out. However, at the same time a part of excess khuruls was proclaimed small, others were called prayer tents, and some have passed to informal position. Thus, the monastery of Dalai-lama (Russia Lkhunbo) was considered closed for fifty years (from 1856 to 1906), though it continued to function.

The known prerevolutionary specialist on Mongolian studies A. Pozdneyev states an interesting point of view on the government policy for the Kalmyk Buddhism. In his opinion, the reforms aiming to weaken the position of Buddhism often led to the opposite results. So, the authorization of the Supreme lamas by the government has made them irremovable. They were actually set equal to government officials, which raised their status. Therefore, Kalmyks began to perceive Buddhist clergy as the authority, and that interfered with proselytism of ROC.

Pozdneyev notes that the transition of all religious power into the hands of one person – Lama of the Kalmyk people, approved by the government of Russia, only united Buddhist church of Kalmykiya, eliminating its internal disagreements.<sup>41</sup>

For summarizing the features of the Buddhism in Kalmykiya, it is necessary to remember that Kalmyks always were far from the large Buddhist centers and it caused independence of their religion, which differed, from other national forms of Buddhism in a number of lines. Among these ethno-specific features must be stated,

- a) A certain conservatism combined with the innovations arising for a variety of reasons,
- b) Existence of various schools traditions under a dominant position of the Gelug School,
- c) Direct connections with Tibet in XVII<sup>th</sup> - the second third of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century (not via Mongolia),
- d) A complete submission to imperial administration at the XIX<sup>th</sup> - beginning of XX<sup>th</sup> century,
- e) A division of khuruls on big and small, and a strong dependence on the formalized reporting,
- f) A limited structure of official hierarchy of khurul,
- g) Presence of serfs – bondmen in temples,
- h) Absence of institute of tulkus.

The architecture of Buddhist cult constructions also had its special characteristics. It differed radically from architecture of the countries of Eastern Buddhist region. It is related both to specifics of materials and to involvement of the Russian masters, and even in some cases architects from the Astrakhan administration for temples designing, which was characteristic for Kalmyks.

The Kalmyk khuruls, which first looked like nomadic complex with felt tents-temples, after changing to stationary conditions, were constructed of timber and stone. The original architecture was formed as a result of mixture of styles of the Tibetan-Mongolian Buddhist and Russian architectures.

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<sup>41</sup> A. Pozdneyev, **Kalmyk's Religion. Encyclopedic Dictionary**, Vol 14, (St. Petersburg: np, 1895), p.73. (in Russian)

### 2.3 Formation of Buddhism in Buryatia

The beginning of official acquaintance of the Buryat society with Buddhism was marked by arrival in Buryatia in 1712 of 150 Tibetan and Mongolian lamas of the yellow-hat sect headed by a Tibetan scientist and religious mentor Ngavan Puntsog. From now on and up to the beginning of the XX<sup>th</sup> century Buddhism developed intensively, especially in Transbaikalia. It was caused by relatively stable situation of the Buryat society. According to the Charter of 1822 by M. Speransky, the Buryat steppe councils headed by old leaders (Taisha) regulated secular life in this territory. According to *The provision on lamaist clergy* of 1853, a centralized authority of Buddhist church led by Hambo-lama controlled religious life and the priors of monasteries (shiretuy) subordinated to it.<sup>42</sup>

In Transbaikalia Buddhism as a world religion, as well as everywhere, promoted socio-political and cultural consolidation. However originally it took place within the frame of tribal groups. As a result, the first public Buryat temples (Datsans) were patrimonial and were founded after the solution of patrimonial Suglans (councils).

Besides, the territory where Datsan parishioners lived actually was the territory of settling of ethnic clans, and the structure of monastic communities originally copied the structure of patrimonial Aimaks (hierarchies), to which lamas were attributed on the basis of tribal affiliation. Therefore, the religious centers arose and functioned mainly within tribal groups.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, Buddhism and tribal relations underwent mutual influence in Buryatia. On the one hand, Buddhism was forced to recognize local tribal distinctions, together with some tribal cults. On the other hand, Buddhism tended to replace the traditional institutes and values incompatible with its basic principles.

Influence of tribal structure on *Saṅgha* led to parochial fight for the title of the chief lama of all the Buryat. At the same time, the rivalry

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<sup>42</sup> K. Gerasimova, **Lamaism and the national and colonial policy of tsarism in Transbaikalia in the 19th and early 20th centuries**, (Ulan-Ude: The Buryat Book Publishing House, 1957), p.13. (in Russian)

<sup>43</sup> K. Gerasimova, **Religion and Problems of the Studies of the Buryat society. Regional Science and Culture: Studies Problems**, (Ulan-Ude: np, 1992), p. 55-56. (in Russian)

of tribal groups of the Buryat clergy was a peculiar manifestation of the process of political consolidation of Buryat ethnic groups. The fight for the title of the chief lama of all Buryat datsans, actually aimed at political domination over the Buryat population of Transbaikalia. The church authorities were above all tribal distinctions and presented a real opportunity to govern all Buryat groups by the religious management. In fact, the supreme religious power compensated the impossibility of concentration of direct all-Buryat political power in hands of any representative of the Buryat aristocracy in the Russian state reality.

According to K. Gerasimova, these facts can lead to a conclusion that political superstructure processes advanced the maturing of the basis of the Buryat feudalism, and that the world religion stimulated development of the new public relations, a territorial, political and cultural community of the separate ethnic groups of the population of Prebaikalia and Transbaikalia.<sup>44</sup>

It should be noted that Buddhism was spread among the groups, which subsequently made the Buryat ethnos, unevenly. After incorporation of the Buryat territories in Russian Empire and drawing of borders between Russia, Mongolia and China, the Buryat ethnic groups were administratively included in two different general governorships. This situation sharpened the socio-cultural distinctions between Eastern and Western Buryats.

In Transbaikalia, the Russian administration afraid that the local population could go to Mongolia, and that the authorities of the neighboring Buddhist countries could undertake hostile actions against Russia. That is why government did not interfere with Buddhism spreading. Therefore, Eastern Buryats apprehended quickly enough Buddhism, and with it and the Mongolian culture. Besides, many Eastern Buryat clans (Khoris -Buryats) were natives of Mongolia. In *The Report on The Origins of Eleven the Khoris-Clans*, it is marked out that when they arrived to the land of the Russian khan, they had with them Mongolian and Tibetan lamas, who, training them, passed them the knowledge and the doctrine and thus spread the Buddhist doctrine.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> D. Darbaev, **The Report On The Origins Of Eleven The Khoris-Clans. Central Asia Middleage Culture: written sources**, (Ulan-Ude: np, 1995). p.46. (in Russian)

In Prebaikal region, in the area of western Buryats, shamanism and local authorities presented a major barrier to Buddhism spreading. Here, in the absence of own written language, Russian literacy and Orthodoxy were actively introduced, whereas the Mongolian script and Buddhism did not gain ground. At the same time, the formal converting to Orthodoxy did not prevent the Western Buryats from professing Shamanism.<sup>46</sup>

The initial failures of Buddhist sermon were caused also by the lag of Western Buryats from their Eastern fellows in social development. Buddhism, being first of all a religion of class society, could be actively spread only in the developed society.

Buddhism began to penetrate to the Western Buryats only at the beginning of the 20th century. The Buryat educator Zhamtsarano saw the main reason of Western Buryats transition to Buddhism in their dissatisfaction with Shamanism. He wrote:

Even among these particular, nominal Irkutsk Buryats-shamanists, we have to tell positively that among them the discontent with their religion had begun long ago, not in our time and not by a request. Emergence of a cult of Zayans (god-humans), sects of worshippers of fire and water, worshippers of a swan, worshippers of heavenly gods, a cult of Mongols, supporters of the white bloodless sacrifices — all these are the signs of search for new ways, and a new religion. And Buddhism was the closest religion of almost all the Mongols and the majority of Buryats. The sole fact that Buddhism was confessed by most of fellow-tribesmen and congeners already was a temptation for those who looked for and craved for a new religion.<sup>47</sup>

The Buryat educator M. Bogdanov considered the main reason for converting of shamanist Buryats to Buddhism being the propaganda by such figures of Buryat education as A. Dorjiev and Ts. Zhamtsarano who,

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<sup>46</sup> D. Tsybikdordzhiev, “Buddhism and the National Movements Forming in Buryatia”, **State, Religion, Church in Russia and Abroad**, No.2, (1999), p.47. (in Russian)

<sup>47</sup> Ts. Zhamtsarano, “Buryats Populist Movement and its Critic”. **Siberia Issues**, No.21, (1907), p.20-21. (in Russian)



in his opinion, had inspired this religious movement, relying on support of the Buryat aristocracy.<sup>48</sup>

In fact, Buddhism adoption by the Western Buryats was not caused by propaganda of some individuals. Converting of the local Buryats to Buddhism was first of all connected with considerable social changes in life of indigenous people of the Irkutsk province. The capitalism development has led to the decay of old patriarchal life style and to further deepening of social differentiation in the Buryat society. The dramatic changes in social and economic life of the Western Buryatia caused by a painful process of late capitalism development, were also reflected in the religious searches, as Shamanism did not correspond to new social realities any more.<sup>49</sup>

Buddhism impact on the course of ethnic processes in Buryatia was ambiguous. On the one hand, it promoted development of unified elements of worldview, having destroyed in a short time all religious and tribal partitions between the tribes of Transbaikalia. On the other hand, its integrating abilities were limited. Buddhist tolerance towards ancient traditions made it possible to include in its structure local cults and deities, which ensured the conservation of certain regional distinctions.

Some researchers even think that the confessional factor played a disintegrating role in the history of the Buryat people, as it started the Buryat division on sub ethnic groups. In their opinion, Buddhism adoption by Transbaykalian Buryats has led to setting historically unjustified borders inside their ethnos.<sup>50</sup>

Certainly, the lack of a common religion among Eastern and Western Buryats aggravated the split in their ethnic identity. However, this split had emerged even before the spreading of Buddhism. Its sources lie in clans' conflicts and in separatism of feudal princes. Besides, the shamanism of the Western Buryats was not uniform. Therefore, it could not overcome fierce civil strifes and blood feud. Besides, disintegration

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<sup>48</sup> Yu. Shirapov, **Buddhism as a Factor in Ideology of Buryat Populist Intellectuals. Records on Philosophic and Socio-Political Thought of the States of Central and Eastern Asia**, (Ulan-Ude: np, 1995), p.74-75. (in Russian)

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> O. Ikhenova, Ethno-cultural Factors of Religiousness: Dynamics and Specific Manifestations in Poly-confessional Society, **Ph.D. Dissertation**, (Department of Religious Studies: Russian Academy of State Service), 1998. p.9. (in Russian)

processes among the Buryats were also supported by Shamanism with its cult of family and tribal deities and absence of centralized social institutes.

Buddhism only promoted consolidation of Transbaykal Buryats. Buddhism, a more advanced religious form in comparison to Shamanism, spreading among the Eastern Buryats, has created powerful ideological and socio-cultural prerequisites for overcoming of dissociation between different ethnic groups of Transbaykalian Buryats and for formation on their basis of a complete ethno-confessional community.

Buddhism, undoubtedly, has played an important role in formation of such cultural elements as the literary language and related literary tradition, the painting, the architecture and many other, which all were vital for a forming ethnos.<sup>51</sup>

Distribution of the Buddhism among the Buryats marked the initial stage of ethnic consolidation of separate tribal and socio-political associations, which later formed the Buryat ethnos. Therefore, the Buddhism role in consolidation processes among the Buryats was more considerable, than among Kalmyks, as their ethnogenesis process had begun much earlier.

Besides, the Buryats had no such a powerful ethno-consolidating factor, as own statehood, which was available for Kalmyks. That is why there were more difficult situation for ethnic-integration process. Thereof the Buryat *Saṅgha* had such ethno-consolidating functions, which in other countries were performed by the state and other social institutes. The Buddhism role in formation of national self-consciousness and national idea among the Buryats was much larger than in the countries, which had strong national statehood.<sup>52</sup>

In Transbaikalia, the Russian administration was originally forced to consider Buryats' traditions and customs, including their religion. The Transbaikalia proximity to the state border was taken into account, and therefore colonial and missionary policy was mitigated. At the same time,

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<sup>51</sup> L. Rinchino, "About the role of Buddhism in the Buryat ethnic and cultural history", in Abaev, N. (ed.), **250th anniversary of the official recognition of Buddhism in Russia**, (Ulan-Ude: Buryat Science Center, 1991), p.19-20. (in Russian)

<sup>52</sup> K. Abaev, "Buddhism and Christianity in Geo-political Space of Russia-Eurasia". **Knowledge. Understanding. Skill**, no.1 (2007), p.89. (in Russian)

the Imperial government tried to take *Saṅgha* under its control, having turned it into a part of state machinery.<sup>53</sup>

One important consequence of Buryat *Saṅgha* isolation was its independence from the Mongolian Buddhist church. The Imperial government considered the fact that *Saṅgha* of Mongolia and Tibet was controlled by the government of Qing China, which used its confessional policy in the conquered national regions as one of means of submission of the non-Chinese population.

Therefore, for the purpose of consolidation of the state positions in the Far East the Russian government decided to control the foreign communications of the Buryats, including religious ones. For this purpose, the Buryat Buddhist church was made autonomous, that is Buddhist Buryats managed their religious affairs independently.<sup>54</sup>

One of the important events in the history of Buryatia was the official recognition of the Buddhism as one of religions of Russia. The Decree by the empress Elizabeth Petrovna approved the staff list of the Buryat clergy, which then has sworn fidelity to the Russian state.

As a result, separate Buddhist communities and datsans began to merge in one uniform system of the church organization, and that played an important role in socio-political and cultural consolidation of the Buryat tribes.

The Russian government, confirming its loyal relation to the Buddhism by legislative acts, sought to gain control over *Saṅgha* of Transbaikalia and the Buryats' spiritual life in general. Besides, this measure contributed to legitimating of the annexing of the Buryat lands to Russia and improved trust and sympathy toward Russian Government from both Russian and foreign Buddhists.

In general, the government policy for the Buddhism was notable for its tolerance. Imperial administrative laws did not present a serious threat to class privileges and economic interests of Buddhist clergy of Transbaikalia. Some restrictions introduced by the Provision of 1853 were brought in by the Russian administration not in order to reduce the

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<sup>53</sup> A. Badmaev, "Buddhist Datsans and Buryats: The past and the present". **Siberia in the panorama of millennia: Materials of international symposia**, Vol 2, (Novosibirsk: np, 1998), p.33. (in Russian)

<sup>54</sup> G. Galdanova, K. Gerasimova, **Lamaism in Buryatia XVIII<sup>th</sup> – early XX<sup>th</sup> cc. Structure and Social Role of the Cult System**, p.18.

influence of the Buddhism on the Buryat but rather to strengthen administrative dependence of the Buryat church on the central power.

The Government was consciously forming loyal moods among the Buddhist clergy through the system of benefits and privileges, in hope to influence through it not only Transbaikalia, but also abroad. As a result, Transbaykalian region had a specific situation: for political reasons the imperial administration was forced to support Buddhist church, and often to the detriment of interests of Christianization.<sup>55</sup>

The tolerance of the Russian state towards Buddhism possibly goes back to the Mongol-Tatar period of the Russian history.<sup>56</sup> It is known that Mongols, being pagans, treated all world religions with respect. It is a very rare phenomenon during the era of crusades and cruel religious persecutions in the West.

Mongols extended this confessional policy also to the conquered countries including Russia. As P. Savitsky fairly noted, Russia inherited from Mongols among other the practice of national and religious tolerance.<sup>57</sup>

Patronizing of Buddhism by the Russian Government in the territory of Transbaikalia improved the rather positive attitude of Buryat population towards the Russian authorities.

The Buryat historic-literary records contain numerous reflections of conjugation of the Buddhism and the Russian monarchy. The Buryat historical works repeatedly mention the Buddhist nature of activity of the Russian tsars, who, according to the authors, performed civilizing function of sacral character. It is only natural that one of the Buryat chronicles says: “Let the success accompany us in wide spreading of the Buddhist religion under the patronage of the White Tsar”<sup>58</sup>. Another Buryat chronicle proclaims:

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid. p.32.

<sup>56</sup> For 300 years, Russ territory (ancient name of Russia) was under the rule of Mongols.

<sup>57</sup> L. Gumilev, **The Black Legend: Friends and Enemies of the Great Steppe. Letters of P. Savitckii to L. Gumilev**, (Moscow: np, 2007), p.478. (in Russian)

<sup>58</sup> **Buryat Chronicles**, (Ulan-Ude: Kurumkan printing house, 1995), p. 133. (in Russian)

With Buddha's blessing, under the Tsar's flag, with the constant and eternal virtue of all living beings, feeling the deepest happiness, let us esteem our parents, without forgetting their beneficence!<sup>59</sup>

There was even a special prayer for the emperor Alexander III, composed by the head of the Buryat Buddhist clergy Pandita-Hambo-Lama Daniyil Gomboyev, and it was told for a long period in all datsans of Transbaikalia.<sup>60</sup>

Possibly the term *White Tsar* arose because of the fact that in XVIII<sup>th</sup> century the Russian empresses (Elizabeth and Ekaterina) patronized the Buddhism in Russia. Because of that, Mongols and Buryats considered them as the embodiments of the deity White Tara.

The similar attitude towards the Russian tsars could be observed also in the Kalmyk steppes, especially at the edge of XIX<sup>th</sup> - XX<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some representatives of the Kalmyk clergy even deified the Imperial dynasty. The most vivid reflection of this tendency can be seen in the work by Lama Dambo Ulyanov. He dedicated the work '*Buddha's Predictions About the lineage of Romanovs and Short Essay of my Travel to Tibet in 1904 — 1905*'<sup>61</sup> to justification of a divine origin of the imperial dynasty in Russia. Basing on the predictions of sacred Buddhist books, D. Ulyanov concluded that the founder of Romanov dynasty, Mikhail Fedorovich, was the embodiment of one of apostles of Buddhism. At the same time, Ulyanov idolized also Russia itself, identifying it with the sacred land of Shambhala.<sup>62</sup>

Thus, it is possible to say that the Buddhist clergy desired to prove sacral nature of the Russian power, basing on already existing theocratic doctrine of a Kagan-Chakravartin. The lack of own statehood and supreme power among Buryats and Kalmyks in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century resulted in the fact that socio-political concepts, habitual for the Mongolian people, extended on the Russian monarchy.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid. p.167.

<sup>60</sup> "Buddhist prayer for the Tsar, erected in memory of the miraculous salvation of Their Majesties on the day the 17th October 1888", **Historic Gazette**, No.1 (1890), p.221- 222. (in Russian)

<sup>61</sup> D. Ulyanov, **Buddha's Predictions for House of Romanov and Short Essay of my Travel to Tibet in 1904 — 1905**, (St. Petersburg: Printing house "Gerold" 1913), p.120. (in Russian)

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. p.86

At the same time the tolerance of the Russian authorities towards Buddhism of Buryats and Kalmyks, and respectively, their reciprocal positive attitude towards the Russian state, were recorded even abroad. For example, in the Tibetan folklore, the soldier who protected Buddhism and fought against China was called Oros, which means Russian in the Buryat and Kalmyk languages. A Buryat B. Rabdanov, who visited Eastern Tibet at the very beginning of the XX<sup>th</sup> century, wrote that Dalai Lama was friendly to Russia as it was the only foreign state welcoming the Buddhism.<sup>63</sup>

## **2.4 Formation of Buddhism in the Territory of Altai and the Tuva Republic**

One more very specific center of Buddhism is the Republic of Tuva. Firstly, it should be noted that it became a part of Russia only in the XX<sup>th</sup> century, shortly before the Revolution, and Buddhism establishment process happened there irrespective of influence of the imperial power.

In Tuva wide circulation of Buddhism began later than in Dzungaria and Transbaikalia. In spite of the fact that Tuva for a long period was part of the Dzungarian Khanate where Buddhism was the official religion, first stationary monasteries appeared here only in the second half of XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, during the Qing period. It is possibly related to a longer domination of the patriarchal and patrimonial traditions, which favoured the preservation of early forms of religion here.

Spreading and rooting of Buddhism among Tuvinians during the Qing period were favoured first of all by socio-political and socio-economic conditions. Buddhism spreading coincided with the period of formation of the Tuva statehood as a part of the Qing Empire. As the result of this, the process of spreading of the new religion had was more intensive. However, Buddhism in Tuva acquired its ethnic shape only after a whole century.

Buddhism enabled centralization of the power and association of Tuva, by overcoming tribal disunity, as, unlike Shamanism, it processed

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<sup>63</sup> A. Mahakov, S. Baldanov, **From the Story of Buda Rabdanov. National Intellectuals, Clergy and Issues of Social and National Revival of the Peoples of Buryat Republic**, (Ulan-Ude: np, 1995), p.96. (in Russian)

considerable integrational potential. Buddhism was attractive to the simple people, because it gave an opportunity to get education at monastic school that raised the social status of the person.<sup>64</sup>

Tibetan Buddhism was not only official religion, but also generated the theocratic form of government, but in Tuva it could not subdue to itself the institute of power, but only adapted itself to the existing political system, having become its essential part.<sup>65</sup>

Just like in Mongolia, Kalmykiya, Buryatia, in Tuva Buddhism was originally the official religion, which was not totally understood by the main part of the population. Complicated Buddhist philosophy was obscure to simple nomads therefore lamas had to borrow shamanic ceremonies and cults, having transformed them according to spirit of Buddhism. Thus, almost at the same time with distribution of Buddhist ideas, a spontaneous rapprochement of both religions began. This process resulted in reconsideration of some shaman cults and their connection with Buddhism.

The transformation the pre-Buddhist cults and beliefs has led to the establishment of the Tuvinian version of Buddhism, which had two levels - philosophical, studied and interpreted by clergy, and popular, practiced by the bulk of the population.<sup>66</sup> As a result of this close interaction of Buddhism and early beliefs, a new syncretic system appeared which became the main religious system of the Tuva society.

Syncretism of Shamanism and Buddhism was most brightly shown in Tuva. Here it was reflected in marriages between lamas and Shaman women, which were quite widespread. In Tuva, there was even a custom to invite shamans to the Buddhist temple so that they made sacrifices to spirits and gods according to their custom. Many Tuva lamas considered that it is normal to ask shamans for help in a case or any

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<sup>64</sup> M. Mongush, "Traditional and Non-traditional Religions in Tuva: History and Modernity", **The East. Afro-Asian Societies: History and Modernity**, No.1 (2007), p.19-20. (in Russian)

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. p.20.

<sup>66</sup> O. Homushku **Religion in History and Culture of Tuvinians**, (Moscow: Institute of Ethnology and Antropology of RAS, 1998), p.38-39. (in Russian)

disaster. However, there were also opposite facts when shamans addressed to lama-doctors in order to be cured with Tibetan drugs.<sup>67</sup>

Another element of the Tuva religious syncretism was the institute of Burkhan-Kham (literally Buddha-shaman). The priests who were called Burkhan-Kham were trained in Buddhist monasteries, but simultaneously performed functions of a lama and a shaman. Shaman-lamas, depending on circumstances, could carry out either Buddhist or shaman ceremonies. Syncretism was reflected also in their costume, which combined lama and shaman components.<sup>68</sup>

Buddhist-shaman syncretism among Buryats and Tuvinians had an integral character, and in general, the developed religious system did not lose its national roots. Thereof Buddhism in these regions, without losing the supranational spiritual and intellectual potential, at the same time gained a pronounced ethnic form, addressing simple believers as system of national ceremonies.<sup>69</sup>

In spite of the fact that both in Transbaikalia and in Tuva there was a certain syncretism, Buddhism positions in these regions were different, as it was the main religion of Eastern Buryats owing to his earlier distribution. As for which religious system was dominant in the Tuva society – Shamanism or Buddhism – the experts' opinions diverge. As M. Mongush notes, one researchers consider that Tuvinians during the pre-revolutionary period went through a stage when one world-view was already shattered, and the beginnings of another were not acquired yet. Others see there a full fusion of Buddhism and Shamanism. The third party claims that adoption of Buddhism did not prevent Tuvinians from remaining devoted shamanists.<sup>70</sup> The only obvious fact is that Shamanism positions were stronger in Tuva than in Transbaikalia.

Thus, in socio-cultural space of Russia it is possible to observe three types of syncretic relationship of Buddhism and Shamanism:

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<sup>67</sup> M. Mongush, "Traditional and Non-traditional Religions in Tuva: History and Modernity", p.19.

<sup>68</sup> V. Dyakonova, "Lamaism and its Influence on World-view and Religious Cukts of the Tuvinians", **Christianity and Lamaism among Native Population of Siberia**, (Leningrad: Science, 1979), p.158. (in Russian)

<sup>69</sup> L. Rinchino, "About the Role of Buddhism in Ethno-cultural History of Buryats", p.21-22.

<sup>70</sup> M. Mongush, "Traditional and Non-traditional Religions in Tuva", p.18.



- a) The parallel, almost not crossing existence of institutes of Lamas and shamanism in Transbaikalia.
- b) The syncretism close to symbiosis in Tuva.
- c) The syncretism with the subsequent assimilation of Shamanism in Kalmykiya.

Lack of a uniform Buddhist center was institutional specifics of the Tuva Buddhism. All Tuva monasteries submitted to the head of the Mongolian church Bogdo-gegen.

The structure of spiritual hierarchy was borrowed from Mongols without special changes. In the Tuva Buddhism, there were same established posts, monastic degrees and ranks as in the Mongolian Buddhism. At the same time in Tuva, as well as in Kalmykiya, there was no institute of Khubilgan. This, and also the lack of the uniform spiritual center and perfectly regulated church organization, was a weak spot of the Tuva Buddhism.

Buddhism gained a certain distribution also among the Altai people, the main part of which for a long time was a part of the Dzungarian khanate, where Buddhism was the state religion. According to B. Kitinov, specifics of the Altai society, consisting partly of Buddhists and partly of shamanists, left its mark on the local Buddhism, as the services of its priests borrowed a lot of things from Shamanism.<sup>71</sup>

The scale of Buddhism spreading among Altaians is reflected in Russian archival materials where it is noted that local feudalists (zaysans) in their letters to the Russian authorities swore by the name of Buddha to follow the Russian laws to and to be faithful to Russia.

After inclusion of Altaians in socio-cultural space of Russia many Altai lamas were moved to Kalmyks to Volga, and one of them, a lama Delek<sup>72</sup>, even headed Kalmyk *Saṅgha*.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> B. Kitinov, **Sacred Tibet and the militant steppe**, p.142.

<sup>72</sup> A. Kurapov, “Lama Delek – “Khubilgan” Zaya-Pandita and Political Processes in Kalmykiya Khanate in 1750-s”, in **Buddhist Clergy and Culture of Kalmyk people. International Scientific Conference Documents**, (Elista: Jangar, 2004), p.17-22. (in Russian)

<sup>73</sup> B. Kitinov, “About the Role of Altai Lamas in the History of Buddhism among the Kalmyks in 1750-s”, in **Altai and Central Asia: Cultural and Historic**

The resettlement to Volga, and also the confessional policy of imperial administration have resulted in gradual weakening of Buddhism position in Altai, but it did not disappear completely, functioning mainly at the popular level. Legends and myths connected with Buddhism continued to circulate among Altaians. The remaining memoirs of old men show that some Buddhist monks and simple nonprofessionals studied Buddhism in Tibet and Mongolia. Many Altaians were trained in monasteries of the neighboring Mongolia. Among Altaians, there was even a specific group of experts on Buddhist sutras (Sudur) which people called sudurchy.<sup>74</sup>

At the beginning of the 20th century a new religion - Burkhanism arose in Altai as a joint of the Mongolian Buddhism and ancient pagan beliefs of the Altai people. The pantheon of Burkhanism had no finished integrity, and its doctrine was notable for eclecticism. However, it is obvious that Buddhism influence on Burkhanism was rather significant. The national figures standing at the origins of Burkhanism maintained a close connection with the Mongolian lamas and it naturally found reflection in orientation and cult and ceremonial aspects of this movement. Mongolian Buddhism influence found its reflection in prohibition of bloody sacrifices, dissociation from shamans, wide use of Buddhist attributes, participation of Buddhist lamas in Burkhanist ceremonials, adoption of many Buddhist terms by Burkhanists, and so on.<sup>75</sup>

The emergence of Burkhanism can be explained by the aspiration of elite of the Altai nationality to keep the people and culture from assimilation. Emergence and distribution of Burkhanism was synchronized with mass resettlement to Altai of peasants who took agricultural lands of locals. Besides, after the beginning of the Russian-Japanese war the state intensified its russification policy in the region<sup>76</sup>. Owing to these circumstances the Burkhanism was not only the new

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**Heritage**, (Gorno-Altaysk: Printing house "Gorno-Altaysk", 1999), p.136-143. (in Russian)

<sup>74</sup> V. Kosmin, "Mongolian Buddhism Impact on Forming and Development of Burkhanism in Altai", **Ethnographic Digest**, No.4 (2005), p.55. (in Russian)

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. p.61-62.

<sup>76</sup> S. Filatov, "Altai Burkhanism", **Religion and Society: Essays on Religious Life of Modern Russia**, (Moscow: Summer garden, 2002), p.235. (in Russian)

religious movement seeking for overcoming Shamanism, but also at the same time an ideology of the national liberation movement.

Speaking about Burkhanism, and in view of everything told above, it is necessary to define whether Burkhanism was a special form of Buddhism. According to V. Kosmin, despite numerous Buddhist elements in Burkhanism, it is impossible to equate it to Buddhism, as the Burkhanism was not Buddhism in full. He notes that Burkhanism represented the complex transitional phenomenon. Not just syncretic bridge, but a dynamic transition from Shamanism to Buddhism.<sup>77</sup>

## **2.5 Buddhism in Russia in the late XIX<sup>th</sup> First Half of the XX<sup>th</sup> Centuries.**

About 150 years ago, the world community began to undergo global transformation. Russia was an active participant of these universal processes and took a very heavy blow. In 20th century alone the state twice went through a collapse and changed the political system: in 1905-1917 and in 1989-1993.

In 1905 the first revolution occurred, the monarchy was overthrown. Then in 1917, the second revolution brought communists to power, and the Soviet State was proclaimed. Thus began a long and very hard formation of the new state - the Soviet Union. This formation acquired the form of civil war and came to the end just in the early twenties. Civil war spread not only in Russia, but also practically in all neighboring states.

However, the reasons of these events arose in XIX<sup>th</sup> century and they were connected with a number of global political and social changes. All over the world, intensive centripetal processes began. By the present moment, they took a format of globalization.

At the beginning of these processes, the relative tolerance to national, cultural and religious autonomy of peripheral areas gave way to rather intense pressure from the centers of regional and colonial powers. Quite often over time, this pressure grew into repressions and even genocide. In other cases, it only provoked an active resistance and

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<sup>77</sup> V. Kosmin, "Mongolian Buddhism Impact on Forming and Development of Burkhanism in Altai", p.63.

strengthening of positions and even gaining of independence of regional ethnic groups, their cultures and religions.

Interaction of Buddhism with Christianity in the territory of Russia is one of the most striking examples of such unsuccessful attempt of pressure.

### **2.5.1 Buddhism and Orthodox Christianity in the End of XIX<sup>th</sup> the First Half of XX<sup>th</sup> Centuries.**

The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), representing the state religion, had a great influence, which it sought to extend to all regions of the country. Existence of other religions not only irritated Orthodox Christians, but also bore potential danger of integrity of the Russian state.

Nevertheless, up to the middle of XIX<sup>th</sup> century the imperial power and Orthodox Church showed a maximum of patience and care in Christianization of the Buddhist people, because of a socio-political situation in the Far East and in Central Asia.<sup>78</sup> Forced Christianization could cause resistance of indigenous people and by that complicate the development of these territories. Therefore, the missionaries sought to attract the population with gifts and privileges, for example, tax immunity for several years.

The new stage of spreading and introduction of Christianity among Kalmyks and Buryats began in the second half of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century when in Russia the special system of Christianization known in scientific literature as *Ilyinsky's system* arose and began to grow. During this period training of missionaries and priests from among Buryats and Kalmyks was begun, schools for their baptized children were opened, translation and publishing of spiritual literature in local languages was organized, new churches and missionary camps were under construction.<sup>79</sup>

However, the baptism had a rather formal character. In Buryat and Kalmyk environment, process of christianization was initially perceived superficially. Buryats and Kalmyks, accepting Orthodoxy, did not apply special efforts to penetrate deeply into the essence of the new doctrine,

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<sup>78</sup> G. Manzanov, **Religious Traditions in Value Orientation of Buryats Youth**, p.37.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

and in case of need addressed not to the orthodox priest, but to lamas. The christening as a rule served as a mechanism for achieving a higher social status or as a way of improvement of one's financial condition.

The formal nature of adoption of Christianity by many Buryats and Kalmyks became completely clear after declaration of the imperial Manifesto of the October 17 1905, which provided religious freedom to the population of Russia. At this time, baptized Buryats and Kalmyks massively turned to Buddhism. Only among Kalmyks 3468 persons turned from Orthodoxy into the Buddhism from 1905 till 1909. The number of the Kalmyk Buddhist clergy also grew significantly - from 954 up to 1374 people.<sup>80</sup>

Despite Christianization, at the everyday life the well-known Eurasian tolerance revealed between representatives of Buddhism and Christianity, which was reflected in coexistence of temples of both, good personal relations on the level of clergy and laypeople of different religions.

Kalmyks and Buryats, especially baptized ones, often had in their houses Buddhist and orthodox cult objects side by side, and the Buddhist belief intricately connected to Christian elements. And vice versa, the Russian population treated the holy sites of Buddhists rather respectfully. The Tibetan medicine had great popularity among the Russians living in Transbaikalia.

Tolerance between Orthodox Christians and Buddhists was shown also in the fact that many Kalmyks and Buryats, being Buddhists, quite often visited Orthodox churches or chapels, at the same time remaining loyal to the traditional belief.

Besides, the Mongolian people had experience of peaceful co-existence of Buddhism with Christianity of Nestorian doctrine, which left the mark in their culture and mentality.

The main reasons of small efficiency of Christian mission among the Buryats and Kalmyks were the same that caused the failures of the orthodox missionaries acting among other peoples entering socio-cultural space of Russia. However when comparing the results of Christianization of Kalmyks and Buryats with similar activity of orthodox missions in other regions of the country, it is possible to find certain specific features.

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<sup>80</sup> Guriy (Stepanov), "Lamaism Effort to Rising of its Morals", **Missionary Congress in Kazan**, (Kazan: central printing house, 1910), p.116-117. (in Russian)

For example, the study of the experience of Christianization of the peoples of the Volga and Kama region reveals that the formal coverage a baptism was much wider there, than among Kalmyks and Eastern Buryats. The weak side of Christianization in that region consisted in fact that Maris, Udmurts, Chuvashs and other peoples of the Volga region under cover of Christianity continued to profess traditional cults, though influenced by Christianity. As a result, Orthodoxy of these peoples was in effect a syncretic fusion with the local beliefs, which had pagan and tribal character.<sup>81</sup>

Absolutely contrary situation was in Kalmykiya and Transbaikalia. The orthodox mission among Kalmyks and the Buryats was facing not tribal beliefs, but a well-organized Saṅgha, whose ideology met the requirements of already developed feudal relations.

G. Dorjiyeva notes that here, Buddhism was a serious rival of Orthodoxy at least because of its centuries-old experience of contact with other religious systems and perfectly fulfilled techniques of relationship with them, depending on whether they were pagan cults of primitive and early class society or the developed world-class religious systems like Christianity.<sup>82</sup>

The nomadic lifestyle of the majority of the population, not disposing to perception of specific dogmas, cult and ceremonial practice of orthodox Christianity was the objective factor complicating spreading of Orthodoxy among Kalmyks.<sup>83</sup> This circumstance partly explains the difficulties of Christianization of the Buryat people.

Besides, Buddhists of Transbaikalia had an opportunity to reduce activity of ROC by means of close and almost continuous contacts with Tibet and Mongolia.<sup>84</sup> In Kalmykiya Christianization was restrained for a

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<sup>81</sup> G. Dorjiyeva, **Buddhism and Christianity in Kalmykiya. Experience in analyzing the religious policy of the government of the Russian Empire (mid-XVII<sup>th</sup> - early XX<sup>th</sup> centuries)**, (Elista: Djangar, 1995), p.66-67. (in Russian)

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> K. Orlova, "The Problem of Kalmyk Christianization in the Context of Russia's Home and Foreign Policy (mid XVII<sup>th</sup> — early XX<sup>th</sup> cent.)", **Ph.D. Dissertation**, (Department of Religious Studies: Russian Academy of State Service, 2006, p.46. (in Russian)

<sup>84</sup> B. Kitinov, **Buddhism in Identification Processes Among Russian Buddhists**, p.176.

long time by the existence of Kalmyks own statehood which guarded the interests of the Buddhist church.

However, first of all Christianization of Kalmyks and Buryats was blocked by superposition of ethnic and religious identities. In spite of the fact that religious identity is wider than the ethnic one, their matching was rather commonplace in that historical period.

The fact that Kalmyks and Buryats feared that the replacement of their traditional religious identity by a new one would lead to the loss of ethnic identity in many respects promoted the formation of Buddhist renovation movement.

### **2.5.2 Renovation Movement in Russian Buddhism.**

The Reformist (Renovation) Movement of laymen and clergy which arose at a boundary of XIX<sup>th</sup> - XX<sup>th</sup> became an important milestone in the history of Russian Buddhism. The Reformist Movement was aiming at modernization of the Buddhism, its church organization, some aspects of discipline and ceremonialism according to the changing conditions.

At the same time reformers called for return to initial purity of Buddhist religion. Seeking for clarification of Buddhism from both shaman and pre-shaman strata and for restoration of the principles of the classical Buddhism, Buddhist reformation at the same time revived the initial Buddhist universalism, a tendency for overcoming of ethnic isolation.

Speaking about the renovation movement in Buddhism, it should be noted that it was not only Russian phenomenon. In the same period, similar movements proceeded in other Buddhist regions. The religious renovation took place in Buddhism of China, Mongolia, the countries Southern and Southeast Asia.

The most close to the renovation movement in Buryatia and Kalmykiya was Mongolian renovation, which arose in the environment of educated lamas in the first half of the 19th century. Representatives of the Mongolian renovation movement supported founding not only religious, but also secular schools in which teaching would be conducted in Mongolian, demanded to translate the prayers and religious and philosophical treatise from Tibetan into their native language.

The second wave of renovation arose in Mongolia at the end of the 19th century. At that period of Mongolian history the most educated and progressive part of its population came from the lamas environment and did not think of any innovations and reforms in the country beyond the boundaries of traditional religious ideology. Therefore their appeal to national revival and modernization was addressed mainly to clergy.

The Mongolian reformers sought to clear lamas of the sins of money-making and depravity. According to the plan of the new movement ideologists, renewed and cleared of superstitions and moral filth Saṅgha, had to become the force, able to protect the Mongolian people from full physical and spiritual degradation under foreign oppression.<sup>85</sup>

Without going into details of this difficult period in the history of Mongolian Buddhism, it is necessary to emphasize that its renovation was a specific manifestation of a global universal tendency to modernization of religious philosophy and practice, depending on what the new social realities required from religion.<sup>86</sup>

In the territory of Transbaikalia the Buddhist Reformist Movement developed in a subsoil of the Buryat Education which was in its turn connected with the process of national consciousness formation of the Buryat people. The reformatory and educational movement formation was influenced by both further spreading of Buddhism and strengthening of Russian culture influence. Owing to this some representatives of the Buryat national intellectuals began to seek to save the foundations of Buddhist church by means of modernization.

The Reformist Movement was closely connected to activity of a number of Buryat thinkers who sought for progressive arrangement of society. Agvan Dorjiev, who was the representative of Dalai Lama XIII in Russia, was one of the highest lamas belonging to ideologists of renovation at that time. He possessed the features of a traditional Buddhist philosopher and of a Russian intellectual who was interested in achievements of modern world science, and understood the vital need of church reform.

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<sup>85</sup> L. Abaeva, N. Zhukovskaia, "Tradition and Modernization in Buddhism History", in **World Religions. Yearbook**, (Moscow: Eastern literature, 1983), p.134. (in Russian)

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. p.133.



As the result of work of many lamas, Buddhism during this period became available and clear to the people. That was in their works where for the first time the ideas of religion clarification, which had didactic character, were expressed.

The Buryat lamas created the national literature which contained the ideas of cultural education of the people, impartation to them high moral ideals of Buddhism. Their works reflected social and political views of the Buryat intellectuals from among Buddhist clergy. Representatives of Buddhist clergy studied history of their people, propagandized secular and religious knowledge, acquainted the Buryats with the Indian, Tibetan and Mongolian cultures, spread literacy among the population and also explained and adapted Buddhist doctrines for the Buryat reality.<sup>87</sup>

The Buryat renovation became an ideological platform for a group of progressive intellectuals and the educated clergy who, by means of reforms, tried to revive the spirit of the nation, to exempt it from superstitions and paganism which the initial Buddhism had accumulated. Leaders of the renovation movement pursued the aim to update traditional religiousness, to adapt Buddhism for new conditions, to establish a common ground of Buddhism and modern European science, transferring it from a religion to the phenomenon of national and world culture, to some kind of refuge for the national spirit.<sup>88</sup>

Religion renovation substantially applied to the maintenance of Buddhist doctrine and cult. The Buryat Buddhism had to be gradually exempted from some external attributes of traditional religion: magnificent decoration of the temples, difficult and obscure to the ordinary believer ceremonies, assimilated pre-Buddhist cults. The renovators also urged to return to the original philosophical Buddhism with the purpose to get rid of the available defects and flaws. They tried to make the renewed Buddhism the ideology for the Buryat people, claiming that the educated century needs pure fundamentals of ethical and philosophical doctrine of Buddha Shakyamuni. The renewed Buddhism, in their opinion, had to be separated from ceremonialism, superstitions,

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid. p.163-164.

<sup>88</sup> N. Zhukovskaya, "Buddhism in the history of the Mongols and Buryats: political and cultural aspects" p.15.

sorcery, magic and fetishism - all that came to Buddhism from Shamanism and other religions.<sup>89</sup>

Buddhism is philosophical doctrine which ideal is the cognition by the person of relativity of all life,<sup>90</sup> as wrote the famous Buryat educator and the Renovation figure Bazar Baradin. Philosophization of Buddhism led to the fact that on its basis a new ideology appeared, uniting the Buryat intellectuals and a part of clergy in one national liberation movement.<sup>91</sup>

Not only the dogma and cult, but also Saṅgha had to undergo reforming. Renovators planned the reform of Buddhist church management on bases of conciliarism, collective nature, electiveness and management democratization. They suggested to modernize religious education system, methods of the religious sermon, to strengthen authority of clergy by means of strengthening of moral principles of monastic community. Renovation ideologists wrote and said that traditionally educated lamas could not be mentors of the people in new conditions. For this they would lack the general culture and modern knowledge. Modern lamas, as renovators emphasized, had to study the European culture and science.<sup>92</sup>

Renovation was closely connected with the Educational movement. Combination of the educational ideas with Buddhist reformation affected wide layers of Buryat public consciousness, having become an important stage in formation of new ideological movements in Transbaikalia. The educators and religious reformers focused on problems of overcoming feudal backwardness, eradication of harmful remnants, elimination of national and religious discrimination.

During this period the Buryat Education representatives logically came to conclusion that Buddhism must be used in national revival. The

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<sup>89</sup> K. Gerasimova, "Concerning Buryat «Bourgeois Intellectuals» of Early XX<sup>th</sup> cent". **National Intellectuals, Clergy and Problems of Social, National Revival of the Peoples of Buryat Republic**, Ulan-Ude: np, 1994, p 25. (in Russian)

<sup>90</sup> A. Ayusheyeva, "Religious Reformation as a Factor of Forming of National-Liberating Movement Ideology", **Buryat Buddhism: History and Ideology**, (Ulan-Ude: np, 1997), p.55. (in Russian)

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. p.56.

<sup>92</sup> K. Gerasimova, "Concerning Buryat «Bourgeois Intellectuals» of Early XX<sup>th</sup> cent", p.25.

reason of the choice of Buddhism as national ideology consisted not in its specific features but in those historical conditions which determined the enormous influence of Buddhism on life of the Buryat population.

During this period Buddhism was one of the main components of Buryats socio-cultural life and an essential factor of their integration. It got into all spheres of public life of the Buryat people and had huge impact on his worldview, national psychology and culture. Buddhism in Transbaikalia promoted preservation, strengthening and further development of the Buryat ethnos, and also opposed to Russification of the Buryats.<sup>93</sup>

In these conditions, the exemption of Buryat public consciousness from influence of Buddhism was out of the question. At that time Buddhism was the only form of ideology which language was clear and available to the bulk of the Buryat people. Renunciation of Buddhist culture by the figures of the Buryat Education would lead to a rupture with the people, and would doom the national intellectuals to full isolation. The Buryat intellectuals could not take such step in the situation of the national movement rise in days of the first Russian revolution, as it remembered the dramatic destiny of such famous Buryat figures as D. Banzarov and P. Badmaev who, having got the European education, could not find a common language with their compatriots.<sup>94</sup>

Another reason of Educators' appeal to Buddhism was an outlined tendency to acculturation of the Buryat. The Russification and Christianization policy, implied by the imperial government in Transbaikalia, led to the fact that the religious question got an extremely important social significance here, having gone far beyond purely religious framework. In consciousness of the Buryat population of Transbaikalia, Buddhism was not only a religion or a cultural tradition, but also one of manifestations of their national community, a spiritual stronghold in fight against policy of assimilation and Russification.

In that circumstances the figures of the Buryat revival considered Buddhism as a fundamental factor of consolidation. They saw the spreading of Buddhist religion among western Buryats as their only

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<sup>93</sup> D. Frolova, "Renovation in Buryatia", in **Buddhism in Buryatia: Origins, History and Ideology**, Ulan-Ude: np, 2002, p.163. (in Russian)

<sup>94</sup> Yu. Shirapov, **Buddhist Factor in the Worldview of Buryat Populist Intellectuals**, p.63-64.

salvage from assimilation. Therefore many Buryat educators welcomed the spontaneous movement of Baikal Buryats towards the Buddhism, considering that it will play an important role in familiarizing of the last with the all-Buryat culture and will promote ethnos consolidation.<sup>95</sup>

The movement for the Buryat Buddhism renovation, thus, was closely connected also to the national movement in Transbaikalia. As it was already noted, it was the response to the amplified missionary activity of Russian Orthodox Church in Transbaikalia, which involuntarily favoured the activation of the local Buddhism. The similar phenomenon was observed also in other Buddhist regions of the world. So, for example, Russian buddhologist I. Minayev, being in the second half of the 20th century on Ceylon, wrote:

Strengthening of the European element on the island and attempts of missionaries to extend Christianity caused absolutely original phenomenon: both these reasons stirred up several monks and Buddhist society, protecting itself from attacks of missionaries, having heard that in Europe their literature is studied, they started reading their books, collecting them, ordering new manuscripts from Burma and Siam, and began to study the sacred scripture.<sup>96</sup>

In fact, we observe here a manifestation of the law according to which any action gives rise to counteraction. This law of physics is quite applicable to the social phenomena. The challenge which the Western Empires threw to their colonies of the East gave a powerful impulse for Buddhist revival. In precisely the same way, the answer of the Russian Buddhist culture, paradoxical as it is, was directly provoked and prepared by imperial and orthodox influence.

The Buryat renovation at the same time was also a part of the social and political movement for radical reforms of all life of people. However ideas of a reorganization of public lives and religious renovation found not only supporters, but also opponents in Transbaikalia. Therefore in the course of discussion of reforms the nobility and clergy split on conservatives (traditionalists) and reformers (renovators).

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p.64.

<sup>96</sup> V. Kornev, **Buddhism and Society in Southern and South-Eastern Asia**, (Moscow: Science, 1987), p.169. (in Russian)

Traditionalists supported the return to steppe councils, preservation of a patriarchal lifestyle and the existing religious forms without any changes. Supporters of Renovation, on the contrary, welcomed the forthcoming changes in public life, and in particular, introduction of national self-government. Thus, Buddhism took an active part in social and political life of Buryatia of that time and was more and more involved in the laymen life. Religion began to be perceived as the integral component of political culture and political ideology, and religious interests began to act as political interests.

In Kalmykiya, as well as in Transbaikalia, the origin of the renovation movement was also connected with the movement for national revival and education. A part of Kalmyk national elite established linkage between the ideas of national revival with Buddhist religion, saw in it a tool of education and culture development.

So in the 1890s the famous pilgrim of Baaza-bakshi Menkedzhuyev opened the first higher philosophical school (Chorya) in Kalmykiya. There were movements, aiming to return to the pure Buddhism. Return to the original Buddhism was comprehended and as expansion of religion positions, construction of new temples and assimilation of doctrines by believers. So, for example, at a congress of July 22, 1917 the decision to increase quantity of khurul to 111, clergy - to 2730 people was made.

Naymin Badmayev was one of the brightest representatives of the Kalmyk intellectuals supporting revival of culture and religion. In his numerous works he justified Buddhism role and value for Kalmyks, connecting with it cultural development and education of the people.

Following his appeals, some priests participated at the beginning of the 20th century in the movement for creation the village schools, donating considerable sums of money. At the same time educational activity of Badmayev himself was not limited by church interests. He translated into the Kalmyk language of the works of Russian classics, and into Russian — monuments of the Kalmyk folklore, acted as the author of tutorials for the Kalmyk schools.

Possibly, the renovation movement of the Kalmyk clergy first arose in Don, and was connected with the activity of the Don Kalmyks lama Menke Bormanzhinov. Lama Bormanzhinov raised moral requirements to clergy, introduced compulsory higher Buddhist education for mentor-lamas, sought to increase quality of the sermon, and supported

service in the native language, available to laymen. He collected from all khuruls capable and young gelongs and getsuls and taught them in his spiritual academy. Contemporaries noted that these priests made the most talented Buddhist preachers whose influence on the people yielded very positive results.<sup>97</sup>

The lamas who got an education in Tibet became the main ideologists of the renovation movement in Kalmykiya. So, one of leaders of the renovation movement in Kalmykiya was Badma Bovayev. There is a number of reports about his lecture courses and treatises on the Buddhism, but the poem *Chikna Khudzhir* (Delight of the hearing) is only one work of B. Bovayev remained until our days.<sup>98</sup> In this work Badmayev urged clergy to reconsider their behavior and to return to initial “purity” of Buddhist doctrine. He also sharply criticized those Kalmyk priests who broke monastic discipline and did not strive for knowledge.

It should be noted that the remote geographical position of Kalmykiya from Tibet, Mongolia and even Transbaikalia could not but affect the situation of local Buddhist church. For centuries of isolation from the Buddhist centers the Buddhist clergy there departed from initial precepts of the monastic charter.

One of key derogation from a canon was acquiring by Kalmyk monks of a considerable private property. According to Vinaya and the articles of Mongol-Oyrat laws of 1640, the monk should not have anything except things of personal use, and all movable and immovable property belonged to Saṅgha. In reality many clergymen owned a large number of cattle, houses and other property. Burdened with property they thought little of studying Buddhist philosophy and practice of meditation, caring mainly for their property and numerous relatives. This situation led to various violations by clergy of the monastic life rules. B. Bovayev opposed to all this and urged Kalmyks to return to the initial doctrine of Buddha, to turn khuruls into the real educational and cultural centers.

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<sup>97</sup> S. Balykov, “Lama Menke Bormanzhinov”, in **Bogshrahinskii Aymak and Bogshrahintcy: brief historical essays**, (Elista: Jangar, 2002), p.35. (in Russian)

<sup>98</sup> B. Bovayev, “Delight of the Hearing”, **Poetry of the USSR peoples of XIX<sup>th</sup> cent. (World Literature Collection)**, Vol 102, (Moscow: np, 1977), p.579-588. (in Russian)

Agvan Dorjiev did much for updating of Buddhism in Russia. He was born in Buryatia, but was sent for training to Tibet. After the successful end of training in the Baldan Braybun monastery, Dorjiev was appointed to a position of the teacher of Dalai Lama XIII. Later under the influence of his reports Dalai Lama and Panchen-Lama changed their position in relation to Russia, and afterwards it grew into the idea of closer relations between Tibet and Russia. Since 1888, the military operations of England and its colonial plans including the seizure of Tibet convince Dalai Lama and a part of the high-ranking Tibetans in the need of closer contacts with Russia. In 1898. Dalai Lama sends Dorjiev to Russia in order to clarify its attitude towards Tibet and possibility of the real help from it. At that moment, Agvan Dorjiev acted as an official political representative of the Tibet-Mongol mission in Russia. He carried out diplomatic negotiations between Tibet and Russia.

Dorjiev, taking an active part in the life of the Kalmyk clergy, considerably contributed in the emergence of the renovation movement in Kalmykiya. Being the main ideologist of the renovation movement in Buryatia, Dorjiev also often visited Kalmykiya. Knowing the facts of religious indifferentism, anti-church moods, he was confident that revival of the Kalmyk people can and has to happen on the soil of Buddhism - a component of its national culture. Carrying out his plan, Dorjiev founded in Kalmykiya two higher confessional schools chorya, which had to become the training centers for educated lamas knowing Buddhist philosophy, world and national culture, Tibetan language and history.<sup>99</sup>

But the main Dorjiev's achievement was the construction of the first Buddhist temple in the capital of Russia, which completed in 1915.

### **2.5.3 Buddhism During the Formation of the Soviet Regime**

Transformation of Buryat and Kalmyk Buddhist clergy didn't stop after establishment of the Soviet government in Russia. After the October revolution of 1917 in Russia, modernization of Buddhism took place synchronously with the collapse of a socio-political and economic order of the state. The uncontrolled, spontaneous development of Buddhism, characteristic for the previous period, the beginning of the 20th century,

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<sup>99</sup> G. Dorjiyeva, **Buddhist Church in Kalmykiya in the end of XIX<sup>th</sup> – first half of XX<sup>th</sup> cent**, (Moscow: Publishing Center of the Institute of Russian History RAS, 2001), p.18. (in Russian)

could not continue too long. Representatives of the reformatory movement in Buddhism detected the signs of the approaching even more tight control over religion and tried to adapt Saṅgha for new political realities.<sup>100</sup>

The Renovation movement, having arisen at the turn of the century, when the capitalist relations began in Buryatia and Kalmykiya, was finally formed as a reformatory movement in the conditions of the Soviet system with its atheistic ideology. Thus, the specifics of Buddhism reforming process in Russia were caused by the fact that it had to develop in an environment, other than the one it generated.

The ideology of a new stage of reforms was closely related to political practice. Buddhist reformers were forced to adapt to alien conditions and to declare unity with materialism, Marxism and communism. This adaptation was in many respects a forced attempt to find a special, median way between Buddhism and Marxism, the aspiration to keep Buddhism positions in new circumstances.<sup>101</sup>

At the same time it should be noted that the interests of the Soviet Russia in foreign policy at first coincided to some extent with the expectations of some Buddhist reformers who secretly sought revival of the all-Mongolian unity, even if under the rule of Russia.

Bolsheviks (the Russian communists) in their turn dreamed to extend the socialist revolution to Central Asia. Not by chance in the 1920-s the Soviet government organized several secret expeditions to Tibet. Besides it is known that in the first years after the revolution of 1917 the Buryat Buddhists built datsans more quickly than ever earlier.<sup>102</sup>

The uniform Russian legislation, regulating relationship of religion and the state (the decree of 1918), was not adapted at once, and this allowed religious reformers of Buryatia and Kalmykiya to see, by the example of other religions (first of all, Orthodoxy), the consequences of religious policy of the new government.

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<sup>100</sup> E. Safronova, **Buddhism in Russia**, (Moscow: Publishing house of RAS, 1998) p.69. (in Russian)

<sup>101</sup> K. Gerasimova, **Renovation Movement of Buryat Lamaist Clergy**, (Ulan-Ude: Buryat book publishing house, 1964), p.10. (in Russian)

<sup>102</sup> D. Tsybikdorjiev, "Buddhism and the National Movements Forming in Buryatia", p.55-56. (in Russian)



Buddhist reformers made proper conclusions and tried to make use of the experience of Russian Orthodox Church which also underwent some reforms. They declared their loyalty to the Soviet government and readiness for cardinal reforms of Buddhist church.<sup>103</sup>

Buddhism in Russia had to develop and adapt to new conditions in three directions. Firstly, it was necessary to undertake administrative reform which included introduction of collective leadership and selectivity principles, the admission of laymen to management of temples and strict reporting.

Secondly, clergy everyday life radically changed. According to the reformed charters lamas had to refuse luxury in life, rich furniture, expensive clothes, and were obliged to organize life in monasteries on equalization bases. Thus, the second direction of activity consisted in leveling in the property and legal status all the representatives of monastic community, regardless of their titles, and to reduce the costs of Khuruls for simple believers.

Finally, the third direction of reforming consisted in ideological adaptation, which meant reconsideration in a spirit of modernization of traditional Buddhist statements, and also change of clergy training system. The Buddhist schools syllabus now included general education subjects in the native language.<sup>104</sup>

In general, the new program of reforms was based on the principles which were set by Renovators before revolution. However there were also some innovations. So, for example, the new political situation made important such points as loyalty to the new state and recognition of the Soviet power. Making use of Orthodoxy experience, Buddhist reformers tried to unite the ideas of Buddhism and communism. Reformers declared consistency of communistic and Buddhist ideals, creating a peculiar doctrine of Buddhist socialism on the Russian soil.

The reformers idea of proximity of Buddhism and communism was fully expressed in Dorjiev's report at the All-Union congress of Buddhists in 1927, where he noted:

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<sup>103</sup> E. Safronova, **Buddhism in Russia**, p.69.

<sup>104</sup> G. Dorjiyeva, **Buddhist Church in Kalmykiya in the End of XIX<sup>th</sup> – First Half XX<sup>th</sup> century**, p.43.

The Western European culture, though highly developed, did not give a sufficient cognition of the causality law, did not fight against low instincts of the person. The elements of self-love and possessiveness – “I” and “mine” - developed extremely. Everyone cares for his own benefit, building it on misfortunes of others, and all achievements of culture are used as tools of exploitation and enslavement of one person or one people by another and so on. As a result, capitalism and imperialism emerged as sources of misfortune of all mankind.

The great thinker of Western Europe Karl Marx discovered these contradictions and sources of the evil of mankind in, and our teacher Lenin began to implement this great doctrine and showed a way to construction of a new life, based on brotherhood and justice, destruction of property - this source of all low instincts of the person. We, Buddhists, believe in celebration of the truth and justice, in victory of knowledge and spiritual perfection over darkness and ignorance, in destruction of the evil and sources of misfortunes of modern mankind - capitalism and imperialism.<sup>105</sup>

Thus, traditional flexibility and pragmatism of Buddhism allowed it to declare its unity with Marxism. The reason of loyalty to the Soviet government and the reformers' idea of consistency of Marxism with Buddhist ideas were caused by their urge to avoid repressions and persecutions of Buddhists.

Perhaps, these ideas were only a tactical trick, which enabled to adapt temporarily and to survive unfavorable times for Buddhism. At the same time it is necessary to consider the fact that in that period Lenin's authority in the East was really high.

Jawaharlal Nehru in his famous book *Discovery of India* noted that millions of people look at him as at the savior and the greatest person of the era.<sup>106</sup> Respect for Lenin and the ideas of socialism can be found also in works of other famous thinkers of the East.

Besides, both ideologies had some common features. The early Buddhism really included pronounced egalitarian and democratic

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<sup>105</sup> A. Dorzhiev, “The report by Hambo A. Dorzhiev on the first; All-Union Buddhist Synod in Moscow on January 20-29, 1927”, in A. Baskhaev, **The Buddhist Church of Kalmykia: 1900-1943**, (Elista: “Djangar”, 2007).

<sup>106</sup> N. Jawaharlal, **Discovery of India**, (Moscow: Foreign Literature Publishing House, 1955), p.308.

tendencies, which in some degree can be identified with the communistic idea of general equality.

At the same time, of course, it is necessary to consider the fact that Buddhist democratism and egalitarianism in many respects had declarative character as it didn't provide any concrete measures for a revolutionary reorganization of non-democratic social institutes and norms. Buddhists did not see social problems as main issues of their doctrine because Buddhism arose as a way of religious salvation of the person. Besides, the Marxist ideas of class fight, social revolution and proletariat dictatorship contradict the Buddhist doctrine which allows exclusively evolutionary solution of all social contradictions and considers that all social problems have to be solved only in the nonviolent way.<sup>107</sup>

Concerning ideological justification of reforms, ideologists, led by A. Dorjiev, noted that the original Buddhism is the philosophy of the ancient Indian Buddhism, and all latest developments and branchings should not be taken into account, because only the Buddhism fundamentals, only those moments, common with present problems, are necessary for the future.<sup>108</sup> Thus, in reforms of the Russian Buddhism it is possible to find not only the traits of modernism, but also of fundamentalism.

In general fight of fundamentalism and modernism is often reflected in paradoxical situations. So, for example, the aspiration to study and comprehend historical experience of tradition quite often entails the break-through in new cultural space as, coming back to traditions, we involuntarily introduce in them modern elements. On the contrary, the aspiration to reformation often turns in revival of archaic spiritual standards and traditions. Thus, as a rule, the mixture of tradition and innovation in both cases is inevitable.

In the territory of Buryatia reforms encountered an active resistance of a conservative part of clergy which was against nationalization of datsans property. Conservatives opposed also any

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<sup>107</sup> L. Abaeva, N. Zhukovskaia, "Tradition and Modernization in Buddhism History", p.136.

<sup>108</sup> A. Damdinov, "Agvan Dorjiev in Renovation Movement of Buryat Buddhist Clergy", in **Buryat Buddhism: History and Ideology**, (Ulan-Ude: Buryat Science Center, 1997), p.82. (in Russian)

serious reforms of the ethnic form of Buddhism, defending the preservation of Buddhism as it was formed during the era of old political, social and economic and cultural institutes.

Buddhist conservatives believed that the reform of Buddhism, even if under a banner of return to sources, would cause a serious damage to it. Conservative lamas proved that reforms are not applicable in Buryatia, that they contradict the psychology of Buryats and their ancient lifestyle. They were right to some extent as reformers did not find broad support among Buryat people, and most of ordinary believers, owing to traditional psychology, continued to adhere to the old religious principles.<sup>109</sup>

The Buryat traditionalists, opposing church and social reforms, knew worse the new political situation. As a result, reformers achieved the majority in many datsan councils. Reformers succeeded to carry out a quick communities registration and to submit all necessary documents to appropriate authorities. By the right of the first, their communities assumed a significant amount of datsans, it caused an outburst of indignation among the conservatives. The property division led to active resistance of conservatives and even to disobedience to the authorities. Many traditionalist lamas of frontier datsans demonstratively went to Mongolia and China.<sup>110</sup>

In this fight, the Soviet government supported the reformers who showed loyalty to the power. Traditionalists, in their majority, were reactionary and, naturally, could not find support from the state. In general the authorities were interested in intra-church split, hoping that strict methods of fight both parties would compromise themselves in the eyes of the Buryat people, which will gradually be disappointed in Buddhism.<sup>111</sup>

The base of intra-church fight and split of clergy upon hostile groups consisted not only of economic, but also of political motives. The attitude to the Soviet power, to the Soviet national autonomy was one of the main questions of the public life of the Buryat Buddhists.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid. p.86.

<sup>110</sup> E. Safronova. **Buddhism in Russia**. p.74.

<sup>111</sup> A. Damdinov, "Agvan Dorjiev in Renovation Movement of Buryat Buddhist Clergy", p.87.

After the final establishment of the Soviet government this political struggle was hidden under the cover of a religious conflict. Traditionalists and Renovators argued publicly only on church and cult issues, however, in reality, the conflict concerned first of all the accepting or not accepting the Soviet power.

Nevertheless, political motives did not always define the conflicts between conservatives and reformers. The religious aspect of their disagreement consisted in different ways in which both parties tried to preserve Buddhism in new situation, adverse for religion.<sup>112</sup>

Besides conservatives and reformers the theocratic Balagatskoe movement, organized by Lubsan-Sandan Tsydenov, which also had reformatory character, was widespread in these years in Buryatia. Professor A. Pozdneyev, who studied Tsydenov's ideas, considered him the ideologist of the modern Buddhism who supported the mystical direction of reforms.

The hand-written heritage of Tsydenov consists of religious works and documents of the Balagatskoe movement. A manuscript of *Lubsan-Sandan's Manifesto*, written in Mongolian, remained until now. This work is difficult for translation due to its symbolical language. At the same time it contains amazing and courageous prophecies on distribution of Tantric Buddhism to the West, and on the future of world civilization.

Lama Tsydenov propagated in Buryatia a non-conventional form of Buddhism. Its religious reform consisted in development of not monastic, but ascetic form of Buddhism which prevailed in Tibet before the strengthening of positions of the Gelug-pa school. That's why Tsydenov's idea was not supported not only by traditionalists, but also by reformers who were guided by learnt lamas who got their education in monastic academies.

At a certain period of civil war in Russia, which burst after the revolution of 1917, Soviets lost control of Buryatia. The power in Transbaikalia was seized by the ataman Semenov. Tsydenov's supporters declared creation of the theocratic state, announcing Lubsan-Sandan to be its Khan.

This theocratic movement, also called Balagatskoe, lived on even after the fall of the Semenov regime, under the Soviet rule. In general it

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid. p.84.

pursued a noble purpose - to save Buryat people from destructive consequences of revolution and civil war. In fact, it saved many lives and managed to protect civilians from violence and robberies. Political value of the theocratic movement consisted in demonstration of the great influence which Buddhism had on the Buryat people and on their political views.

According to S. Lepekhov, the Balagatskoe movement in the conditions of civil war played a role of defender of values and norms of Buddhist civilization. Therefore it contained no separatist or nationalist aspirations. Such aspirations contradict the principles of Buddhism for which national and frontiers do not matter.<sup>113</sup>

The Balagatskoe movement, Lepekhov notes, was one of the brightest and dramatic attempts of realization in practice of state construction of the most important principle of Asoka's civilization program – government by means of Dharma, bringing of happiness by means of Dharma and protection by means of Dharma.

The Balagatskoe movement, in our opinion, being the theocratic movement, was based also on the known Mongolian doctrine of “kagan-chakravartin” which assumes merging of the lay and spiritual power in one person.

The situation in Kalmykiya was a little less dramatic. Despite disagreements, the clergy did not split into contradictory groups here. Reformers quite often made compromises with traditionalists, and representatives of conservatives tried not to aggravate the relationship with reformers. Therefore, the religious life renovation in Kalmykiya was less painful and more successful. At the same time, reform was undertaken so skillfully that it almost did not touch conservatives who often declared themselves reformers and remained in the khuruls. Therefore, there was not the split as such in the Kalmyk Buddhism. All khuruls accepted the reform, at least, officially.

In Tuva, the Reformist Movement arose a bit later than in Mongolia, Buryatia and Kalmykiya. Therefore many ideas of reforms were borrowed by the Tuva Buddhists from their neighbors. The specificity of Tuva reforms was that they were carried out in the conditions of existence of its own state which at its initial development

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<sup>113</sup> S. Lepekhov, **Madhyamika's Philosophy and Genesis of Buddhist Civilization**, pp.57-58.

stage regarded Buddhism very loyally. Therefore the Tuva reformers criticized anti-governmental actions of certain representatives of clergy.

There were noted some particular cases when the lamas resisted to social and economic reforms. Condemning the attempts of church to interfere with political life of the country, reformers precisely defined the position of lamas as spiritual mentors, no more. A number of priests ambiguously apprehended separation of religion from the government. They wondered, whether lamas lost their political rights in this case?<sup>114</sup>

Reforms in Tuva, as well as reforms in Buryatia and Kalmykiya, did not miss the questions of religious dogmatics. So, in the speech of one of delegates of the All-Tuvinian Buddhist congress of 1928 it was said that the Buddhist doctrine and Marxism are identical, as they both concern first of all the person. Such approach expressed the readiness of church representatives for the dialogue with the government and the desire to work out together some system of universal values. However, these ideas did not get further support and remained unrealized.<sup>115</sup>

#### **2.5.4 Scientific Studying of Buddhism in Russia**

The global processes happening in the XIX<sup>th</sup> and XX<sup>th</sup> centuries influenced not only the internal transformation of the Buddhism. Changes in secular society created a new format of Buddhism perception by society. In addition to previous functions, Buddhism began to be perceived as a subject of scientific research.

The beginning of Buddhism studying in Russia can be dated by the years 1820s – 1830s when a member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences Ya. Schmidt published a number of buddhologist researches (in the German language). His works were based on studying of Mongolian and Tibetan sources. They had a wide resonance in Europe.<sup>116</sup>

But a truly scientific studying of Buddhism in Russia is connected with names of father Palladiy Kafarov and academician V. Vasilyev. Palladium (in the lay life - Peter) Kafarov for many years was the head of Russian Christian mission in Beijing. He was a Sinologist of the highest

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<sup>114</sup> O. Homushku, **Religion in Culture History of Tuvinians**, p.80.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. p.75.

<sup>116</sup> S. Kuvaev, “Semantic context of Russian Buddhism”, p.5.

class, and the history of Buddhism took a very important place in his researches.<sup>117</sup>

Vasilyev was an academician in the true sense of this word and first of all a buddhologist. Besides Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan Vasilyev spoke also Manchurian, Mongolian and other Eastern languages, which extremely expanded the source base of his researches. Vasilyev's works gained the European popularity during his lifetime. His main work *Buddhism, its Doctrines, History and Literature* soon after its issue was translated to German. A fundamental defect of the works of this scientist was his outright Eurocentrism, which sometimes turned into negligence to phenomena of the studied cultures.

Indologist buddhology in Russia was founded by I. Minayev. Before him, Buddhism in Russia was studied firstly by Chinese and Tibetan sources. It was caused by the fact that China was a direct neighbor of Russia, and citizens of the Russian Empire (Buryats and Kalmyks) were followers of the Tibetan Buddhism. Minayev studied first of all Pali texts. He was especially interested in problems of studying of Vinaya (he translated *Pāṭimokkha-sutra* into Russian).<sup>118</sup>

Except these eminent buddhologists-theorists it is necessary to mention the scientists who were engaged in field observations and ethnographic researches. They left priceless data concerning lifestyle, everyday life and religious practice of monks and laymen, their contemporaries in Buryatia, Mongolia and Tibet. First of all, A. Pozdneyev, G. Tsybikov and B. Baraydin treat these scientists.

In 1897 S. Oldenburg founded the *Bibliotheca Buddhica* series. This series played an enormous role in the history of not only Russian, but also world buddhology. This series soon gained a great international authority, due to which it is republished abroad up to the present days, though from the late 1930-s this series actually ceased to exist, and attempts to reanimate it in the years 1960s-1980s did not bring any essential results. The purpose of the series was, first of all, scientific publication of the classical Buddhist texts (mainly in Sanskrit and Tibetan; the Chinese Pali Buddhism was represented very poorly) supplied with thorough reference tools, academic comments and prefaces.

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<sup>117</sup> E. Torchinov, **Introduction to Buddhology**, (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg Philosophical Society, 2000), p.131. (in Russian)

<sup>118</sup> I. Minayev (tr.), **Pāṭimokkha-sutra**, St. Petersburg: np, 1869.



The series contained also the translations of Buddhist texts. In many respects, the foundation of *Bibliotheca Buddhica* marked the beginning of a new, “classical” stage of the Russian buddhology, connected first of all with the name of the academician F. Stcherbatsky.

Stcherbatsky got an excellent sanskritologist education at the St. Petersburg and Vienna Universities. In Vienna, he trained at the largest European Sanskritist G. Bühler, whose textbook he later translated into Russian. It is used up till now by all students-Indologists in Russian Oriental studies institutes.<sup>119</sup>

The main Stcherbatsky’s works were written during the Soviet period. The greatest of them are four monographs: *Theory of Cognition and Logic According to the Doctrine of the Latest Buddhists*, *The Central Conception of Buddhism and the Meaning of the Word Dharma*, *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvana* and *The Buddhist Logic*. Besides Stcherbatsky wrote numerous articles, translations of small Buddhist texts and publications in the *Bibliotheca Buddhica* series.<sup>120</sup>

The first of the aforesaid monographs concerns the doctrine of a logic-epistemological branch of school *Yogachara* (Dharmakirti and Dharmottara), the second exposes *Abhidhamma* of *Sarvastivada* school, the third opens the philosophy of *Madhyamika* Buddhism and *Madhyamika*’s understanding of *Nirvana*, and the fourth is also devoted to the logic-epistemological direction of *Yogacara*.<sup>121</sup>

This shows that Stcherbatsky and his school were engaged mainly in Buddhist philosophy in its most refined forms.

At the same time, Stcherbatsky showed a fundamentally new approach to the translation of the Buddhist philosophical text. He rejected traditional philological translation and proved the need of philosophically adequate translation of classical Buddhist texts. Not philologists, but philosophers have to study Buddhist ideas, - the academician claimed. Another important methodological position of Stcherbatsky’s school was the requirement to consider the Buddhist philosophy history in the

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<sup>119</sup> Th. Stcherbatsky, **Selected works about Buddhism**, Science, Moscow, p.14. (in Russian)

<sup>120</sup> Full list of his publications, retrieved on 15 February 2017, [http://www.orientalstudies.ru/eng/index.php?option=com\\_personalities&Itemid=74&person=242](http://www.orientalstudies.ru/eng/index.php?option=com_personalities&Itemid=74&person=242).

<sup>121</sup> E. Torchinov, **Introduction to Buddhology**, p.134.

context of its polemic with opponents, first of all with philosophical schools of Brahmanism, because out of specific historical and philosophical context a lot of things in the Buddhist thought development cannot be understood.

Stcherbatsky was not only the scientist-researcher, but also the brilliant teacher. He brought up the whole group of scientists who formed Russian (St. Petersburg, or Leningrad) buddhologist school. E. Obermiller was the most outstanding scientist among Stcherbatsky's pupils.

Obermiller carried on the traditions of classical buddhology, which principles were developed by Stcherbatsky. Obermiller paid special attention to studying of texts of *Maitreya-Asanga Abhisamayalankara* and *Ratnagoṭravibhaga*. Thus, Obermiller was the first European scientist studying this text, which was basic for the theory of *Tathagatagarbha*. The majority of the published Obermiller's works is written in English.<sup>122</sup>

However, during the subsequent historical period, the Russian buddhologists activity practically came to naught, and during the World War II, this school practically ceased its existence.

### **2.5.5 The Period of Repressions**

In the 1920s, after the end of Civil War, the new historical stage of the state development began. The Soviet government expected that after having entered a new historical era, the society would vigorously reject all old concepts, including religion. However, this did not occur, and the country leaders began to resort to more and more violent measures. 1929 was the year of *Great change*, it had a special place in the policy of the Soviet government in this sphere.

In the conditions of socialism formation the theoretical platform of Buddhism was untenable. However it occurred not because the principle of modernization, by which the religion developed in this period, was bad or obsolete, the self-renewing potential of any religion is inexhaustible. In that historical situation when the existence of not only

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid. p.24.

monasteries, but the religion itself was brought into question, the tactics of reformation began to become useless in principle.<sup>123</sup>

During this period, the Soviet government policy did not consider progressive currents in Buddhist church any more. It realized that the church and the clergy still had a great influence on the people. The state even more often regarded churches of all faiths as internal enemy and as the ally of world imperialism. In the aspect of church and clergy the Soviet government adhered to the hypertrophied theory of class fight. They perceived religion only as *opium for the people*, and clergy was perceived as a socially alien element.

The fight methods against lamas took extreme forms. In the practice of atheistic propaganda the tendency of sheer bureaucracy of fight against church prevailed more and more, flagrant violations of legality became more frequent, and propaganda against Buddhist clergy and church gained the widest scope. By the beginning of 1930s by means of vigorous antireligious propaganda an odious image of a lama as grabber and reactionary emerged in public consciousness of Buryats and Kalmyks. All this was aimed to undermine the moral authority of Buddhist clergy during the split of clergy.<sup>124</sup>

In 1937 — 1938 in Buryatia almost all active religious figures, irrespective of their belonging to conservative or reformatory wing of clergy, were repressed by the PCIA agencies.<sup>125</sup> The campaign for Buddhism eradication, which began in the late 1920s, has led to close all Buddhist temples, imprisonment and execution of the majority of lamas under various false charges (pan-mongolism, espionage, anti-Soviet propaganda etc.).

Agvan Dorjiev was arrested in 1937 and died in prison in 1938 at the age of 85 years.

The peak of repressions tragically affected the fate of tens thousands of innocent Soviet citizens. These consequences were immensely serious for the small Buryat people as the main blow fell

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<sup>123</sup> G. Dorjiyeva, **Buddhist Church in Kalmykiya in the End of XIX<sup>th</sup> – First Half of XX<sup>th</sup> Century**, p.131.

<sup>124</sup> A. Damdinov, “Agvan Dorjiev in Renovation Movement of Buryat Buddhist Clergy”, p.89.

<sup>125</sup> People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs.

mostly on the most honest, self-sacrificing and sincerely devoted to the homeland people.

In formally independent Tuva during this period there was also a turn to drastic repressive measures against monasteries and clergy. Antireligious repressions affected also the Altai Burkhanists. In 1930s-1940s many inhabitants of Mountain Altai were repressed and condemned for connections with Buddhist clergy of Mongolia, Tibet and Tuva.

Repressions were carried out in Kalmykiya with the same thoroughness. Before revolution, there were more than one hundred temples, the number of clergy reached two and a half thousand. In 1924-1928, under the Soviet government, there were registered 70 Buddhist religious societies with 38'452 ordinary members and 1'904 priests. By the beginning of the World War II, not a single acting temple remained.

The striking example is the force which the government brought down on the higher confessional school of Tsanid-Chore. In 1931 the newspaper *Lenin's path* published an article by Kalin *The Enemy's fortress*, where he wrote that the activity of the higher spiritual school, which attracted hundreds of young men and was turning them into officers of priestly army, was the act of anti-Soviet religious and political fight.<sup>126</sup>

In 1931, it was decided to close Tsanid-Chore. In the autumn of 1932, a certain Manzheyev with companions arrived from the regional center and persuaded to gelongs to admit that they could not maintain Chore, forcing them to sign this statement. Besides, a property inventory was made.

In the Russian Federal State Archive the researcher, G. Dorjiyeva,<sup>127</sup> found out the report of April 20, 1936, where it was said,

All the houses and buildings of Tsanid-Chore were assigned to the Village Soviet, namely: Burkhan's, all musical instruments, burkhan's garments of brocade and velvet, complete volume of Ganjur were transferred to the Republican museum. Wooden tables, cupboards,

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<sup>126</sup> N. Kalin, "The Enemy's Fortress", **Lenin's path**, (17 May 1931), p.3. (in Russian)

<sup>127</sup> G. Dorjiyeva, "Religious Policy of the Soviet Authority in Kalmykiya in the end of 1920s – 1930s", **Buddhism of Russia**, No.42 (2009), p.21. (in Russian)

robes and other utensils were auctioned, and all the revenue was handed over to the State Bank. Silver cups (tiaclin tsektse), various big and small plates weighing 3,5 kg were submitted to the State Bank for sending to Moscow Mint.<sup>128</sup>

Across all Russia many valuable xylographs, manuscripts, statues and icons (thang-kas) were barbarously destroyed. Only part of them remained museum funds.

This devastation turned development of Buddhism back to the ethno-cultural course. On the one hand, it was connected with destruction of temples and of monastic tradition, on another, with wide circulation of the everyday-life Buddhism which was closely connected with pre-Buddhist cults and had a pronounced ethnic character.

In 1941, Nazi Germany occupied the territory of Kalmykiya. Germans began to open prayer houses in occupied territories. The service in these prayer houses was conducted by the former priests who refused their vows during the Soviet repressions. As the result of this Kalmyks began to support fascists actively and even went to war on their party. However Germans kept this territory not for long, less than for two years.

The fact that Kalmyks actively supported the German aggressors led to tragic consequences for all people. On December 28, 1943 as a result of the operation *Uluses* all Kalmyks at a time were moved from the Kalmyk territory to various regions of the East of the country, and the Kalmyk autonomous republic was liquidated.

During deportation period (till 1957), the Kalmyk people was sprayed in the wide space of Siberia and Central Asia. Persecutions of the former priests continued in the exile, and the cult objects which remained in families were lost.<sup>129</sup> In such conditions the social niche, in which the Buddhist ceremonialism functioned, was inevitably reduced. In the absence of temples it was narrowed to household level.

Secret ceremonies were carried out by the former clergymen in their settlements. So, for example, in Kazakhstan the exiled Kalmyks met Sharap Lubsan Tepkin, the former deputy of authorized representative of Tibet in Russia and the last Lama of the Kalmyk people (the top title in Buddhist hierarchy from the middle of XIX<sup>th</sup> cent.). He had been

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> V. Ubushaev, **Kalmyks: Deportation, Return, Revival. 1943-1959**, (Elista: Publishing house of the Kalmyk University, 2007), p.15. (in Russian)

repressed in 1931, and stayed in Kazakhstan after the prison camp. He carried out services for his brothers in faith till his death.

So, the Kalmyk Buddhism became unknown for strangers and secret for the devoted.

The Russian Buddhology also had a hard fate. Most of scientists were repressed and executed on absurd charges. E. Obermiller died of multiple sclerosis. The academician Stcherbatsky underwent a real persecution as the idealist-neo-Kantian who preached reactionary views and who was involved in reactionary *Indian Priest-craft*. However he was not repressed. After the beginning of World War II Stcherbatsky together with other academicians was evacuated to Kazakhstan. He died there on March 18, 1942. The classical Russian buddhology died with him.

## **2.6 Revival of the Ethnic Buddhism in Russia**

In the second half of the XX<sup>th</sup> century in Russia, despite all persecutions, Buddhism remained an important factor defining self-identifications of Buryat, Kalmyk and Tuva peoples. Besides, the authorities needed something to support ideological clichés about liberty of conscience in the USSR, and this was possible only by opening temples of the main faiths.

During this period, Buddhism was officially acknowledged as social phenomenon, manifesting in specific forms of ceremonies and rituals in the places allocated for this purpose. At the same time, religious life, wide spreading and learning of Buddhist ideas and spiritual principles, was practically forbidden. Correspondingly, any real religious education of the population was not encouraged. The authorities probably believed that such measures would surely lead to gradual fading of Buddhism as live religion.

However, despite all persecutions and restrictions, the value of Buddhism for the peoples, traditionally professing it, remained. Buddhism had the strongest positions in Transbaikalia.

So, for example, a social research of religiousness of the local Buryat population was conducted in the 1970s in rural districts of Buryatia. It showed a certain preservation of religious (Buddhist) factor in self-identification of Buryats. In spite of the fact that the research revealed the ignorance of Buddhist doctrine and religious meaning of ceremonies, as well as absence of regular ceremonial practice in life of

the majority of the population, it was impossible not to notice that the devotion of the Buryat people to the Buddhism remained.<sup>130</sup>

### **2.6.1 Destiny of the Ethnic Buddhism after the II World War.**

The second period in the history of Buryat Buddhism began in 1945. In 30 km from Ulan-Ude, the Ivolginsky datsan was constructed, besides it was permitted to resume the activity of the Aginsky datsan in Chita region.

In 1946, the Meeting of Buddhist figures of Buryat-Mongol ASSR (name of the Buryat Republic in the Soviet time) the Charter of Spiritual administration of Buddhists and the Provision on Buddhist clergy of the USSR was adopted. Among other things it obliged lamas to worship not only the sacred Buddhist faith but also the Homeland of workers, and to contribute in every possible ways its strengthening and blossoming.

The Supreme body of Buddhist church became the Central Spiritual Administration of Buddhists of the USSR (CSAB), headed by its chairperson who received the title of Pandita Hambo-lama. The CSAB USSR residence became the new temple Khambin-Sume (Ivolginsky datsan).

Some Buddhist priests who went through repressions were given the chance to return to these two datsans, Ivolginsky and Aginsky. Up till 1980s, all officially allowed activity concentrated in these datsans, which had only about twenty priests.

Besides these two centers, in all Buddhist regions illegally acted several hundreds of former lamas who by that time were already set free from prison camps. They carried out religious practices for their fellow-villagers and visitors, practiced the Tibetan medicine. Some lamas had disciples outside traditional Buddhist regions. The former priests had big authority in villages and were secret elders of the ulus. They often introduced a religious element into household ceremonies and various ulus holidays. Therefore, they were not only defenders of national

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<sup>130</sup> T. Skrynnikova, **Traditional Culture and Buddhism in Self-identification of Buryats**, retrieved on 16 February 2016, [http://www.dartmouth.edu/~crn/groups/religion\\_group\\_papers/Finalpapers/Skrynnikova.pdf](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~crn/groups/religion_group_papers/Finalpapers/Skrynnikova.pdf). (in Russian)

traditions and customs, but also active religion disseminators in uluses. The former priests were also the closest assistants of datsans' lamas.

In 1956, the CSAB USSR delegation took part in the celebration of the 2500 Buddha's anniversary in Nepal and India and met for the first time the Supreme hierarchs of the northern Buddhism Dalai-Lama and Panchen-Lama.

In 1970 in Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia), a Buddhist institute was founded at the monastery Gandan-tekchin-ling due to the efforts of Hambo-lama Gomboyev and Hambo-lama of Mongolia Gombojav. The generation of modern Buddhist priests of Mongolia and Russia studied in this institute.

At the initiative of Gomboyev in 1975, the Asian Buddhist conference for peace (ABKM) with the headquarters in Ulaanbaatar was created. This international organization includes representatives of Buddhists of Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Thailand, Nepal and other countries of the Asian continent.

In June 1979 for the first time in history, Buryatia was visited by His Holiness Dalai-Lama XIV.

The Buddhism situation in Kalmykiya was harder than in Buryatia. Kalmykiya's autonomy restoration in 1957 was not followed by rehabilitation of religion. It remained forbidden. While in post-war Buryatia, the Central Spiritual administration of Buddhists of the USSR was created and two Buddhist temples were open, Kalmykiya became a testing ground of atheistic policy of the state. Till 1988 not a single Buddhist society, not a single temple was registered officially in the republic. The believers' attempts to register a community for the purpose of opening of a Buddhist temple run across a rigid counteraction from local party bodies.<sup>131</sup>

Despite total absence of religious communities and temples, religiousness level in Kalmykiya in this period was close to average rates of Soviet Union. In 1985, on the eve of registration of the first Buddhist community, the Institute of ethnography of Academy of Sciences of the

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<sup>131</sup> N. Ochirova, **Buddhist Clergy and Kalmyk Culture Development. Buddhist Clergy and Culture of Kalmyk People**, (Elista: np, 2004), p.10. (in Russian)



USSR and Kalmyk institute of history, philology and economy conducted ethno-social research in Kalmykiya. The rate of religiousness made 23% in cities and 30% in villages. 33% of respondents in cities, 39% in villages, and also 21% among artistic intellectuals addressed gelongs, at the same time, according to double morals rules, 46% of those who addressed gelongs in the village and 49% in the city called themselves non-believers. 98-99% of Kalmyks celebrated the calendar holidays Tsagan Sar and Zul.<sup>132</sup>

Despite the resistance to authorities, a number of the unofficial Buddhist centers nevertheless opened in Kalmykiya. They were mainly the places of residence of Buddhist clergy. And though the majority of lamas after official renouncing of title had found families, they were highly respected by the population, as in the believers' opinion their forced refusal of celibacy was justified. As E. Bakayeva marks out, in the days of main celebrations, requiring collective services, some of the former priests came to visit the most respected lamas for the purpose of carrying out a joint prayer. This fact can possibly serve as the evidence of existence of a community of monks, but most of them for that moment had families.<sup>133</sup>

Another tradition existed in the same time. Long since laymen carried out a prayer in "matsg" days (a fasting on 8, 15, 30 days of each lunar month) and weekly everyday services after Tsagan Sar and Zul (1st day of the first spring month and the 25th day of the first winter month) in the houses of believers. The community considers the purification of the dwelling the main aspect of the offering to ancestral spirits.

Thus, by the end of 1980s, the Buddhist tradition remained in three forms: a secret community of the former priests, a "matsg" believers' community and in the form of household religiousness. Except the persons who got religious education in the khuruls schools, some ceremonies were carried out also by the persons who did not have education. Anyway, the tradition remained.

Thus, from all previously mentioned, it is possible to draw a conclusion that a considerable part of adult population of the republics, despite atheistic policy, has kept their religious tradition and, which is

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<sup>132</sup> N. Ochirova, **Buddhist Clergy and Kalmyk Culture Development**, p.10.

<sup>133</sup> E. Bakayeva, "On the peculiarities of the contemporary religious situation in Kalmykiya (Buddhism and "initiated")", p.26.

especially important, has transferred it to the younger generation. The data of ethno-social research contain an explanation for the fact that after democratization a sharp growth of religiousness was recorded in Kalmykiya.

During the Soviet period, in the territory of Tuva, Buddhism also was in an extremely difficult situation. The destruction of standard system of Buddhist education led to actual complete cessation of clergy reproduction. At the same time the specific complex of local Buddhist traditions, which had developed in interaction with autochthonic cults and which defined the regional features of the Tuva Buddhism disappeared almost completely.

During this period in Tuva, the number of lamas reduced and simultaneously the number of shamans increased. O. Homushku explains the strengthening of influence of Shamanism by the need to fill a spiritual niche, which remained unclaimed because of the reduction of Buddhist priests' number.<sup>134</sup> At the same time, she notes that the communication of Tuva Buddhists with Ivolginsky datsan remained rather strong throughout all Soviet period. They made pilgrimage there and from there they received the representatives of the Buryat Buddhist clergy.<sup>135</sup>

The situation in Altai was even more complicated. The tradition of Burkhanism was completely destroyed there. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the Burkhanism ideologists had not left any texts. Researches and diaries of the Russian scientists and missionaries of ROC were the only source for studying Burkhanism.

The Roerich movement which representatives made pilgrimages to Altai since 1970s gave a certain incentive to revival of Buddhism and Burkhanism among oyrats. At the same time, Roerich followers not only looked for the truth and the country of Shambhala, but also actively introduced locals to Agni Yoga and Buddhist philosophy.

In the years of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Roerich movement influence on Altaians increased even more. Its representatives toured Altai villages with a travelling art gallery, at the same time carrying out conferences and distributing spiritual literature, which told

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<sup>134</sup> O. Homushku, **Religion in History and Culture of Tuvinians**, p.105.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.* p.104.

the Altaians that the White Burkhan, of course, is the Blessed Buddha, and that Buddhism is the most scientific religion.<sup>136</sup>

According to S. Filatov, who conducted researches in Altai, Altaians leaders of Burkhanism-Buddhism admitted an enormous influence of the Roerich doctrine on the ideology of their movement. Most of them has old and close ties with the Roerich movement ideologists, who revealed them the spiritual linking of sanctity of Altai, Buddhism, ecology, modern science and social progress.<sup>137</sup>

In general, it should be noted that Buddhism, against all repressions and persecutions, continued to function in Russia, influencing on the society. And though the Buddhist community as the agent of religious socialization practically disappeared, religious and moral guidelines and cult knowledge was transferred within a family. Thus, the main agent of religious socialization in the family was the senior generation, which obtained the religious knowledge from the clergy representatives.

Besides, it is necessary to remember that the religion, even after it, was forced out from the mass consciousness, and after its institutional forms cease to play a significant role in life of society, still continues to influence people by means of values, which continue to exist even in other secular layers of culture.

### **2.6.2 Ethnic Buddhism in Post-Soviet Russia**

Since 1988, the collapse of the Soviet Union began. The decision was made to re-orientate the state values from socialist to capitalist. Glasnost (publicity), religious liberty were proclaimed, privatization was carried out, and a lot of things were transferred from state property to private owners.

In 1991, the Soviet Union ceased its existence. Its territory split into a set of independent states, which had mutual territorial claims to each other. The conflicts between these states quite often turned into an active armed confrontation. War began also in Russia, in the territory of Republics Dagestan and Chechnya, next to Kalmykiya. All these events

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<sup>136</sup> S. Filatov, "Altai Burkhanism", p.242.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. p.243.

have thrown Russia into chaos, which ended with coming to power of the president Putin at the end of 1999.

The period of wild freedom generated not only economic decline and increase of crime. It had catalytic impact on the increase of religiousness, and Buddhism in particular, in Russia and the neighboring republics. After the announcement of religious liberty, the accumulated religious hunger caused an explosion of spiritual activity. As a result, parallel to the increase of social tension and crime, Buddhist temples and monasteries in Buryatia, Kalmykiya and Tuva began to revive and build up.

In October 1994 in Buryatia, in the Tsongolsky datsan, most ancient in Buryatia, the ceremonial opening took place of the main temple Baldan-Braybun, which was built up again on the place of the destroyed one.

The shrine of Buddhists, Zandan Dzhu statue, was transported from the museum to the recovered temple. The remained Tamchinsky, Tsugolsky and Aginsky datsans, which now are monuments of architecture of federal importance, began to be restored.

In 1993, the first group of the Tibetan teachers of the Buddhism from India arrived in Russia. Since 1994, students annually go to study to Buddhist educational institutions of India.

In 1995, the Damba Ayusheev was elected new Hambo-lama of CSAB of the Russian Federation, and he holds this post to this day. In 1996 at a congress of Buddhists the new charter was adopted, according to which CSAB of the Russian Federation was renamed into the Buddhist Traditional Saṅgha of Russia (BTSR). Two BTSR highest Buddhist educational institutions, the Aginsky Buddhist institute and the Buddhist institute of Dashi-Choynkhorlin, obtained the state licenses for training students.

On the General Assembly of the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace in 1998 in Ulaanbaatar BTSR confirmed its aspiration to revive the activity of this international Buddhist organization in Russia. The Aginsky datsan was assigned as the second Russian national ABCP center.

The contribution of the women's Buddhist movement should be noted particularly. In the 1990s, the Buryat Buddhist laywomen used the experience of their Mongolian sisters in religion who took an active part

in creation of convents. Besides Buddhist convents (datsans) and monastic communities, various gender-orientated Dharma-centers and communities developed, in which the gender equal rights is cultivated in socio-religious aspect. The Buryat nuns organized courses on Buddhist philosophy for all comers, and also promoted the visits of the Mongolian female lamas for participation in joint ritual services (hurals).<sup>138</sup>

Besides, the Buryat nuns and lay women established close cooperation with the international organization *Sakyadhita* aimed at the practical aspect of gender equality in national Buddhist communities, namely at creation of equal opportunities for receiving religious education, for promotion in the socio-religious statuses, and also at strengthening of position of the woman in socio-political, economic, professional and matrimonial spheres.

In addition, women's Buddhist organizations of Buryatia take a distinct peacekeeping position both within the country, and beyond. This position was symbolically expressed by the construction of the *Peace stupa*, built on the bank of Lake Baikal by the nuns of the Buryat women's datsan. The stupa was built as the response to acts of vandalism in Afghanistan and terrorism in the USA.

It is necessary to emphasize that the new realities in many respects form other paradigm of the Buddhism, than was 100 years ago. Firstly, at the time of the Russian Empire monasteries and clergy were financially supported due to economic activity of the laymen living in the territories, which belonged to monasteries.

Social, economic and ideological transformations, which were carried out during the Soviet period, destroyed the traditional way of financial support of monasteries and clergy. Monasteries lost their lands and could use only donations. Therefore, the number of monasteries was minimized.

Secondly, earlier in Buryatia and Kalmykiya the religious hierarchy was formed and functioned under the state control and was regulated by the corresponding documentation. The state guarded a complete independence of Buddhist hierarchs of Buryatia and Kalmykiya from any influence from the Tibetan theocracy. The religious head of the Buryat Buddhists was Hambo-lama, and of the Kalmyk Buddhists -

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<sup>138</sup> O. Balzhitova, **Women Status in Buddhism of India, Mongolia and Buryatia**, (Chita: np, 2007), p.14. (in Russian)

Shajin-lama. Neither of the two submitted to Dalai Lama and both carried out their own religious policy.

In new Russia, there is no structuring state factor. Secular authorities do not act as guarantor of traditional religious relations preservation. Religious identity is a private affair of each person. Legislative, executive and judicial branches of the power must only provide to citizens the guarantees of freedoms and rights, and to prevent religious discrimination.

The Russian Buddhists had to carry out a socio-cultural innovation. They had to define legitimate in new society financing sources for monasteries and religious educational centers, ways of replenishment of monks' number, as well as to stir up missionary and propagation activity. These problems have not received a conceptual solution. As the result, a series of conflicts broke out, and there were even splits in the religious environment.

Ideological vacuum was filled with the experience of functioning of Tibetan Buddhism in the globalized world, and this experience was very ambiguous and politically disputable. Thus, the third novelty factor, which influences decisively on the development of Buddhism in Russia, is the Tibetan factor.

The model of global Tibetan Buddhism was attractive in the aspect of infrastructure, which provides the functioning of socio-religious institutes of monkhood, laymen, Buddhist education and a religious reciprocity. So, for example, in Tibetan monasteries in the territory of India the system of Buddhist education and assignment of the religious statuses is restored and reproduced (though in a reduced form).

Among indisputable advantages of global communicative network of Tibetan Buddhism should be noted its effective missionary activity, overcoming any borders (ethnic, territorial, state, language and even historical and cultural).

The global communicative network of Tibetan Buddhism possesses efficient, without malfunctions, methods of gathering lay followers and reproduction of the clergy, skilled in conducting missionary activity worldwide and contacts with the international community. Due to this by 1990s, the Tibetan refugees opened a great number of Buddhist communities worldwide.

The new Tibetan policy very harmoniously fitted into the globalized society. In 1990s, the Tibetan Buddhism already functioned as a system of transnational communities of ethnic Tibetans and not ethnic newly converted Buddhists worldwide.<sup>139</sup>

In many respects, the split of the Saṅgha in Buryatia was caused by the rejection of the Tibetan influence by a part of the Buryat clergy and the aspiration to keep the course towards forming of relationship with the state, accepted in the USSR. Similar thing occurred 100 years ago. Only this time, due to the lack of centralization the renovators focused now on the Tibetan influence could not maintain an organized resistance, today they are a set of separate independent communities.

In Kalmykiya, unlike other Buddhist regions, from 1930s, there was no Buddhist temples and the Buddhism did not exist officially.

In 1988 in Elista the first “prayer-house” opened, its prior was Tuvan Dorji, a lama who arrived from Buryatia, and three years later, in 1991, he was elected Shajin-lama of the Kalmyk people.

In July 1989, new period of the Kalmyk Buddhism began when Kushok Bakula Rinpoche consecrated the prayer house called Elista khurul.

The most difficult problem consisted in training of Buddhist clergy, which carried out in various centers - from Ivolginsky datsan to Dharamsala.

In 1991 the First Conference of Buddhists of Kalmykiya and the Astrakhan region took place, there it was decided to create the Association of Buddhists of Kalmykiya (ABK) which announced itself the independent organization of Buddhists. By then 14 people already studied in Buddhist training centers of Buryatia and Mongolia.

From first years of existence of a prayer house the question of construction of the temple was raised, and during the first arrival to Kalmykiya in 1991 Dalai Lama XIV consecrated the new plot for the temple.

Visits of Dalai Lama in 1991 and 1992 to Kalmykiya became a milestone in the history of the Kalmyk Buddhism. Dalai Lama’s and his

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<sup>139</sup> E. Ostrovskaya, “Russian Buddhism in the Frame of Civil Society”, in Malashenko A. (ed.) **Twenty years of religious freedom in Russia**, (Moscow: The Moscow Carnegie Center, 2009), p.3. (in Russian)

young follower Telo Tulku Rinpoche's appeal to help the faith revival urged the youth to create the Youth Buddhist association (AYBK) which activists later took part in all important affairs of ABK.

Thus, as in Kalmykiya there was practically no opportunity to restore the ethnic form of Buddhism, all development of religion was turned to perception of the Tibetan influence, and entry into this global ethno-religious communicative network as soon as possible. In Kalmykiya, there were few traditionalists, they remained scattered over the entire republic in little groups and therefore unlike Buryatia, in Kalmykiya the split did not occur.

Tuvan Dorji was peacefully displaced from his post in 1992. The new Shajin-lama became a Kalmyk Telo Tulku Rinpoche, the U.S. citizen, the disciple of Dalai Lama XIV. Due to his activity, a big group of boys could go study to India. Since 1993, the Tibetan lamas began to conduct service in the khurul.

In December 2005 the construction of the central khurul "Gold monastery of Buddha Shakyamuni" was finished, in the territory of this khurul the largest Buddhist temple in Europe is situated.

Currently in Kalmykiya, there are working khuruls practically in each of the district centers and in many settlements. The opening of Chorya khurul, which had been closed and destroyed in 1930s, and built up again in 1990s, became a joyful event.

Tuva showed to the world the third variant of Buddhism revival in native territories. The analysis of events of 1990s – 2000s allows us to claim that the Buddhist Renaissance in Tuva encountered the same difficulties, which were found in Buryatia and Kalmykiya.

The Tuvinian specifics of this process was defined by the fact that the traditional religion revival was initiated there by the laymen Buddhist organizations, and not by the clergy.

An independent citizens' initiative wakened in 1989, when the political government of Tuvinian ASSR proposed to legalize the New Year celebration *Shagaa* according to the Buddhist lunar calendar.

In 1990 the Council for Religious affairs of Tuvinian ASSR<sup>140</sup> registered a Buddhist society Aldyn Bogda, which in the next year 1991 started an active promotion by means of a newspaper *Erege* created by

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<sup>140</sup> Name of Tuva Republic during to Soviet time.



this society. Aldyn Bogda stood up for the invitation of Buddhist Mongol preachers to Tuva.

The same year the first Buddhist temple was built with an active ideological and financial support from respected representatives of Tuvinian art intellectuals. The Tuva yurts-chapels resumed their functioning, and the newly built-up temples attracted the small local Buddhist clergy.

However, as well as in Kalmykiya, the process of revival of the Tuvinian Buddhism quickly enough changed its vector due to the official pastoral visit to the republic of Dalai Lama XIV and a delegation of representatives of the Tibetan government in exile (so-called Central Tibetan Administration) in 1992.

This visit was initiated by Tuva government, which wished to begin bilateral intergovernmental negotiations with the Tibetan exiles.

As the result, a contract on religious cooperation was signed, and according to it, the Tibetan party was obliged to send to Tuva Buddhist mentors from among the clergy, which lived in diaspora in the territory of India. The Tuvinian party, in turn, had to send to the monasteries of the Tibetan diaspora a group of young men for a course of religious education.

The key figure in ideological supervision of the Tibetan global Buddhism over the process of the religious Renaissance in Tuva became the official spiritual representative of Dalai Lama XIV in Russia Geshe Jampa Tinley.

In 1997, the activity of the spiritual representative of Dalai Lama XIV in Russia became legally reinforced: with assistance of the President of Kalmykiya K. Ilyumjinov, Jampa Tinley obtained the Russian citizenship.

However, it should be noted that in Tuva Geshe's activity met a half-hearted attitude. The scientific literature marks a distinct inclination of indigenous Tuvinians to the local historically developed form of Buddhist religiousness. Tuvinians declared that they prefer the traditional religious practices and life cycle ceremonies. They trust to lamas from Tuva and Buryatia.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> M. V. Mongush, **History of Buddhism in Tuva (Second Half of VI<sup>th</sup> — End of XX<sup>th</sup> century)**, (Novosibirsk: Science, 2001), p.134. (in Russian)

The conflict of the Tuva traditionalists and supporters of the accession to global communicative network of Tibetan Buddhism became sharply visible in the late 1990s, when the question was raised on the organizational structure of Tuvianian Saṅgha of the Russian Federation. In 1997 in Kyzyl the All-Tuvianian Founding Congress of Buddhists took place, and there it was decided to create the supreme organizational body of the Tuvianian Saṅgha “Republic of Tuva Hambo-lama’s Administration” (UKLRT) and a new position of Hambo-lama, the religious head of the Tuva Buddhists. The started struggle for congregation grew into a long conflict concerning the applicants for the post of Hambo-lama.

Only in 2005 a compromise figure was found, it was acceptable both for traditionalists and for the Tibetan missionaries. It was a monk Dzhangpel Lodoy. He got an education in the St. Petersburg datsan and in the Tibetan duplicate-monastery Drepun Goman (in the territory of India). He began an active work, establishing contacts with the heads of the Kalmyk and Buryat parts of Russian Buddhist Saṅgha, constructing new large monastic complexes, cooperating with local republican and federal authorities.

Thus, it is possible to say that within only one XX<sup>th</sup> century Buddhism in Russia endured blossoming, decline and revival (the history of Buddhism is rich in similar examples).

At the edge of the XX<sup>th</sup> – XXI<sup>th</sup> centuries the number of Buddhist communities and organizations increases in a geometrical progression, by exceeding tens times the number of communities, officially registered in the mid-1980s. Only two registered communities were in CSAB until the end of 1980s: Ivolginsky and Aginsky datsans and a certain marginal Tuva branch presented by two Tuvianian lamas serving in Ivolginsky datsan. Neither in Tuva, nor in Kalmykiya, registered communities did not exist. Since 1990 the St. Petersburg datsans, which was destroyed in 1937, resumed its functioning. In the late 1990s, the number of the registered communities already exceeded officially existing in 1980s by 80 times, and in 2002 - already by 100 times.

Many Buddhist communities and groups have legalized their activity, and the most intensive growth was recorded in Buddhist communities and organizations outside the regions of historical distribution of Buddhism, in non-traditional for Buddhism territory of

Russia. Today in Russia, there are more than 200 Buddhist organizations and communities, 6 of them are centralized and almost autonomous.

## 2.7 The Phenomenon of Non-Ethnic Buddhism in Russia

In parallel with the attempts to revive Buddhism in its original territories, in 1990s a process of legalization of new Buddhist communities began in regions of Russia where Buddhism did not exist before. The most intense activity of Buddhists was recorded in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Here it is important to notice that the seeds of this phenomenon were sowed in the middle of the XX<sup>th</sup> century in Soviet Union.

After World War II, the Reformist Movement in Soviet Buddhism was associated with the activity of Bidiya Dandaron, Buddhist teacher, buddhologist and an original thinker. His father was a colleague of the religious reformer Tsydenov, who founded the Balagatskoe movement. Dandaron in the childhood was recognized as a reincarnation of one of high lamas.

In the work *Neobuddhism* written in prison, Dandaron studied the theory of life and death of civilizations as an example of how Western scientists understand the essence of Buddhist doctrine about karma<sup>142</sup>. Later, on the idea of karma of peoples and civilizations became one of the bases of his doctrine. During the war years, he even managed to smuggle the manuscript of *Neobuddhism* to the West.

Gradually a circle of people who went in for Buddhist philosophy and Tantra and who tried to comprehend their life and situation through a prism of Buddhist philosophy gathered around Dandaron. During several years, Dandaron gave courses to this group. Dandaron's community included several dozens of people from Buryatia, Leningrad, Moscow, Tartu, and Vilnius.

Obviously, most of his followers were non-ethnic Buddhists. Therefore, we can say that this community initiated the process of Buddhism spreading in Russian society beyond traditional ethnic limits.

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<sup>142</sup> In Dandaron's interpretation Karma means a consequence and not an act itself, in this way, the term Karma here is close to the term Destiny.

Dandaron's activity irritated the local authorities. In 1972 on a fabricated charge, he was arrested and soon died. In prison, Dandaron managed to create new work “Black Copybook”, in which he tried to comprehend the history of the country and the modern world from Tantric position.

Dandaron's *Neobuddhism* represented an attempt of creative synthesis of western philosophy and science with eastern wisdom. On the one hand, the metaphysical ideas of Dandaron's *Neobuddhism* arise from Buddhist philosophy, on the other – he finds the methodological principles in the western philosophical tradition, in particular in a Neo-Kantianism. Probably this was what attracted people with European mentality.

Dandaron paid considerable attention to social problems in his works. Unlike figures of the renovation movement, Dandaron was skeptical about the ideas of Marxism, considering them outdated. Dandaron wrote:

The theory of scientific communism, created in the middle of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, differed from Saint-Simon and Fourier's utopian socialism in the fact that it was constructed on scientific data of that time as a result of the analysis of criticism of political economy and dialectic development of society. At that time, during its authors' lifetime, it was considered an absolute truth, in any case, so its followers believed. But more than one hundred years later, it changed radically because the scientific truth on the basis of which it was created (the economic doctrine) changed itself to unrecognizably, therefore the theory of scientific communism today is not scientific truth.<sup>143</sup>

It is necessary to notice that the possibility of Buddhism spreading among Russians could emerge only with actualization of an individual Tantric practices in it.

People who faced Buddhism already as adults initially had no opportunity to be socialized in monastic system by means of traditional institutes of Buddhist education. As the alternative, a possibility is created of close and individual communication with the mentor-lama who

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<sup>143</sup> B. Dandaron, **Selected Works. Black Copybook. Biography Material. History of Kukunor Sumpa Kenpo**, (St. Petersburg: Eurasia, 2006), p.174. (in Russian)

provides the disciple with maximum information for successful practice. However, the lama himself, being not socialized according to the traditional for the Buryat Buddhism scheme, looks for alternative models and paradigms of development and teaching Buddhist tradition along with modernization of forms and ways of these two processes.

By the end of 1970s, Andrey Terentyev began to play a noticeable role in Russian Buddhist movement. He entered the philosophical faculty of Leningrad State University in 1970. In his 2nd year, he created student's society for studying Eastern philosophy, first of all Indian and Chinese. One of Dandaron's disciples, V. Rudoy from the Institute of Oriental Studies, was invited to be the head of this society.

Later Terentyev went to Buryatia where he began to study at Buryat lama. This was not a single case of Buryat lamas' disciples, and by 1990s they only became more frequent. Terentyev noted that Buryat teachers of that time almost had no Buryat disciples, as the Buryat youth, unlike the Russian, was not interested in Buddhism.<sup>144</sup>

Terentyev's contribution to the development of Russian Buddhism consists in his vigorous activity as translator and publisher. Under its edition, already in the early 1990s one of the central works of Tibetan Buddhism, Lamrim Chenmo - five volumes, written in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century by Je Tsokapa – was published in Russian. Only more than 10 years later, this text was completely translated into English.

The destiny of previous attempts to translate this text deserves our attention. A famous Buryat scientist Gombojab Tsybikov tried to translate Lamrim into a European (Russian) language. In 1910, he published the Mongolian translation of a part of this work (corresponding to the first volume of Lamrim), and in 1913 translated the same part from Mongolian into Russian.<sup>145</sup> Tsybikov did not succeed to translate other parts of the text, due to circumstances.

The following translator of Lamrim was a Russian Mikhail Tubansky, Stcherbatsky's pupil. During a study tour to Mongolia in

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<sup>144</sup> A. Terentyev, "Introduction by editor", in A. Terentyev (ed.), **Lam-Rim Chen-Mo**, Russian translation, (St. Petersburg: Nartang, 1994), p.XV. (in Russian)

<sup>145</sup> G. Tsybikov, **Lam-Rim Chen-Mo. (Stages of the Way to Enlightenment). Tszonhava's Work in Mongolian and Russian Translations**, Vol 1, Russian translation, (Vladivostok: np, 1913). (in Russian)

1927-1936, he managed to prepare the full-annotated translation of all parts of Lamrim and to provide it with annotations and scientific apparatus. However upon his return to Leningrad Tubansky, among many other orientalist, was arrested in 1937 and died in camps. Attempts to find his fundamental work did not succeed neither in St. Petersburg, nor in Mongolia.

Thus, it is possible to say that the Buddhist thought had an opportunity to appear in Russian language earlier, Russian intellectuals were ready to perception of Buddhism, but the political situation blocked these needs. However, it caused hunger, but did not cut off the need.

Andrey Paribok, who actively participated in his time in A. Terentyev's work, prepared another very valuable translation of the Buddhist text. In 1989, he published Russian translation of Milindapañhā.

The translation was qualitative from the scientific point of view, all successful discoveries of previous researches were apprehended, at the same time the critical look to the scientific approach was not lost. A special uniqueness of this translation consists in artistic methods of the translation elaboration.<sup>146</sup> The approach suggested by Paribok to the translation of Buddhist terms which considers the widest context of cultures, is certainly the strongest line of this work. However, owing to its complexity, this method remained only a unique discovery. It was not widely used in works of other translators.

In modern Russia, ethnic Buddhists do not translate texts neither into national languages, nor into Russian. Instead, they learn Tibetan and use old translations. Thus, non-ethnic Buddhists are much more active in the sphere of education.

Up to the end of 1980s, Buddhism among Russians kept its lay character. Monastic tradition was not adopted, because Russians did not have access to educational institutions and monasteries of Buryatia. Dandaron also did not make monastic vows and therefore could not give them to others. So, Russians accepted monastic tradition only since the time when an easy access in Ivolginsky datsan was provided.

In 1990s religious associations, professing not only Tibetan, but also other forms of Buddhism, imported from various countries of the

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<sup>146</sup> A. Paribok "Introduction" in A. Paribok (tr.) **Questions of Milinda**, (Moscow: Science, 1989), p.15. (in Russian)

foreign East at first to Western countries and then to Russia, declared themselves.

Thus in modern Russia, traditional forms of religious associations and renovators' organizations coexist. All of them more or less actively declare themselves as members of Russian society and make their share of contribution into spiritual, social and political life.

Such communities have relations with both Eastern and Western Buddhists. As a rule, they are associations of laypeople, who follow a certain *lieder*. Sometimes monks from India (Tibetans) and Japan head such communities. But more often, the leader is a layperson, who organized big international organization, which center is in Europe.

Not ethnic communities differ very much on belonging to Buddhist sub-traditions, among which prevail those imported to Russia at the edge of the 1980-1990s from Japan, China, Nepal, Vietnam, Italy, Denmark, Great Britain, Poland, Germany, France, and also from the Tibetan diaspora in the territory of India.

Such communities organically fitted into a new format of society. Nevertheless, at the same time they do not meet expectations of Buddhism as one of traditional religions of Russia, as they have no historical link to Buddhist traditions on Russian territories.

Emergence of such associations stimulated a conflict situation in the Buddhist environment. Such communities were built according to the western model. It corresponds to the principles of modern society. However, Buddhism in original territories underwent a considerable ethnization, therefore ethnic clergy in Buryatia, Kalmykiya and Tuva consider non-ethnic Buddhists as exotic odd fellows, but not their equal brothers in faith. Various new religious groups are also inclined to cooperation. Conflicts between non-ethnic Buddhists happen frequently.

There is also problem of competition between Buddhism and Orthodoxy. Buddhism seems to be recognized as one of the traditional religions existing in Russia and has a status equal to Orthodoxy. But if Orthodox Christians regard peacefully the ethnic Buddhism, then non-ethnic Buddhists often become objects of attacks.

Some Buddhist organizations, which were introduced from the West, in particular the Karma Kagyu School are declared as destructive sects. The Russian Association of Studying Sects (RASS) included

Russian Association of Karma Kagyu in the list of totalitarian sects.<sup>147</sup> It is indicative that the RASS is headed by two Christian eparches together with a layman professor Dvorkin. Actually, it means that this organization expresses the point of view of Russian Orthodox Church.

If we look at the content of the critical materials about the Russian Association of Buddhists Karma Kagyu, we will find a curious system of argumentation (The quick anti-sectarian reference book. Karma Kagyu (Ole Nydahl)<sup>148</sup>). Telling the story of this school since the VII<sup>th</sup> century, the critics treat literally such Buddhist symbols as *kapala*,<sup>149</sup> blood, *necklaces of skulls*, and then pass to the description of atrocities of the famous figure of Civil War Ja-lama. Thereby the negative image not of the modern school, but of a quite traditional Tibetan Karma Kagyu school is created (and at the same time of Gelug School, as Ja-lama was its follower). It means that under a mask of criticism of modern “sect” the criticism of traditional Buddhism is carried out.

The government also do not treat non-ethnic Buddhist communities seriously, equating them to some peculiar hobby clubs.

On the other side, organizations and communities existing in the territories without Buddhist tradition, can be called more intellectual as the majority of their followers comprehend the Buddhism widely, but not only religious philosophical doctrines or practices of their own school. At the same time, Europeans allow modernist ideas and views. Usually, their mentors actively include modern philosophical and scientific ideas in their sermons, seeking to correspondence to the modern scientific knowledge level.

By the way, these tendencies allow a number of researchers to classify these Buddhist organizations as new (not Buddhist) religious movements in which, as a rule, the religious main body of the doctrine either is blurred or is eclectic.

In this regard, it is possible to talk about the existence of specific cultural tradition of Russian Buddhism. Of course, the term *Russian Buddhism* is conventional and belongs not to theological sphere, but to

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<sup>147</sup> List of totalitarian sects, retrieved on 28 Lanuary 2017, <http://nevskiy.orthodoxy.ru>. (in Russian)

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Cup made from skull.



areas of socio-political and socio-cultural life. At the same time, Russian Buddhists in their mentality, identity, lifestyle, cultural traditions differ from Buddhists of Tibet, China, Japan or other countries. The analysis of Buddhism in historical and cultural tradition of Russia shows us that in this environment, the Buddhist development was defined by its Eurasian character. The long and deep perception of the Russian culture by Kalmyks and Buryats, contributed in the formation of such unique Eurasian phenomenon as Russian Buddhism.

## 2.8 Russian Buddhology after the World War II

As it was already noted, after Stcherbatsky's death in 1942 buddhology in Russia (USSR) disappeared at least for 15 years.

After Stalin's death in 53, buddhologist researches in Russia timidly began to revive. An important role in the course of this revival was played by homecoming of the well-known tibetologist and buddhologist Yu. Roerich, the son of the famous artist. Roerich did a lot for revival of the *Bibliotheca Buddhica*. In 1960, he published in this series Dhammapada (in V. Toporov's translation).<sup>150</sup> The publication of this translation caused scandal. The academic officials accused the scientist of priestly propaganda. Yu. Roerich hardly endured this persecution and soon died. However, in 1963, also in *Bibliotheca Buddhica* series, B. Pankratov and E. Temkin published a chapter from *Purva Bhavana Krama* by Kamalashila, which was prepared for the edition by E. Obermiller. After that, *Bibliotheca Buddhica* stopped again for decades.

At the edge of 1960-1970s, the second period of Russian buddhology prosperity began. An important role in it was played by the editions of the Tartu State University "Works on Sign Systems" and "Works on Oriental Studies". Such figures of the buddhologist Renaissance as L. Myall (*prajna-paramita* literature), B. Dandaron (Vajrayana, traditions Dzogchen and Mahamudra), and O. Volkova (classical Indian Buddhism) regularly published their works there. A. Piatigorskiy published there his works on methodological aspects of buddhology, Buddhist psychology and phenomenology of consciousness.

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<sup>150</sup> Toropov, V. (tr. to Russian). **Dhammapada**, Translation to Russian language, (Moscow: Bibliotheca Buddhica, 1960).

His conversations about the nature of consciousness with M. Mamardashvili, conceived as an introduction to studying vijnyanavada, had not only buddhologist, but also an actual philosophical value.

However, this Renaissance turned to be very short-term. In 1972, Dandaron was arrested. As it was already mentioned, he was not only buddhologist, but also a practicing Buddhist and even more - a Tantric yogin (as he came from an old kin, which gave Buryatia many outstanding lamas). He was charged of creation of a certain sect. As defense witnesses many buddhologists, who closely contacted Dandaron's group, were invited. The court condemned Dandaron, who soon died in prison, and took out particular decisions in regard of some witnesses. Consequences of "Dandaron's case" were very tragic for buddhology. In the opinion of the authorities and the academic officials, it became a suspicious, almost seditious occupation. Buddhologist researches were stopped. The majority of research subjects of buddhologist character were closed. A. Piatigorskiy emigrated to England, and A. Syrkin to Israel. O. Volkova and L. Myall were practically discharged of scientific life.

Nevertheless, Russian buddhology did not stop completely. Though in classical sense it almost disappeared, many researches continue to develop in historical, sociological, philological and culturological formats. These formats are anyway connected with studying of the Buddhism (for example, problems of correlation of Buddhism and the state institutes in Eastern countries, national Buddhist literature of medieval China, role of Buddhism in cultures of Central and East Asia and others).<sup>151</sup>

We should especially note the book of a Moscow art critic E. Zavadskaya "The East in the West"<sup>152</sup> (M., 1972; republished in 1977 under the name "Culture of the East in the Modern Western World").

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<sup>151</sup> Here we should state the names of such scientists as the academician G.M. Bongard-Levin (Spiritual literature of Ancient India), L.N. Menschikov (Buddhist literature of Byanven genre), M.I. Vorobeva-Desiatovskaia (Buddhist Sanskrit texts of Central Asia), I.S. Gurevich (the language of Chan conversations Yuyulu), V.I. Kornev (Buddhism and social life of the countries of South-Eastern Asia), V.N. Goregliad (Buddhism and Japanese literature), A.S. Martynov (Buddhism, society and state in China and the Far East).

<sup>152</sup> E. Zavadskaya, **The East in the West**. (Moscow: Science, 1972). Republished in 1977 under the title **Eastern Culture in Modern Western World**. (in Russian)

This small book describes the influence of the Buddhism Chan (Zen) on Western culture of the XX<sup>th</sup> century. Though its proper buddhologist value is rather modest, it played a very important and positive role both in informing general public on new processes of cross-cultural interaction, and in distinct stimulation of interest in a buddhology at young Orientologists.

In the second half of 1970s and in the early 1980s the number the buddhologist researches increased. Though in general their level remains rather modest on the international standards, the buddhology revival itself was a very encouraging fact. It is also important to note that the buddhologist studies orientation on indologist and tibetologist subjects, traditional for Russia, at that moment was completed with the emerged and developing researches in the field of history of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism.

In 1980s, researchers of new generation actively declared themselves as participants of scientific process. They defined the character of Russian buddhology of the 1990s.

It is impossible to leave without attention the group of V. Rudoy's, a scientist who was actively working already in 1970s. Later (at the edge of 80s-90s) this group was organizationally formed as a group of buddhology of St-Petersburg Branch of RAS Institute of Oriental Studies. This group can be considered the first complete Russian buddhologist school after Stcherbatsky, with well-defined methodological principles. The most active and consistent members of this school, besides the Rudoy himself are probably E. Ostrovskaya and T. Ermakova.

The main subject of this group's study is the classical Buddhist *Abhidharma*, and even not all *Abhidharma*, but Vasubandhu *Abhidharmakosha* treatise. On the basis of the comprehensive analysis of this monument, Rudoy's group draws wide conclusions of all-buddhologist character.

Some extremely important positive factors of Rudoy's disciples activity are follow,

- a) Appeal to the classical buddhologist perspective and revival of Stcherbatsky's school traditions.
- b) Existence of a developed theoretical and methodological research base and the hermeneutical procedure.
- c) High level of both the philological and historic-philosophical text analysis.

At the same time, it was marked by absolutization of the doctrine of the treatise of Vasubandhu. Sometimes received conclusions extend non-critically to Buddhism in general, including not only Indian forms of this religion. Sometimes Vasubandhu's philosophy of his period identified with the standard or classical Buddhism. These aspects significantly reduced the value of the obtained results.

In the early 1990s the Buddhologist School of philosophical faculty of St-Petersburg State University (E. Torchinov, K. Solonin and a number of beginning young scientists) is gradually formed. Genetically this school goes back to Rudoy's school. However, it differs both in its subject and on some approaches. Firstly, the university buddhologists use first of all the Chinese texts material. Secondly, they are inclined to consider Buddhism as truly pluralistic tradition, refusing the attempts to find a certain modal, standard or even classical Buddhism.

Summing up the review of the thorny path of the Russian buddhology, we can say that, despite a quick revival process and development of new subjects and approaches, Russian buddhology considerably lagged behind the Western and Japanese scientific schools. For now, it is not able to act as a subject of modern research process, which is equal to equal to other scientific traditions.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

In general, the situation in Russia can be characterized as stably unfavorable for Buddhism.

In Mongolia, Buddhism did not immediately take the lead. Nevertheless, it has become possible over time. One of the main favorable conditions for the spread of Buddhism in Mongolia was a sharp change in the socio-political system of Mongolian society from tribal to feudal. Later, with the collapse of the Mongol Empire and with the growth of Russian influence, some Mongol tribes became part of Russia. They brought Buddhism to the territory of this state.

In Russia, there were similar sharp changes in the socio-political system. It happened twice in the XX<sup>th</sup> century. But the first change destroyed the religion, and the second allowed only to restore the tradition to its previous level.

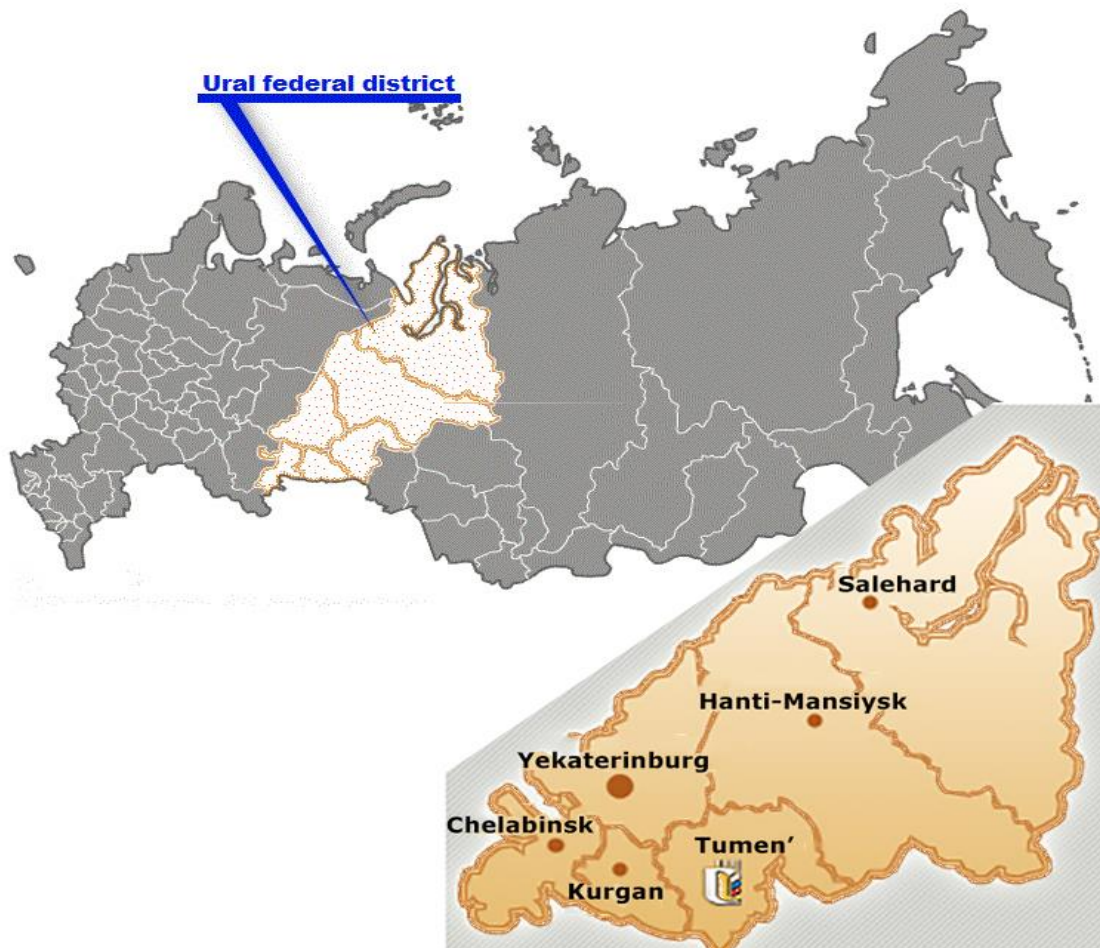
New global political phenomena are brightly manifested in the Russian reality of the XIX<sup>th</sup> – XXI<sup>th</sup> centuries. Among them, Buddhology,

the growth of education, globalization, the development of non-ethnic Buddhism and many others. Of course, each of them deserves a separate, detailed study. Nevertheless, they did not have a decisive influence on Russian society, and Buddhism did not achieve a dominant position in Russia, as happened in Mongolia.

### Chapter III

## Sociological Study of Modern Russian Buddhist Communities in the Ural Region

At the present time, almost all regions of Russia are represented all the existing traditions of Buddhism: Theravada, Mahayana and Tibetan Vajrayana. Ural is no exception. Over the past two decades, Buddhist communities, mainly related to Tibetan Buddhism, had form a noticeable phenomenon in the religious landscape of the region.



**Figure 3.1 Geographical Position of Ural Federal District and Yekaterinburg City**

Buddhism in the post-Soviet period has become one of the alternatives to other officially recognized religions, the new spiritual landmark.

The rise in popularity of Eastern doctrines in the regions in which Buddhism was not developed traditionally, makes it relevant to study the processes of spreading and adaptation of Buddhist institutions.

For the sociological research author chose communities located in the Ural Federal District. The large Buddhist communities in the Ural region consist of Buddhist new converts. They do not belong to the nations, which profess Buddhism traditionally.

Buddhist communities means Buddhist groups, united by a commitment of a Buddhist school or teacher and carrying out joint religious activities. These communities are registered or not registered as a local religious organization and belongs to a large network of communities in Russia or abroad.

It is important to note that, applying the sociological approach, the author did not resort to any sociological theories or models, but only used research methods that sociologists apply.

In addition to the studies that have been mentioned in Chapter 1, other kinds of sources have been taken as a basis of the work. Legislative source, which was used for the analysis of the legal provisions of the Buddhist community, is Federal Law Russia no.125-FZ *About Freedom of Conscience and Religious communities*. Official records, in particular the documents on land allocation, have been used to reconstruct the history of Shad Tchup Ling community. An official letter from the press service of the Ivolga datsan<sup>1</sup> to the disciples of Sannikov was provided by Shad Tchup Ling members.

In addition, the community Shad Tchup Ling submitted the correspondence materials, personal letters of community leaders of 2003.

Also, the materials of the official websites concerning the history of communities, teachers, religious practices, social activities (exhibitions, visits of teachers, lectures) have been used. The data about the structure and activities of the community was taken from the information published by members of the community in the social

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<sup>1</sup> Ivolga datsan (datsan means seminary).

network VK.<sup>2</sup> Journalism and media materials were actively used in the work.

### 3.1 Karma Kagyu School

One of the largest non-ethnic communities of Buddhists in Russia and particularly in the Ural is the Association of Diamond Way. It is a global network of centers founded by Lama Ole Nydahl and his wife Hannah Nydahl.

Ole Nydahl (born 1941) is one of the lamas recognized by the school of Tibetan Buddhism, Karma Kagyu (Khamtsang Kagyu), which was formed in the XI<sup>th</sup> – XII<sup>th</sup> centuries. The founders of the Kagyu tradition are considered to be the Tibetans Marpa Chokyi Lodro (1012-1097) and his disciple Milarepa Shepa Dorje (1052-1135), as well as Gampopa (1079-1153), who systematized the a complex of teachings of this tradition in the text *Precious jewelry of liberation*.

One of his students, Düsüm Khyenpa Lama (1110-1103) had set the basis of the Tibetan social and religious institution tulkus, which is tradition of searching the rebirth lamas. In the line, founded by him, all tulkus received the title of *Karmapa*. At Karmapa Rangjung Dorje III (1284-1339) the second line of tulkus - Shamarpa or Red Cap Karmapa emerged.

#### 3.1.1 History of Karma Kagyu School in the Europe and in Russia

At the beginning of the XXI<sup>th</sup> century in the Karma Kagyu, there was a split due to the fact that different groups of adherents the Karma Kagyu recognized different people as the incarnation of the 17th Karmapa. Urgyen Trinley Dorje (born 1985) was recognized by the close disciples of XVI Karmapa, Tai Situ Rinpoche and Gyaltsab Rinpoche. The Dalai Lama XIV verified his status. The latest Shamarpa and Lama Ole Nydahl supported Trinley Thaye Dorje (born 1983).<sup>3</sup>

Religious practice of the Karma Kagyu school begins with the act of *taking refuge* in the *Three Jewels*: the Buddha, his teaching and the Saṅgha (the school of Tibetan Mahayana include in its structure not only

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<sup>2</sup> VK - VKontakte (eng. on connection) Russian analogue of Facebook.

<sup>3</sup> T. Lehnert, **Rogues in robes**, (Moscow: Diamond Way, 2004), p.21. (in Russian)



monks, but also bodhisattvas). After this practitioner collects two *accumulations*. The first *accumulation* is good *kamma* from compliance with basic morality in Pratimoksha<sup>4</sup> system and the bodhisattva vows<sup>5</sup>. The second *accumulation* is wisdom.

The basic practice in the Karma Kagyu, as well as all modern schools of Tibetan Buddhism, is *Ngondro* (Tibetan: Introductory, preceding), designed to cleanse the internal negative forces, to develop positive<sup>6</sup> and prepare the mind for further development. *Ngondro* involves performing 100,000 prostrations to the image of the *Tree of Refuge*, *mandala* offering, *Vajrasattva* mantra repetition, and *Guru Yoga* practice<sup>7</sup>.

Ole Nydahl became interested in Buddhism in 1968 during a trip to Nepal. In 1969, he and his wife became the closest Western students of the 16th Karmapa.<sup>8</sup> After several years of training in 1972, XVI Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje (1924-1981) ordered Ole and Hannah Nydahl to found in the West Buddhist centers where people could study Buddhism. Enlisting a letter from the Karmapa,<sup>9</sup> Hannah and Ole Nydahl received support from the Government of Denmark and started their mission.

Lama Ole succession line goes back to the high-ranking lamas of the Karma Kagyu School: XVI Karmapa Rangjung Dorje Rigpe (1924-1981), the XVII Karmapa Trinley Thaye Dorje (born 1983), the XIV Shamarpa Mipham Rinpoche Chokyi Lodro (1952-2014), Lopon Tsechu Rinpoche (1918-2003) and Kalu Rinpoche (1905-1989).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In Tibetan Buddhism this term means vows of individual liberation and usually contain only 5 rules of lay people.

<sup>5</sup> Gampopa. **Precious jewelery of liberation**, (St. Petersburg: Karma Yeshe Paldron, 2005), pp 150-170. (in Russian)

<sup>6</sup> A. Berzin, **Selected works on Buddhism and Tibetology**, Vol 1, (Moscow: Open World, 2006), p.52. (in Russian)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> O. Nydahl, **The discovery Diamond Way. Tibetan Buddhism Meets West**, (Moscow: Diamond Way, 2010), p.380. (in Russian)

<sup>9</sup> Letter from the 16th Karmapa to Danish Queen Margarethe, retrieved on 24 October 2016, [http://www.lama-ole-nydahl.org/wp-content/k\\_letter\\_01.pdf](http://www.lama-ole-nydahl.org/wp-content/k_letter_01.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Lama Ole Nydahl, official site, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://www.lama-ole-nydahl.ru/teachers/>. (in Russian)

Nydahl status as a Buddhist teacher is confirmed by official letters by Shamarpa Rinpoche<sup>11</sup> and Rinpoche Chodrak Tenpela.<sup>12</sup>

Currently, there are more than 650 secular Buddhist centers that are founded by Nydahl, which are located in 57 countries.<sup>13</sup>

According to the website of the Russian Association of Diamond Way Karma Kagyu lineage, in Russia the first group of Buddhist practitioners under the guidance of Lama Ole emerged in Leningrad in 1989. In 1992, Buddhist centers have been registered in several major cities in Russia, and in 1993 they merged the association.<sup>14</sup>

Currently, the Association is the largest Buddhist organization of the Russian Federation. It comprises more than 80 registered centers in all parts of the country, including traditionally Buddhist regions of Tuva, Buryatia and Kalmykiya. In addition, there are the so-called groups of Karma Kagyu friends in the cities, where the number of Buddhists belonging to the Association is too small and does not allow the official register, retreat centers in the Republic of Karelia, Mari El, Altai and others. The total number of members of the centers of Karma Kagyu difficult to determine, since the organization does not carry internal statistics.

The study and practice of Buddhism in the within the Association are intended for people who choose it because of its orientation to secular and non-monastic Buddhism, recognized as the most viable and promising form of adaptation of the Buddhist tradition in the West.

Association of Karma Kagyu carries active research and educational activities. Since 2008, every two years, it organizes

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<sup>11</sup> Document from Shamar Rinpoche (1983) Recognition as a Buddhist teacher from the lineage holder of the Karma Kagyu lineage, the second highest after the Karmapa, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://www.lama-ole-nydahl.org/wp-content/shamarpa.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> Document from Khenpo Chödrak Rinpoche (1995) Confirmation of the Lama title Retrieved on 24 October 2016, [http://www.lama-ole-nydahl.org/wp-content/kenpo\\_choedrak.htm](http://www.lama-ole-nydahl.org/wp-content/kenpo_choedrak.htm).

<sup>13</sup> Buddhist Centers Worldwide. **Over 640 Diamond Way Buddhist Centers Worldwide, retrieved** on 24 October 2016, <http://www.diamondway-buddhism.org/diamondway-buddhist-centers/>.

<sup>14</sup> Russian Karma Kagyu Association, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://www.buddhism.ru/onas/almaznyiy-put-v-rossii>. (in Russian)

international scientific-practical conference of Vajrayana Buddhism in Russia, which attract both professional scholars of Buddhism and Buddhists from all over Russia. In large cities, the Association holds regular exhibitions telling about Buddhism.

Most of the centers of the Association have a web page telling about the Buddhist teachings about the teachers of their traditions and events. The official website of the Russian Association has a list of the documents confirming the traditionalism of the organization<sup>15</sup>. There are letters by Shamarpa Rinpoche, the second most important lama in the Karma Kagyu tradition,<sup>16</sup> and researchers-buddhologists N Zhukovskaya,<sup>17</sup> B Kitinov<sup>18</sup> and others.

Despite this, there are also other conformity assessment of traditional Tibetan models principles and practices adopted by the Association. So, Nydahl disciples are called sectarians,<sup>19</sup> the organization itself neo-Buddhist sect, whose vigorous activity has negative social consequences as a whole.<sup>20</sup> Ole Nydahl is condemned for discrepancy with the authentic Buddhist Lama (the presence of a wife or girlfriend, eating meat and drinking alcohol, the lack of traditional lama's clothes, using techniques of American evangelical preachers during the speeches to large audiences).<sup>21</sup>

The head of the Buddhist Traditional Saṅgha of Russia Pandita Hambo Lama D. Ayushev evaluates the organization created by Nydahl

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<sup>15</sup> Official documents, Retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://www.buddhism.ru/onas/dokumenty-i-assotsiatsii>. (in Russian)

<sup>16</sup> Letter by Shamarpa, 1997, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://www.buddhism.ru/pismo-kyunziga-shamarpyi-2>. (in Russian)

<sup>17</sup> Letter by N Zhukovskaya **About traditionalism of the Karma Kagyu school**, 2000, Retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://www.buddhism.ru/pismo-d-ra-n-l-zhukovskoy-otraditsionnosti-shkolyi-karma-kagy>. (in Russian)

<sup>18</sup> Letter by B Kitinov **About traditionalism of the Karma Kagyu School**, 1999, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://www.buddhism.ru/pismo-k-i-n-b-u-kitinova-o-traditsionnostishkolyi-karma-kagy>-1999. (in Russian)

<sup>19</sup> **Neo-Buddhist mission of Ole Nydahl**, retrieved on 24 October 2016, [http://www.sektoved.ru/enciclopedia.php?art\\_id=41](http://www.sektoved.ru/enciclopedia.php?art_id=41). (in Russian)

<sup>20</sup> M. Plotnikov **Neo-Buddhist sect of Ole Nydahl**, retrieved on 24 October 2016, [http://www.k-istine.ru/sects/nidalh/ole\\_nidahl\\_plotnikov.htm](http://www.k-istine.ru/sects/nidalh/ole_nidahl_plotnikov.htm). (in Russian)

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

in the similar way. He said that the Saṅgha should refer to all other traditions and schools of Buddhism, such as Zen Buddhism and Karma Kagyu, as Orthodox Christians refer to the Pentecostals.<sup>22</sup>

Buddhologist and Tibetologist A. Terentyev said that Ole Nydahl deliberately exalts himself and his organization in the description of the history of Buddhism in the West as the process of just the last few decades, in which there is no significant figures, except for him and his wife. Terentyev calls the Nydahl's exposition of the Buddhist concept of the emptiness as *the nihilistic, materialistic fantasies* that have nothing to do with the traditional philosophy, but which are replicated trustingly and are evolved by his disciples.<sup>23</sup>

Another cause for criticism is the fact that the Association of Diamond Way always positioned itself as the Karma Kagyu School. In fact, it had just arisen as a result of the split of opinions in the selection of XVII Karmapa and increasingly marginalized fraction of the Karma Kagyu. Shamarpa Rinpoche had created it and Ole Nydahl widely distributed it in the West. But the main part of the Karma Kagyu clergy and practitioners, who believe in the Karmapa Ugyen Trinley, has nothing to do with the activities of the Ole's organization. Therefore, I think it would be more correct for Nydahl's disciples to call themselves somehow like the Karma Kagyu lineage of Shamarpa Rinpoche. They should not make the impression that they really represent the entire Karma Kagyu.<sup>24</sup>

### **3.1.2 The Development and Structure of the Karma Kagyu Community in the Yekaterinburg City**

In the Ural Federal District and surrounding areas, the Association of the Karma Kagyu has, in addition to Yekaterinburg, large branches in cities such as Chelyabinsk, Magnitogorsk (Chelyabinsk region), Sarapul,

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<sup>22</sup> P. Varnavsky, "National religion in context of globalization: traditional Buddhism in modern Burytiya", **Anthropological Forum**, No.14, 2011, p.205. (in Russian)

<sup>23</sup> A. Terentyev, "Where does "diamond way" leads", in **Vajrayana Buddhism in Russia. History and modernity**, (St. Petersburg: Unlimited Space, 2009), p.123. (in Russian)

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

Izhevsk (Republic of Udmurtia), Perm (Perm Territory), Ufa (Republic of Bashkortostan).<sup>25</sup>

Lama Ole founded Diamond Way Buddhist Center in Yekaterinburg personally. He arrived in the city during a tour of Russia in 1992, at the invitation from Yekaterinburg. With the support of the representatives of the Department of Religious Studies of Ural State University, in particular its current head Pivovarov,<sup>26</sup> public speech Ole Nydahl was organized in the conference hall of USU. A year later, in March 1993, Ole Nydahl visited Yekaterinburg again. This time, the Association journal of 1994 already called this group of Buddhists Yekaterinburg center.<sup>27</sup>

According to the information provided by one of the former members of the Karma Kagyu center in Yekaterinburg, we can reconstruct the history of this institution in the early 1990s. One of the organizers of the Ole Nydahl lecture was a graduate of the Faculty of Philosophy USU. She led the newly formed group Karma Kagyu. Due to the high interest from the public to the eastern practices, at that time it included esotericists, Wushu fighters, karate fighters, all and sundry.<sup>28</sup>

Based on the first community, the second group was formed under the informal control of Buddhists Popravko family. They started to meet and practice separately and were guided by the principle of the purity of lineage, that is, the former approach of the community, which aims to all those interested, was rejected. The managers of the Association of Diamond Way Karma Kagyu tradition in St. Petersburg, who controlled the cleanliness of the regional groups, supported these changes.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Russian Karma Kagyu Association, Retrieved on 10 October 2016, <http://www.buddhism.ru/en/o-nas/almaznyiy-put-v-rossii>. (in Russian)

<sup>26</sup> Interview with a former member of the Karma Kagyu July 09, 2016, PAL F2 A1.

<sup>27</sup> O. Nydahl **108 questions to Buddhist yogin**, (St. Petersburg: Diamond Way, 1994), p.44. (in Russian)

<sup>28</sup> Interview with a former member of the Karma Kagyu, July 09, 2016. PAL F2 A1.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

After the visit of Ole Nydahl to Yekaterinburg in 1993, a five-year break has happened. The next time he visited the community only in 1998.

At that time, meetings with Ole Nydahl and with another high Lama Eshe Lodoy Rinpoche, who regularly visited Yekaterinburg, gathered all Buddhists of the city regardless tradition of their schools.<sup>30</sup> The first structure of the Karma Kagyu community has collapsed by 1998, and the second group continued to grow due to the care of the central organization. Ole Nydahl held lecture in a private apartment of one of the community members. The number of Yekaterinburg Karma Kagyu community members at the time was approximately 35 people.<sup>31</sup>

At the same time Mikhail Sannikov (Lama Tenzin Dokchit), who founded in 1995 the Buddhist center Shad Tchup Ling on the Kachkanar Mount made contact with Ole Nydahl. Parallel to this, he maintained relations with the leadership of the Russian Association<sup>32</sup>, and was one of the initiators and organizers of the official registration of the Yekaterinburg Karma Kagyu community as a local religious organization named *Yekaterinburg Diamond Way Buddhist Center Karma Kagyu School*. Registration has been agreed with the leadership and conducted in 2001.

Six months later, using the documents received from the Association, Lama Tenzin Dokchit registered LRO Diamond Way Buddhist Center Karma Kagyu School of Kachkanar city, which became the official representative of the Shad Tchup Ling interests. It was planned that Shad Tchup Ling will be the local Retreat Center of Association, which will provide financial support for this project.<sup>33</sup>

Travelling teacher E. Leontyeva, S. Pozdneyev were sent to give lectures at Shad Tchup Ling. However, the founder of Shad Tchup Ling<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> G. Fedorov, **Looking three eyes into boundless space (Teosof view at Buddhism)**, Almanac *Paramita*, No.2. 1998, p.23. (in Russian)

<sup>31</sup> Interview with the head of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, M. Sannikov (Lama Sangye Tenzin Dokchit) July 22, 2016. PAL F1 A1.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with the former president of the community center of Ekaterinburg Buddhist Association Karma Kagyu of Diamond Way July 15, 2016. PAL F2 A2.

<sup>34</sup> Letter by M. Sannikov to Nydahl, 2003 (Mimeographed).

reacted to their knowledge of Buddhism critically.<sup>35</sup> Such criticism has caused dissatisfaction among representatives of the Association, and the relationship between the communities began to grow cold.<sup>36</sup> Nydahl and Sannikov have spoken for the last time in 2005 about the necessity of Buddhist monkhood in the Russian realities, as well as the depth of a standard program of Buddhist practices in the Association.<sup>37</sup> These contradictions have not been resolved, and dialogue between Shad Tchup Ling and the leaders of the Association come to naught.

Membership of Kachkanar LRO Karma Kagyu in the Association since that time has become nominal. Meanwhile, Boris Erokhin, translator of the *Precious jewelry of liberation* (Gampopa is autor), member of the Karma Kagyu School has lectured about the history of Buddhism and basic differences between its traditions in Shad Tchup Ling at the personal invitation of Sannikov. Also, many Buddhist practices that are typical of the Karma Kagyu, continued to be carried out in Shad Tchup Ling for several years. Documents about formal exit of community Kachkanar from the Association have been prepared only in 2011.<sup>38</sup>

In 2005, the private house at the address Raskova, 46 was bought into the ownership of the Yekaterinburg center. This building is a meeting place for Karma Kagyu Buddhists up till now.

In 2008, after it became clear that the project of the Karma Kagyu retreat center in Shad Tchup Ling is closed, members of the Karma Kagyu centers together from Yekaterinburg and Chelyabinsk have bought some land near Lake Argazi in the Chelyabinsk region. There in 2013 the construction of the building was started for Ural Argazi retreat center. The construction process is carried out by members of the Association of the nearby cities and currently is not completed, but the territory of this center already hosts courses, lectures, and every weekend are carried out

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<sup>35</sup> Interview with the head of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, M. Sannikov (Lama Sangye Tenzin Dokchit) July 22, 2016, PAL F1 A1.

<sup>36</sup> Letter by Nydahl to M. Sannikov, 07.04.2003.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with the head of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, M. Sannikov (Lama Sangye Tenzin Dokchit) July 22, 2016. PAL F1 A1.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

practices. Since 2013, there is a resident Karma Kagyu member constantly living in the Argazi.<sup>39</sup>

The building with an adjacent plot of land, purchased by the Yekaterinburg community, on the exterior is almost not identified as a religious center. Only at the gate, there is the emblem of the Karma Kagyu Association, and in the courtyard there are colorful ritual flags *lung-ta*.

In addition to the collective practices, the building is used as a venue for lectures Association of teachers who come to Yekaterinburg.

According to the results of the survey majority of the Karma Kagyu center members expressed satisfaction with the conditions for Buddhist practice provided by this building. Although there was an opinion that the community needs a bigger building than this. Also in the questionnaire, six Karma Kagyu Buddhists expressed the wish to have a traditional Buddhist temple in Yekaterinburg in addition to their center.

During the annual Winter Tour Ole Nydahl makes the journey across Russia with lectures in major cities. Since 2004, he visited Yekaterinburg once per two years with lectures and training courses. For these events, spacious platforms are leased for a large number of listeners:

- a) *Mahamudra* Course on February 26-29, 2004 in the Lavrov's House of Culture;<sup>40</sup>
- b) Lecture on March 5, 2007 at the Theatre of puppets;<sup>41</sup>
- c) Lecture *Buddhism Today* on 7 January 2009<sup>42</sup> and 19 January 2011 at the Cultural Center *Ural*;<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with the former president of the community center of Ekaterinburg Buddhist Association Karma Kagyu of Diamond Way, July 15, 2016. PAL F2 A2.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Ole Nydahl, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://www.e1.ru/talk/guest/desc/111.htm>.

<sup>41</sup> **Scandinavian Lama arrived in Yekaterinburg to talk about the "paranoia" Orthodox Christianity**, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://www.utro.ru/news/2007/03/05/630246.shtml>. (in Russian)

<sup>42</sup> **Lama Ole Nydahl in Yekaterinburg**, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/info/issue10/>. (in Russian)

<sup>43</sup> **Public lecture by Lama Ole Nydahl in Yekaterinburg**, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/news/newspage53/>. (in Russian)



- d) Course named *Buddhist meditation. Levels of penetration* and *Ngondro* explanations on 12-14 January 2013 in Railway House of Culture.<sup>44</sup>

In addition, in October 2005, a teleconference was conducted between Nydahl and his followers from Chelyabinsk, Yekaterinburg, Krasnoyarsk and Irkutsk.<sup>45</sup> Members of the Yekaterinburg Buddhist center travel regularly to the lectures and courses in Chelyabinsk, in the case of Yekaterinburg is not included in the list of cities of Lama Ole Nydahl's Winter tour.<sup>46</sup>

One of the organization specific features are the Diamond Way teachers (formerly teachers-travelers), who are appointed personally by Ole Nydahl. This choice is based on their progress in the study of Buddhism. This is primarily students, not lamas, who are able to explain Doctrine clearly. Each Buddhist center must invite these lecturers at least twice per year.

These teachers-travelers play an important role. They fasten links between centers within the Association, including international level, carry out educational activities, clearly talking about Buddhism and their personal Buddhist experiences, they answer questions from various people: not only the members of Karma Kagyu communities, but also newcomers who came to meet exotic for them Buddhist worldview.

Yekaterinburg Centre receives Diamond Way teachers from Central and Eastern European countries and Russian cities rather often, about once a month and a half (in 2014 6 these lectures were held, in 2013 - 4, in 2012 - 12, in 2011 - 7), all these events are recorded in the official community website in the section *News*.<sup>47</sup>

The Russian Association of Diamond Way is controlled by supreme organ, which is Conference of the local centers representatives.

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<sup>44</sup> **Lama Ole Nydahl came to Ural**, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/news/newspage82/>. (in Russian)

<sup>45</sup> **Lama Ole Nydahl will communicate with adherents of Buddhism virtually**, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://www.savetibet.ru/1128320220.html>. (in Russian)

<sup>46</sup> Interview with the former president of the community center of Ekaterinburg Buddhist Association Karma Kagyu of Diamond Way July 15, 2016. PAL F2 A2.

<sup>47</sup> News, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/news>. (in Russian)

In the intervals between the Conferences, the Association is directed by the Council of Representatives, Lama Ole Nydahl (Denmark) being a permanent member of this Council.

The president carries out representation in the various institutions and signing different securities. The headquarters of the Association and its legal address are located in St. Petersburg.<sup>48</sup> President of the Association and head of the central religious organization since 1993 is A. Kaybagarov, who had adopted Buddhism in 1989 after esoteric hobbies,<sup>49</sup> and since 1999 he lectures about the Buddhism.

At the head of each local religious organization there is officially elected president. In the case of the Yekaterinburg community, the president is also a formal entity for the operation at the state level,<sup>50</sup> but in fact, actual issues are resolved by the general meeting of the community.<sup>51</sup>

### **3.1.3 The Composition and Activities of the Yekaterinburg Karma Kagyu Community**

Due to the fact that the number of community members on a regular basis is not registered, and there are no mandatory contributions,<sup>52</sup> its leaders do not have exact data on total number of people associated with the Yekaterinburg Karma Kagyu center. It was suggested that because many people in Yekaterinburg received dedications by Ole Nydahl, about 200 people keep in contact in one way or another.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Russian Karma Kagyu Association, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://www.buddhism.ru/en/o-nas/almaznyiy-put-v-rossii>. (in Russian)

<sup>49</sup> Koibagarov Alexander, president of the Russian Association of Buddhists traditions Karma Kagyu, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://pressria.ru/authors/koybagarov>. (in Russian)

<sup>50</sup> Interview with the Ekaterinburg Karma Kagyu community members. July 09, 2016, PAL F2 A3.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with the former president of the community center of Ekaterinburg Buddhist Association Karma Kagyu of Diamond Way. July 15, 2016. PAL F2 A2.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with the President of the Russian Association of Diamond Way Buddhist school Karma Kagyu A. Koibagarov June 07, 2016. PAL F2 A4.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with the Ekaterinburg Karma Kagyu community members. July 09 2016, PAL F2 A3.

However, an interview with an independent observer indicates that daily practice *Three lights* is usually carried out by 6-9 members of the community, at a Diamond Way teachers lecture there are 50-80 people, including members of the Chelyabinsk center and non-Buddhists who came to gain knowledge about Buddhism.<sup>54</sup> On a large and important event, the Ole Nydahl's course of *Mahamudra* in Chelyabinsk in January 2015, about 50 people came from Yekaterinburg Karma Kagyu center.<sup>55</sup> These data reflecting the number of permanent and motivated members confirm the information from several interviews: "No more than 50 people are actively involved in the community", "50 people are the backbone of the community".<sup>56</sup>

According to the survey, all members of the community, with the exception of one man, belong to the Association of Diamond Way starting from the moment they became Buddhists, that is they did not cross into this Buddhist community from any other. Three respondents associated themselves with the Orthodox Church before the Buddhism, while the rest did not mention their interest in other religions in the past.

The overwhelming majority of the community members have held there from three to ten years or more, there were only one or two people who belonged to it since its foundation.<sup>57</sup> According to one of the former members of the center, people leave the Association in quest of serious progress in Buddhist practice, evaluating the approach adopted in it as superficial. Thus, a significant number of members of the Yekaterinburg Karma Kagyu, including former leaders, after obtaining enough experience, moved to Dzogchen Community.<sup>58</sup>

The data of questionnaires and interviews can give approximate information about the social pattern within the community. The number of men only slightly exceeds the number of women. Half of Karma Kagyu Community members are married. At the same time, their relatives are also Buddhists in the majority, or are interested in it.

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<sup>54</sup> Interview with an independent observer July 25, 2016, PAL F2 A5.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with the former president of the community center of Ekaterinburg Buddhist Association Karma Kagyu of Diamond Way, July 15, 2016. PAL F2 A2.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with a former member of the Karma Kagyu, July 09, 2016. PAL F2 A1.

In the community, there are people from 27 to 50 years, with a predominance of persons 30-40 years old. The vast majority has a higher education a few people have secondary special education, minority works in accordance with the received specialty.

No one thought that during practices he/she is suffering because of any problems in the community, teacher or place for practice. All respondents felt that their lives changed for the better after initiation to Buddhism.

Members of this community estimate Buddhism prospects in the Ural about the same way: “wide, as elsewhere in the world”, “very positive”, “positive, Buddhism will continue to develop in the Urals”, “Buddhism contains many sermons about how to be happy. Everyone wants happiness. Therefore, prospects are most promising”.

According to information provided by the former president of the center, about a third or half of community regularly goes to the initiation abroad (to Europe) once per year.<sup>59</sup> Survey results confirm this evidence. In the questionnaire, the questions about pilgrimages and trips in order to increase their knowledge about Buddhism, four Buddhists responded that they went abroad for that purpose, and across the Russian Federation also, three members answered, that they travelled only inside of Russia, and only one person did not commit such tours.

Having clarified the open-ended question “Did you receive initiations, teachings beyond the Ural region?” the author has obtained information about organized trips to Spain, where there is a retreat center of the International Association *Karma Gon*, as well as to Germany, where there is a large *Europe Center* and to Austria.

In addition, Yekaterinburg Karma Kagyu Buddhists visit the Argazi retreat center. There they conduct Buddhist practices and participate in the construction.

This Buddhist center is focused on communication with the public. It is the most available opportunity for the Yekaterinburg citizen to be acquainted with Buddhism. In fact, the Karma Kagyu center is the only public Buddhist community in the city. Besides weekly summary

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with the former president of the community center of Ekaterinburg Buddhist Association Karma Kagyu of Diamond Way, July 15, 2016. PAL F2 A2.

lectures on Introduction to Buddhism for beginners,<sup>60</sup> this community organizes open days,<sup>61</sup> tours for adults and children.<sup>62</sup> In 2013, the initiative to organize weekly demonstrations of films about Buddhism emerged.<sup>63</sup> On the 30 of July 2007, the Center supported international Diamond Way sports project to collect donations *Kagyü Run*.<sup>64</sup> In the same 2007 on occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the center, from 12 to 19 November, teachers-travelers lectures and photo exhibition *Tibet - the roof of the world* were conducted.<sup>65</sup>

The celebration of the Tibetan New Year (Losar festival, which takes place in the Tibetan Buddhism according to the lunar calendar) is carried in the Yekaterinburg community for several years. There are four press releases concerning such events in 2007,<sup>66</sup> 2008,<sup>67</sup> 2010<sup>68</sup> and 2015<sup>69</sup>. In addition to the annual lectures for visitors, meditations and

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<sup>60</sup> Schedule of Karma Kagyu center, retrieved on 12 March 2015, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/schedule>. (in Russian)

<sup>61</sup> News of Karma Kagyu center, retrieved on 12 March 2015, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/news/3>. (in Russian)

<sup>62</sup> 07.06.2014 Open excursion for everyone, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/news/newspage100>. (in Russian)

<sup>63</sup> 22.05.2013. Weekly movie screenings are held in Yekaterinburg Buddhist center, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/news/newspage90>. (in Russian)

<sup>64</sup> News, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/news/7>. (in Russian)

<sup>65</sup> 12.11.2007-19.11.2007. Anniversary celebration of the Yekaterinburg Buddhist Center, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/news/newspage8>. (in Russian)

<sup>66</sup> Tibetan New year in the Yekaterinburg city, retrieved on 24 October 2016, [http://savetibet.ru/2007/02/14/losar\\_in\\_ekaterinburg.html](http://savetibet.ru/2007/02/14/losar_in_ekaterinburg.html). (in Russian)

<sup>67</sup> 08.02.2008 Tibetan New year in the Yekaterinburg Buddhist center, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/news/newspage12>. (in Russian)

<sup>68</sup> 14.02.2010 Happy New 2137 year! Celebration of the Tibetan new year in a Buddhist center, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/news/newspage43>. (in Russian)

<sup>69</sup> Tibetan New Year will be celebrated at the Buddhist center of Yekaterinburg, retrieved on 10 October 2016, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/news/newspage105>. (in Russian)

decoration of the center building with flags *lung-ta*, 24-hour meditation was conducted in 2008.

The community celebrates the birth and enlightenment of Buddha, which is also determined by the date of the lunar calendar. In recent years, according to press releases of 2005-2014,<sup>70</sup> the celebration program includes an open day, lectures on Buddhism, meditations, traditional Tibetan dish *tsampa*.<sup>71</sup> It should be noted that only two of those community members who have submitted survey, wrote that they do not celebrate the traditional Buddhist holidays.

In 2003 and 2009, Yekaterinburg has hosted the traveling exhibition of Buddhist art *Treasures of the Himalayas (or Treasure of Tibet)*. It was organized with the support of the Russian Association of Diamond Way Buddhist Karma Kagyu tradition.<sup>72</sup>

From June 7 to July 9, 2012 on the initiative of the Yekaterinburg Buddhist center, the international public organization *Cultural Heritage of the Himalayas*, the Yekaterinburg Museum of History and Museum of Archaeology, ethnography and history of the Samara State University, in Yekaterinburg an exhibition dedicated to Buddhist culture *From Tibet to the Ural* was conducted. More than 150 exhibits have been collected for the exhibition.<sup>73</sup> They include Asian countries artefacts, archaeological finds of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, which were found in the Ural territory, and

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<sup>70</sup> Buddha's birthday 2005, retrieved on 12 March 2015, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/info/issue4>. (in Russian)

Buddha's birthday 2007 in Yekaterinburg, retrieved on 12 March 2015, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/info/issue1>. (in Russian)

12.05.2008- 25.05.2008 Day celebration program birthday and enlightenment of Buddha in Yekaterinburg, retrieved on 12 March 2015, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/news/newspage18>. (in Russian)

Big excursion on the Buddha's birthday, retrieved on 12 March 2015, [http://www.buddhism.ru/center\\_news\\_page/bolshaya-ekskursiya-v-den-rozhdeniya-buddyi](http://www.buddhism.ru/center_news_page/bolshaya-ekskursiya-v-den-rozhdeniya-buddyi). (in Russian)

<sup>71</sup> We invite you to an open day on June 6, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/news/newspage108>. (in Russian)

<sup>72</sup> Y. Shishkina, "Travelling 'Treasure'", **Evening Yekaterinburg**, (06 February, 2009), pp.1,6. (in Russian)

<sup>73</sup> Buddhism: From Tibet to the Ural, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UuLBHWfJFc>. (in Russian)

metal wares, which were brought to the Ural for remelting during World War II.

Buddhist Centre cooperates with the schools of the city in preparation for the lessons of the basics of religious culture and secular ethics. For lessons about Buddhism school teachers used not only the official textbook *Fundamentals of religious cultures and secular ethics: Basics of Buddhist culture*,<sup>74</sup> but also applied to the Yekaterinburg Karma Kagyu Center, the members of which held lectures, answered the questions of schoolchildren and offered to teachers<sup>75</sup> the book by Y. Leontyeva's *Guide to Buddhism. Illustrated Encyclopedia*.<sup>76</sup>

Members of the Yekaterinburg Karma Kagyu Center perform *Ngondro*. It is the traditional complex of preliminary practices. According to the Nydahl's approach, the completion of them, is an obligatory condition for admission to practices of a higher level,<sup>77</sup> such as Guru Yoga on Karmapa VIII. In the Yekaterinburg center, this practice is not performed collectively.

Instead, the more available Guru Yoga on Karmapa XVI, called *Three lights* is practiced. At the end of the practice, the short *puja* for *Mahakala Bernagchen* can be committed according to the traditional melodies in the original Tibetan language: unlike other practices, it is not translated into Russian.

In addition, members of the Center perform *sadhanas* (Sanskrit method of achieving) Practices to achieve certain conditions: *Meditation on Diamond Mind* (sadhana of *Vajrasattva*), *a meditation on the Buddha of Medicine* (*Bhaishajyaguru*), *meditation on Loving Eyes* (sadhana of *Avalokiteshvara*) and others.

Translations into Russian language of these texts are standard for all Karma Kagyu Centers of the Association and are issued centrally by

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<sup>74</sup> B. Kitinov, K. Savcenko, **Fundamentals of religious cultures and secular ethics: Basics of Buddhist Culture**, (Moscow: Drofa, 2012-2013). (in Russian)

<sup>75</sup> Interview with the former president of the community center of Ekaterinburg Buddhist Association Karma Kagyu of Diamond Way, July 15, 2016. PAL F2 A2.

<sup>76</sup> E. Leontyeva **Guide to Buddhism. Illustrated Encyclopedia**, (Moscow: Eksmo, 2012). (in Russian)

<sup>77</sup> O. Nydahl, **Aspects of Diamond Way meditation. Vajrayana Buddhism in Russia: From contacts to interact**, (Moscow: Diamond Way, 2012), p.186. (in Russian)

publishing house Diamond Way. According to the survey, members of the Yekaterinburg Karma Kagyu Center read texts for the practices and rituals in Russian language and Tibetan transcription, and one respondent said that he also uses the English text in personal practice.

Mentions of conducting other practices adopted in the Kagyu lineage, such as the practice of *anuttara-yoga tantra* level (Practice *yidams* [Tibetan Connection with mind] and other *Dhammapalas*), except *Mahakala Bernagchen*, was not encountered during the research. Practice of *yidams* and the *Six Yogas of Naropa* are considered as traditionally secret, and Buddhists should not talk about them. An informant belonging to the number of people who have the longest practice experience in Yekaterinburg center, when asked about the traditional of the Kagyu lineage practice of *Six Yogas of Naropa*, has said that if they are practiced in our time, he does not know anything about it.<sup>78</sup>

The author's own observations confirm that any outside people may attend or participate in the practice of *Three Lights* and *Mahakala-Puja*. This is also confirmed by an independent observer.<sup>79</sup> Meditation *Three Lights* is performed daily at 20:15 in the Buddhist center on the Raskova Street, 46,<sup>80</sup> also it was practiced at the end of Diamond Way teachers' lectures.

The Association can be considered an open organization. Interview with Independent Observer has shown that he had access not only to lectures on Buddhism and to some practice, without initiation by Lama Ole Nydahl. He also visited the *Mahamudra* course, one of the highest practices of Tibetan Buddhism, which assumes the experience of higher catharsis.<sup>81</sup>

At the same time an independent observer has noted that Lama Ole Nydahl deviated from the traditional approach to *Mahamudra* practice, presenting it not as a set of practices, but as a view.<sup>82</sup> As a result, the Ole Nydahl's Karma Kagyu has no meditation called *Mahamudra*.

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<sup>78</sup> Interview with informant XI, July 30, 2016. PAL F2 A8.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with an independent observer September 21, 2016, PAL F2 A6.

<sup>80</sup> Schedule of Karma Kagyu center, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://ekaterinburg.buddhism.ru/schedule>. (in Russian)

<sup>81</sup> G. Tucci, **Tibet Religions**, St. Petersburg: Eurasia, 2005, p.102.

<sup>82</sup> O. Nydahl, **Great Seal**, St. Petersburg: Diamond Way, 2000, p.153. (in Russian)



This is not a guide to practice. It is a kind of attempt to direct transmission of the experience from teacher to student.<sup>83</sup> This method of *Mahamudra* comprehension, according to Nydahl, has issued as a separate path probably only from the time of the 16th Karmapa, it was the secret power of the Kagyu lineage, and today represents the core of the new groups of the Karma Kagyu lineage in the West.<sup>84</sup>

Each member accepts *bodhisattva*<sup>85</sup> vows informally in a morning after waking up and before any practice.<sup>86</sup> Traditionally, this vow and the formula of Buddhist refuge are preliminary stage of any practice. Lama Ole initially gives these vows. They are the official admission to the practice.

According to the questionnaires, all of the respondents in the Buddhists center do a practice once or several times per day, and communicate with the teacher (in this case Lama Ole Nydahl is teacher for all) every few months, or with regularity every few years. Yekaterinburg Karma Kagyu Buddhists observe the vow of personal liberation (5 vows a layman) by default, understanding its necessity at the level of common sense,<sup>87</sup> that is, they do not formally adopt this vow.

Ole Nydahl gives initiation into *phowa* (yoga transfer of consciousness at the time of death). He got it from the lama of Nyingma School.<sup>88</sup> This course is available annually in Russia. In the Association and in the center of Yekaterinburg *phowa* is not a regular practice. It is performed to help the dead beings, in case of someone from the Buddhists or their friends or relatives die.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Interview with an independent observer, September 21, 2016, PAL F2 A7.

<sup>84</sup> O. Nydahl, **Great Seal**, p.23.

<sup>85</sup> Bodhisattva is a person, which Nurtured *bodhichitta* that is a spontaneous desire to attain Buddhahood for the benefit of all living beings under the influence of great compassion (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, **Bodhisattva Vow**, St. Petersburg: Utpala, 2002), p.1.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with informant XI, July 30, 2016, PAL F2 A8.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Lineage of our *phowa* Longchen Nyingtik, retrieved on 24 October 2016, <http://www.buddhism.ru/liniya-peredachi-nashey-praktiki-phovyi-longchen-ningtig>. (in Russian)

<sup>89</sup> Interview with informant XI, July 30, 2016, PAL F2 A8.

E. Glavatskaya in her article *Diamond Way Buddhism in the religious landscape of the Urals: the experience of historical and anthropological research*<sup>90</sup> notes that in general, a visit the Karma Kagyu Buddhist Center produces the emotional experience of a positive nature. Buddhists are described as very positive people. They are happy to answer visitor's questions. All of them are very friendly and adequate people, but not crazy on their own passion.

These data correlate to the information received by means of questionnaires. Karma Kagyu Buddhist Center members answered the questions about the attitude of other people to their Buddhist identity. Thus, according to their testimonies, their families mainly refer to their choice of religion positively, some refer neutrally; friends positively or neutrally; unfamiliar people mostly refer neutrally, seldom moderately negatively.

The center almost does not communicate with other communities in Yekaterinburg and Sverdlovsk region, who do not belong to the Association. Kuligin, the former president of the Yekaterinburg center, in an interview said that,

“The joint activities never happened, that is, these activities are possible at the level other than practice (exhibition, evening), but we and they do not express such desire. All interactions between the communities, come to occasional borrowing of some exhibits from his friends from the other community”.<sup>91</sup>

Community members confirm that they do not seek to communicate, except cases of necessity.<sup>92</sup> The survey shows that only one person from the respondents keeps in contact not only with the centers of the Association, but also with a certain community of the Gelug School.

Interview with President of the Russian Association Kaybagarov demonstrates that this approach is not original for the center of

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<sup>90</sup> E. Glavatskaya, T. Babkina, “Diamond Way Buddhism in the religious landscape of the Ural: the experience of historical and anthropological research”, **Vajrayana Buddhism in Russia: Historical Discourse and neighboring cultures**, (Moscow: Diamond Way, 2013), p.147. (in Russian)

<sup>91</sup> Interview with the former president of the community center of Ekaterinburg Buddhist Association Karma Kagyu of Diamond Way, July 15, 2016. PAL F2 A2.

<sup>92</sup> Interview with informant XI, July 30, 2016. PAL F2 A8.

Yekaterinburg. He said, “Indeed, it is difficult to work with the other communities: they have not enough experience or coordination of work for accomplishing a project. Karma Kagyu works more effectively.”<sup>93</sup> This point of view on cooperation is explained by the idea that in other communities, people belong to another type.

### 3.2 Dzogchen Community

The founder of the **International Dzogchen Community** (hereinafter IDC) is Namkhai Norbu (born. 1938), Tibetan emigrant. At the age of three, he was recognized as the tulku<sup>94</sup> of Adzom Drukpa, who had been one of the major mentors of Dzogchen teachings, and received a traditional education appropriate to this status. In 1960, the Italian Tibetologist J. Tucci invited him to Rome, where he worked until 1964 at the Italian Institute of the Middle and Far East. After that Namkhai Norbu became a lecturer at the University of Naples, where he worked until 1992.<sup>95</sup>

Since the 1970s, he began broadcasting the teachings of Dzogchen to his Western disciples, and in the second half of 1980s, in Arcidosso<sup>96</sup> he has founded the first Dzogchen community, which over the time has grown in the administrative center of the international organization of the same name,<sup>97</sup> which is currently represented in 40 countries.<sup>98</sup>

#### 3.2.1 General Data about the International Dzogchen Community

IDC admits the four noble truths - the subject of the first sermon of the Buddha Shakyamuni, as a mandatory part of the Dzogchen

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<sup>93</sup> Interview with the President of the Russian Association of Diamond Way Buddhist School Karma Kagyu A. Koibagarov, July 28, 2016, PAL F2 A4.

<sup>94</sup> *Tulku* means a Rebirth of the famous teacher.

<sup>95</sup> Namkhai Norbu, retrieved on 30 October 2016, <http://kunsangar.ru/index.php/teacher/rinpoche.html>. (in Russian)

<sup>96</sup> Tuscany, Italy.

<sup>97</sup> E. Ostrovskaya, “The secular Buddhist community of St. Petersburg”, **Sociological studies**, no.1 (1999), p.111. (in Russian)

<sup>98</sup> Dzogchen Community, retrieved on 30 October 2016, <http://kunsangar.org/ru/community>. (in Russian)

teachings.<sup>99</sup> At the same time, the specific feature of Namkhai Norbu's method of Dzogchen teaching is that he teaches it outside the traditional context of Tibetan Buddhist Nyingma school doctrine. Meanwhile, in its framework (as well as in some other schools, in which the transmission line of this teaching arose and persisted) Dzogchen is regarded as the culmination of its adept's religious progress. He can begin this practice only after he has acquired necessary experience on levels of sutra and tantra.

Namkhai Norbu resolves this contradiction with the traditional methodology asserting that everybody who begins to practice Dzogchen already has experience and connection with this doctrine, which originate from his/her past births, and thus, there is no absolute beginners and alien people in Dzogchen.

This circumstance along with the fact that all teachers of Dzogchen, as a rule, insist on the absolute superiority of this teaching over any other,<sup>100</sup> and the lack of need to perform a classical four-step *Ngondro*<sup>101</sup> (preliminary tantric practices necessary to gain access to more advanced) makes membership in the Dzogchen Community especially attractive for formal neophytes.

In Russia, the IDC exists since the first Namkhai Norbu's visit to Moscow in 1992. In 1998, at his suggestion, a large regional center was founded in Moscow. It was named the North Kunsangar (gar is camp in Tibetan language). Later it has become the focal IDC center in Russia.

Since the second half of the 1990s, Russian translations of Namkhai Norbu's books began to appear. Currently, IDC centers exist in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ulan-Ude, Vladivostok, Irkutsk, altogether in 39 major Russian cities.<sup>102</sup>

All local communities of Dzogchen practitioners are included in the organization **International Dzogchen Community**. According to

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<sup>99</sup> Typical bylaws for Gar, retrieved on 30 October 2016, <http://kunsangar.org/membership>.

<sup>100</sup> G. Tucci, **Tibet Religions**, St.Petersburg: Eurasia, 2005, p.120.

<sup>101</sup> I. Zhuravlev, "Yantra Yoga is a rhythm. Interview with Fabio Andre", retrieved on 30 October 2016, <http://wildyogi.info/issue/ilya-zhuravlev-%C2%AByantra-ioga-eto-ritm%C2%BB-intervyu-s-fabio-andriko>. (in Russian)

<sup>102</sup> *Lings* and communities, retrieved on 30 October 2016, <http://kunsangar.org/ru/regions>. (in Russian)

their charter, they are non-profit organizations, which bring together people who are interested in the study and practice the Dzogchen teachings (*ati-yoga*) under the guidance of qualified instructors.

The organization presents itself as being not related to politics and out-of sects.<sup>103</sup> Members of the community manifest that they do not belongs to any particular religion, including Buddhism. Even though Dzogchen system was created, was preserved and is practiced until recently within Buddhist tradition.

This adds a certain specificity to the character of IDC existence and self-identity of its members. Thus, despite the obviously religious character of IDC, its divisions are registered as public rather than religious organizations. This specificity is clearly manifested in its Ural divisions. The members of the Yekaterinburg Dzogchen Community identified themselves as Buddhists, but at the same time, the Chelyabinsk community head has categorically denied that he and his companions belong to Buddhism.<sup>104</sup>

The organization is managed by the spiritual mentor of the Dzogchen Community (president), the International Assembly of the Saṅgha and the International Board of Directors (International gakil), whose members are nominated by the president and confirmed by the Council. The International Coordinating Committee, which has advisory functions, is composed of representatives from all the *Gars* (major regional centers). IDC Center is located in Italy, but *Gars* represent administrative power, supporting network connections between *Lings* (communities) and higher authorities.

In Russia, the largest *Gar* is North Kunsangar in Moscow, which continues to perform its functions to this day. After the Crimea became part of Russia in 2014, the South Kunsangar in the Balaklava district has passed to territory of Russia.

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<sup>103</sup> Frequently Asked Questions About the International Dzogchen Community, retrieved on 30 October 2016, <http://dzogchencommunity.org/frequently-asked-questions-about-the-international-dzogchencommunity>. (in Russian)

<sup>104</sup> Interview with the head of the Chelyabinsk Dzogchen Community, November 12, 2016, PAL F3 A1.

Group managers conduct their duties according to the charter, which is valid for all communities belonging to the IDC.<sup>105</sup> The Authority is called *Ganchi*. It controls each community. It consists of three departments (distinguished by color: yellow, red and blue), which correspond to the three aspects of existence (body, speech, and energy, or mind) according to the Buddhist model.<sup>106</sup> Yellow *Ganchi* is engaged in economic issues, red *Ganchi* is responsible for maintenance and development of the group, Blue *Ganchi* manages everything related to the culture and practices. The community can be controlled by *Ganchi* of three, six or nine people. In the case of the Yekaterinburg community, there are three people. Board members are selected by voting of community members.<sup>107</sup>

IDC International *Ganchi* defines the shares of contributions for the benefit of the IDC activities, for *Gar* and the share remaining in the community.<sup>108</sup>

According to the international rules of membership, a small community (up to 30 members) must remit 70% membership fee to the *Gars*, having the right to keep 30%. Contributions from regional organizations and centers are one of the main financing sources of the International Dzogchen Community.<sup>109</sup>

IDC Membership is divided into several types: normal, family, youth (persons under 18 years of age), abbreviated (for pensioners, students, the unemployed), and supporting sponsorship (with extra discounts and bonuses). A person can be deprived of Membership in the community.<sup>110</sup> Considering the strict requirements for formal membership in the organization and the impossibility to establish during surveys the

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<sup>105</sup> The fundamental principle of Dzogchen, retrieved on 30 October 2016, <http://kunsangar.org/media/cmsmediafiles/8/Principle%20of%20Dzogchen%20Community443y.pdf>.

<sup>106</sup> Dzogchen Community, retrieved on 30 October 2016, <http://kunsangar.org/en/community/>.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Typical bylaws for *Lings*, retrieved on 30 October 2016, <http://kunsangar.org/membership>.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Regulations of Membership, retrieved on 30 October 2016, <http://kunsangar.org/membership>.

exact number of each type of members, the author has identified only general information about the size of Yekaterinburg Dzogchen Community.

### 3.2.2 History and Structure of Dzogchen Community in Yekaterinburg City

The Yekaterinburg Dzogchen Community was formed almost simultaneously with the Moscow Community, although, of course, significantly inferior to it in numbers - according to one informant, it was organized by several people, who have received instruction and initiation into Dzogchen, in 1993.

This group came from a small community of people, formed in late 1980 in Sverdlovsk,<sup>111</sup> which included people interested in various Eastern religions and spiritual practices (Zen Buddhism, Hindu schools, etc.).<sup>112</sup> Lacking own premises for meetings and activities, the group has rented one of the classrooms at the Ural State University. Later this group has split into smaller communities engaged in more narrow topics, as it happened to the Dzogchen Community itself.

Currently, the community has no official registration, neither as a local religious nor as a public organization. Geographically Perm and Chelyabinsk groups of Dzogchen practitioners are the closest IDC to the Yekaterinburg Dzogchen Community.

Members of Yekaterinburg Dzogchen Community have repeatedly stated that no one knows the exact number of persons as part of a community.<sup>113</sup> In one of the informal conversations with the informant DII from the community, it was found that the yellow *Ganchi* should know the number of people, at least regularly paying the membership fees. However, a letter with this question, addressed directly to *Ganchi* remained unanswered, and in subsequent informal correspondence, the same informant DII stated: "... better not to publish these numbers".

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<sup>111</sup> Sverdlovsk is the old name of Yekaterinburg.

<sup>112</sup> Interview with the founder of the Yekaterinburg Dzogchen Community, September 13, 2016.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with a member of the Yekaterinburg Dzogchen Community DI, September 19, 2016. PAL F3 A3.

E. Ostrovskaya has also noted a significant element of secrecy in the functioning of the Dzogchen Community of St. Petersburg, which she examined in 1999.<sup>114</sup>

Communication between members of Dzogchen Community is carried out through a private group Dzogchen Community of Yekaterinburg in the social network VK.<sup>115</sup> Information about the schedule of practices, lectures and online translations is distributed via the e-mail newsletters. There is also a private community on Google+ network, accessible only to trusted participants of this group.<sup>116</sup>

During two visits to the collective ritual meals and drinks *ganapujha* (19 November and 28 December 2013), the author has recorded 6 practitioners, 4 of which were permanent. Three more persons have responded to the questionnaire sent via the newsletter *Ykt Dzogchen Community* by e-mail.

In an informal conversation, one of the community members made the assumption that the number of the community is up to 15 people. He also told that in 2013 there were twice as many community members than now, someone practiced in the gompa (a room for collective practices), someone practiced at home and rarely appeared in the community.<sup>117</sup>

The age of people related to the Yekaterinburg Dzogchen Community varies from 20 to 50 years, and the duration of their involvement in the life of the group - from several months to 22 years.

According to a former member of the Yekaterinburg Dzogchen Community and Karma Kagyu center, some part of the Buddhists from Karma Kagyu center, including leaders, having been getting enough experience, have passed to Yekaterinburg Dzogchen Community.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> E. Ostrovskaya, "The secular Buddhist communities of St. Petersburg", p.111.

<sup>115</sup> Interview with a member of the Yekaterinburg Dzogchen Community DI, September 22, 2016. PAL F3 A4.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Interview with a member of the Yekaterinburg Dzogchen Community DII, September 23 2016. PAL F3 A5.

<sup>118</sup> Interview with a former member of the Karma Kagyu, July 09, 2016, PAL F2 A1.



Therefore, the Buddhists of the region see in the Dzogchen more possibilities for development than in other traditions.

Direct contacts with Namkhai Norbu take place through online communication and during personal meetings, as informants reported in the questionnaires. Worldwide internet broadcasts are held regularly. They are created for educational purposes by nonprofit cultural organization *International Institute of Tibetan Studies of Shang Shung*, founded by Namkhai Norbu.

Periodically, the community is visited by Namkhai Norbu disciples, who have been authorized to conduct training (so-called instructors). Thus, on 5-11 January 2016 a closed course Yantra Yoga with Svetlana Suprun was held. This event was accessible only for confirmed members of the Dzogchen Community. On October 3, 2016 public lecture by Alexander Gomonov *The ancient Tibetan knowledge about universe and man as the principle of ecological thought and the inseparability the individual and the world* was held. On October 11-12, a retreat was held, during which A. Gomonov gave explanations on the practice of *Narac Kongtrul* (purification practices) and *Shitro* (the practice of care for the dying and the dead), he participated in the practice of *Santi Maha Saṅgha*.<sup>119</sup>

The community does not have its own facilities. For rituals such as the *Vajra Dance*, which require a lot of space and include a relatively large number of participants, gymnasium of a school in the Upper-Iset district of Yekaterinburg is rented. Regular meetings take place in one of the rented premises located at Street Dolores Ibarruri, 2a (until the end of 2013 the room was on Pushkin Street, 24-31).

This Buddhist group does not carry out any collaborative activities with the other communities of the city.

Missionary activity (open days, holidays) to attract new members into the ranks of practitioners is not conducted, because from the perspective of Dzogchen missionary work is not necessary, and it is believed that if someone has a karmic connection with the teachings, they will come.<sup>120</sup> According to one of the practitioners of Dzogchen, this group organizes courses twice a year, for example open course on Yantra

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<sup>119</sup> Interview with a member of the Yekaterinburg Dzogchen Community DII, September 23, 2016. PAL F3 A5.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

Yoga and lecture, advertising is given in advance. When the community invites teachers, then try to share information with the city. It is not very active, but nonetheless.<sup>121</sup>

According to the questionnaires, the majority of members of the group have obtained higher education, including one member with a PhD degree. They found information about the community through friends or the Internet, and did not profess deeply other religions before Buddhism.

However, the information obtained during the research should be taken into account. Namely, that the creation of the group is connected with the Society for the Study of Eastern beliefs, spirituality, and the fact that some members of the Dzogchen Community were actively interested in transpersonal psychology of Grof, other methods of personal development and various philosophical trends.

Indisputable advantage of Dzogchen Buddhism, from its practitioners point of view is its high effectiveness and productivity. As the effects of Buddhist methods practice informants have noted “calming the mind”, “consciousness and energy control”, “bringing in a more advanced state”.

Despite the fact that in most cases there are no other Buddhists in families of Dzogchen practitioners, their family members express neutral or positive attitude towards their religion.

Informants responses to the survey question about the prospects of Buddhism in the region differ:

- a) without changes,
- b) weak due to the fact that people either are not interested in spiritual development, or are choosing Orthodoxy,
- c) All the conditions are ripe for learning about oneself, and Dzogchen can provide such knowledge.

On a personal level contacts with representatives of the Karma Kagyu center are maintained, although joint activities are not carried out.

Frequency of practice is ranged from several times per day to several times per week. It was recorded that the members of this community received initiations of other Buddhist traditions teachers. In order to increase knowledge about Buddhism and practices informants

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

mostly go outside the Sverdlovsk region and abroad, because the opportunities to be initiated within the borders of Ural are very rare.

Buddhist holidays are not celebrated, but the schedule of practices correlated with the lunar calendar is observed: certain practices are carried out within the prescribed lunar day. To gain access to participation in the practices initiation by Chogyal Namkhai Norbu is required.

*Vajra Dance* (here *Vajra* means the true nature of the mind) – is an innovation of Chogyal Namkhai Norbu, which he began to teach in the 1990s.<sup>122</sup> This practice refers to the class of the *terma* hidden teachings that people with extraordinary abilities *tertons* find through meditation, in dreams, and otherwise.<sup>123</sup> At the sounds of *Vajra song* Dzogchen practitioners move through the five-colored *mandala* (here meaning the iconographic image of consciousness), designed for a maximum of 12 people, located on the floor. The purpose of the practice is to harmonize body, speech and mind, which is the most important goal for Dzogchen practitioners.<sup>124</sup>

To carry out this practice members of the Yekaterinburg Dzogchen Community rented gymnasiums of a school in Upper-Iset district and of Pedagogical College. This practice is not performed often due to organizational difficulties.

Once a week or two the lessons take place on the *Santi Maha Sangha* - the course of learning and practice of 9 levels, which was introduced by Chogyal Namkhai Norbu in 1994 in order to ensure the continuation of the teachings of Dzogchen in purity.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Vajra Dance, retrieved on 30 October 2016 URL: <http://kunsangar.org/en/vajra-dance/>.

<sup>123</sup> Tulku Tondup Rinpoche, **The secret teachings of Tibet**, (St. Petersburg: Uddiyana, 2006) p.48. (in Russian)

<sup>124</sup> Namkhai Norbu. “The principle of the Vajra Dance”, **Zerkalo**, No.2 (2006), p.45-49. (in Russian)

<sup>125</sup> Santi Maha Sangha, retrieved on 30 October 2016, <http://kunsangar.org/en/sms/>.

Closed broadcasts can refer to the nuances of practices. *Umdze* training on how to properly conduct rituals.<sup>126</sup> Training *kumbhaka* clarifies method of control and holding breath and others.

The community practices movement yoga, or *Yantra Yoga*, up to 4 times a month. It depends on personal schedules of practitioners.<sup>127</sup>

Yantra Yoga has been described in VIII<sup>th</sup> century by Buddhist teacher Vairochana in the treatise *Sun and Moon Union*.<sup>128</sup> Movement and postures of the yoga are coordinated with breathing for the purpose of harmonization and relaxation.

Developed structure of IDC and unique practices that have appeared only thanks to Chogyal Namkhai Norbu make this organization an extraordinary phenomenon in the space of either traditional Buddhist culture and in the West.

Yekaterinburg Dzogchen Community, integrated into the global IDC network, is included in the most highly organized structure among all the other Buddhist communities of the Ural.

A small degree of publicity and severe conditions for gaining the formal membership and admission to practices give the Dzogchen community the reputation of elitist in Buddhist environment.

At the same time, innovations of Chogyal Namkhai Norbu concerning the way of IDC organization, as well as a series of practices used there alienates part of the Buddhists, who aim to obtain the traditional knowledge and practices.

### **3.3 Buddhist Community Shad Tchup Ling**

The founder of the community Shad Tchup Ling and of the complex of the same name on Mount Kachkanar of Kachkanar district in Ural region is M. Sannikov (b. 1961). In 1989 he entered into the Ivolga

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<sup>126</sup> The Training Umdze in the Dzamling Gare, retrieved on 30 October 2016, <http://www.kunsangar.org/ru/retreats/treningumdze-v-dzamling-gare-specialnyj-kurs-o-to>. (in Russian)

<sup>127</sup> Yantra-yoga, retrieved on 30 October 2016, <http://kunsangar.org/ru/yantra-yoga>. (in Russian)

<sup>128</sup> What is Yantra-yoga, retrieved on 30 October 2016, <http://www.yantrayoga.net/about>.

to group of students of D. Jalsaraev (Pema Jung), who was a famous and respected Buryat<sup>129</sup> lama of the Gelugpa school. There Sannikov has received the Buddhist name Tenzin Dokchit.<sup>130</sup>

Under the guidance of Jalsaraev, Sannikov was trained in Ivolga and Tamchin temples. Several times he traveled to Mongolia to Gandanshadurviyn temple in the city Erdenet and to Erdene Zuu Monastery in the town of Kharkhorin. After graduation in 1995 at the request of his mentor, Sannikov has gone to Ural in order to found a monastery, which was named Shad Tchup Ling (Tibetan: A place of study and implementation).<sup>131</sup>

### 3.3.1 History of the Shad Tchup Ling Community

Shad Tchup Ling was built on the eastern peak alluvial rock deposits of Mount Kachkanar in Kachkanar district of Ural (58°46'37.5"N 59°23'11.2"E), in the territory of the Kachkanar district forestry department, and occupies about 0.3 hectares at the total used area of 4 hectares.<sup>132</sup>

The construction of the buildings began in May 15, 1995 by Tendzin Dokchit, later they were rebuilt once. Initially the future monastery on Mount Kachkanar was a three-story building between the rocks. After the fire in 1998 the construction of residential premises started.

It is important to note that over the Urals, architectural constructions of religious worship are created only in this complex. The rest of the communities do not show any activity for creating monumental cultural values in the region. At the moment, a large number of buildings are already constructed in the Shad Tchup Ling. In the heart of the complex there is Enlightenment Stupa, symbolizing the Buddha's

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<sup>129</sup> V. Poresh "Tibetan Buddhism in Russia", in **Modern religious life in Russia**, Vol 3, p.249.

<sup>130</sup> S. Kuvayev "Stupas of Kachkanar Mountain", **Resonance**, Nijniaya Tura: Resonance, 2013, p.84. (in Russian)

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Interview with the head of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, M. Sannikov (Lama Sangye Tenzin Dokchit), March 15, 2016. PAL F1 A2.

mind.<sup>133</sup> Inside of this building there are special relics: sacred texts in Tibetan and Russian languages and mantras written on paper. Stupa height is 3.5 m. The construction of this monument was completed approximately in 2000.

Near the entrance, there are two other such buildings. The highest of them has the form identical to the stupa described above, but its height is 4 m. Under it there is a small prayer room 1.5x1.5 m and a stone pedestal. The total height of construction is 8 meters, it was completed around the year 2009.<sup>134</sup>

The construction of one more unique religious worship building was completed in 2016. It's a Buddha statue with an underlying reliquarium, its height is up to 8 m. In the plan the construction represents a semicircle 12 m in diameter.

In 2005-2006, there was a significant influx of new members into the Shad Tchup Ling due to the frequent trips of Tenzin Dokchit to Yekaterinburg.<sup>135</sup> In the summer of 2006 his disciples from Yekaterinburg got to use the house with a plot of land for Buddhist center in the dacha cooperative (summer cottage village) *Yolochka* near the village of *Wide River*. Later, the house was bought by the community. This center, called Shavaripa Ling, became a meeting place for the Yekaterinburg Buddhists collective practices. At least one resident constantly stays there.

In 2010, with the collapse of the Yekaterinburg group of disciples Tenzin Dokchit, this project has been stopped, and the house was offered to a private person.<sup>136</sup>

In 2007, Tenzin Dokchit disciples began to construct a small building in Verkhoturye district of the Ural region, 80 km from the center of Shad Tchup Ling. This is a small building called *Luipa Ling*, was located in the forest on the bank of river Tura, near a cave, which was supposed to serve for reclusive practices.

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<sup>133</sup> S. Kuvayev, **The Stupas of Kachkanar Mountain.**

<sup>134</sup> Interview with member of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, I. Smirnov, August 01, 2016, PAL F1 A4.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Interview with the head of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, M. Sannikov (Lama Sangye Tenzin Dokchit), May 20, 2016. PAL F1 A3.

A small subsidiary farming was organized and, as a rule, one or more people lived there. In the end of 2009 it became clear that the community can not afford to keep it. Valuable property was removed from *Luipa Ling*, and in October 2011, the building was burned down in a fire.<sup>137</sup>

The process of building on Kachkanar mountain had started without receiving of property documents for land. Long time the community tried to obtain land rent freely that is available to religious organizations, with support to the law *About Freedom of worship and religious associations*. But the process still is not finished. This fact became the subject of long proceedings between the community, and the management of *Kachkanar Mining and Processing Plant* (KMPP), which planned the deposit development of territory adjacent to the Shad Tchup Ling.<sup>138</sup>

Therefore at the turn of 1990-2000's the community has faced the need to negotiate with the management of the plant and government representatives on behalf of a registered religious organization.

As it was stated in the section concerning Yekaterinburg Karma Kagyu community, through personal contacts with Ole Nydahl and Kaybagarov, the head of the *Russian Karma Kagyu Buddhist Association*, M. Sannikov has obtained approval for registration in Kachkanar of a local religious organization under the aegis of the Association. Legal registration was obtained in 2001, but by 2005, disagreements concerning the organization of educational process in the Association have led to the actual rupture with it while retaining LRO.<sup>139</sup> In November 2012 Kachkanar LRO was registered under the name *Buddha's cloister* and has left the Association.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Interview with member of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, I. Smirnov, August 01, 2016, PAL F1 A4.

<sup>138</sup> **Kachkanar Buddhists complain about “Evrax” to Medvedev and Putin**, retrieved on 11 April 2016 <http://veved.ru/press/14696-buddisty-kachkanara-zhaluyutsya-medvedevu-i-putinu-naevraz.html>. (in Russian)

<sup>139</sup> Interview with the head of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, M. Sannikov (Lama Sangye Tenzin Dokchit), July 22, 2016. PAL F1 A1.

<sup>140</sup> A. Terentyev “Russia going again to demolish temples and Buddhist stupas”, **Buddhism of Russia**, no.44 (2012), p.109. (in Russian)

During the 2000s, the entire legal activity related to the dispute about the land on which Shad Tchup Ling was built, was carried out on behalf of the Kachkanar LRO, which at that time belonged nominally to the Russian Karma Kagyu Association.

In 2013, due to the fact that the LRO had become a subject of permanent judicial proceedings by the KMPP, it was decided to liquidate it.<sup>141</sup>

In the same 2013, former president of the Kachkanar LRO, Berezin, has managed to agree with the Board chairman of The Central Spiritual Administration of Buddhists of Russia (CSABR), Bakayev, about registration of the new LRO in Nizhny Tagil. This was possible due to the CSABR policy, which did not belong to any one of the Buddhist schools and provided support in registration for those communities who could not do it on their own. New LRO, called *The Buddha's Path*, designed to continue the work on the legal support of the project Shad Tchup Ling, was recorded in winter 2013.

In June 2014 D. Bakaev and Lama Sharab Danzan (chairman of LRO *The community of the village Promyslovka Astrakhan region*) personally visited Shad Tchup Ling. Bakaev awarded Tenzin Dokchit certificate of Buddhist priest and spiritual mentor of LRO *Buddha's path*<sup>142</sup> and he awarded the LRO *Buddha's Path* with a diploma *For the development and strengthening of the Buddhist teachings in the territory of the Ural Federal District and the creation of interregional and international relations*.<sup>143</sup>

In September 2014, B. Grechin, chairman of the Yaroslavl LRO *Sangye Cho Ling*, also a member of the CASBR has visited Shad Tchup Ling. As a result of the revealed similarity of the two communities' positions on the issue of Russian Buddhism prospects, and the necessity to organize their own educational institutions, at the general meeting of Shad Tchup Ling the joint declaration of intent to create a common CRO was signed, but the third LRO, necessary for the implementation of this project, has not yet been found.

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<sup>141</sup> Interview with member of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling Yu. Binina, January 21, 2016, PAL F1 A5.

<sup>142</sup> E. Suvorina, "Kalmyk Lama on the Kachkanar mount", **Radar**, no.25 (19 June 2014), p.11. (in Russian)

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*



### 3.3.2 The Composition, Structure and the Kinds of Shad Tchup Ling Activities

Community Shad Tchup Ling is characterized by its non-sectarian approach. There Methods and traditions of many Buddhism lineages are studied, especially Tibetan Buddhism, Theravada and Zen. However, so far the Tibetan Buddhism is dominant, as the founder of the community has studied in this tradition.

Some of Buddhist practices used by Shad Tchup Ling refers to the Gelug School.<sup>144</sup> They include the following sadhana: Guru Yoga for Tsongkhapa *Gaden Lhadzhi*, *six-time Guru Yoga*, praise of Manjushri *Lam Dang*, *Amitayus* sadhana, practice of Solitary Knight *Vajrabhairava*, *ganapudzha* for Tsongkhapa *Lama chodpa*, *ganapuja* for *Palden Lhamo*. There are also various auxiliary rituals such as offerings to harmful spirits, *sabdaka* (Tib. owners of areas), offering to the *nagas*, the ritual of taking daily vows (Tib. *Sojong*), repentance ritual to thirty-five Buddhas, sanctification miniature stupas *tsa-tsa* and others.<sup>145</sup>

In the early 2000s, in the period of close contact with the Karma Kagyu, the set of Gelug practices was extended by a number of sadhanas typical for the Russian Karma Kagyu Association: Guru Yoga for Karmapa *Three lights* short *Mahakala-Puja* for *Bernagchen*, *Avalokiteshvara Sadhana* and *Bhaishajyaguru* (Buddha of Medicine), as well as the *phowa* practice from *Longchen Nyingtik* line. With the collapse of cooperation with the Association Guru Yoga *Three lights* gradually went out of use.<sup>146</sup>

In the period of 2006-2008, the texts of all sadhanas and rituals used in the Shad Tchup Ling, previously borrowed from existing translations or translated into Russian by disciples of Sannikov, were verified by community members in order to verify terminology precision and then they were edited. Thus Shad Tchup Ling has obtained its own versions of translations of common practices.

*Mahakala Puja* a long time remained the only practice, during which the text was read in the Tibetan language, as in the Association,

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<sup>144</sup> Interview with the head of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, M. Sannikov (Lama Sangye Tenzin Dokchit), July 22, 2016. PAL F1 A1.

<sup>145</sup> Interview with member of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling B. Sutchinova, February 25, 2016 PAL F1 A6.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

but starting from 2012 it began to be read solely in Russian, in the equivalent translation.<sup>147</sup>

In autumn and winter period, when the construction and other works on arrangement are reduced, the collective practices schedule expands, and in spring and summer it becomes more free. Every full moon *Mahakala Puja* is performed during one day, and the rituals associated with the celebration of the Tibetan New Year, depending on the lunar calendar, such as *ganapuja Palden Lhamo*. The practices not connected with Anuttara-yoga-tantra, as a rule, are open to all, including Shad Tchup Ling guests.

After obtaining Refuge by Tenzin Dokchit, newcomer begins to practice Ngondro. According to Sannikov's approach, prostrations are the fundamental practice, and the other three Ngondro elements (mandala offering, *Vajrasattva* mantras recitation and Guru Yoga) are optional.

After completing the required number of prostrations a member of the community, continuing to participate in common practices, makes his own personal set of practices based on personal recommendations of the Lama. Among the Anuttara Yoga Tantra yidams practices of, at Shad Tchup Ling *Yamantaka* (one of the most important yidams of the Gelug School) is the most widely used.<sup>148</sup>

In the Shad Tchup Ling, individual retreats are practiced. They are devoted a particular practice. Retreats last from one day to one week. The practitioner is provided the time and place where he is free from the community regulations and any extraneous occupation and dedicate his time to intensive practice of certain sadhana. These activities are usually assigned by Lama, but can be also arranged on the personal initiative of a community member.

Although the vast majority of Sadhana used in the Shad Tchup Ling belongs to the Gelug School and the theoretical basis for Sannikov's disciples is the fundamental work of the founder of the Gelug, Lama Tsongkhapa *Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (Tib. *Lamrim Chenmo*), the community members do not identify themselves exclusively with this school.

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<sup>147</sup> Interview with member of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, I. Smirnov, August 01, 2016 PAL F1 A4.

<sup>148</sup> Interview with member of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling B. Sutchinova, February 25, 2016 PAL F1 A6.

From time to time members of the community on the approval and recommendation of Tenzin Dokchit, committed collective trips to the lectures and initiations of teachers of other Buddhist traditions. For example, in 2014 it was a trip to the Chelyabinsk region for the course of concentration of shamatha (Pali *samata*) practice and *phowa*, which was conducted by Geshe Sherab Lhundub of the Bon tradition.<sup>149</sup>

Meanwhile, the majority of teachers, visited by community members, belong to the Gelug School. So, in the second half of the 2000s, Shad Tchup Ling representatives attended almost all the teachings that Jampa Tinley<sup>150</sup> and Yeshe Lodoy Rinpoche<sup>151</sup> given in Yekaterinburg.

Shad Tchup Ling long time did not belong any educational system, which would include a basic knowledge of the theory, history and practice of Buddhism. The significant difficulty in the organization of their own program is caused by instability of the number of students, who stay on the Kachkanar Mount. For a long time, there was no possibility to carry out this work systematically with the same people.<sup>152</sup>

Currently, educational activities are integrated in the community daily activities, and include a joint study of classical Buddhist texts, such as *Gurupanchashika* by Ashvaghosha and Lamrim Chenmo by Tsongkhapa.<sup>153</sup>

In the spring of 2015, Shad Tchup Ling began a correspondence with the director of the international department of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) K. Aysitt regarding the possibility of establishing FPMT study group on the basis of Shad Tchup Ling. As a result of this correspondence in July 2015 in Moscow at the teachings of head of the FPMT Zopa Rinpoche, the community members received blessing for the organization of educational courses and were given all the necessary materials. It should be noted that the training

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<sup>149</sup> Interview with member of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, I. Smirnov, August 01, 2016 PAL F1 A4.

<sup>150</sup> Geshe Jampa Tinley, retrieved on 04 November 2016, <http://geshe.ru/>.

<sup>151</sup> Yeshe Lodoy Rinpoche, retrieved on 04 November 2016, <http://yelo-rinpoche.ru/teachers/>. (in Russian)

<sup>152</sup> Interview with member of the Shad Tchup Ling S. Burmistrova, May 24, 2016 PAL F1 A7.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

program in FPMT is based on the traditional monastic education courses accepted in the Gelug School.<sup>154</sup>

In 2014-2015, one of the oldest community members S. Burmistrova who sought to obtain traditional education in the Gelugpa school, in order to organize later the process of education in Shad Tchup Ling, has attempted, with the Lama Dokchit approval, to enter the Mongolian female monastery *Dulmaling* belonging to FPMT structure. These attempts were unsuccessful. The following year she went to India, where in the state *McLeod Ganj* she has visited *Tushita* Buddhist Center, and in the state in *Sidhpur - Tosamling* Monastery, 18 km from *Dharamsala*. In *Dharamsala*, she has received the documents for admission to the Tibetan language courses.<sup>155</sup>

During the campaign of protection of Shad Tchup Ling against demolishing the former president of Kachkanar LRO Berezin (the author of this work) has published an open letter to Russian Buddhists asking for support.<sup>156</sup> In August 2012, while searching contacts with Russia Buddhist organizations, he has established a relationship with Ajahn Chatree the head of Buddhavihara the St. Petersburg Thai tradition center.<sup>157</sup> Phra Chatree invited the author to Thailand and offered to assist in obtaining monastic initiation and education. As a result of the negotiations, in 2014, the author of this work has entered the Thai Buddhist University Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya. With the approval of Tenzin Dokchit, he suspended all previous practices of Vajrayana and became Bhikkhu in the Theravada tradition under the name Dhammavudho.

Disciples began to come to Tenzin Dokchit (Sannikov) since the end of the 1990s,<sup>158</sup> and then the backbone of the community has changed several times. A significant number of people has left Shad Tchup Ling in

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<sup>154</sup> Interview with member of the Shad Tchup Ling, S. Burmistrova, July 08, 2016 PAL F1 A8.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> A. Terentyev **Russia going back to demolish temples and Buddhist stupas**, pp.109-111.

<sup>157</sup> Buddhavihara, Retrieved on 04 November 2016, [http://www.buddhavihara.ru/?page\\_id=33](http://www.buddhavihara.ru/?page_id=33). (in Russian)

<sup>158</sup> Interview with the head of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, M. Sannikov (Lama Sangye Tenzin Dokchit), July 22, 2016, PAL F1 A1.

2003. Later, they were actively spreading the letter received in answer to their request to the Ivolginsky temple in Burytiya,<sup>159</sup> in which Lobsang Tarlam, the secretary of the datsan, has answered that he could not documentary confirm the fact that Tenzin Dokchit had been studying at datsan in the early 1990s. The rupture of relations with the Karma Kagyu in 2005 also had influenced the people's leaving from Shad Tchup Ling.<sup>160</sup>

However, in the mid-2000s, the backbone of the community was formed of 5 members.<sup>161</sup> At the same time the Sannikov disciples community of about 10 people was formed in Yekaterinburg.<sup>162</sup> By 2010, a significant number of Shad Tchup Ling members have changed their life priorities due to marriage and childbirth. Currently, Tenzin Dokchit disciples live, besides Mount Kachkanar, in different cities of the Ural: Kachkanar, Lesnoy, Yekaterinburg, Ivdel, Nizhny Tagil.<sup>163</sup> The number of men more than twice exceeds the number of women that can be explained by the difficult life conditions on the Kachkanar mountain.

The community numbers approximately 25 people in the age from 25 to 55. The most part of Dokchit disciples are Russian (two Tatars), not married, have higher education. Before taking the Refuge they haven't profess any other religion, and stay in the community from one to 21 years. Families of Shad Tchup Ling members regard their choice with moderate disapproval, whereas their friends support them.

During the author's stay in the community, any criticism of the Shad Tchup Ling lifestyle by tourists has never been recorded. Three Kachkanar citizens responded to have no interest to Buddhists living near the city, another two have expressed skepticism and one considered Shad

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<sup>159</sup> "Eleven kilometers to enlightenment", retrieved on 04 November 2016, [http://www.aziko.ru/ural-sights-marshruty/articles\\_items/odinnadtsat-kilometrov-do-prosvetleniya-gora-kachkanar](http://www.aziko.ru/ural-sights-marshruty/articles_items/odinnadtsat-kilometrov-do-prosvetleniya-gora-kachkanar). (in Russian)

<sup>160</sup> Interview with the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling member, I. Smirnov, August 01, 2016, PAL F1 A4

<sup>161</sup> Interview with member of the Shad Tchup Ling S. Burmistrova, May 24, 2016 PAL F1 A7.

<sup>162</sup> Interview with member of the Shad Tchup Ling B. Sutchinova, February 25, 2016, PAL F1 A6

<sup>163</sup> Interview with the head of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, M. Sannikov (Lama Sangye Tenzin Dokchit), July 22, 2016, PAL F1 A1.

Tchup Ling a sect. Three of the surveyed students of Ural Federal University, who visited the community, were surprised only by the fact that some members of Shad Tchup Ling smoke a lot.<sup>164</sup>

At various times two documentary films about the community were shot. Film *Flight of a particle* in 2001 by A. Murugov was dedicated to the personality of M. Sannikov. Film *Refuge* in 2012 by V. Golovnev recorded the relationship between members of the community, their way of life and religious practices.

Through video interviews by V. Golovnev about the Shad Tchup Ling members life, which they led before their arrival in the community and also the story of the personal tragedy of one Sannikov's female disciples, an opinion emerged in the Internet that the members of this group have adopted Buddhism as a result of shock they experienced. However, survey and personal observations of the author do not confirm such supposition.

Tenzin Dokchit disciples have pointed out as the reason for their visit to Mount Kachkanar, the interest in Buddhism as open for all, logical and universal manual for life. Only five Sannikov's disciples said in their questionnaires that they have been in traditionally Buddhist regions of Russia. Four of them went abroad for Buddhist teachings and pilgrimage.

Shad Tchup Ling Community is the most famous Middle Ural Buddhist community outside the region. It attracts people from different regions of the country. In the past ten years among the Shad Tchup Ling members, there were natives of Smolensk, Moscow, Perm, Stavropol Region, the Altai Republic, Belarus and Ukraine who came to Kachkanar specially to Tenzin Dokchit.<sup>165</sup>

The Governing Body of the community Shad Tchup Ling is the general assembly, during which the important decisions about the functioning of the community are taken, persons responsible for the performance of tasks or regular duties are assigned. There are no strict written rules of procedure of the assembly. These events happen at intervals of two months in Shad Tchup Ling building.

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<sup>164</sup> Interview with an independent observer, September 21, 2016, PAL F2 A7.

<sup>165</sup> Interview with the head of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, M. Sannikov (Lama Sangye Tenzin Dokchit), March 15, 2016, PAL F1 A2.

Agenda of the meeting, as a rule, is formed beforehand. However, each of those present may bring to discussion any other questions. For the absent members of the community, participation is possible through the remote sending their opinions on the stated issues via the Internet or by phone. Decisions are taken by majority vote. Tenzin Dokchit's opinion is considered on an equal basis with others, but assembly tries do not contradict his views.<sup>166</sup>

A person becomes a member of Shad Tchup Ling after obtaining *refuge* practice by Tenzin Dokchit. Before 2007, Lama made the decision about taking someone as disciple only on the basis of a personal interview. However, after a number of cases when persons had left Shad Tchup Ling after receiving *refuge*, the community introduced the practice of the probationary period, when a candidate for disciples must live in Shad Tchup Ling three months before receiving refuge. This was supposed to minimize the possibility of casual people entering the community.<sup>167</sup>

Financing of community activities, especially of the construction process, is carried out at the expense of donations of its members living in the cities. There is no practice of collecting any permanent contributions. Most often, one-time fee is collected for the actual needs.

Important financial sources include selling souvenirs in Shad Tchup Ling and charitable projects to raise funds from a wide range of people.

Part of the community, generally totaling of 8-15 people, constantly lives in Shad Tchup Ling, obeys internal regulations, regularly participates in collective practices, educational events, construction and domestic work. The other members of the community, who live in cities, periodically come to Kachkanar on weekends and during holidays.<sup>168</sup>

During the whole period of existence of the community, the specific role was carried out by Presidents of LRO associated with Shad Tchup Ling. They are *Buddhist Center of Diamond Way Karma Kagyu school Kachkanar* (headed first by Smirnov, the oldest Tenzin Dokchit's

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<sup>166</sup> Interview with member of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling Burmistrova, July 08, 2016, PAL F1 A8.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Interview with member of the Shad Tchup Ling Y. Binina, January 21, 2016 PAL F1 A5.

disciple and later by Berezin) and *Buddha's path* organization of Nizhny Tagil, whose president is S. Hudyakov. In Kachkanar and Nizhny Tagil was never possible to find a sufficient number of people who could make the local community. So functions of the LRO Presidents were reduced to legal representation of the central community in a dispute for the land on which Shad Tchup Ling was built, as well as to official correspondence with the government, Russian and foreign Buddhist organizations and private persons.<sup>169</sup>

Shad Tchup Ling periodically holds public events, which are visited by up to a hundred and fifty people, not connected with the community. The largest of these is the celebration Losar.<sup>170</sup> Shad Tchup Ling has organized for its guests traditional New Year rituals, costume performances, competitions and Tea Party.<sup>171</sup> As a rule, there is the closed ritual part of the celebration intended only for members of the community (*puja Palden Lhamo*).

The celebrations connected with the community itself are less crowded, such as the Shad Tchup Ling founding day (15 May) and the birth day of the head of the community (30 November).<sup>172</sup>

Apart from the mentioned above events the community does not conduct any other activities related to Buddhist teaching and designed for the public at large.

It was established that only once a course (retreat) of *shamatha* practice (pali *samata*) was organized at Shad Tchup Ling - in the summer of 2009.<sup>173</sup> In 2014, President of LRO *Buddha's path* has organized in Nizhny Tagil seminar with invited instructor in Tibetan yoga trulkhor (Yantra Yoga).<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Interview with member of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling B. Sutchinova, February 25, 2016, PAL F1 A6.

<sup>170</sup> Tibetan Lunar New Year usually falls on February.

<sup>171</sup> S. Kuvaev, "White month", **Resonance**, No.7 (13 February 2014), p.14. (in Russian)

<sup>172</sup> Interview with the head of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, M. Sannikov (Lama Sangye Tenzin Dokchit), March 15, 2016, PAL F1 A2.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Interview with member of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling S. Burmistrova, July 08, 2016, PAL F1 A8.



Outside of Mount Kachkanar community, public events are held seldom. For all time of the community existence, the author founded only two such cases. May 20, 2006 at Yekaterinburg in Club Zen Harmony a charity concert in support of the second stupa in Shad Tchup Ling has taken place. It was attended by two local rock band,<sup>175</sup> and in 2012 at the University of Perm, a photo exhibition was organized with the assistance of the community dedicated to Shad Tchup Ling.<sup>176</sup>

In addition to these activities, the most important community publicity factor is the location of the Shad Tchup Ling on the popular tourist route. According to the records kept in the community, more than two thousand tourists visit this place per year, including foreigners from Europe, USA, China, Japan, Mongolia and other countries.<sup>177</sup> Buddhists arrange free excursion through the territory of Shad Tchup Ling for tourists.

The community has a page in the social network VKontakte,<sup>178</sup> on which news and information about Buddhist activities of other communities in the Ural are published, also a blog at LiveJournal<sup>179</sup> is kept, dedicated to everyday Shad Tchup Ling life.

The community has consistently attracted media attention both local and regional, and sometimes even at the federal level. As a rule, the subject of publications becomes a community everyday life coverage, personality of the founder, reports from the public events as well as events surrounding the dispute about the land between the community and KMPP.

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Within the framework of the project “Free Art Tribune” in the Faculty of Law Library opens exhibition of photographs of the monastery Shad Tchup Ling, retrieved on 04 November 2016, <http://www.psu.ru/news-archive/year-2012/v-ramkakh-proekta-svobodnaya-art-tribuna-vbiblioteke-yuridicheskogo-fakulteta-otkryvaetsya-vystavka-fotografij-o-monastyre-shad-tchupling>. (in Russian)

<sup>177</sup> The logbook of Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, Retrieved on 04 November 2016, <http://shadtchupling.livejournal.com>. (in Russian)

<sup>178</sup> Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, retrieved on 04 November 2016, [https://vk.com/shad\\_tchup\\_ling](https://vk.com/shad_tchup_ling). (in Russian)

<sup>179</sup> The logbook of Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, retrieved on 04 November 2016, <http://shadtchupling.livejournal.com>. (in Russian)

Due to the fact that Tenzin Dokchit does not have diploma from Institute Dashi Choyhorlin in Ivolga datsan in where, according to him, he studied at the beginning of 1990s, negative judgments concerning his personality and the entire community Shad Tchup Ling prevail in Russian Buddhist environment.<sup>180</sup>

Representatives of Yekaterinburg Buddhist Center Karma Kagyu have called him an impostor, whom no one had ordained into Lama.<sup>181</sup> An extremely negative attitude toward Shad Tchup Ling is traced among Vajrapani center. M. Nikitin, director of the center at the mid-2000s, and its present director Mikhail Shishkin expressed the opinion that the members of Shad Tchup Ling and the head of the community in general are not Buddhists.<sup>182</sup>

According to the conducted research, M. Sannikov himself and members of the community who are in it the longest have participated at initiation ceremonies conducted both in the Ural and beyond.<sup>183</sup> Since the procedure for the adoption of a Buddhist *refuge* (without which, according to traditional rules, no initiation can be carried out) precedes all such initiations, we must admit that the main part of the community nominally and formally should be considered as Buddhist, regardless of whether M. Sannikov is Lama or not.

In general, we can say that the community Shad Tchup Ling contacts with other Buddhist organizations in the country more actively than other communities studied in this work. In this case, the best relationships are formed with those communities that do not belong to any rigidly centralized structure, and in fact are independent. Basically, Shad Tchup Ling development corresponds to the situation reflected in other Buddhist communities. On a personal level, contacts are maintained, but the interaction between the organizations almost never occurs.

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<sup>180</sup> Information from other Buddhist Forum, retrieved on 04 November 2016, <http://wap.buddhistforum.borda.ru/?1-0-80-00000664-000-40-0>. (in Russian)

<sup>181</sup> A. Zhukovskaya, "Resident became a Buddhist monk", **Arguments and facts Ural**, No.34, (23 August 2006), p.1. (in Russian)

<sup>182</sup> Interview with an independent observer, September 21, 2016, PAL F2 A6.

<sup>183</sup> Interview with the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling member S. Burmistrova, May 24, 2016, PAL F1 A7.

### 3.4 Conclusion

As a result of sociological research 3 secular non-ethnic communities of Buddhists of different traditions have been studied:

- 1) The Buddhist Center Karma Kagyu of Yekaterinburg,
- 2) The Dzogchen Community of Yekaterinburg,
- 3) The Shad Tchup Ling Community.

The history of appearance and development of non-ethnic Buddhist communities of the Ural was reconstructed based on resources of the Internet and interviews with communities' members. The first associations appeared in the 1990s, when communities of non-ethnic Buddhist Dzogchen tradition, the Karma Kagyu and Shad Tchup Ling community were organized.

The communities emerged due to the presence of people interested in Buddhist philosophy and practices, and the ability to conduct an active missionary work after the changes in religion legislation. In two cases, the group grew out of communities interested in learning about Eastern cultures.

General situation of the examined Buddhist groups and communities reflects very accurately the reality typical of traditional non-Buddhist regions of Russia. Thus, the vast majority of new Buddhists belong to the tradition of Tibetan Vajrayana (Gelugpa School, Karma Kagyu) and followers of Zen Buddhism and Theravada are a minority.

The sequence of the emergence and existence of the Buddhist groups, which belongs to different Buddhist traditions, is similar as a whole, although every tradition has its peculiarities.

As a rule, the primary group, which consists of a few people, occur because of the trips of its most active members to other regions in order to attend teachings and initiations given by local or by guest teachers. Such teachings and initiations are usually given by a specific mentor, and therefore the group is originally formed on the basis of association not with any particular school, but with a particular mentor.

This principle is particularly well reflected in the groups related to Tibetan Buddhism, in which primary attention is paid to the principle of guru yoga, rearing of exceptional personal devotion to a certain spiritual master. Though in other traditions (of the Far East and the South), the

mentor figure also implies honor and respect, the importance of these factors in the Vajrayana is incomparably greater.

So, group members can attend to the teachings and see other teachers (the same or another school, collectively or privately), but the consolidation and formation of a group occurs, as a rule, around the figure of a single mentor.

All studied Buddhist communities are not linked genetically or administratively with communities having the continuity with pre-revolutionary Buddhist organizations (Buddhist Traditional Saṅgha of Russia in Buryatia, the Office of Hambo-Lama of Tuva or Association of Buddhists of republic Kalmykiya).

The same situation is in the vast majority of groups of Tibetan Buddhism, created in Russia in the last 20-30 years beyond the traditional Buddhist regions, where such organization during the 1990s tried to regain, rather than to extend their influence.

Towards the end of existence of the USSR, the Central Spiritual Administration of Buddhists of Russia (whose successor is BTSR now) was the only center of Buddhism in the country and it was not able to communicate with the largest educational centers of Tibetan Buddhism in India. Because of the closed Soviet foreign policy and in consequence of repression by the end of the 1980s there were no lamas in Buryatia, who could match in the learning with Tibetan teachers.<sup>184</sup> There were no khubilgan lamas (tulkus), which in Vajrayana Buddhism are considered as possessing the highest competence in teachings transfer.

Therefore, the attention of the Russians from the beginning of the 1990s was drawn to foreign Buddhist teachers. The political and administrative domination of the Gelug school, existing in Tibet before the Chinese occupation, was not maintained among Tibetan emigrants, and we can make the assumption that all Buddhist teachers were equal in their ability to spread Buddhist teachings in the West.

In Russia, the traditional clergy, though after colossal shocks, remained in their historical territories, although in a different socio-political reality. The problem of finding new methods of interaction with the audience was not as crucial for them as for the Tibetans in the West.

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<sup>184</sup> G. Fagan, "Buddhism in Post-Soviet Russia: Revival or Degeneration?" *Religion, State & Society*, Vol. 29, No.1, (2001).

Russian Buddhists treatment of the Buryat Buddhism is rather detached. The first generation of Russian Buddhists, for example, Dandaron community, was directly related to Buryat lamas as the sole source of Buddhist teachings at the time. Today, the overwhelming majority of practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism is associated with Tibetan lamas from different schools and organizations.

Most of these lamas belong to organizations with centers abroad, and only a few (Jampa Tinley, Yeshe Rinpoche Lodoy) permanently residing in Russia and have officially registered independent religious organizations (CRO and LRO). But in fact, they are subordinate to the Dalai Lama's administration, which is located in India.

Most international organizations, which are now represented by Buddhist groups in the Ural region, emerged in the second half of the twentieth century due to activity of immigrants from occupied Tibet or missionary activity Asian Buddhist teachers in the West with the expectation of attracting laypeople.

This pattern is correct not only for the Russian community, but also for the majority of communities in Western countries.<sup>185</sup> The structure of these organizations formed and is currently supported by the same Buddhist teachers such as Lama Zopa Rinpoche from the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition, Namkhai Norbu of the International Dzogchen Community, Lama Ole Nydahl from the international network of centers of the lineage Karma Kagyu.

All of these organizations are focused around a personality of a teacher and practices, which he can transmit. In each such structure, disciples have a limited set of methods, but not all the array of practices inherent to the school.

The central organization is supported not by means of financial injections from the center, but by the visits of teachers or their representatives, which provide the influx of newcomers into the group, maintain interest to practice of the actual members and continues community activities.

The status of non-ethnic Russian Buddhist communities can be evaluated as stable. The stability of each community is based on three factors:

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<sup>185</sup> R. Seager, **Buddhism in America**, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999. p.124.

- 1) Isolation of the Buddhist groups from each other,
- 2) Their support from a large organization,
- 3) Guru Yoga (the practice of devotion to lama).

The backbone of majority communities was formed in the early 2000s. Small influx of new members is presumably equal to the number of old members leaving the community, therefore the numbers of communities remain more or less stable.

Buddhism is adopted by people, who do not associate themselves with any religion, are interested in various doctrines, and were rarely orthodox previously. Information about changing the spiritual and moral guidance of those who left Buddhist communities, is scarce. In most cases, this is due to the fact that the former Buddhists stop communication with their former communities.

Almost all representatives of non-ethnic Buddhist communities have argued that Buddhism is not a religion but a pathway of life. Ethnic Buddhists, even though they had written that they are Buddhists from childhood, but stipulate that in order to take serious vows and become a real Buddhist they need to go a long spiritual path.

At the moment, it is impossible to establish the exact number of non-ethnic Buddhists in Russia, because some Buddhists may not engage in communities and practice individually.

The number of members in a community does not depend on the size of the city. The Shad Tchup Ling community situated away from major cities on Mount Kachkanar in numbers approximately is equal to the community Karma Kagyu in Yekaterinburg.

Almost in all the communities, there are equal numbers of male and female practitioners of Buddhism.

Buddhism has proven particularly attractive for people of 30-40 years old.

The non-ethnic Buddhist communities consist predominantly of Russian. Tatars, Bashkirs (community Shad Tchup Ling, Yekaterinburg Centre Karma Kagyu) and Kalmyks (Dzogchen Center) are represented singularly.

Most of the non-ethnic Russian Buddhists have a college education, but do not work in their specialty. It was revealed that four persons from the Dzogchen Community have master's degree and Ph.D.

At the time of the research, members of the Buddhist communities identified themselves as being Buddhists from six months up to 22 years.

The survey shows that the majority of non-ethnic Russian Buddhists attended lectures, participated in the initiation ceremonies, made a pilgrimage beyond their region. A minority of informants travels for the same purpose abroad, mainly in the European centers of the international organization to which they belong. Less often, they go to Asia (Mongolia, India, Japan, China, Thailand).

The surveyed non-ethnic Buddhists mainly noted in the survey that they receive support from family and friends on the choice of their religious affiliation. Unfamiliar and unknown people, after learning that their interlocutors are Buddhists seldom react moderately negatively, mainly their reaction is neutral mixed with polite interest, despite the fact that Buddhism is not widespread in the region. None of the informants has not stated any problems in carrying out practices.

Most of the activities, through which the access to the non-Buddhist social space realize, were dedicated to educational purposes. Only a small part of them, organized by the Buddhist center of Karma Kagyu and the Shad Tchup Ling community, had a massive cultural character (festivals, exhibitions, concerts). Perhaps it is this fact that makes these communities the most numerous in their region.

The relationship between non-ethnic communities of different movements are almost not supported, and this ties together the members of a single community considerably: the doctrines do not mix. However, individual members of the groups on his/her own initiative attend lectures and events organized by other communities. The exception is the community Shad Tchup Ling, which maintains contact with other Buddhist schools of various regions of Russia and countries of the world.

Relations between ethnic and non-ethnic communities are also not supported. According to the respondents of all ethnic Buddhists, who in the majority are students, they had no knowledge of any non-ethnic Buddhist communities in Russia.

The vast majority of non-ethnic Russian Buddhist communities are branches of large European organizations. We can assume that this is a consequence of the country's remoteness from major Asian Buddhist

communities where Buddhist teachers live permanently and actively conduct teachings.

Regular visits to Russia of the Buddhist mentors associated with various foreign organizations and Buddhist schools, currently do not result in forming of a new stable community of followers. Neither does it give rise to community of students of various lamas, without a common spiritual mentor, which could have an impact on all aspects of community life. As a result of such visits, which took place in Yekaterinburg from mid-2013 to the end of 2016 no new group of disciples has been recorded.

The fact that Shad Tchup Ling spiritual mentor Lama Tenzin Dokchit lives regularly with the community, is unique to the Buddhist associations of the Ural Federal District. This ensures the stability of the community without entering into a central religious organization.

At the same time, the founder of the Shad Tchup Ling M. Sannikov is the only Buddhist spiritual mentor of the Ural Federal District a community, whose authority is questioned by representatives of other Buddhist organizations.

However, it should be recognized that Tenzin Dokchit, and his disciples are Buddhists and practice Buddhist methods regardless of whether he is Lama or not. M. Sannikov and the members of his community have repeatedly taken Buddhist *refuge* at the time of initiations, which were carried out by Lamas respected in the Ural and beyond.

Federal Law “*About Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations*” supported Buddhism, which became one of the officially recognized alternatives for the spiritual quest of the Russians. As shown by number of communities members, which was established during research, over the years of their existence, interest in Buddhism in Russia is stable, despite the fact that this religion is not extensive in the country.

For non-ethnic Buddhists the attractiveness of this religion is caused by relatively similar characteristics which have been specified in the questionnaire: “Buddhism teaches us to be kind, patient ... I especially like the fact that the Buddha - is not God, but a teacher of life”; Buddhism is “logical, harmonious and adequate” “religion of personal experience rather than blind faith” that gives “quieting the mind”, “consciousness and energy management”, “bringing in a more advanced state”. In other



words a stable choice in favor of Buddhism influences the effect of the practices observed in the normal life of the community members.

Four of the interviewed representatives of various communities mentioned that their identity was influenced by the Buddhist Vipassana courses by S. Goenka, which are regularly held in Russia in Moscow, Leningrad and Sverdlovsk regions. It is interesting to note that in Russia, Vipassana is taught beyond Buddhist context, and affiliation to Buddhism by the organizers of these courses is denied.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Interview with one of the organizers of Vipassana courses, July 10, 2016, PAL F4 A1.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Analysis of the Main Factors of Spreading and Development of Buddhism in Russia**

To the study Russian Buddhism in past and present, author applied essentially different approaches. They are historiographical and sociological methods. Historical analysis and social research have different characteristics. They are applied to different phenomena. Both of these methods have important distinctive features.

Through studying the historical context of Buddhism development in Russia, the author reconstructed the circumstances, which defined the development of religion in a certain direction. Main tendencies of this process were already highlighted before. Also, by the means of historiographical method, the author defined the main forms and specifics of Buddhist tradition that developed in Russia during hundreds of years.

However, this method is not effective for studying the modern situation in which Russian non-ethnic Buddhism is developing today. Last 200 years the history changed rapidly. Therefore, political changes that occurred 25 years ago created conditions for new phenomena that do not have a deep historic context. Therefore, it is impossible to apply the historiographical method to study them. In the first place, these phenomena related to the fact that Buddhism transcended ethnic and geographical boundaries.

This is why the author applied sociologic method to study the situation in the sphere of non-ethnic Buddhism. This method allowed to reveal the main forms and features of non-ethnic Buddhist communities, which exist outside of traditional Buddhist areas. In this context, author was able to describe in detail the meditation practices used by the modern Buddhist communities.

In its turn, the sociologic method does not expose the tendency of Buddhism development in Russia. It only describes its modern state of existence.

Under the conditions of searching new ways of civilization development, attempts to implement the principle of mutual complementarity gain particular importance. Author intends to apply this

principle in this chapter. We can detect the factors, which affected the establishment and development of Buddhism in Russia by summarizing results of historiographical and sociological researches. After the studying of this factors from different points of view, author intends to define their main qualities and conditions, in which these factors have the strongest effect. By main qualities, author means qualities that remain regardless of research method and circumstances, in which they occur.

#### 4.1 Government

Government always played the key role in development and distribution of Buddhism. In the times of the Buddha, when a king declared himself a Buddhist lay follower, large quantities of people in the country would follow his example.<sup>1</sup>

Hundreds years after the Buddha, influence of government had not weakened, but became more apparent. After the third Buddhist Council, king Asoka was the one who sponsored and initiated distribution of Buddhism to neighboring countries.<sup>2</sup> The third Council itself was not possible without the patronage of king Asoka.<sup>3</sup>

In historical perspective, it is evident that government acted not only as a main initiator of spreading its own religion to neighboring countries, but also as an essential recipient of Buddhism. Dharma was perceived on the level of government in Sri-Lanka,<sup>4</sup> throughout Southeast Asia and in Tibet. In these cases, the country's leadership took responsibility for solution of many problems associated with the spread of religion among common people.

The role of government as a recipient in the historical context of the Mongolian state was expressed in historiographical research.<sup>5</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> A. Paribok, “«Questions of Milinda» and their place in the history of Buddhist thought” in A. Paribok (tr.) **Questions of Milinda**, (Moscow: Science, 1989), p.24. (in Russian)

<sup>2</sup> V. A. Smith, **Asoka, the Buddhist Emperor of India**, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press. 1920), p.235.

<sup>3</sup> G. Bongard-Levin, **Ancient Indian Civilization**, Moscow: Science, 1993, p.23. (in Russian)

<sup>4</sup> A. Safronova, “Buddhist Sangha of Sri-Lanka”, **Ph.D. Dissertation**, (Institute of Asia and Africa: Moscow State University, 2000), p.27. (in Russian)

<sup>5</sup> See above, Chapter II, p.22.

spread of Tibetan Buddhism in Mongolia was provoked by the government. Moreover, it was connected to the change in the political climate. It should be noted that Buddhism has long remained the religion of the privileged groups, and spread among common people slowly with the transformation of religion itself.

However, the Russian authorities did not perceived Buddhism. This is the main reason why the successful spread of Dharma did not reappeared in the new political reality, as it happened in Tibet, and consequently in Mongolia. The spread of Buddhism within Russian borders almost did not happen.

Nevertheless, the Russian government remains an important factor of formation and development of Buddhism. Historiographical method allows us to see quite clearly three different phases of relationship between government and Buddhism as follows,

- 1) Government dominates over Buddhism and accepts it (before XX<sup>th</sup> century)
- 2) Government dominates over and suppresses Buddhism (Soviet period)
- 3) Government does not dominate over Buddhism and avoids interfering in religious matters (1989 – 2016).

These phases reveal inconsistency of political authority as a factor of Buddhism development. Therefore, we should consider these phases individually.

During the expansion of Russia's borders, the authorities tried to avoid unnecessary conflicts on the new territories and did not enforced their political and economic influence by religious expansion. Generally, all newly included ethnic groups retained their religious traditions and beliefs.

However, the authorities retained control over religious affairs and interfered in the activities of the clergy. This was especially apparent in Buryatia. National and linguistic affinity between Buryats in Russia and Mongolians in China provoked cultural exchange between these countries. In this case, the Buryats were the receiving side. This exchange threatened the newly established border, and created the risk that Buryats will leave to China.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> **Russian History: Russia and the East**, p. 178.

In order not to provoke Buryats, Russian authorities did not try to convert them to Christianity.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, it was necessary to reduce the influence of China. To create an independent and centralized Saṅgha was a successful solution of this problem.<sup>8</sup>

Centralization of Saṅgha was the major effect of the government, as a factor contributing to the development of Buddhism in Russia. Small, scattered groups of clergy and independent Lamas acted only in their own interests, and did not spread the teaching. In addition, competition between them was not allowing Buddhism to establish as an integrated cultural and religious phenomenon.<sup>9</sup> In this case, the government acted as an arbitrator and set up a clear hierarchy. This allowed to carry out a unified religious policy among the people professing Buddhism, as well to approve Buddhism among indigenous religions.

However, negative aspects of state factor should be noted as well. Governmental control allowed Buddhism to develop only within certain limits, and did not let it spread outside geographic and ethnic boundaries.<sup>10</sup> For centuries, Buddhism remained in a frozen state. Nevertheless, a unique Buddhist tradition of Kalmykiya and Buryatia was formed during this time.

The period of the Soviet Union gives us a clear example of another way of interaction between the state and Buddhist clergy. The brutality of measures applied by the Communists to destroy Buddhism (and other religions) is comparable with the Islamic expansion in India.

Obviously, in this period government did not have any positive qualities for the development and spread of Buddhism. On the contrary, it has caused irreparable damage to all aspects of religious life.

An example of communist repressions clearly shows that the government is a crucial factor for the existence of Buddhism. If Buddhist values contradict with the objectives of authorities, no other factors will

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<sup>7</sup> D. Tsybikdorjiev, "Buddhism and the History of Formation of National Movements in Buryatia", p.47.

<sup>8</sup> G. Galdanova, K. Gerasimova, **Lamaism in Buryatia in XVIII<sup>th</sup> — XX<sup>th</sup> Century: Structure and social role of the cult system**, p.15.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p.45.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p.56.

help Buddhism to take its rightful place in the social environment of the country.

The post-communist period has a new and unique state policy in relation to Buddhism. Since the beginning of the 1990s, a new attitude of non-interference to religious affairs was proclaimed in Russia.<sup>11</sup>

This attitude enabled the rapid growth of Buddhism in Russia. Buddhist legacy destroyed by the communists was restoring rapidly. It is important to note that although central administration followed the policy of non-interference, the regional authorities were actively helping to restore the religion in the Buddhist republics of Buryatia, Kalmykiya and Tuva.

The governance of Tuva was the one to initiate and organize the first Dalai Lama's visit to the republic.<sup>12</sup> In the early 1990s, there was no organization in Tuva able to carry such a huge event. Only the policy of republican government, aimed to cultivate national identity, made it possible to develop Buddhism.

During his reign, Ilyumzhinov, the president of Kalmykiya, achieved the recognition of Buddhism as the state religion of this republic.<sup>13</sup> Without the support of the Kalmyk government, it would be impossible to provide fast registration for independent centralized religious organizations in this region as well. After all, officially, there were no Buddhism before the collapse of the Soviet Union in this area.<sup>14</sup>

An important feature of the new stage in the development of Buddhism is pluralism. During this period, plenty of independent organizations appeared, which did not supported the main organization of the republic, and even confronted with it.

In new political conditions, Buddhism was able to overcome ethnic limits and became a notable social and cultural phenomenon in many regions of Russia, especially in Moscow and Leningrad regions. At the same time, due to the policy of non-interference, obstacles to develop traditional and non-traditional Buddhism disappeared. By non-traditional

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<sup>11</sup> E. Ostrovskaya, *Russian Buddhism in the Frame of Civil Society*, p.1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* p.7.

<sup>13</sup> E. Safronova, "Modern Buddhism and Several Problem of Russian Geopolitics", *National interests*, No.6 (2007), p.57. (in Russian)

<sup>14</sup> E. Ostrovskaya, *Russian Buddhism in a Frame of Civil Society*, p.4.

Buddhism, we mean a variety of new schools, which mostly came from Europe. Main organizations that practice modern forms of Buddhism are very restricted. They do not interact with the Buddhists of other schools. It may be noted that a certain separatism is present amid the pluralism of non-ethnic Buddhist schools.

Thus at this stage of historical development, pluralism and separatism are the characteristic features of Buddhism in Russia. These qualities appeared on a background of non-interference policy of the Russian government.

Rivalry and lack of positive interaction between different groups of Buddhists is a negative quality, which does not allow religion to confront serious obstacles. As a result, after a dramatic improvement in the development during the 1990s, came a period of stagnation. According to the sociological study, non-ethnic communities of Buddhists do not grow: the number of new members equals the number of those who have stopped Buddhist practice.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the separation of religion from government is favorable only for a brief period. Russian Buddhists showed to be unable to sustain growth without the help from the government.

At the present stage, the country's authorities are turning away from the policy of non-interference in religious affairs. Important changes were made in the law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations" over recent years. These changes have significantly changed the format of registering new religious organizations. In 2016, the government adopted new rigid rules concerning the conduct missionary activities.<sup>16</sup>

Obviously, these measures are not aimed directly against Buddhism. On the contrary, the danger of Islamic extremism became a major cause of lawmaking initiatives in the sphere of religion. However, because there is no single state religion in Russia, the government has no right to impose any restrictions on only one religion. New laws apply to all.

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<sup>15</sup> See above, Chapter III, p.154.

<sup>16</sup> Federal law from July, 6 2016 No. 374-FL "About changes in federal law "About countermeasures against terrorism"" and separate legal acts of Russian Federation relating to establishment of additional measures against terrorism and providing public safety. (in Russian)

Now it is impossible to predict the direction, in which the policy of government will change. The author considers actions to centralize the spiritual hierarchy in Buddhism the most favorable. However, so far these trends are not present in the activities of state authorities.

## 4.2 Foreign Buddhist Influence

This factor is crucial for the existence of Buddhism in Russia. In fact, it is the source of Russian Buddhism.

The first teachers in the Buryat environment came from Tibet. After Buryatia became a part of Russian Empire, Mongolian and Tibetan presence remained so strong that the government was forced to respond by legislative measures. Decrees were issued to restrict lamas from crossing the border. Russian government virtually established an independent Buryat Saṅgha – these efforts were also provoked by the activities of foreign missionaries.<sup>17</sup>

Despite that all subsequent stages of Buddhism existence in Russia took place in the isolation for a long time, foreign religious influence was an important factor. Despite it was impossible for Tibetan lamas to arrive, many lamas from Buryatia and Kalmykiya went to Tibet and Mongolia for training.

The movement of Buddhism renovation in Russia in the late XIX<sup>th</sup> century began after a similar transformation took place around the world, including Mongolia. One of the main initiators of this movement was Agvan Dorjiev. Despite he was an ethnic Buryat, he received religious education in Tibet. In addition, he conducted all his activities in Russia as a representative of the Dalai Lama. Thus, the reforms of Russian Buddhism were induced by external influence.

Achievements of Dorjiev are not limited to organizing and leading the Renovation movement. One of the main results of his activity was the construction of the first Buddhist temple in the capital of Russia. Using the authority of a Tibetan representative, Dorjiev got an audience with the Emperor, and obtained permission to build a temple.<sup>18</sup> Most of

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<sup>17</sup> G. Galdanova, K. Gerasimova, **Lamaism in Buryatia in XVIII<sup>th</sup> — XX<sup>th</sup> Century: Structure and social role of the cult system**, p.18.

<sup>18</sup> A. Andreev, **Buddha's Temple in the Northern Capital**, p.26.



the funds for the construction came directly from the Dalai Lama.<sup>19</sup> In this case, the foreign influence for the first time manifested in such a significant financial assistance.

Post-communist period in Russia was much more favorable for the external influence than all the previous stages. Two temples in Buryatia were immediately restored after the Second World War, but Buddhists from Kalmykiya and Tuva were unable to rely on their own religious experience. Adopting foreign culture was the only option to restore Buddhism in these areas.

Buddhism was mainly perceived from the transnational Buddhist commutative network.<sup>20</sup> The Tibetan government in exile created this network after the establishment of Chinese rule on the territory of Tibet in 1951. This network was in need of new spheres of influence to spread its own culture.

Because of the existing mutual needs, first visits of the Dalai Lama in Russia produced an explosive effect. Religious organizations start to register in large numbers, construction of many temples and stupas began. First students went to study in Tibetan monasteries in India. Without foreign influence, it was impossible to inspire people and unite them. Dalai Lama's visits played a crucial role.

Later Tibetan representatives and spiritual leaders arrived in Russia. Yeshe Lodoy Rinpoche came to Buryatia.<sup>21</sup> Currently, under his leadership, a monastic Saṅgha that consist solely of Tibetans exist. He failed to make contact with Buryat clergy, and his students created an independent community. He frequently gives lectures all over Russia. Consequently, there are many non-ethnic Buddhists among his disciples.

The official representative of the Dalai Lama in Russia is Geshe Jampa Tinley.<sup>22</sup> Concurrently, he also represents the Dalai Lama in Tuva republic. However, he is not very popular there. In this particular case, his

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p.39.

<sup>20</sup> E. Ostrovskaya, "Russian Buddhism in a Frame of Civil Society", p.1.

<sup>21</sup> Yeshe Lodoy Rimpoche, retrieved on 24 February 2016, <http://yelo-rinpoche.ru/teachers/>. (in Russian)

<sup>22</sup> Geshe Jampa Tinley, retrieved on 24 February 2016, <http://geshe.ru/node/39>. (in Russian)

teachings are not perceived at the level of ordinary people.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, his activities were largely redirected on non-ethnic Buddhists.

In Kalmykiya, situation is more favorable. Telo Tulku Rinpoche, a disciple of the Dalai Lama, was elected as the Shajin lama. He belonged to the Kalmyk diaspora of refugees from Kalmykiya in the United States.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps, the national affinity and democratic election of a new spiritual leader allowed him to avoid conflicts with the local clergy and to establish contact with the common people.

None of three Dalai Lama's representatives knew Russian language upon inauguration. Gradually delving into the Russian environment, they changed their policy and became more independent.

Foreign Buddhism was equally important for the development of non-ethnic Buddhism in Russia. Despite the fact that its appearance is associated with the name of Dandaron and has solely Russian background, the mass development of Buddhism beyond the ethnic boundaries began under the influence of foreign religious organizations.<sup>25</sup>

During the sociological research, the author explored effects of this phenomenon in detail. Two of the three communities studied are subject to foreign influence, not only spiritual, but also administrative. The communities of the Karma Kagyu and Dzogchen are branches of quite rigidly centralized organizations. Such organizations achieved the highest popularity among non-ethnic Russian Buddhists.

Some members of these organizations go abroad to receive instructions and initiations. Foreign teachers also arrive at their invitation. These teachers give lectures, lead ceremonies and meditation retreats.

It is important to note that these centers do not develop themselves independently. Besides the lack of quantitative growth, none of the participants surveyed plan to receive a complete religious education and spread the Dharma in future. Such kind of motivation is absent, because these organizations do not demand resident teachers.

Shown by the survey, branches of foreign religious organizations are closed to interact with other Buddhists. Because of a closed policy,

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<sup>23</sup> E. Ostrovskaya, "Russian Buddhism in the Frame of Civil Society", p.7.

<sup>24</sup> S. Filatov, **Religion and Society: Essay on religious life in modern Russia**, St. Petersburg: Summer Garden, 2002, p.80. (in Russian)

<sup>25</sup> V. Poresh, "Russian Buddhism – How is it Possible?", p.40.

small religious communities cannot afford a resident teacher. As a result, a small number of non-ethnic Buddhists leads to repeated appeals for foreign influence. But again, only within a single organization.

The desire of foreign organizations to retain control over the followers and limit their interaction with other Buddhists led to the phenomenon of separatism, which has already been mentioned in the preceding paragraph. The policy of governmental non-interference is the background of this phenomenon, and the foreign influence is the reason.

The ambition to control Russian Buddhists is quite natural for both country's leadership and foreign organizations. However, the results of this commitment are opposite. Active intervention of the government in religious affairs leads to centralization of clergy and uniting efforts of Buddhists. The influence of foreign organizations, as a united factor, leads to emergence of many independent communities and consequently to separatism. Therefore, it can be assumed that these two factors are opposed to each other and stand in a particular conflict.

Some researchers point out the existence of this conflict. E. Ostrovskaya raised this question most clearly. She cites the example of the former president of Kalmykiya, Ilyumzhinov, who, being under the impression of Tibetan cultural and religious expansion, expressed his ideas to establish a theocratic state in Kalmykiya. According to Ostrovskaya, these ideas were threatening Russia's territorial integrity.<sup>26</sup>

However, neither historical nor sociological studies have confirmed these fears. In Russian history, there is only one case where Buddhists have tried to create their own state. The historical research show that during the Civil War Balagatskoe movement came out with a similar initiative. However, the idea collapsed. Moreover, this initiative arose because of lack of centralized power in the country.<sup>27</sup>

Sociological studies show that Buddhists have a very low interest in politics. Quoting the words of lama Dokchit, no war was conducted under the flag of Buddhism during the history of mankind.<sup>28</sup> This quality

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<sup>26</sup> E. Ostrovskaya, "Russian Buddhism in the Frame of Civil Society", p.4.

<sup>27</sup> M. Ulanov, "Buddhism in the Russian socio-cultural environment", p.169.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with the head of the Buddhist community Shad Tchup Ling, M. Sannikov (Lama Sangye Tenzin Dokchit), March 15, 2016. PAL F1 A2.

does not allow foreign influence to become a real threat to the state authority.

Factor of foreign religious influence has vital importance for Russian Buddhism. However, there are some negative effects of this factor. Separatism and hierarchical confusion are the main of them. Their manifestation inevitably provokes the state to limit foreign initiatives.

### **4.3 Political Situation**

This factor is indirect. It influence Buddhism, particularly through government institutions, which have already been described earlier. Nevertheless, it should be considered separately, because its effect is not limited to the influence of government. The political situation affects also the social and cultural climate in a society. It regulates the processes of inter-ethnic and inter-religious communication. Foreign policy affects foreign religious influence. All these factors manifest themselves as a result of certain political phenomena and altogether form the environment for the Russian Buddhist clergy.

In the present study, we can observe influence of the political situation even before Kalmyks and Buryats went under the jurisdiction of the Russian state. For example, the political system of the Mongol Empire did not allow Buddhism to take its rightful place in society for a long time. The Mongolian government was focused on aggressive nomadic and predatory activity. This regime was an unsuitable ground for Buddhist sermons about peace.<sup>29</sup>

Historical evidence about the reign of ancient Turkic Hagan Mogilyan<sup>30</sup> demonstrates that the impact of political situation is more important than wishes of nation's leadership. Militaristic line of the government did not allowed Mogilyan to implement his plans for the construction of Buddhist temples.

Later, as a result of transition from tribal to feudal system, the Mongols accepted Buddhism as the main religion. Here the influence of political situation is also discernable. Notably, a complex effect is present in this situation. This factor has worked not only directly, but also indirectly through social transformation.

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<sup>29</sup> Y. Drobyshev, "Buddhism and Tengri: Confrontation or Cooperation?" p.109.

<sup>30</sup> See above, Chapter II, p.20-21.

This case is interesting because there was a mutual influence, not only one-sided impact. Having got the opportunity to raise the popularity of Buddhism on new territories, lamas, in turn, actively affected the policy of government. The most evident influence was the introduction of two laws conception to the state management mechanism.<sup>31</sup>

Later, this concept lost its impact and then gained importance again. This decline and rebirth are also the consequences of changing political situation, namely, the collapse of the Mongol Empire, and the subsequent consolidation of some parts of this Empire.

In the Russian Empire before the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, activities of public authorities were primarily triggered by the political situation. The impact of those activities was already described at the beginning of this chapter.

The weakness of Russian borders in the south and east did not allow the authorities to convert Kalmyks and Buryats to Christianity. On the contrary, Buddhism has been recognized at the state level.<sup>32</sup> Centralization and isolation of Buryat Saṅgha from foreign influence was caused by the threat of population moving to the neighboring China.

During the Tsarist regime, Buddhism was limited by extremely narrow territorial borders, which were settled by representatives of Mongolian ethnic group. In political circumstances of that time, significant development of religion was impossible.

At the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, a new stage in the development of Buddhism in Russia was conditioned by the changes in global political environment.<sup>33</sup> In this context, the considered factor manifested itself in conjunction with foreign religious influence.

Movement of Buddhists Renovation in Russia was inspired by the success of similar movements in other countries, and was not directly influenced by political situation. However, reforms in pioneering

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<sup>31</sup> S. Tsybanov, **Features of Chinese and Tibetan Concept of Power in the Buddhist Tradition**, p.91.

<sup>32</sup> G. Galdanova, K. Gerasimova, **Lamaism in Buryatia in XVIII<sup>th</sup> — XX<sup>th</sup> Century: Structure and Social Role of the Cult System**, p.18.

<sup>33</sup> L. Abaeva, N. Zhukovskaia, “Tradition and Modernization in Buddhism History”, p.134.

Renovation countries were a reaction to colonial activities of the European states.<sup>34</sup>

The Dalai Lama initiated a political rapprochement with Russia because of the threat from England. He sent his representative, Agvan Dorjiev, to Russia and actively sponsored his activities. Sympathetic relations between the two countries formed a more favorable attitude to Tibetan religion on the part of Russian state elite. Under the new conditions, Dorjiev was able not only to organize the Renovation movement in Buddhist regions, but also to build a Buddhist temple in the heart of Russia.

We can also assume that political cooperation between colonial states in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century allowed the phenomenon of Buddhist studies to arise.

Subsequent events in Russia demonstrate, how the changings of the political climate influences to Buddhism. In a situation of chaos, legal acts, which hindered the development of Buddhism, were overturned. As a result, in this period spiritual development raised. The civil war even caused an attempt to create a separate Buddhist state.

Furthermore, during communist period, Buddhism was almost completely destroyed. Nearly all the achievements of Renovation movement were negated. Any attempt to reform or adapt Buddhism to new political conditions was condemned to failure.

Nevertheless, we cannot claim that Buddhism absolutely could not exist during communist regime. Thus, after the Second World War, two temples in Buryatia were restored. Overcoming hardships, Soviet Buddhologists continued their activities.<sup>35</sup>

Important to note that the communist regime proclaimed non-ethnical values. Because of the regime, ethnic division of society finally disappeared. As a result of this policy, seeds for the subsequent emergence of non-ethnic Buddhism were sown. Activities of Dandaron had a great response due to the communist environment. In this environment, Russian, Baltic and other students of Dandaron could perceive him as an equal, and not as an Asian stranger.

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<sup>34</sup> E. Semeka, **The History of Buddhism in Ceylon (The Sangha in Ancient Times and Middle Age)**, (Moscow: np, 1969), p.83. (in Russian)

<sup>35</sup> E. Torchinov, **Introduction to Buddhology**, p.136-137.

Another breakthrough in the development of Buddhism, which took place in the 1990s, again was associated with the change of political situation in the country. Critical administrative exemptions led to emergence of a huge number of religious organizations. The majority of these organizations are spiritually and administratively dependent on foreign centers.

Nevertheless, this period did not last long. After coming to power, President Putin has gradually changed the course of the country. In foreign policy, it was expressed in rapprochement with China. As a result of this rapprochement, the Dalai Lama was prohibited to enter Russia.<sup>36</sup>

Many Russian Buddhists painfully react on this ban and Chinese policy towards Tibetans. They regularly hold protests outside the Chinese embassy and send complains to the presidential administration. As a result, the spirit of dissidence, which originated in the Soviet era, remains in Buddhist environment.

However, this trend is not common for Russian Buddhists. For example, BTSR shows complete indifference to the Tibetan issue.<sup>37</sup> This is the only Buddhist organization in Russia, which has a representative in the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation President. High status determines certain loyalty of BTSR to the government. In addition, in spite of independence, this organization was created at the direction of the country's leadership already in the communist period.

Many non-ethnic Buddhist organizations, which do not belong to Gelug School, also show indifference to the Tibetan issue. This can be attributed to the low interest in political issues, which were identified in the course of sociological research.

Nevertheless, strengthening of the state's influence in the spiritual life of Russian citizens is a certain concern, because at the moment, only restrictions become more strong, but not the public liberties in religious sphere. As a result, over the past 17 years no new major religious groups arisen in Russia and the number of Buddhists is not growing.

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<sup>36</sup> A. Terentyev, "The Current State of Sino-Tibetan Issue", **Buddhism of Russia**, no.42, (2009), p.66. (in Russian)

<sup>37</sup> A. Mahachkeev, "Buryats Received Buddhism not from Tibet - Hambo Lama of Buryatia Damba Ayushev", **MK of Buryatia**, (26 March 2008), p.5. (in Russian)

It can be argued that the number of Buddhists and their religious life may be improved under the influence of the political situation, for example with the development of intensive cooperation between Russia and Buddhist countries.

Trends toward a dramatic deterioration of these indicators due to political factor are unlikely. On one hand, Buddhists maintain a fairly neutral political stance, and resentment at the Tibetan issue is not common for modern Russian Buddhists. On the other hand, government's position on the religious question still remains distanced.

In general, it can be noted that since Russia is not a Buddhist state, the government does not carry out special policies for the development of Buddhism. Therefore, changes rarely happen in the Buddhist environment in a stable political situation.

Analysis reveals a certain uniqueness of the political situation as a separate factor of development of Buddhism. This uniqueness lies in its clearly expressed dynamic aspect. Religion actively respond to any changes in domestic and foreign policy of the country. Major improvements in distribution and development of Buddhism were noted during the expansion of Russian Empire, during the overthrow of monarchy, during the establishment of communist regime and during the period of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

#### **4.4 Other Religions**

This factor can be divided into two different types: religion, which were suppressed by Buddhism, and religion, which restrained its spread.

The first type includes all autochthonous religions, especially shamanism. Here we can speak about the interaction between religions, rather than the impact of shamanism on Buddhism. Historical research reveals in detail the phenomenon of assimilation of primitive religions in the process of spreading the Dharma on new territories.

In Mongolia, the Buddha's teaching was not just displaces old beliefs. Many rituals and traditions were accepted by the new religion, and kept almost unchanged. These traditions are the main feature of Mongolian Buddhism. Within the diversity of Mongolian ethnic groups, these same traditions allow to distinguish Buddhism of Kalmykiya and Buryatia.



As noted, this situation is not unique. A similar situation can be traced back to India<sup>38</sup>, and consequently in Tibet, China and Southeast Asia. Moreover, these processes happened not only within Buddhism, but also within other religions, like Christianity and Islam.<sup>39</sup>

Since shamanism is sufficiently studied, we can confidently assert which particular features Buddhism gained from shamanism and which features appeared due to other factors.

In this respect, the fact that Buddhist lamas almost completely taken over the function of shamans is clear.<sup>40</sup>

On the other hand, shamanism was not eradicated completely. In different situations, many manifestations of this autochthonous religion could be noted without any connection to Buddhism. In addition, until the XX<sup>th</sup> century, a certain syncretism of Buddhism and shamanism remained everywhere.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, religions, which were suppressed by Buddhism, are a factor affecting its development. It manifests itself while the world's religions are adapting to local folk traditions. This is one of the most important factors, which form the original shape of the various national manifestations of Buddhism.

Buddhism evolved a completely different relationship with stronger religions. Historical analysis revealed a difficult situation for Buddhism in Mongolia in a period when Tengrity was popular. It can be noted that Buddhism began to gain popularity when this religion started to weaken.<sup>42</sup>

There was no mutual penetration between these two religions. We can explain this by the presence of two conceptual systems that were very important and conflicted with each other at the same time. Buddhists

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<sup>38</sup> V. Vasilyev (tr.), **History of Buddhism in India, written by Tāranātha**, (St. Petersburg: Printing house of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1869), p.234. (in Russian)

<sup>39</sup> M. Popovich, **Worldview of Ancient Slavonians**, p.34.

<sup>40</sup> M. Ulanov, "Buddhism in the Russian socio-cultural environment", p.120.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p.138.

<sup>42</sup> Yu. Drobyshev, "Buddhism and Tengri: Confrontation or Cooperation?", p.112.

developed the concept of the two laws. It did not correspond to the hierarchical system of heaven worship.

A similar situation occurred in Russia. Christianity did not allow Buddhism to distribute freely. On the contrary, the Russian Orthodox Church many times tried to impose their religion on Buryatia and Kalmykiya.<sup>43</sup> In the present situation, there were quite audacious attacks on some representatives of Buddhism. During the historical research it was founded that Karma Kagyu community (the largest organization of non-ethnic Buddhists) was added to the list of totalitarian sects.<sup>44</sup>

It is important to note the tendency, that in spite of the tough competition, Buddhism managed to maintain its position. In Mongolia, until the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, it took a certain place in the life of society. It maintained its place until a favorable socio-political environment appeared. Similarly, in Russia, this religion closely linked to ethnic culture and existed in the environment of the Kalmyks and Buryats long time.

Attempts of Christianity to exert pressure led to strong opposition and mobilization of the Buddhist clergy. This has stimulated the development of Buddhism.

Thus, we can conclude that, like a strong opponent not able to defeat his enemy completely, a strong religion, when trying to fight against Buddhism, just make it stronger.

#### 4.5 Science

This factor appeared only in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century and do not have a deep historical background. However, in less than 200 years, scientific approach established itself as a key aspect of Buddhism perception in the space of non-Buddhist culture, thus it contributed to the spread of this world religion.

Science allows to study any phenomenon through a universal set of methods. It is a relatively new ideological approach, which does not tolerate any cultural, ethnic, religious and even geographical limitations. Probably, it is the most important aspect of modern globalization.

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<sup>43</sup> K. Orlova. The Problem of Kalmyk Christianization in the Context of Russia's Home and Foreign Policy (mid XVII<sup>th</sup> — early XX<sup>th</sup> cent.), p.46.

<sup>44</sup> See above, Chapter II, p.102.

It is interesting that in Russia, among the first researchers of Buddhism there were many members of Christian clergy. Palladiy Kafarov, was the head of Russian Christian mission in Beijing for many years. He was a sinologist of the highest class, and the study of Buddhist history occupied a very important place in his research. Such vast activity of a Christian priest in relation to a foreign religion was possible because the scientific approach lies beyond religious denomination.

The first works of European and Russian researchers did not possess sufficient objectiveness. In Europe, there was an idea of superiority of their own culture over all others. The predominance of Eurocentric worldview can be traced not only in the works of European scientists, such as Bureau, Keith and others. Some Russian researchers were also eurocentrist, for example, V. Vasilyev. This feature did not allow many scientists to perceive the culture of other countries respectfully.<sup>45</sup>

This global trend was eliminated by Russian scientists. Stcherbatsky made the largest contribution to eliminate eurocentrism from Buddhist studies. He has consistently and systematically denied all the allegations about the inferiority of eastern world, and successfully showed similarities between ancient Buddhist categories and contemporary philosophical concepts.<sup>46</sup>

Among the various types of scientific activities, it is necessary to mention the work of translators. Publication of the main doctrinal texts in Russian language enabled numerous people to become acquainted with the teachings of the Buddha without years of studying Pali, Tibetan, Chinese and other languages.

This trend is present not only in Russia. In Buddhist countries of South-East Asia, the situation was similar 200 years ago. It is just to mention that firstly *tipiṭaka* was translated to a European language

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<sup>45</sup> E. Torchinov, **Introduction to Buddhology**, p.132.

<sup>46</sup> Th. Stcherbatsky, **Selected Works about Buddhism**, (Moscow: Science, 1988), p.24. (in Russian)

(namely English, the PTS translation),<sup>47</sup> and only later into Sinhalese, Thai and other languages of traditional Buddhist countries.<sup>48</sup>

Until this moment, only people who could read in Pali language had access to doctrinal texts. Even in Buddhist countries, a small number of people had the chance to study the scriptures. The scientific activities of translators triggered the development of Buddhism.

The sociological study has shown that non-ethnic Buddhists have significant differences from the traditional Buddhist communities. Obviously, the main reason is the mentality and culture of the people. However, the quality of translations is also an important factor in the formation and adaptation of Buddhism in new social conditions. The translator is the one who can transmit the essence of the teaching. Competence, temperament, maturity and beliefs of one person (or a small group) have an enormous influence to thousands of followers. Results of their works are imprinted in history for a long time.

Scientific method has its own prism of perception and fraught the danger of changing the emphasis required for an adequate perception of religious works.<sup>49</sup>

Having a huge stock of different scientific methods, scientists often completely ignore the main function of these texts – making an impact on the reader`s mind. In a process of text analyzing, scholars often examined in detail the content without investigating what some religious overtones present due to the use of certain words, phrases and even sentences.

In addition, scientists not always have an impartial opinion. They take a position and defend it. Eurocentrism has been a good example of such an inadequate interpretation 150 years ago. Nevertheless, opponents of such approach to perceive Buddhism also used unsuccessful methods.

For example, Stcherbatsky interpreted the teachings of Yogachara in philosophical terms of Immanuel Kant. He was proving that European

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<sup>47</sup> PTS, retrieved on 15 February 2017,  
<http://www.ames.cam.ac.uk/library/archive/pts>.

<sup>48</sup> L. S. Dewaraja, “Rhys Davids: His Contribution to Pali and Buddhist Studies”, **Daily News of Sri Lanka**, 17 July 1998, p.12.

<sup>49</sup> Tenzin Gyatso the 14th Dalai Lama, **The Universe in a Single Atom: the Convergence of Science and Spirituality**, (New York: Broadway Books, 2006), pp.50-58.

thinkers used categories that emerged in ancient India more than two thousand years ago. He used the language and hermeneutic procedure that made the ancient Indian text adequate for the perception of Europeans and Russians.

However, in this translation disappeared the foreign cultural content of Buddhist texts. This caused an impermissible europeanization of Buddhist thought. For example, Stcherbatsky translated term *svalakkhṇa* (quality, characteristic) as a “thing in itself”. Such translation hindered rather than helped to understand the content of this term.<sup>50</sup>

Thus, we cannot blame researchers for ignorance. The scientific approach itself is devoid of this flaw. Nevertheless, we have to stay alert concerning their works. Often they are not followers of the considerate doctrine and have narrow outsider view without being able to look from the inside. In addition, they often do not have sufficient impartiality: their works have the imprint of their own opinion.

Further, we should consider an opposite effect. Science not only paved the way for the perception of teaching in the foreign cultural environment. The scientific approach fundamentally changed many Buddhist methods of preaching and analyzing.<sup>51</sup> The activities of modern translators is impossible without the use of scientific methods of philology, hermeneutics, cultural studies and others.

Modern preachers are increasingly drawing parallels between Buddhism and science. However, they often express disdain for traditional philosophical approaches that do not fit into the scientific picture of the world.

Science is also the main source of education for Buddhist teachers in Russia. As an alternative, there is only the possibility of training in specialized Buddhist educational institutions abroad. In Russia, the Buddhist educational institutions operate only on the territory of Buryatia. There is only a small number of them, and the level of knowledge offered is very low.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> T. Stcherbatsky, **Selected Works about Buddhism**, p.37.

<sup>51</sup> M. Plotnikov **Neo-Buddhist Sect of Ole Nydahl**, retrieved on 24 October 2016, [http://www.k-istine.ru/sects/nidalh/ole\\_nidahl\\_plotnikov.htm](http://www.k-istine.ru/sects/nidalh/ole_nidahl_plotnikov.htm). (in Russian)

<sup>52</sup> Interview with a member of the Shad Tchup Ling S. Burmistrova, May 24, 2016 PAL F1 A7.

Therefore, most prominent Russian translators of Buddhist texts have graduated from a secular university with a degree in Oriental studies. In this case, the person receives an extensive and high-quality knowledge about the culture of Asia in general, and then is able to choose Buddhism as his scientific specialty. This path is particularly important for non-ethnic Russian Buddhists, because training in Buryat seminaries and universities abroad is complicated through cultural, ethnic, and linguistic differences.

In this context, it is important to re-emphasize that secular education leaves its mark, leading to differences from the traditional religious worldview approach. Not all Buddhist researchers are able to overcome excessive rationalism and dominance of the materialistic views. Increasingly, these limits become the key characteristics of a variety of Buddhist works.

Summarizing, we can conclude that science allowed to perceive Buddhism in new territories and cultural environments. At the same time, it has left its mark and cut off all that defies rational interpretation.

Science do not lead to emergence of faith and meditative experience. Therefore, it is not a self-sufficient factor.

#### **4.6 Eminent Persons**

Often, the activities of one person has a tremendous influence on the course of world history. Life of Buddha Shakyamuni, the founder of one of the three world religions, is a good example.

Therefore, speaking about the development of Buddhism it is necessary to consider the factor of a strong personality.

Historiographical study did not revealed any detailed information about this factor in the period of more than 150 years ago. Nevertheless, correspondence between Mongol khans and kings allow us to assume that the key stages of spreading Buddhism in Mongolia were initiated and implemented by particular people with outstanding qualities.

Agvan Dorjiev is the first great personality, which we can consider due to significant historical information that remained. His activities covered all Buddhist regions of Russia.

Being a Buryat national, he did much for Buddhists in other regions. He opened two schools in Kalmykiya.<sup>53</sup> Up to that moment, there was no educational institutions of such a high level in this country. At the same time, he always faced strong resistance from the administrative authorities and successfully overcame it.<sup>54</sup>

Activities of Dorjiev went beyond Buddhist regions. There is evidence that he initiated the emergence of Buddhist communities<sup>55</sup> and construction of many Buddhist temples in the Irkutsk region (neighboring with Buryatia).<sup>56</sup>

However, his most renowned work was the construction of a Buddhist temple in the capital of Russian Empire. In St. Petersburg, he had to overcome strong resistance not only from the local administration, but also from the society, since more than 90% of the population professed Christianity in the city.<sup>57</sup>

In the Soviet period, the results of Dorjiev's activities were brought to nothing. A radio station was set up in the building of St. Petersburg temple. However, in 1989, the temple was returned to Buddhist followers. Up to this day, it remains the main symbol of Dorjiev's heritage.

Speaking about the legacy that remained from the time of Tsarist regime, another outstanding person should be mentioned, Pandita Hambo Lama XII Dasha Dorji Itigelov. He was a contemporary of Agvan Dorjiev. To uncover the uniqueness of this man, it is sufficient to say that as a child he was a homeless orphan, but later achieved the highest position in the spiritual hierarchy of Buryatia, and many times was

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<sup>53</sup> G. Dorjieva, **Buddhism and Christianity in Kalmykiya**, p.84-85.

<sup>54</sup> B. Shantaev, "Agvan Dorjiev and Kalmyk Steppe (end of XIX<sup>th</sup> – beginning of XX<sup>th</sup> century)", in Sambuyeva Ts. (ed.), **Buddhist Culture: History, Source, Language and Art: The second Dorjiev's readings**, (Saint Petersburg: Saint Petersburg Oriental Studies, 2008), p.43. (in Russian)

<sup>55</sup> B. Baradin, **Buddhist Monasteries**, (Saint Petersburg: Revers, 1992), p.81-82. (in Russian)

<sup>56</sup> E. Asalhanova, "Agvan Dorjiev and the Contruction of Buddhist Temples in Irkutsk Province", in Sambuyeva Ts. (ed.), **Buddhist Culture: History, Source, Language and Art: The second Dorjiev's readings**, (Saint Petersburg: Saint Petersburg Oriental Studies, 2008), p.10. (in Russian)

<sup>57</sup> A. Andreev, **Buddha's Temple in the Northern Capital**, p.64-66.

awarded by the imperial awards.<sup>58</sup> As stated in one of his biographies, Itigelov alone accomplished responsibilities of Education, Culture and Health Minister in Buryatia.<sup>59</sup>

However, most important were his achievements of supernormal abilities that he was able to apply in the best possible way. He had the ability of foresight, predicted tough times of repression and then the collapse of the Soviet regime.

He also had the unique ability to control the biochemical processes of his body. Because of this, he was able to make his body incorruptible and contribute to the restoration of Buddhism in Buryatia 75 years after his formal death.

In 1927, Itigelov gave final instructions to his disciples about how to deal with his body. Then he asked them to read a special prayer for the dead, *Hare Namshi*. During the ceremony, he stopped all physical processes in the body. Then he was put down to a cedar cube in the lotus position, which he was maintaining at the moment of passing away.

After 75 years, in 2002 XXIV Pandita Hambo Lama Damba Ayusheev carried out the exhumation of Itigelov's body. It remained incorrupt. Ayusheev put the body for public observation and allowed the scientists to examine it twice.<sup>60</sup>

The act of Itigelov's body inspection by Buryatian Republican Office of Forensic Examination from 11 September 2002 states as follows:

The body is without signs of decay... Extraneous aromatic, resinous or putrid odors from the contents of the box are not determined... Soft tissues of the body are elastic, mobility of joints is preserved ... No

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<sup>58</sup> Y. Vasilyeva, "Brief Biographical Details about Pandito Hambo-lama XII Dasha Dorjo Itigelov", in Sambuyeva Ts. (ed.), **Buddhist Culture: History, Source, Language and Art: The second Dorjiev's readings**, (Saint Petersburg: Saint Petersburg Oriental Studies, 2008), p.23. (in Russian)

<sup>59</sup> D. Amogolonova, "The Return of Hambo-lama Itigelov in the Context of Post-soviet Desecularization of Public Conscience", **Tartaria Magna**, no.1, (2012), p.138. (in Russian)

<sup>60</sup> A. Moiseyenko, "Mystery of the Incorruptible Lama: 85 Years Between Life and Death", **Komsomol truth** (27 September 2012): 2. (in Russian)



traces of previously produced opening for possible conservation... were found on the body.<sup>61</sup>

As a result, over the past 15 years a special discourse, which includes religious and practical connotations, formed around the “Immortal Body”. The number of people who call themselves Buddhists followers increased. Religious pilgrimage to Ivolginsky temple has significantly increased. The position of Traditional Buddhist Saṅgha of Russia and its current leader Hambo Lama Ayusheev has strengthened. Hambo Lama Itigelov himself became a symbol of Buryat ethnic and cultural revival. Moreover, he became an important factor, which allowed to make long-term plans for the development of tourist and recreation zone in the Republic of Buryatia.<sup>62</sup>

In modern Russia, the factor of a strong personality is particularly noticeable. It is especially important for non-ethnic Buddhist communities.

As demonstrated by a case study, these communities do not have a vast access to the Buddhist tradition. In Russia, there is almost no Buddhist religious institutions, able to form a complete picture of the religious system in the disciple’s mind. There is no powerful Saṅgha, which can serve as a symbol of faith. Therefore, the main source of inspiration for non-ethnic Buddhists are the founders of their communities.

The vast majority of respondents confirmed that they have received the basic information about Buddhism from the head of their organization. This happened directly (through lectures and individual conversations with the teacher) and indirectly (through the guidance of senior students and books that were written by the leader).

The situation is same for both independent communities, and those, which are the structural elements of centralized organizations. Membership in the centers of Karma Kagyu and Dzogchen is conditioned by devotion to the foreign teachers, Ole Nydahl and Namkhai Norbu. In

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<sup>61</sup> G. Ershova, “The Phenomenon of the Preservation of the Body of Buryat Lama Itihelov”, Retrieved on 23 February 2017, <http://www.biophys.ru/archive/congress2006/forum-p9.htm>. (in Russian)

<sup>62</sup> D. Amogolonova, “The Return of Hambo-lama Itigelov in the Context of Post-soviet Desecularization of Public Conscience”, p.138.

the Shad Tchup Ling community, the main criteria for membership is the fact of discipleship under the guidance of Lama Dokchit.

Organizations created by representatives of the Dalai Lama also have a cult of their founder. Telo Tulku Rinpoche, the head of Buddhists in Kalmykiya, is not a monk. However, he is recognized as the reincarnation of a great Lama and is more revered than many Kalmyk monks are. It should be noted that he is the only leader of the ethnic Buddhists, which seeks to develop a real monastic Saṅgha in the Russian-speaking environment.

The Dalai Lama's representative in Buryatia, Lodoy Yeshe Rinpoche himself is Gelong (Bhikkhu). He also created a monastic Saṅgha, which is a sufficiently authoritative subject of religious life. It presents a worthy example to its followers. However, this monastic community has no serious prospects. After all, it consists of Tibetans, not Russian citizens, and therefore is extremely small and do not replenish.<sup>63</sup>

Problems caused by the difference of ethnic mentalities did not allow Geshe Jampa Tinley to succeed in Tuva Republic. However, his teachings are very popular among non-ethnic followers. It is appropriate to quote the words of D. Solovyov. In his article, *The National in Buddhism: Problem of Definition*, he propose a thesis as stated,

... as a representative of any ethnic group, the Master naturally transfers to a student not only the features of his own mind, but also the mental specific of ethnic group that he represents. When applied to Russian Buddhism, the above thesis is revealed so that the phenomenon of 'Russian Buddhism' occurs in the transmission of Buddhist Dharma from a Russian Teacher to a Russian student.<sup>64</sup>

This probably explains why the Tibetan approach was completely alien to the mentality of Tuva people. However, it found its application in non-ethnic Buddhist environment.

Of course, there is a contradiction in this argument. After staying in Russia and learning Russian language for a long time, the teacher

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<sup>63</sup> Teachers, retrieved on 23 February 2017, <http://yelo-rinpoche.ru/teachers/>.(in Russian)

<sup>64</sup> D. Solovyev, "The National in Buddhism: Issue of Defenition", **The Way of the East. The Problematic of Methods. Materials of IV Scientific Youth Conference on Issues of Philosophy, Religion and Eastern Culture**, (St. Petersburg: Philosophical Society, 2001). p.22. (in Russian)

himself perceives the local culture. He adapts himself and adapts his teaching for the students. Historiographical and sociological studies show that methods of modern Buddhist teachers differ from the traditional ones.

Such flexible adaptation is possible only within a bright and creative individuality. There are very few of such individuals. This once again underlines the importance of a strong personality as a factor for the development of Buddhism in modern Russia.

Currently in Russia, there are no authoritative Buddhist institutions such as a large monastic community and self-contained high-level educational institutions. As long as they do not appear, a strong personality factor will play a key role in the development of Russian Buddhism.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

Of course, the considered phenomena do not exhaust the list of factors that are worthy of mention. Nevertheless, historical and sociological research did not reveal other fairly vivid aspects that had a sufficiently clear influence on the Buddhist society of Russia.

In general, the conducted analysis offers a non-standard foreshortening of the description of interaction between Buddhism and surrounding non-Buddhist space. Indeed, in this case, the object of analysis is neither Buddhism nor the surrounding society, but their interaction channels. At the same time, the impact of these channels on one side of the process, was studied in detail namely their influence on Buddhism.

This formulation allowed us to cut off the redundant information, and concentrate all attention on one phenomenon. In addition, only such extremely narrowed technique allows us to use the data, which was obtained in different methods (historiographical and sociological).

The data obtained make it possible to draw an unambiguous conclusion about the nature of these factors. government and foreign Buddhist influence play a key role for the existence of Buddhism in Russia. The political situation and other religions form the basic conditions, in which the Teaching exists. Factors of eminent person and science play a supporting role. They adapt Buddhism to new, nonspecific conditions.

## Chapter V

### Conclusion and Suggestions

#### 5.1 Conclusion.

The purpose of this research is to study the phenomenon of Russian Buddhism. For a multifaceted comprehension of this phenomenon, three different approaches were applied: historiographical, sociological and analytical. These three approaches correspond to the objectives of research, which are (1) to study the historical processes of development, adaptation and deformation of the Buddhism in Russia, (2) to identify the main characteristic features of neoteric Buddhist communities in Russia and (3) to determine the main factors of spreading and developing Buddhism in Russia.

1. The study of the historical background of Buddhism in Russia revealed the following provisions.

Despite the fact that in the territories that are now within the modern borders of the Russian Federation, the first evidence of the existence of Buddhism dates back to the VII<sup>th</sup> century AC, the events of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century are indeed significant by historical point of view. At that time, about 400 years ago, Buddhism was introduced into the territory of Russia due to the fact that large groups of the Mongolian people became part of the Russian Empire.

At that time, the Teaching of the Buddha had already passed a long process of development and adaptation in the Mongolian environment.

The formation of Buddhism among the nomads was unstable. At the first stages, we observe a very uncertain presence of the religion. Its appearance on the territory of the Mongolian khanate was due to the expansion of the state borders and the inclusion of peoples who already professed Dharma.

During long-term political and social transformations, the leaders of the country embraced Buddhism. They introduced the Buddhist concept of *two laws* to system of public administration. This concept implies the division of power in the secular and religious. Their joint activities should ensure the stable existence of the Khanate.

This concept also survived the decline and rebirth due to the collapse of the Mongolian empire and the subsequent restoration of some of its parts.

Developing in new territories, Buddhism assimilated autochthonous religions, such as shamanism and at the same time perceived from them many cults and customs.

In Russia, Buddhism has not received a serious development. For centuries, it remained within the ethno-territorial borders of resettlement Mongolian nationalities: Buryats and Kalmyks. During this time, an independent Saṅgha was formed. However, the government severely restricted the number of temples and priests.

Only in the end of XIX<sup>th</sup> beginning of XX<sup>th</sup> centuries, global political changes contributed to the growth of spirituality. There were several notable exits of Buddhism beyond the existing limits. In the process of research, it was revealed that these outlets happened due to the activities of outstanding personalities. Also, at this historical stage, scientific activity was manifested brightly. The Russian Buddhologist school played a key role in the process in the process of comprehension Buddhism by the world society.

However, these spiritual, administrative and scientific successes were immediately brought to nothing. The Soviet regime inflicted total damage of Buddhism in Russia. In Tuva and Kalmykiya, religion officially ceased to exist. Nevertheless, the new system of government was not able to eradicate religion completely. In Buryatia, two datsans were established after World War II.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Buddhism quickly regained its lost positions. At the same time, we cannot talk about the restoration of the same tradition, which existed in Russia before, because restored Buddhism has a number of distinctive features.

Currently, there are two types of Buddhists in Russia: ethnic and non-ethnic. They have a common religion, and interact with each other at an informal level. However, they have fundamental differences in mentality and have a different historical background.

Ethnic Buddhists in Russia are represented by three large groups. They are Kalmyks, Buryats and Tuvans.

Some ethnic Buddhists are also present in the Altai, but they do not have their own independent hierarchical structure and they are few in

number. In addition, they mainly profess Burkhanism, which has a number of significant differences from traditional Buddhism.

After a period of repression in Buryatia and Tuva, the clergy managed to restore an independent religious structure. However, the quality of Buddhist education in these republics is rather low.

Kalmykiya, in the process of restoring religion, relies on the Tibetan transnational commutative network. This network was established by the Tibetan government in exile after the establishment of Chinese power in Tibet in 1951.

Likewise, preachers of Tibetan Buddhism influenced to spread of Buddhism in Russia over the traditional territorial and ethnic limits. In this sphere, not only representatives of the Tibetan tradition showed activity. In modern Russia began to appear Theravada communities and groups professing Zen Buddhism. Nevertheless, due to their small number, they exist only in the largest cities and yet do not represent a clear phenomenon. Here it should be noted, that whole non-ethnic Buddhism has become a notable religious phenomenon in Russia only in recent decades. Therefore, historiographical method was ineffective for its study.

2. A sociological study of the phenomenon of non-ethnic Buddhism in Russia was conducted among the religious communities of the Ural. Three large Buddhist communities were studied. They are the Karma Kagyu community, the Dzogchen community, and the Shad Tchup Ling community.

The vast majority of new Buddhists belong to the Tibetan Buddhism, but followers of Theravada or Zen are in minority. Most of the communities are organized as branches of major international organizations.

Consolidation and formation of these communities happen around a single mentor, but not by any particular school. This principle is well reflected in the Tibetan Buddhism, in which the guru yoga principle (personal devotion to own spiritual master) is very important.

Non-ethnic Buddhists are not linked genetically or administratively with ethnic Buddhist organizations of Burytiya, Tuva or Kalmykiya. This situation is in vast majority of non-ethnic Buddhist groups, created in Russia in the last 20-30 years beyond the traditional Buddhist regions.

These communities do not grow. Number of newcomers roughly corresponds to number of those who stopped communicating with a community.

Minority of new Buddhists had associated themselves with any religion before they adopted Buddhism. Predominantly the communities consists of Russians. Other nationalities (Tatars, Bashkirs, Kalmyks) are represented singularly. Approximately half of respondents have a college education, but do not work by their specialty.

At the time of the research, respondents identified themselves as Buddhists from six months up to 28 years. Majority of them attended lectures, participated in the initiation ceremonies, made a pilgrimage beyond their region. A minority of informants travels for the same purpose abroad, mainly to Asia (Mongolia, India, Nepal, Thailand and other).

The respondents receive support from family and friends on the choice of their religious affiliation. After realizing that their interlocutors are Buddhists, unfamiliar and unknown people react neutrally with polite interest, despite the fact that Buddhism is not widespread in the Ural. Relations between ethnic Buddhists and members of the community are not supported.

Most of the activities, which were organized by the communities in non-Buddhist social space, were dedicated to educational purposes. Only a small part of events had a massive cultural character (festivals, exhibitions, concerts).

The effect of the practices observed in the common life of the community members stimulate their further movement on the Buddhist path. Also, the very low interest in politics was identified among non-ethnic Buddhists. However, at the same time, the analysis, which was carried out on the basis of combining the results of historiographical and sociological research, identified the deep dependence of Buddhism on political factors.

The great Greek thinker Pericles spoke a famous aphorism: if you are not interested in politics, this does not mean that politics is not interested in you. After almost 2500 years, this phrase remained relevant.

3. Most of the factors that have a key influence on the development of Buddhism in Russia belong to the sphere of politics. Notable that the political situation itself, as a factor of the Buddhism

development in Russia, shows bright dynamic characteristics. Religion actively reacts to any changes in both domestic and foreign policy of the country. The active dissemination and development of Buddhism occurred during periods of great changes: the expansion of the Russian Empire borders, during the overthrow of the monarchy, and the establishment of the communist system and during the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Two other factors, the activity of which is conditioned by the political situation, are Government and foreign Buddhist influence. Both are vital for the development of Buddhism in the Russian environment. At the same time, these factors have been opposed to each other in many aspects of the analysis.

Foreign influence is the main source for Buddhism in Russia, but at the same time, it introduces chaos and promotes the development of separatism among Buddhists. On the contrary, Government structures Saṅgha and promotes its consolidation, but it hinders influence of foreign Buddhists in particular and hinders development of Buddhism as a whole.

Other religions can be described as the main form-building factors that provoke the most radical elements of Buddhism adaptation. Thus, they are responsible for the emergence of key features of a certain Buddhist tradition that distinguish it from the background of other forms of this religion.

At the same time, the main factor, which influences the adaptation of Buddhism in general to modern society, is science. due to science, Buddhism finally overcame ethnic boundaries.

## **5.2 Suggestions**

This work created the prerequisites for the development of a forecast of the Buddhist prospects in Russia in future. Such a forecast was not realized here because of sociological data limits, remoteness of the author from the research object and a sudden changes of the foreign policy situation of Russia at the time of the research work. The author considers the creation of such a forecast as possible and even very expedient in the near future.

In addition, the conducted sociological research has shown that the regular conduction of such surveys brings great benefit. They fix a certain stage in the life of Buddhist communities in the rapidly changing



flow of events. Such surveys are necessary for a more detailed and in-depth study of all aspects of the Buddhists life and for identification of the interdependence between various spheres of their activities.

The author considers that on the basis of conducted sociological research, the organization of comparative analysis of the data will be very useful for survey results of other Buddhist communities.

Prospects for comparative analysis are not limited to the use of sociological research data. Historical data on the development of Buddhism in Russia, which were structured in this paper, should be compared with the history of the spread of Buddhism in other non-Buddhist countries.

Similarly, a comparison of the main factors affecting Buddhism in various countries is of great interest.

Based on the results of this study, a number of practical recommendations can be formulated, such as,

1. In the process of building diplomatic relations with the Russian authorities, representatives of Buddhist countries should be actively interested in the situation of Buddhism in Russia. The active position of foreign partners will limit the negative manifestation of the factor of government, which manifests in containing the natural development and spread of Buddhism in the Russian-speaking environment.

2. In the process of training for missionary activity, teachers should pay close attention to the linguistic abilities of the future missionaries. The preacher must be able to master the language of the country, which adopted him. Only by being able to communicate freely with representatives of a another culture, he will be able to adapt the Teaching, develop a methodology for transferring knowledge, and above all, control the assimilation of *Dhamma*.



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