

## **A MARKET APPROACH TO THE RISE OF THE GELUK SCHOOL IN TIBET**

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### **Abstract**

The Geluk school was late in arriving on the religion scene in Tibet, yet it rose to become the state religion around the middle of the seventeenth century. Using an economics-of-religion approach, our argument proceeds in five steps: (1) the homogeneity of the Buddhism market in Tibet in the eleventh-twelfth centuries; (2) the early Ming Dynasty's non-intervention policy in Tibet and the Chinese Imperial Court's tolerance of a variety of religions (Buddhism, Islam, Confucianism); (3) the rise of the Geluk school during this liberalizing period with the patronage of the hegemonic extended family of Central Tibet; (4) the Geluk school functioning as a club by requiring strictness in the form of celibacy, a monolithic orthodoxy, religious scholarship, and the policy of having only monks as abbot monks. The latter excluded hereditary succession politics from the school's leadership, thereby creating a corporate monastic system. As a result, (5) the Geluk school was largely able to maintain its institutional independence from kinship politics and, through a strategic alliance with (foreign) Mongol patrons, became the state religion.

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The Geluk School has been the dominant form of Buddhism in Tibet since the late 1600s. But it was not always so, as the Geluks superseded their many rivals over the preceding two centuries. To analyze the formation of the Geluk school and its rise to religious monopoly, we use methods developed in the economics of religion. As the name suggests, this approach employs economic concepts to explain the rise and decline of religious institutions.<sup>1</sup> By viewing schools and sects as firms competing with one another for adherents and patrons, we can employ economic theory about market entry, pricing of religious “goods,” supply and demand, and monopolistic tendencies to explain institutional behavior. This type of analysis offers a perspective on religious competition that is markedly different from the historical, philological, and exegetical methodologies commonly applied to the study of Tibetan Buddhism.

The economics of religion approach introduces a new methodology to the study of international relations. This approach has recently been employed to analyze the behavior of suicide bombers in several countries (Berman and Laitin 2007; Berman and Iannaccone 2005) and radical Islamic militias (Berman 2002). Our argument begins by observing that homogeneity of the Buddhism market in Tibet became established from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries. Previous cross-country empirical research showed that religious concentration or homogeneity tends to generate state religion (Barro and McCleary 2005). The Buddhist hegemony over the Tibetan religion market meant that outside religions, such as Islam and Christianity, had high entry costs. As a result, religions from other geographic regions, particularly neighboring areas in south Asia, were not willing to enter Tibet. Without competition from other religions, Buddhism flourished in Tibet, with several schools and sects developing over time.

The early Ming Dynasty's (1368-1424) non-intervention policy in Tibet created the socio-political conditions for the rise of the Geluk school. During this period of political liberalization, the founder of the Geluk school, Tsongkapa Lopsang dragpa (1357-1419), and his disciples were successful in securing the patronage of the most important hegemonic family of Central Tibet. The successful rise of the Geluk school, a fledgling group that broke off from the Sakya school in the early fifteenth century, can be effectively explained using a club model.<sup>2</sup> The theoretical club model from the economics of religion advanced by Iannaccone (1992) and Berman (2003) explains the success of strict religious groups from a combination of branding, sacrifice, and mutual aid. In this model, the Geluk school appears as a "high-cost" player. The Gelukpa introduced strictness in the sense of a monolithic orthodoxy and religious scholarship. They introduced "sacrifice" in the form of celibacy and required large monastic institutions to exclude lay abbots, thereby giving exclusive province to abbot monks. To our knowledge, the Gelukpa were more successful than the other Buddhist schools and sects in Tibet in excluding the hereditary-succession practices for school leadership that underlay the usual clan politics, creating instead a corporate monastic system. In this setup, the Geluk school was able to maintain institutional independence from kinship politics. Building on its institutional strengths and its innovative "theology," the Geluk school created a brand or trademark by differentiating itself from the existing schools and sects. These advantages, when combined with the support of (foreign) Mongol patrons and a little luck, allowed rituals and doctrines particular to the Gelukpa to become part of Tibet's state religion in the seventeenth century.

## Buddhism as a Natural Monopoly

In the late twelfth century, Tibetan religious hierarchs and their institutions understood their role to be the preservation and continuance of Mahayana Buddhism and, on a practical level, of esoteric, tantric Buddhism. The second Muslim invasion in northern India reached Bihar State toward the end of that century and resulted in the virtual destruction of such famous institutions of Buddhist learning as Nalanda, Odantapuri, and Vikramashila. This destruction created a diaspora of Indian Buddhist masters, with many seeking refuge in Tibet. The destruction of the large Indian monasteries gave rise to and consolidated the geo-religious shift, with the Tibetans becoming the center of the Buddhist universe, the first known documented instance of which took place in the thirteenth century (Martin 1994: 532, fig. 9; van der Kuijp 2004: 54).

From the ninth to the thirteenth centuries, Buddhism developed in Tibet to the degree that four schools came into existence--the Old (Nyingma) and the three New Schools (Kadam, Kagyü, and Sakya). There were also a good number of quasi-independent sects.<sup>3</sup> This was a period of religious florescence with a great many ritual, liturgical, and doctrinal variations. Monks learned from various masters, incorporating aspects of different intellectual and meditative traditions and lineages into their own school, all of which were authenticated by various teacher-disciple lineages of transmission.<sup>4</sup> In short, there were no intellectual property rights with strong “brand” differentiation. By the thirteenth century and apart from popular non-institutionalized religious practices, the only aspects that differentiated the four schools and various sects were, on a practical level, their attachments to different lineages and particular tutelary divinities. An intellectual orthodoxy had been set regarding religious texts and teachings. Although

quite flexible, serious deviations from traditional teachings and writings became heresy and such teachings and writings were ostracized.

By the mid-1200s, the religion market was characterized by innovation and fluidity, with easy entry into and exit from a school as well as many competitors to choose from. As these schools and sects grew, their translations of sacred texts, religious treatises, biographies of masters, poetry, and songs were written in distinct literary styles. Monastic libraries grew containing thousands of tomes. Tibetan teachers became famous for their erudition and attracted students from parts of China, Mongolia, and Nepal.

As the economics of religion predicts, during this period the pre-Buddhist Bon religion and Nyingma, derived from the eighth and ninth-century dissemination of Buddhism, entered a revival.<sup>5</sup> Over time, the Bon had begun incorporating elements of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism in order to compete with Buddhism. Bon also began to imitate the Buddhist schools by building temples and forming monasteries. By the 1100s, at least, the Bon had developed the doctrine of the Nine Ways, which, to put it overly simplistically, was a compilation of pre-Buddhist and Buddhist teachings and practices. The Bon religion homogenized and became Buddhist-like as a way to maintain adherents and garner support among the local population.

In response to competition from the rising schools in the eleventh century, Nyingmapa began to formulate a coherent tradition placing Padmasambhava, the Indian master, not only as the founder of their religious traditions but also at the core of Tibetan Buddhist culture. Padmasambhava soon became the Tibetan culture hero *par excellence*. Just as the other schools had monasteries promulgating a particular tradition, the Nying-

mapa monasteries specialized in the transmission of “treasure” texts, that is, traditions of revelatory literature.

How much market strength a religion monopoly has depends on how many close substitutes there are for the product. When a religion is a natural monopoly, it is less concerned about new entrants into the market precisely because the cost of entry into the religion market is too high for other religions to compete. New religions have initial costs (up-front expenses) that they calculate they can pay off later. The closest religion competitor to Buddhism would have been Islam, but it is not yet clear why it did not enter Tibet in a significant way. A plausible explanation is that Buddhism had already entered Tibet during the eighth and ninth centuries. Even before the Mongols established the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) and exclusively patronized Tibetan Buddhism, Tibetan aristocracy patronized Buddhism. Indeed, during the late tenth and throughout the eleventh century, Tibetan aristocratic families were underwriting an orthodox revival of Buddhism in Tibet. With indigenous aristocratic support, Buddhism was the major religion in Tibet and any new religion, such as Islam, would have had considerable up-front costs to mount successful competition.

#### The Liberalization of Politics in Tibet

During the early Ming dynasty, the Chinese world-view articulated a garbled version of the geo-religious shift, whereby the Tibetan cultural area, not India, was the center of Buddhism (Toh 2004: 44-58). Tibet had become “India” as the religious locus of Buddhism. The early Ming rulers continued the Yuan policy of inviting religious hierarchs of the various Tibetan religious schools to court, conferring upon them honorific

titles and ranks.<sup>6</sup> No longer was Tibetan Buddhism the religion of the entire imperial court. Instead, Tibetan Buddhism was reserved for the emperor and his inner court. The Yuan dynastic title and position of Imperial Preceptor held by Sakya hierarchs was abolished, ending their privileged access to the higher echelons of the imperial court.

Sakya monastery no longer served as the administrative seat for the imperial court in Tibet, and the Ming would not replace it with another. The early Ming military policy toward Tibet, beginning with the Yongle emperor, was one of nonintervention. Certainly, during its last years, the Yuan dynasty decreased its military and political involvement in Tibetan affairs. Yongle's noninterventionist policy toward Tibet has been attributed to several factors. Yongle focused his attention and resources on military campaigns in Southeast Asia, staging six large-scale naval expeditions led by the eunuch Zheng He, and overseeing the extensive fourteen-year reconstruction of the capital of Beijing (Dreyer 1982: 173-220; Farmer 1976: 98-133). Rather than militarily subduing and occupying the troublesome border areas of Qinghai and Sichuan, Yongle's policy was one of using local tribes to maintain order.

As it had been by and large the case before, the political situation in Tibet during the early Ming dynasty was one of several clans, often with their "home" monastery, ruling over geographic regions. Imperial commercial activities took place within the Tibetan cultural area, while the Ming forces simultaneously engaged in skirmishes on the Sino-Tibetan borders. Yongle appears to have had a combination of religious and commercial interests in the area dominated by Tibetan Buddhist culture. There is mention that during his reign the Yuan postal system, which had fallen into disrepair, was reconstructed. The continued Mongol military threat in the north and the scarcity of horses from Mongolia

motivated the imperial court to establish trade relations with the Drigung sect, who supplied horses from Amdo (Sperling 1979: 281; Sperling 1983: 346-350). During the height of the Phagmodru rule in Central Tibet (1385 – 1432), trails were maintained between China and Tibet and security ensured safe travel (Tucci 1949: 26). The Phagmodru were so-called after their home-monastery by the same name. This Kagyüpa monastery and its estates were controlled by the ancient Lang family.

From the perspective of Tibetan political economy, two trends emerged that transformed the political and religious landscapes. Beginning sometime in the early thirteenth century, several schools and sects developed a secular office overseeing administrative and financial matters of monasteries and their landed estates. The institution of a secular administrative office most likely had come into being to manage their economic resources, including land that was being acquired from such patronage relationships as could ensue with, for example, landed Tibetan aristocratic families and various Mongol rulers and princes of the blood. The accrual over time of monastic land holdings along with hereditary tenant families, the control of major roads that were trade routes, and the monopolization of trade by monasteries required administrative management. The increasing concentration of land and economic wealth in the monasteries gave rise to conflicts, often violent, among these institutions. The abbatial seat, held by a lay person or monk, and the secular office remained distinct and were usually kept separate. Hereditary conflicts arose when male successors were not available or several contested for the same position. When there was a dearth of male heirs, a lay abbot might hold both the ecclesiastical and secular offices so as to be free to marry and propagate the family lineage. Another option would be that a cousin or half-brother assumed the secular office.

The other trend that emerged was the disintegration of political unity among the autonomous units. The thirteen myriarchies into which Central Tibet was divided during most of the period of direct or indirect Mongol rule, from 1240 to the early 1350s, were by and large religious aristocracies with monasteries at their centers. With the demise of Mongol control over Central Tibet (and that of its proxy), the myriarchical structure became politically irrelevant, leaving basically but a handful of main aristocratic families and their allies in its wake. They formed what amounted to an administrative civil-military system of families that, being nominally affiliated with the Phagmodru rule, politically and economically replaced the earlier system of myriarchies. The Phagmodru rule began with the historically colorful figure of Jangchub gyeltsen (1302-1364).<sup>7</sup> However, these families, who administratively served the Phagmodru, soon became themselves increasingly wealthy and militarily powerful, ultimately, in the early fifteenth century, challenging the authority of the Phagmodru hierarchs. By the beginning of the fourteenth century, the two trends weave themselves into one main pattern: the shift of secular politics and wealth into the ecclesiastical, monastic schools.

From these two trends came a cycle of the earlier myriarch families weakening and splintering due to internal conflicts. The families thereby became vulnerable to the rise of new aristocracies out of the administrative families that were allied with the Phagmodru, initially under the leadership of Jangchub gyeltsen. We have two examples of such families who played key administrative roles, the Zina and Rinpung. These not only intermarried with the Phagmodru but also successfully challenged their authority, one temporarily and the other more decisively.<sup>8</sup>

Integral to the rise of a new aristocracy was an affiliation with a school or sect, a connection that usually meant abandoning the sect (though not necessarily the school) of one's hegemonic clan.<sup>9</sup> Deregulation of the religion market in Tibet occurred with the liberalizing of politics under the early Ming. As the old myriarch political system fell apart, the religion market became more fluid as some religious institutions began to break loose from their family affiliations. Thus, we now begin to witness a greater fragmentation of the almost monolithic structure of many schools, foremost of which is Sakyapa. The fragmentation began with the political and religious conflicts and subsequent schisms within the ruling families of Sakya monastery, the ancient Kōn family. One of the first consequences of these internal schisms was, it can be argued, the formation of the Jonang sect (Ruegg 1963:75-76). These conflicts and the ensuing fluidity in the religion market also made possible the rise of the Bodong sect and, indeed, the Geluk school. For the next 200 years, Tibetan politics would be characterized by succession conflicts, inter-family wars, and the increasing concentration of wealth and authority in the schools and sects.

### The Context for the Rise of the Geluk School

The Geluk school as a religious organization began and grew significantly during roughly the second half of the hegemony of the Phagmodru (ca. 1354 – 1434/5) in Central Tibet. Tsongkapa and his disciples established what soon became the school's three main monasteries near Lhasa. For many centuries, the Tibetans had recognized this locale not only as a thriving trading center (Beckwith 1977; Clarke 2004: 39-40) but also as an important religious center with the oldest two temples. With the exception of the Kadam

school, already on the wane in the fourteenth century, no other school or sect had existing monasteries so close to Lhasa and in such density.

A native of Amdo, Tsongkapa came to Central Tibet around 1372 to continue his studies. At that time, the Phagmodru, who, with their allies, were in full control of the area, were patrons of hierarchs of various sects of the Kagyü school. It is important to note that, prior to their ascendancy, the Lang family with Phagmodru was as an exponent and supporter of this school. With the Phagmodru patronizing a number of non-hierarchs, a separation begins to take place between religion and family/clan politics. More generally, we see a tendency in hierarchs and their schools toward transitioning themselves into identities independent of the family/clan structure.

Tsongkapa established himself as a charismatic teacher attracting adherents as well as the attention of the Phagmodru ruling family, which began patronizing him.<sup>10</sup> In fact, Dragpa jangchub (c.1355-1386), who became abbot of his ancestral monastery of Phagmodru [Densatse] in 1373, had been one of Tsongkapa's teachers, albeit for a short time (Tucci 1949: 26; van der Kuijp 2001: 60). Tsongkapa later composed a reverential biography of Dragpa jangchub as an act of respect and in homage to his teacher. This act was at the request of the Supreme Ruler (*gong ma*) of the Phagmodru Dragpa gyeltsen (c.1385-1432), Dragpa jangchub's younger brother. Tsongkapa also viewed the gesture as a way to cement the personal relationship between the Phagmodru family as patron and Tsongkapa as religious teacher (van der Kuijp 2001: 61).

The relationship between the Phagmodru ruler and Tsongkapa continued as his popularity grew. In 1409, Tsongkapa, with the patronage of Dragpa gyeltsen and his governor Ne'u Namkha Zangpo, who governed the area in and around Lhasa, participated in

the *Monlam chenmo* festival in Lhasa. The *Monlam chenmo* festival would, over the years, attract a large number of participants and observers.<sup>11</sup> With the benefit of hindsight, we can perhaps discern that participating in the festival was part of a complex series of acts that furthered Tsongkapa's legitimacy in and around the religious market with Lhasa as its center. In fact, Tsongkapa's turning the famous Jowo statue from one representing the Buddha's presence in history (*nirmanakaya*) to the more numinous presence of an ahistorical, super-mundane form of Buddha-hood (*sambhogakaya*)—he did so by giving it an ornamental crown—may have had a signal effect on enhancing the statue of Lhasa.

On occasion, the *Monlam chenmo* festival's celebrations included the restoration or refurbishing of the Jowo statue and the Jokhang temple. The *Monlam chenmo* also created an opportunity for patronage from Mongol tribes and nomads living to the north of Lhasa and the local landed aristocracy. During that same year, 1409, the construction of Gandan monastery began with the patronage of the governor of an adjacent administrative center, Olkha tagtse. With the patronage of the Phagmodru family that ruled over the area controlled by the Ne'u family, one of Tsongkapa's disciples founded Drepung monastery in 1415, in the southwest of Lhasa. This patronage encouraged or obliged other noble families to endow lands to Drepung and to send their sons to the monastery for religious training. In the absence of archival material, we can only speculate that other nobility and the rising merchant families in Central Tibet were endowing the monastery with land as well. Tsongkapa's small but thriving group was also patronized by the Yongle Emperor, who twice (1408 and 1413) invited its master to visit the Imperial Court in China. In both instances, Tsongkapa declined. The first time, he was most

likely actively involved in teaching and establishing his group of disciples. But, in response to the 1413 Imperial invitation, Tsongkapa sent his disciple, Jamcen Chojay Shakya yeshe, who arrived in Beijing in February, 1415 (Sperling 1982: 107). This disciple was well received by the emperor who, upon Shakya yeshe's departure from the Imperial Court, bestowed significant gifts upon him. In 1417, Shakya yeshe returned to Tibet. With instructions from Tsongkapa and funds from the emperor as well as Ne'u Namkha zangpo, he founded Sera monastery in 1419. During Tsongkapa's life, a formal monastic organization was beginning that would transform into what became known as the Geluk school. This monastic organization was primarily cenobitic with eremitic practices incorporated into its structure.

The rule of Dragpa gyeltsen appears to have been a prosperous and politically stable regime. Tucci mentions that, during Dragpa gyeltsen's reign, the trade routes between Tibet and China were improved and security was provided to travelers. The construction of the first Geluk monasteries—Ganden (1409), Drepung (1415), and Sera (1419)—occurred after the other religious schools and sects were well established.<sup>12</sup> Competition for resources in terms of patrons, land, and adherents must have been strong. By locating monasteries in geographic proximity to Lhasa, the Geluk monasteries were strategically positioned to gain patrons and resources.

Another significant fact is that Dragpa gyeltsen outlived Tsongkapa by thirteen years. Dragpa gyeltsen did not patronize the fledging Gelukpa to the exclusion of other Buddhist schools, but it is safe to say that his largesse was mainly focused on the former. He continued his patronage of Tsongkapa's disciples, several of whom had become Dragpa gyeltsen's teachers. One activity Dragpa gyeltsen funded was the xylographic

printing of some of Tsongkapa's writings. This and other funded activities assured the continued growth of the Geluk school after the death of its founder.

### The Formation of the Geluk School

Tsongkapa and his disciples were monks trained in the Sakya school. Although he was aware that his writings were going to be controversial, particularly the ones he wrote after he had been privy to a series of visions in which Bodhisattva Manjushree personally explained to him how Buddhist philosophy and, in particular, Middle Way (Madhyamaka) thought had developed in the Indian subcontinent, there is no evidence that he interpreted his monastic and scholarly innovations as a schism from the Sakya school. Schisms tend not to occur because a reformer, such as Tsongkapa, intentionally seeks to break away from a school or denomination. Rather, a schism is possible because the innovator seeks to reform from within the school to which he belongs.<sup>13</sup> The religious context in the early fifteenth century, in which Tsongkapa lived, was fluid. Even though there were three main schools, each with various sub-sects, the fifteenth century Tibetan religion market is best described as homogeneous. Scholars such as Tsongkapa were initially itinerant scholars studying with teachers in monasteries affiliated with various schools, sects, and lineages.<sup>14</sup> Sectarian orthodoxy began to appear with the increasing growth of monasteries in terms of patrons, wealth accumulation, and members.

Tsongkapa sought to retain what he considered to be an orthodox version of Buddhism.<sup>15</sup> He stressed intellectual rigor in religious scholarship in the tradition of the Kadampa and Sakyapa. Tsongkapa's reinterpretation of Indian sources from the first decade of the fifteenth century until his passing was done with the intent of retaining what was,

in his view, the original Indian meaning. Although all Tibetan schools accept Nāgārjuna's formulation of the Madhyamaka, Tsongkapa's interpretation of Madhyamaka became a fully articulated system and, for the Gelukpa, the only one within this school's monasteries to capture fully the meaning of Nāgārjuna's philosophy. Tsongkapa's work became the doctrinal foundation of the Geluk school.

About twenty years after Tsongkapa's death, one of his disciples, Kedrup Geleg palzang po (1385-1438), sought to create doctrinal orthodoxy whereby dissent from what he and his colleagues considered to be Tsongkapa's opinions was not tolerated. Gyeltsab Darma rinchen (1364–1432) was chosen by his peers to succeed Tsongkapa as second abbot of Gandan monastery and Kedrup, primarily a student of Gyeltsab, became the third abbot of Gandan monastery after Gyeltsab had served a mere six years (1432-1438).

Kedrup's ancestors may have come from Khotan (an oasis and city along the Silk Road, today in southwestern Xinjiang, China). And not unlike Tsongkapa, Kedrup did not have blood ties to Central Tibetan aristocracy. His ascendancy to abbot of Gandan monastery is attributed to his native intellect and the spiritual power he accrued as a tantric practitioner. It fell to Kedrup to attempt to create a doctrinal orthodoxy, which is a hallmark (branding) of the Gelukpa school. Unlike other schools of Tibetan Buddhism, the Geluk school required a level of orthodoxy and adherence to Tsongkapa's views on exoteric and esoteric Buddhism that was unprecedented in the history of Buddhism in Tibet. This orthodoxy was made possible, in part, by the adoption of a response to the increasing criticisms from Sakyapa scholars who challenged the legitimacy of Tsongkapa's views, many of which had been formulated under the influence of a series of vi-

sions to which he had been privy. For Tsongkapa and his followers the visions were of Manjurshree; for his opponents, they were of an evil demon.

To be sure, the demise of the Yuan dynasty meant the loss of a significant patron for the Sakyapa and their prominent position in Tibetan politics. Whereas Kedrup and the rising Geluk monasteries—Gandan, Sera, Drepung—were patronized by the Phagmodru, the financial collapse of Sakyapa and the rise of the Gelukpa represented not only a political-economic shift but a geographic one as well from Tsang, where the Sakyapa had their locus, to U, where the three Gelukpa monasteries were situated.

Internally, the Sakyapa were weakened by kinship rivalry for power (Petech 1990: 81-82). With a lack of capable leadership, both in its religious and political structures, the Sakyapa could no longer exert intellectual or political control over Kedrup and his immediate disciples. Kedrup and the Gandenpas (as they were called) successfully differentiated themselves from the Sakyapa and created a new school.

### Organizational Characteristics of the Geluk School

Several organizational aspects of the Geluk school differentiated it from the other religious schools and sects. These characteristics reinforced each other to strengthen the Geluk school: (1) ordained abbots, never lay abbots; (2) an emphasis on monastic discipline, casuistical (vinaya) adherence, and scholastic training; and (3) mass monasticism created a competitive advantage in an already crowded and competitive religious market. The primary advantage of this combination of structural features is that the Geluk school focused on religious goods, minimizing its organizational involvement in clan politics, particularly conflicts over hereditary leadership.

Unlike the other religious schools, the Gelukpa adhered strictly to the practice of ecclesiastical abbots (no lay abbots). This institutional feature did not prohibit clan affiliation of an abbot from playing out in the administration of a monastery. However, institutionally the degree of intermingling of secular clan interests with ecclesiastical ones, as found in the other schools, was not the situation in Gelukpa monasteries. It does not appear that abbatial seats of Gelukpa monasteries were directly controlled by clan politics. In contrast, in the other schools, the abbatial seat and secular head could be held by the same person, as occurred three times with the Phagmodru. The consequence of this organizational structure was that clan politics and succession conflicts were inherent to monastic life and politics. In contrast, the Gelukpa institutional feature of ecclesiastical abbot tended to reinforce an institutional focus on religious activities and the development of the monastic community.

The practice of cenobitic mass monasticism by the schools and sects permitted their growth to become more inclusive. Certainly Gelukpa monasteries grew to be very inclusive once Gelukpa religious practice became the state religion and the state sanctioned the policy of mass monasticism. At the time the Geluk school was growing, there were many other well-established schools competing for adherents. In theory, all the schools were practicing mass monasticism. That is, they were accepting any male child admitted to the monastery, except in a few cases. These practices made competition strong for novices.<sup>16</sup> Celibacy was a high cost not only for each male who joined the monastery but for society in terms of economic productivity and reproduction. This sacrifice was offset by the social prestige and salvific merit earned by parents for having a son as a monk. The family further reinforced the monastic system by disinheriting the son

who became a monk (Goldstein and Tsarong 1985: 16). By entering the monastery as pre-pubescent boys (between the ages of 7 and 12), celibacy provided credibility that the religious product was genuine. The monks were engaged in religious activities rather than distracted by worldly ones. Celibacy also ensured that the wealth of the school remained within the school. When the Gelupak school adopted the idea of reincarnating hierarchs, the combination of celibacy and reincarnation were mutually reinforcing, concentrating wealth in an incarnate's office (*labrang*).

Applying the club model, we can see that by not requiring an optimal monastery size but rather permitting the maximum number of monks, the majority of monks became religiously lax in their participation, though not necessarily in their religious beliefs. The Gelukpa monastic system may have encouraged this laxness by having low selective criteria for novices (if any), by not making a significant financial commitment to the novices and monks, and only punishing the worst offenses (homicide, larceny, and heterosexual sex) (Goldstein 1998: 19). Monks received tea and food at the communal prayer assemblies and from the different monastic colleges within the monastery (Murphy 1961: 440; Goldstein 1989: 34). Monks also received a share of the funds donated to the monastery. The majority of monks were an economic asset to the monastery in that they provided an inexpensive form of labor.

The result of mass monasticism was a two-tiered class of monks. The smaller group comprised monks who pursued academic training (*pechawa*). The larger group consisted of monks (*tramang* or *tragyü*) who did not engage in scholarly study but rather assumed practical tasks (cooking, financial affairs, security) within the monastic community.<sup>17</sup> The scholar monks received a small stipend from their seminary and financial

support from their families. As their reputations grew in the seminary, the monastery, and later as itinerant scholar monks engaged in public debates, they received gifts and acquired patrons. All monks were taught basic reading, not writing, as part of their religious obligations to recite prayers. Monks participated in general assemblies in the morning and evening, where prayers were recited. Only a select group of monks were trained in tantric rituals.

Monastic house codes (*cayig*) could stipulate sets of rules that regulated the life of monks living in a community. Just as the *Regula Magistri* (ca. 480) and the *Regula Benedictine* (ca. 530-560) provided for the institutional structure and discipline of European monastic life (regulating the spiritual and practical life of a cenobitic community), so, too, Tibetan monasteries had their constitutions. Similarly, monastic constitutions proliferated during early Medieval Europe as in Tibet during the fourteenth century. However, in Europe the monastic constitutions, although many and diverse, originated in a common root culture that created homogeneity in monastic organization. This was not the situation in Tibet until the Geluk school in the seventeenth century became the state religion and may have imposed its monastic organizational characteristics on the other schools. In addition, in Europe a shift from a gift to a profit economy occurred in the early Middle Ages, coming into maturation with the Cistercian order in the twelfth century.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, the Tibetan economy remained an agrarian feudal one, based on gift exchange (accompanied by merit making) with commercial activity mainly taking place in the form of bartering. The consequence of this system was factionalism and constant warfare over landed estates.

The imposition of Gelukpa doctrinal orthodoxy might have been made possible, in part, by the adoption of xylographic printing by Tsongkapa and his disciples, or the recognition of its usefulness. Xylographic printing began in China in the eighth century and quickly spread with Buddhism as its vehicle to Korea and Japan in the eighth century and Vietnam in the eleventh century. (Needham 1985: 322, 336-7, 350). As is to be expected, xylographic printing was also known in Tibet. The earliest notice of Tibetan printed texts date from the first decade of the thirteenth century; the earliest available xylograph derives from blocks carved in 1284. During Tsongkapa's life, the early Ming dynasty continued printing activity much as it had under the Yuan with two printing centers employing 107 families (Needham 1985: 172). These printings were for merit-making, not for reading (a similar situation to Dragpa gyeltsen funding the xylographic printing of Tsongkapa's writings.) In Japan, sutras for reading were printed in the monasteries as early as 1088. Printed sutras were produced alongside handwritten ones. In Vietnam, in 1299, a Buddhist liturgy was printed (Needham 1985: 350). In contrast, we have no evidence of the production of xylographic texts (as compared to calligraphic ones) becoming popular in Tibet during this period. Similar to Japan, the printing of religious texts in Tibet was controlled by monasteries.

Xylographic printing had an advantage over calligraphy in that a standard text could be mass produced and distributed to monastic communities. In this sense, xylographic printing could have played a role in the establishment of Gelukpa orthodoxy.<sup>20</sup> Lacking archival evidence, we can only hypothesize that Kedrup, as abbot of Gandan, exercised the religious and political authority to ensure the proliferation of Tsongkapa's writings while banning the printing of the writings of other disciples of Tsongkapa.

Kedrup's successors (part of his transmission lineage) would continue the work of consolidating the Gelukpa "canon" by censoring the works of other Gelukpa disciples.

The manuals (*yig cha*) for the three major monasteries—Gandan, Drepung, and Sera—were being written at the same time as the disciples of Tsongkapa were consolidating the orthodoxy of the school (Dreyfus 2003: 124-5; 143; 282). These monastic manuals are compilations of the Gelukpa's scholasticism from the particular intellectual perspective of the monastery. To consolidate the curriculum, certain texts from other schools were banned from the Gelukpa monasteries. Further doctrinal unification of the Geluk school occurred with the revising of the monastic manuals in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In summary, those structural features unique to the Geluk school—ordained abbots, an emphasis on monastic discipline (celibacy), casuistical (*vinaya*) adherence, scholastic training, and doctrinal orthodoxy created a competitive advantage in an already crowded and competitive religious market. The enforcement of doctrinal orthodoxy, to the degree that no deviation was allowed, led to the creation of a canon consisting of the writings of Tsongkapa, Kedrup, and Gyaltsab.

### Competition and Consolidation to State Religion

Upon the death of Dragpa gyeltsen in 1432, an internal succession struggle began. The Phagmodru were by this time an established hegemony in Central Tibet. However, the family had intermarried with several landed families that held high positions in their governance of Central Tibet, among them the Rinpong family, who now sought political control. Two changes in social and economic structures allowed for the rise of new fami-

lies such as the Rinpung. First, the practice of family allegiance to one school had been weakened by the Phagmodru, who patronized hierarchs of several schools, not just one. Second, landholdings and tenant peasants were bequeathed to monasteries, thereby increasing the economic position of monasteries at the expense of the family/clan structure. Already by the mid-1300s and perhaps even earlier, monasteries had become significant agrarian organizations with extensive landholdings. In addition, hierarchs of the schools had benefited from the generosity of the Yuan and Ming courts, significantly increasing the wealth of their *labrang*s. This shift in resource locus from Tibetan families to the religious schools was important for the rising political power of new families such as the Rinpung.

After Dragpa gyeltsen's death, a new succession pattern began to emerge whereby the abbotship of the monastery of the Phagmodru was occupied, and the position of Supreme Ruler (*gong ma*) remained vacant. The solution proposed was to permit the abbot to marry, have offspring, and provide heirs. The Rinpung quickly took advantage of this change in political succession. The heir in line to become Supreme Ruler was a minor, and the Rinpung promoted the 4<sup>th</sup> Zhamar incarnate Chödrag yeshe (1453-1519) of the Kagyü's Karma sect as the boy's regent. The 4<sup>th</sup> Zhamar was a well-known charismatic hierarch, who had been the student of the Phagmodru court hierarchs. In 1485, the Rinpung family, having no male heirs as monks, seriously began patronizing the 4<sup>th</sup> Zhamar. In 1493, the 4<sup>th</sup> Zhamar abbot of Phagmodru monastery Densatel, with the backing of the Rinpung family, assumed the position of regent of the Phagmodru. The 4<sup>th</sup> Zhamar held both the ecclesiastical and political positions until his death in 1519.<sup>21</sup>

The appointment of the 4<sup>th</sup> Zhamar as abbot and Supreme Ruler of the Phagmodru signaled a radical shift in political power. The Rinpung, through the abbot, now controlled the Phagmodru hegemony in Central Tibet. We cannot tell from archival material how politically involved the 4<sup>th</sup> Zhamar was in ruling the Phagmodru. However, the mere fact that the 4<sup>th</sup> Zhamar assumed the position of Phagmodru Supreme Ruler was significant. He was an outsider, not a member of the Phagmodru clan. By assuming political office as well as being abbot, the 4<sup>th</sup> Zhamar politicized his religious sect, and in so doing gained political leverage and access to resources. By 1498, he and his Rinpung supporters were politically in control of Central Tibet. In 1503, as a favor to the 4<sup>th</sup> Zhamar, Yangpachen monastery was constructed, which henceforth became the seat of the Zhamar incarnation line. He together with the 6<sup>th</sup> Zhanag incarnate lama and their supporters took control of the area around Lhasa, in effect blocking the movements of the Gelukpa monks in their three major monasteries. The Ne'u family, supporters of the Gelukpa, had lost their political authority over the region. From 1498 until 1517, Gendün Gyatso, posthumously the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dalai Lama, abbot of Drepung monastery, remained an itinerant monk, traveling from monastery to monastery in western Tibet.

The political situation in Central Tibet was unstable, marred by civil warring. In the absence of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dalai Lama from his monastic seat, the Rinpung broadened their alliance to include the Kagyü's Drigung sect. In 1542, the last year of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dalai Lama's life, Brigung monastery attacked Gandan monastery but was held back. Nevertheless, Brigung monastery successfully incorporated eighteen Gelukpa monasteries and their estates under its jurisdiction (Ya 1991: 21; Shakabpa 1967: 92). Even though the Gelukpa school continued with the support of the Phagmodru Lang family, it was se-

verely weakened as a political power by internal family fighting. These disputes left the Geluk vulnerable. In 1563, Sönam Gyatso (1543-1588), one of two main incarnate hierarchs of Drepung and soon to be given the title of Dalai Lama, decisively entered Phagmodru family politics by siding with a grandson, who openly revolted against the authority of his grandfather, the Supreme Ruler. The grandson established his capital at Gonrikarpo, while his grandfather retained the ancient clan capital at Ne'u dong. Upon the death of the grandfather, further conflict over succession erupted, and the Phagmodru split in two, one branch at Ne'u dong and the other at Gonrikarpo. They would soon be undermined again by one of the ministers of the Rinpung family, Zhingshagpa, who, in 1565, militarily took the fort city of Shigatse (in Tsang). The Rinpung, with hegemonic aspirations, made an alliance with the 5<sup>th</sup> Zhamar incarnate. The Sönam gyatso, with his landed property under siege and his aristocratic patrons in demise, luckily was able to turn to a foreign patron.

Sönam gyatso accepted an invitation from Altan Khan, chief of the Tümed Mongols. The visit took place in June 1579. It was primarily a strategic political move under the guise of religious proselytizing. The Mongol chief converted to Gelukpa Buddhism and conferred upon Sönam gyatso the title of "Dalai" (van der Kuijp 2005: 14-31). Sönam gyatso conferred upon the Mongol Khan the title, "Religious King, Divine, Great Brahma". The old pattern of patron-lama was re-established, thereby ensuring the economic support of the Mongols for the Dalai Lama's *labrang*. The Mongols also sought the expansion of influence into Tibet and the spread of Gelukpa Buddhism into Mongolia and eventually eastern Tibet, to some degree traditional Karma Kagyüpa territory. The 3rd Dalai Lama (Sönam gyatso) spent ten years engaged in missionary activity in Inner

Mongolia, proselytizing among the various tribes (Ya 1991: 26; Shakabpa 1967: 94-95). His effectiveness in converting the Mongol tribes to his brand of Buddhism allowed him to garner in a short span of time the devotion of most of the Tümed, Chahar, and Khalkha Mongols (Richardson 1958: 155; 1962: 41). In western Tibet, where the Mongols resided during part of the year, the Dalai Lama established monasteries in Lithang and the Kokonor region and was made honorary abbot of Chamdo monastery (Shakabpa 1967: 96).

The religious following of the Geluk school among the various Mongol chiefs and their tribes was critical to building its political base and network of patrons. The 3rd Dalai Lama continued to consolidate his political relationship with the Mongols. He established an office at Tongkhor (also known as Lushar), halfway between Lhasa and Chahar, Mongolia, to facilitate communication with the Altan Khan and later Altan's successor and son, Dhuring Khan (Shakabpa 1967: 96). This diplomatic outpost would continue to grow in staff and strategic importance.<sup>22</sup>

The rebirth of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dalai Lama in a great-grandson of Altan Khan raised the political-religious stakes. In 1603, the 4<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, Yönten gyatso (1589-1616), was brought at around the age of 14 or 15 from Inner Mongolia to Drepung monastery by a large Mongol escort. It appears that the Mongols were reluctant to have the Dalai Lama live in Tibet, but the abbots of the Geluk monasteries were concerned over the Lama's education and his potential deviation from monastic celibacy. Realizing the increasing political-military strength of the Gelukap school and its ties to several Mongol tribes, the 10<sup>th</sup> Zhanag Chöying gyatso (1604-74) decided to accept invitations from certain Mongol chiefs. But the 10<sup>th</sup> Zhanag, who maintained relations with the Chinese Emperor and a

Mongol chief, could not compete with the 3rd Dalai Lama's revival of Buddhism among the Mongol tribes. By contrast, the 6<sup>th</sup> Zhamar incarnate Garwang chöki wangchuk (1584-1635) took steps to consolidate his authority over Central Tibet. From 1603 to 1621, Tibetan politics deteriorated into a civil war. The origins of this war, which came to an end in 1642, are as yet far from clear. Suffice it to say that they were most likely economic rather than religious. The 6<sup>th</sup> Zhamar and his supporters were temporarily held back by the Phagmodru. Perhaps taking advantage of the death of the highly ineffectual and to some degree tragic 4th Dalai Lama in 1615, the Tsang armies invaded, and this time they were successful, killing several thousand monks at Sera and Drepung monasteries.<sup>23</sup> It is likely that many of these men had temporarily relinquished their monastic vows so as to be able to take up arms. Hence, they cannot legitimately be referred to as "monks" in the literal sense of the word.

By 1618, the ruling family in Shigatse, Tsang, had established itself over Central Tibet and virtually installed the abbot of Tsurpu monastery, that is, the 10<sup>th</sup> Zhanag, as the ruling lama of Tibet. Sera and Drepung monasteries remained surrounded by Tsang troops. At first, the Tsang banned the search for the reincarnate of the 4<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. But the Tümed Mongols, supporters of the Geluk school, reclaimed Lhasa and the province of Ü. A *status quo ante bellum* peace was established (Ahmad 1970: 106).

In 1622, the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama Ngawang lobzang gyatso (1617-82) was identified and brought to Drepung monastery. Mongol pilgrims and troops traveled in and out of Lhasa frequently over the next few years. Their presence unsettled the Karma sect of the Kagyüpa and their Tsang supporters because the Mongol Tümed and Ölöts were followers of Gelukpa. However, the Tsang leadership had changed and actively stepped up its

attacks on Gelukpa institutions and its landed holdings, but not just in Central Tibet. The Tsang nobility made an alliance with nobility in eastern Tibet, the king of Beri principality of Kham, who enjoyed close connections with the Sakyapa. The Tsang also called upon their supporters, the Kalhka Mongols who had conquered northwestern Tibet (Amdo), and now prepared to send 10,000 troops into Tibet. The objective was to eradicate the political and economic aspirations of the Drepung leadership, led by the very clever and ambitious Gendün compel (Ahmad 1970: 116-8). Not coincidentally, Gendün compel was in charge of the Dalai Lama's *labrang*, that is, he was its chief financial officer (*chamdzö*). But, for reasons that still need to be fully explained, the Kalhka general turned on the Kagyüpa, and apparently killing the 6<sup>th</sup> Zhamar incarnate.

Realizing the extreme precariousness of the situation, the Gelukpa hierarch informed Gushri Khan, the chieftain of the Ölöts, who, in alliance with the Baatur Mongols, conquered Beri. The fighting would last approximately 18 months. The Beri king was put to death, with his territories annexed. After several battles, Gushri Khan defeated the Chahar Mongols, who had been persuaded by the Khalkha Khan to fight for the Karmapas. Finally, turning to Central Tibet, a combination of Gushri Khan's and Drepung's troops defeated the Tsang dynasty, with its seat in Shigatse, thereby completing the military conquest of Tibet (Ahmad 1970: 13-4).

In 1642, with the defeat of the Tsang dynasty and her Mongol and Tibetan allies – the latter included the Karma sect of the Kagyü school as well as the Sakya school— Gushri Khan turned the governance of Tibet over to the 5th Dalai Lama and his right-hand man Gendün chomphel (Shakabpa 1967: 112-113; Petech 1972: 8). The Mongols occasionally returned to Lhasa during the winter to reside at Kangda Kangsar palace.<sup>24</sup>

The 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama quickly moved to consolidate the religious monopoly of the Geluk school. He stripped the Karmapa incarnate of his authority as well as his monastery of Tsurpu and his *labrang*. The 10<sup>th</sup> Zhanag left or fled Central Tibet and lived his remaining years in exile. However, he was apparently able to reach some sort of an agreement with the Dalai Lama whereby most of the monasteries were restored to his sect. At the same time, a representative of the Dalai Lama's ecclesiastical court was stationed at the Karmapa's seat of Tsurpu.

In the end, a strategic alliance—with the right Mongolian faction—and military victory were keys to the ascendancy of the Geluk school in Tibet. They reacted to this triumph by consolidating their religious authority. In particular, only the Geluk school was permitted to have monasteries in and around Lhasa. This triumph was not only due to the two main players, Gushri Khan and Gendün compel. The Khan's troops were seriously weakened when they were unable to take the Shigatse fortress after a siege lasting several months. It was only when Gendün compel arrived with a military force from Drepung that Shigatse fell.<sup>25</sup> Further, Huang Taiji, Emperor of the Manchus, reached out to the abbot of Sakya monastery and, in 1642, sent him an invitation to come to his court, perhaps in the hope of reviving the earlier relationship that had existed between Sakya and the Mongols during the Yuan period.<sup>26</sup> But an outbreak of smallpox prevented the abbot from making the voyage. We can legitimately speculate that, if there had been no smallpox epidemic, Tibetan history would have looked very different with the Dalai Lamas simply remaining what they were, namely, one of several incarnation lineages that made their home in Drepung monastery.

The Geluk school, as the monopoly religion firm, made the state the legitimate interpreter of the religion and its tradition. The consequence of this arrangement between political authority and religion was the imposition of the Geluk school over the other schools and sects. The Geluk state secured its hold on the religion market through government subsidies to the school's monasteries and special privileges. As an example, the Dalai Lama permitted monasteries to conscript children of hereditary households, especially when the monastery needed novices (Goldstein 1989: 2). For smaller monasteries with few agricultural resources, the Dalai Lama instituted state subsidies in barley, butter, and tea (Goldstein 1989: 2). For the New Year's celebrations in Lhasa, the Tibetan government supplied the monks with tea, butter, and cash.

Although the supremacy of the Geluk school as the religious monopoly firm was established, the struggle for political sovereignty over Tibet would continue. It soon began with the 6th Dalai Lama, whose legitimacy was questioned by the Mongol Khan, with the backing of the Manchu emperor. The Gelukpa's control of the state would be continually challenged by foreign political entities. Eventually, the 7th Dalai Lama would consolidate in his office both religious and secular authority, having been given the opportunity to do so by the Manchu court in Beijing.

### Conclusion

The economics-of-religion approach to Tibetan Buddhism provides a potentially rewarding model for explaining how the Geluk school was able to become a state religion in a highly competitive market. Other aspects of Tibetan Buddhism, such as the evolution of monastic institutions, the nature of their corporate *labrang*-s, etc., can also be ana-

lyzed with principles and concepts that derive from economic theory. Of course, in so doing we are faced with a serious dilemma. To date, very few archival documents have been published that throw light on the different kinds of financial transactions involving members of this school. It is also unfortunate that we do not have data on how extensively individuals switched from one school to another, how many monks were affiliated with each school, learned from each lineage, and levels of religious participation. These data would have given us a better picture of the degree to which the schools were providing a variety of different religious products and of the competition among them.

Given the available historical records, we can tentatively say that relative homogeneity of the Tibetan religion market applied by the late 1300s. Some of the individuals belonging to one school (or sect] or another, particularly when they are reincarnate hierarchs, would have a *labrang* attached to them.

An excellent example of the kind of results that can be obtained by having access to a mere fragment of the archive of one monastery is illustrated by the far-reaching study by Dieter Schuh of Samtenling monastery.<sup>27</sup> Financial transactions included the making of loans and perhaps even the pricing of religious goods. The archival record also includes documentation of sundry business activities, such as barter and trade, and real estate sales among individuals, larger entities such as monasteries, and between individuals and these larger entities. Because a monopoly religion has a “captive audience” so to speak, its major concern is not attracting members but in getting income (tithing) to maintain itself. The Lhasa Archives contains several million documents, many of which relate to these kinds of economic activities. Only when a good number of these are carefully studied and published will we be able to pursue in depth the kind of research moti-

vated by this preliminary study. At that point, our understanding of the Tibetan religion market will dramatically increase and improve.

## Endnotes

1. Examples of this type of analysis are Ekelund, Hébert, and Tollison 2006; Froese and Pfaff 2001, 481-507; Barro and McCleary 2005; and Berman, Eli, 2003. "Ha-mas, Taliban and the Jewish Underground: An Economist's View of Radical Religious Militias." NBER Working Paper #10004. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, September.
2. Laurence R. Iannaccone developed the club-theoretic model; see Iannaccone 1992, 271-291. Eli Berman extended the club model to terrorism and economic development; see Berman, Eli 2003. " Hamas, Taliban and the Jewish Underground: An Economist's View of Radical Religious Militias." NBER Working Paper #10004. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, September; Berman, Eli and Laurence R. Iannaccone 2005. "Religious Extremism: The Good, the Bad, and the Deadly." NBER Working Paper #11663. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, September.
3. David Germano, with Ronald M. Davidson, defines a sect as having the following characteristics: a clearly identified founder; a distinctive body of literature specific to it; statements of identity separate from other religious movements; centers with permanent structures; a shared administrative hierarchy; and common ritual activities such as pilgrimages and festival events. See Germano 2007.
4. A lineage is a continuous succession of spiritual masters who impart to subsequent generations a distinct body of knowledge that is not exclusively limited to one sect; see Kapstein, 1979, 138-144, especially pp. 138-9. Whereas sects may disappear due to lack of adherents, lineages continue and are taught regardless of sectarian differences.
5. For detailed accounts see, Bdud 'joms 'Jigs bral ye shes rdo rje 2002; Kvaerne 1972, 22-40, especially p. 30; and Martin 2001.
6. These were Sakyapa and Kagyüpa—Karmapa, Drigung, and Phagmodr—hierarchs; see, Sperling 1979, 280-289, especially 280; Sperling 1983, 348, footnote 43; Toh 2004, 51.
7. There is not enough space to go into the details of this larger-than-life man. For a preliminary description of his rise to power see, van der Kuijp 1983, 425-466.
8. For a brief analysis of how the Zina family attempted to overthrow the Phagmodru rule in 1373 see, van der Kuijp 2001, 57- 76. The second case, the Rinpung family, is discussed later on this paper as it has direct bearing on the rise of the Geluk school into a state religion. Elliot Sperling discusses the inter-marriage of the Kyura family of the Drigung with the Lang family of the Phagmodru leading to a peaceful alliance of these once antagonistic families, see Sperling 1987, 40-41.
9. It is unclear whether families primarily switched religious affiliations among sects within schools as opposed to across schools. This is a topic that requires further study.
10. It must be remembered that at this time, Tsongkapa was viewed by his contemporaries as a Sakyapa monk and not the founder of a nascent sect. The relationship between the Phagmodru ruler, the secular political authority, and Tsongkapa, the religious teacher, was a personal one between preceptor and donor; see Seyfort Ruegg 2003, 362-372, especially 366-368.

11. Although the initiation of the *Monlam chenmo* New Year's festival is attributed to Tsongkapa, there is evidence that the Karmapa (and perhaps also other religious hierarchs) celebrated a festival with the very same name in the fifteenth century.
12. The exception to this pattern is Tashilunpo monastery in Shigatse. It was founded in 1445 by Gendündrup (1381-1471), who was posthumously recognized as the 1<sup>st</sup> Dalai Lama.
13. We can find salient examples in Christianity. For example, Martin Luther sought to reform the Roman Catholic Church, not to break away from it and create a new Christian religious entity. John Wesley sought to revitalize the Church of England, but instead revolutionized Protestantism with his "methods."
14. For a list of Tsongkapa's teachers and in whose lineages he is registered, see Seyfort Ruegg 2000, 60-64, and 88f.
15. D. Seyfort Ruegg explains how Tsongkapa can be both a "conservative traditionalist" and a "creative restorer/renovator/innovator" see, Seyfort Ruegg 2004, 321-343.
16. Mass monasticism was not unique to the Geluk school. However, the Gelukpa would come to have the largest monasteries in Tibet and perhaps in the world. There are no systematic treatments of the monastic system going back to 1409. Some authors suggest that children with physical deformities and handicaps were not admitted; see, Richardson 1951, 112-122; and Melvyn C. Goldstein contends that illiterate monks were admitted and tolerated; see, Goldstein 1989, 22.
17. Goldstein estimates that prior to 1951, 10 percent of the monks at Drepung monastery were engaged in scholarly studies. See Goldstein 1998 15-52; especially 20-22.
18. The *Regula Magistri* prohibited monks from working (RM 86). Then, during the early Middle Ages in Europe the *Regula Benedictine* (although based on the *Regula Magistri*) required monks to work as part of their daily activities and did not forbid but rather encouraged manual labor in the fields as an imitation of the apostles and fathers (RB 48). This paradigmatic shift occurred as a function of the necessity to survive. The monasteries were not generating enough income through gifts. And, they realized the profit opportunity that resulted from the work of the monks offset this. This process, however, pulled the monks too much from prayer and other liturgical services. In the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, another class of monks was introduced known as the *conversi* (lay brothers) who primarily engaged in manual labor. *Conversi* were also a function of a labor shortage due to the Black Death, see, Fry 1981.
19. The initial start-up costs of setting up a printing shop would have to be off-set by the economies of scale. Also, if manual transcription of texts was relatively cheap, there would be no market incentive to introduce a printery. What we are suggesting is that in the case of establishing Geluk orthodoxy through a uniform monastic curriculum, xylographic printing would have had an advantage over calligraphy in that the printing could have been done more expediently, on a mass scale, and thereby ensured the use of uniform Geluk texts in all the monasteries. We hypothesize that this did not occur in Tibet due to the tenuous authority during the fifteenth century that the abbot of Gandan had over the other Geluk monasteries, the geographically localized nature of the monasteries, the continued intent on the part of the hierarchs to retain a monopoly over printing (rather than increasing the demand for texts by printing large numbers). Historically, the Geluk monastic system remained decentralized in the sense that no single authority exerted exclusive, supreme authority over the three major monasteries—Sera, Drepung, and Gan-

dan. As Melvyn C. Goldstein expresses it, “The Three Seats thus had no qualms about challenging the government [Dalai Lama] when they felt their interests were at stake, for in their view they were more important than Ganden Photrang, the government headed by the Dalai lamas.” See Goldstein 1990, 231 – 47, especially 245.

20. The Zhamar incarnates are second to the Zhanag incarnates. The 1st Zhamar Dragpa sengge (1283-1349) was a contemporary of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Zhanag incarnate hierarch.

21. Luciano Petech is of the view that the feud between the Karmapas and the Geluk was a “purely political” rivalry. One might argue that it was a combination of seeking political supremacy coupled with establishing one’s school as the state religion. Part and parcel of becoming a state religion would be the acquisition of land and household labor. See, Petech 1972, 53-54.

22. Ahmad 1970, 103 and Shakabpa 1967, 100. At about this time, Zhabdrung Ngawang namgyel (1594-1651), the abbot of Ravlung monastery (located in Central Tibet) of the Drugpa sect of the Kagyü, fled to Bhutan where he established the Southern Drugpa sect and a theocracy. In fact, Drugyul or Drug land, that is, Bhutan, is called after the name of this Kagyü sect.

23. Petech 1972, 8.

24. This point is noted with regard to Islam. See, Cesari and McLouchlin 2005.

25. For this, see Kun dga’ blo gros 1991, 106.

26. Kun dga’ blo gros 1991, 366 ff.

27. See Schuh 1988.

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