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*Article*

# The Tactics of Religious Engagement and Political Participation of Chinese Buddhism during the Great Mongol Empire Era (1206-1260)

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**Abstracts:** Influenced by the pluralistic and open-minded cultural ideologies of shamanism, the rulers of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty emphasized the implementation of religious government policies with an emphasis on coexistence, adaptability, and pragmatism. The Mongol ruling elite formed alliances with religious factions in various regions and worked closely with local spiritual leaders. During the era of the Great Mongol State, Kublai Khan valued the wealth of the Han Chinese territories. To maintain the order of Mongol Yuan rule in northern China, he used Han Chinese Buddhism and other religious forces to balance and suppress Quanzhen Dao. As a result, Chinese Buddhism became increasingly politically influential in Mongolia. Using their religious identity and talent, Chinese Buddhist monks became active in Mongolia to regulate the political activities of the Han Chinese religious forces. This led to a shift in the religious landscape of northern China during the transition from the Jin to Yuan dynasties.

**Keywords:** Kublai Khan; Religious policies; the Great Mongolian State; Chinese Buddhism; Quanzhen Dao

The complex characteristics of the Greater Mongol regime contrasted with those of the traditional Chinese dynasties. The Empire's primary method of integrating political resources was the continued expansion of wars of conquest. They plundered and redistributed the population, land and other associated wealth resources, and established a nomadic descendant regime in line with the interests of the Altan Uruq (the Golden Family). The impetus for this Mongol war of conquest was the Mongols' strong desire to plunder riches and religious zeal to conquer new territories. The Yuan Dynasty, as the successor to the Great Mongol Empire, continued the political and religious traditions of the steppes that had existed since the time of Genghis Khan. At the same time, the ruling class of the Yuan dynasty made appropriate policy adjustments in response to the evolving social reality. For example, Kublai Khan partially responded to the situation in China by adopting the Chinese system and presenting himself as a Chinese emperor, thereby possessing the dual political identity of a Mongol Khan and a Chinese emperor (Xiao, 1999, p. 17).

The Mongol government of the Yuan Dynasty did not establish a universal ideology accepted by all ethnic groups. Ideological conflicts between regions were persistent and could only be controlled through repressive and divisive strategies that were strongly reminiscent of conquering regimes. Given these circumstances, the Mongol Yuan regime adopted a series of institutional governance measures that took into account the different customs and habits of different places. It became a more effective political decision to treat other ethnic groups differently. However, these policies still failed to achieve the political impact of ethnic "unification" in terms of ideology, political participation, and bridging class differences between ethnic groups. Therefore, the Yuan court adopted a policy of religious tolerance and used religious teachings to bridge ethnic differences. Attracting and welcoming different religions became essential for political unification.

## 1. Psychological and Spiritual Characteristics of the Mongolian People

Shamanism, which emphasizes the worship of the 'Everlasting Heaven' as the supreme deity, is the predominant religion among the Mongolian tribes on the plateau. Shamanism is a pantheistic religion that venerates the spirit of all things and is traditionally defined as a religious practice originating in Siberia and Central Asia. The shaman is the central figure in the local society's witchcraft-religious life, but this does not imply that they are the sole dedicated priesthood holders. Shamanism coexists with other forms of witchcraft and religion (Eliade, 1964, p.3).

Shamanism is particularly open-minded, and the Mongol ruling class readily accepted other religious traditions because of their openness to shamanistic thought. It is important to note that Mongolians are not bound by religious beliefs. According to Mongolians, the world's various religions and their followers are considered to be those who pray to heaven for blessings and longevity. The value of these religions lies in their ability to pray for the blessings and longevity of the Mongol emperors and the "Eternal Heaven." In addition, these religions have the latent ability to bridge the consciousness gap between different ethnic groups to a certain extent.

The Mongol Empire's policy of religious tolerance was a rare and remarkable example of political strategy in both the pre-modern and modern periods. It is important to note that the Mongol Empire was not the only one with tolerant religious policies. The Qara Khitai (Western Liao) also followed a similar policy. According to some scholars, the religious policies of certain empires in Inner Asia were influenced by the historical tradition of the region. Inner Asian empires often found themselves at a crossroads where multiple religious systems met and exchanged ideas. As a result, the introduction of tolerant religious policies was seen as more beneficial for maintaining the empire's rule (Biran, 2005, p. 211).

During his visit to Mongolia, the Christian clergyman Jean de Plancarpin (1182-1252) noted that the Mongols recognized God as the author of all visible and invisible entities. However, he noted that the Mongols did not express their reverence for God through prayers, blessings, or rituals, even though they believed in God as the overseer of the world's tribulations and fate. (Plancarpin2013, p.28) Medieval authors such as Jean de Plan Carpin, Wilhelm von Rubr  ck, Marco Polo, Rashid al-Din and Djuveni postulated that the Mongols worshiped a single "god" which they equated with the Christian God. The 13th century Mongols adhered to shamanism as their religious practice. They worshiped Tengri, the "eternal heaven," as a natural being worthy of worship. It is important to emphasize that the term "Tengri" differs from the word "God" as understood by European authors in the Christian context. (Uchida2003, p.409)

The portrayal of the Mongols by European chroniclers is a strange mix of accurate accounts and invented fantasies. Based on the firsthand accounts of European historians, the Mongols were characterized by large heads, short necks, broad chests, large hands, and small feet. They were also known for their exceptional physical strength. In terms of their beliefs, they were not religious and did not adhere to any particular belief or form of worship. The Mongol leader referred to himself as the "King of Kings." (Uchida2003, p.334) Shamanism, as the original belief system of the Mongols, traces the origin of all nature to "Tengri". In the shamanic tradition, "Tengri" is a complex concept that encompasses more than just "Eternal Heaven." (Wulan2017, p.3)

In the context of pantheism, the Mongols were not as influenced by religious beliefs as other cultures. Their king was considered the "King of Kings" who was superior to all other rulers. While they only recognized Tengri as deities, they were more receptive to integrating different religious traditions. The Mongols demonstrated the ability to recognize similarities between their religious beliefs and those of other religions. They also took a pragmatic approach to religion, ensuring that it did not hinder their secular governance. This understanding was consistent among them.

## **2. The Mongolian Ruling Elite's Pragmatic Religious Strategies and Their Religious Inclinations**

Timothy May examines the psychological foundations of the politics of religious tolerance in Mongolia, paying particular attention to the concept of identity. He explains that the Mongols encountered a variety of religions during their global conquest, including Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Sunni or Shia Islam, and Buddhism. This revelation posed a challenge to religious selection and conversion. Such religious decisions often triggered changes in beliefs, beliefs,

and even culture among Mongols who turned to other world religions. This act was perceived by the Mongols themselves as an erasure of Mongolian identity, as they believed that heaven was favoring them after the founding of the Great Mongol State. Foreign religious sects could be accepted while preserving Mongolian identity by incorporating and taking into account other cultural elements. (Timothy 2017, p.258)

Shamanism, with its emphasis on daily life, draws attention to factors that influence personal fate and suffering. The Mongols who practiced shamanism believed in a significant parallel between the present world and the afterlife. This belief was particularly pronounced in the afterlife, where a person's spirit was not subject to eternal damnation. Shamanism has played a crucial role in shaping Mongolian culture. The Mongols maintained an open and pragmatic attitude towards religion, bridging the gap between life and death and offering the living various interpretations to free themselves from their sins. They are receptive to religious practices and rituals and use these beliefs to address their practical needs. (Richard Foltz 1999, p.44)

Early in his reign, Genghis Khan instituted strict military principles to regulate personal dependencies between himself and the heterogeneous ethnic groups under his rule. During the Mongol Yuan Dynasty, Mongol aristocrats held positions of power. Their religious beliefs permeated the social thought of all classes, including the upper echelons. These religions found widespread acceptance and gave them access to a wealth of political and economic resources. As a result, the socioeconomic status of individuals within these religious groups was increased. Religious leaders sought to win the favor of the Mongol nobility and to secure the recognition and patronage of the aristocracy. The Mongol ruling elite took a pragmatic approach to religion, using it to their advantage while preserving their faith. The Mongols did not strictly enforce religious purity, and the Mongol Khans demonstrated a skill at managing the various religious sects to maintain balance. They pursued a pluralistic and inclusive strategy in dealing with the various religions and customs of the region under their control, which was known for its diversity. During Mongke Khan's reign, Buddhist monks gained support throughout the Mongol Empire. Numerous Buddhist sects received support from the monarchs of Genghis Khan's line, particularly those of the Tolui line. Noteworthy are Mongkol Khan's comments about the strong political patronage and economic support of Buddhist sects by Kublai, Ariq Böke and others. However, this support from the monarchs did not mean that the Mongols had converted to Buddhism, and the beginning of the Mongol kings' support of Buddhism was obviously determined by realpolitik. With a penchant for Buddhism and a keen interest in religious debates, Kublai found himself on the losing side of the action's humiliation, as he handled the Buddhist discussion in defeat to the side of the Taoist priests who had ordered them to shave their hair and convert to Buddhism. Kublai's mother, Sorqoγtani Beqi, implored him to show compassion for religious tolerance rather than deviating from Mongolian politics (Morris 1988, p. 42). After the mid-13th century, Taoist power could no longer compete with Buddhism, which had been suppressed during the Jin Dynasty. Although it retained its identity and status as an important northern religious sect, it was eclipsed by the religious preferences of the upper Mongol nobility, who played a direct role in regulating the spiritual ecology. The Mongol Empire's upper nobility shared similar religious beliefs, and their conversions to other religions in the conquered regions were often driven by self-interest and the pursuit of political advantage over other groups. The rulers of the empire used religion as a political tool strategically and with a clear and conscious intention.

The power struggle between Kublai and Ariq Böke in 1264 caused irreversible damage to the territorial integrity of the Mongol Empire. While most Mongol kings nominally recognized Kublai's accession to the throne, his political influence increasingly declined in the Mongol steppes and beyond the central plains. Kublai Khan and his successors formed a strong political and military alliance with the Ilkhanate, which was ruled by Hülegü Khan. This alliance was formed against the descendants of Chagatai in Central Asia, led by Qaidu, a descendant of Ögedei. The political policies and religious leanings of Kublai and his successors differed from those of the Chinggis Khanate, which dominated the Black Sea and Caspian Sea steppes and was led by the descendants of Juchi. A contradiction emerged between the traditional politics of the steppe and Kublai's novel vision of an empire focused on the accumulation of wealth from populated regions. The Mongol kings questioned



Kublai's deviation from the political tradition of the steppe: "The customs of this dynasty differ from the Han laws (hanfa, 漢法). Now we stay in the Han area (handi, 漢地), building cities and towns and following the Han ceremonial system and laws. What is the reason for this?" (本朝舊俗與漢法異, 今留漢地, 建都邑城郭, 儀文制度, 遵用漢法, 其故何如?) This topic sparked political unrest around the concept of identity from (Xiao2007, p.11). Of course, Kublai would not adopt all "Han methods of rule" and would not fully endorse the rule of integration into Han culture. Despite the efforts of Kublai and his descendants to authenticate their khanate within the Mongol Empire and assert their status as "Chinese emperors", they continued to encounter obstacles to the skepticism and controversy among Central Asian monarchs regarding the traditions of steppe life and to dispel Mongolian identity.

The extensive Mongol Empire consisted of two main regions, each characterized by different natural and human environments, resulting in unique styles of government. The Mongol Empire struggled with the challenge of managing a vast territory with a low population density and no common culture or economic base, making it difficult to maintain unity and prevent fragmentation (Xiao 2007, p. 11). After the collapse of the Mongol Empire, the ruling classes of the khanates adopted one of the predominant world religions in their respective regions (Timothy 2017, p.231). The acculturation of local indigenous civilizations diluted the shared cultural identity of the Mongols with the Khanates. The Mongols living in the Han region gradually adopted a sedentary lifestyle and adopted Tibetan Buddhism. The Qipchaq, Chagatai and Ogadai khanates retained their nomadic traditions, but mostly converted to Islam and assimilated with the local Turkic population (Xiao 2007, p. 15). Despite their political and cultural differences, the Mongols had integrated into local communities by the transition from the 13th to the 14th centuries. It was a great challenge to reconcile the different lifestyles of the locals and the nomadic Mongolians. Even Genghis Khan's "Yehe Zasag" code could not prevent the disintegration of the ruling family (Vladimirtsov 2007, p. 149).

During the expansion of the Greater Mongolian State, various religions attempted to influence the religious beliefs of the Mongolian ruling class. However, influenced by shamanistic thinking, the Mongol rulers developed a pragmatic and pluralistic political strategy. Consequently, all religions were used as tools to serve the "Eternal Heaven" and the Mongol royal family. In most cases, Mongol rulers transformed these religions into instruments that served their interests and the well-being of the nation. The Mongols used the concept of divine destiny to unify religions and thus avoid subjugation to other faiths. Since the ultimate goal of faith is universal, there is no justification for religious persecution. This also addresses Timothy May's question of why the Mongols did not adopt a world religion before the division of the empire (Timothy 2017, p. 255). After the division of the empire, numerous Mongols converted to Buddhism and Islam. Timothy May suggests that this may be related to the question of Mongolian identity. As a result of the Mongol conquest of the world, contact with more complex types of civilizations and religious practices led to a gradual change in thinking from a focus on heavenly fate within the framework of shamanism to a focus on the afterlife. As the Mongol Empire collapsed, the leaders of the major khanates sought to gain a religious and psychological advantage over their rivals. This led to an intensification of religious differentiation between the khanates and led to religious rivalry.

### 3. The Influence of Chinese Buddhism on Political Affairs during the Period of Mongol Rule

After Emperor Xuanzong of Jin (金宣宗, 1213–1224) relocated south, there was a mass migration of citizens and officials. This led to widespread social unrest and significant numbers of displaced people south of the Yellow River. The government quickly lost administrative control over northern China, resulting in local military forces taking control of large parts of the country. After the Mongol invasion, there was not enough time to stabilize the central Chinese plain. As a result, local armed groups of varying sizes recaptured much of the previously lost territory as the Mongols advanced south (Tang 2013, p. 441). Amid the chaos in northern China, several religious groups rapidly expanded their power and influence. These groups forged alliances with armed factions and Mongols in various regions, expanding the reach of their sects among the elite rulers of the Great Mongol State and northern China. Within the Mongol Empire, the Han Chinese Chan monks came into contact

with the Mongol rulers in the central plains. However, it was not until the reign of Ögedei Qayan that the Han Chinese monks were fully integrated into the politics of the Greater Mongolian State. Before Kublai's reign, only a handful of Mongols showed any interest in Buddhism, and most had no real affection for it. During this period, Buddhism was considered one of the world religions and was not perceived as different from other known religions. In 1223, Genghis Khan summoned Qiu Chuji (丘處機), the leader of Quanzhen Dao. He decreed that all monks in the country should be under the supervision of Qiu Chuji and that Quanzhen Dao should be given preferential treatment and significant power (天下應有底出家善人都管著者). The Taoist priests in the monasteries of Qiu, who prayed daily for the emperor's longevity, were to be exempt from taxes and labor (丘神仙應有底修行底院舍等, 系逐日念誦經文告天底人每與皇帝祝壽萬萬歲者。所據大小差發稅賦, 都教休著者). After Qiu Chuji and his team returned to Yanjing, an imperial decree was issued again. In this decree, Cai Meibiao (蔡美彪) indicated that Qiu Chuji was responsible for the leadership of monks worldwide. However, this probably referred to Han Chinese Taoist priests rather than other religious groups. This is because Genghis Khan had no contact with other Han Chinese religious groups other than Quanzhen Dao.

The Quanzhen Daoists failed to utilize the power given to them by Genghis Khan. According to the monk Xiangmai (祥邁) and his "Records on Discerning Falsehood in the Zhiyuan Era" (至元辨偽錄), only Qiu Chuji's disciples were granted exemption from rents, taxes, and servitude. In contrast, monks and other religious figures were not granted this privilege. This system, which was missing in ancient times, is ruthlessly implemented in modern times. Qiu was vested with administrative privileges to manage the Taoist forces in the central plains, but he lacked the authority to govern the Buddhist forces. Xiangmai claimed that he intended to use Qiu's power to exempt Buddhists from paying taxes, but Qiu refused to extend the exemption to monks or other Taoist sects. Xiangmai's accusation contained some truth, as Qiu Chuji and other Quanzhen Taoists attempted to use the Mongols' power to suppress Buddhism. Compared to the Quanzhen Dao, Han Chinese Buddhism was relatively insignificant.

The above-mentioned religious society in northern China reflects the social reality of the ungovernable Han territories since the era of Genghis Khan. Despite their limited understanding of the institutional culture of the Central Plain, when the Mongols began their attack on the Jin dynasty, they attempted to adopt the Jin dynasty's existing local government, bureaucracy, official ranks, and numbering system to facilitate their rule (Rachewiltz, 1996). During the Mongol conquest, they not only partially disregarded the existing political system of the central plain. Instead, they flexibly adjusted their approach to government. However, some Mongol nobles, immersed in looting and killing during the long war of conquest, did not recognize the Handi as a region of sustainable wealth generation.

In the early years of his reign, Ögedei praised Yelv Chusai (耶律楚材) for his reformatory efforts. Yelv Chusai wanted to change the corrupt political practices of the Mongol nobility by introducing the central plain taxation methods. This reform facilitated the recovery of the Han Chinese economy. However, it was too optimistic to expect that the Mongol nobility would adopt the ideas of the "customs of the fallen land." Yelv Chucai in the Handi insulted those who wanted to exclusively advance the interests of the Mongol nobility. At the same time, ShiMo Xiandebu (石抹咸得卜) from Yanjing Province incited Temuge Otchigin, Ögedei's uncle, to falsely accuse Yelv Chucai of treason with the intention of executing him (Yelv Chucai 2021, p.320). In 1234, Sikiqutug Yelv replaced Chucai as judge of Zhongzhou and Handi, which led to the failure of Chucai's reforms. The fundamental political differences between the politics of the steppe and the politics of the central plain are significant, and the reforms implemented by Yelu Chucai alone were not enough to change the predatory mindset of the Mongolian aristocrats (Yelv Chucai 2021, p. 328). The northern China region was embroiled in political unrest and required immediate intervention to restore social order. After the death of Ögedei Khan, political chaos reigned, characterized by centrifugal tendencies at home and the exploitation of the population's wealth by aristocrats. The stability of the Great Mongol State was even weaker as the House of Tolui replaced the House of Ögedei as Great Khan. The geographical distance and political disagreements between them increased the internal centrifugal

tendencies among the northwestern kings. During this period, as the Handi's financial resources became increasingly important to the survival of the large Mongol state, the Handi's lack of governance attracted increasing attention from the Mongol ruling hierarchy.

In northern China, the Quanzhen Daoists carried out "arbitrary" practices that included the destruction of Confucian temples and Buddhist statues and the takeover of 482 Buddhist temples. These actions significantly disrupted the balance of power within northern China's religious society. They also provoked opposition from monks and Confucian scholars who expressed dissatisfaction with their behavior. The monks and Confucianists were looking for a powerful Mongol patriarch who could protect Buddhism and Confucianism in northern China. They held out hope that Kublai Khan would recognize the importance of the Han land, a region of wealth and power. Furthermore, they expected him to suppress and counterbalance the influence of the Quanzhen Dao, which had disrupted the traditional religious power structure in northern China.

As early as 1242, Kublai Khan commissioned the Chan monk Haiyun Yinjian (海雲印簡) to investigate Buddhism north of the desert. Kublai asked the question: "Does Buddhism contain a method for stabilizing the world?" could be stabilized. Haiyun advised Kublai to keep an open mind and seek advice from wise men and renowned scholars from the Central Plains to gain insights into effective governance amid the chaos. In this context, the monk Zi Cong (子聰, also known as Liu Bingzhong, 劉秉忠) distinguished himself and proved to be an important strategist in Kublai's court. In 1244, Wang E, a former scholar of the Jin Dynasty, and other elite scholars of Confucianism such as Zhang Wenqian (張文謙), Li Dehui (李德輝), Dou Mo (竇默), Yao Shu (姚樞), and Zhang Dehui (張德輝) joined Kublai's team. Kublai Khan, who ruled the Mongol Empire at the time, showed great interest in Handi society and system and spent a lot of time with these scholars to gain insight and knowledge on these matters.

In 1251, Kublai accepted Mongke Khan's commission to direct military affairs in the southern desert, raising hopes for a Chinese revival. In 1252, Zhang Dehui and Yuan Hao Wen traveled north of the desert to meet Kublai Khan and invited him to become the "Great Master of Confucianism" (儒教大宗師), an invitation which Kublai gladly accepted. By this time, Buddhism and Confucianism had gained the support of a powerful Mongol ruler. In contrast, debates between Buddhists and Taoists, attacks from Confucians, and changes in the rulers' religious leanings hindered Quanzhen Dao's progress. During the Buddhist-Daoist debates, there were cases of Buddhist temples being returned, Buddhist statues being restored, and Taoist scriptures being burned. These events show the decline of Quanzhen Dao's political power under the influence of Mongol superiors who favored Buddhism, such as Mongke, Kublai and Ariq Böke. Buddhism stands at the forefront of all religions, with the addition of the Sakya school of Hphags-pa and Kashmiri monks such as NaMo, so that Tibetan Buddhism occupies a more special political status in the Mongol Khan court than Han Chinese Buddhism. (Chen & Shi 2020, p.240)

It took about 20 years for Han Chinese Buddhism to exert influence on the Mongol upper class and politically suppress Quanzhen Dao. During the reign of Ögedei Khan, Sorghoqtani, Tolui's wife, received 80,000 handi from Zhending. This group included local scholars, monks, Taoists, and the Dragley family, with whom she had a close relationship in Hebei. Sorghoqtani recruited numerous Han Chinese scholars and religious leaders to serve her in the northern desert. Although Sorghoqtani is Nestorian, she is known for her tolerance of the Handi religions. As a result, many Handi Chinese monks were able to participate in activities under the patronage of the queen in the northern desert. Haiyun Yinjian began to gain influence in the Mongol court around 1230 and interacted more frequently with members of the Tolui family. The fact that Haiyun was summoned to Kublai's tent in the northern desert to learn about Buddhism in 1242 underscores the strengthening relationship between Chinese Buddhism and the Tolui family. Hai Yun's accompanying disciple, Zi Cong, joined Kublai's tent. This move helped elevate the status of Handi Buddhism and gradually influenced the beliefs of Kublai, Ariq Böke and others.

In 1258, Kublai Khan sparked debates between Buddhists and Taoists. This action led to the formation of a stronger political alliance between various Buddhist sects, including Handi and Tibetan Buddhism, to counter the influential Quanzhen Dao in northern China. The religious conflict

that arose from Kublai's policies toward Buddhism and Taoism continued well beyond the founding of the Yuan dynasty. In 1280, some Taoist priests deliberately set fire to the metropolis's Changchun Kuan. Their followers falsely accused the monks of the temple, giving Kublai an excuse to further weaken Taoism. In the second half of 1281, Kublai ordered the burning of all Taoist texts except the Daodejing (道德經) to cut off Taoism's political and economic influence. This religious conflict proved beneficial to Buddhism, which subsequently gained considerable land, wealth, believers, and other resources. (Franke; Twitchett 1998, p. 489)

#### 4. Conclusion

Looking at the story of Genghis Khan's rise to power in the northern desert steppes and the founding of the Great Mongol State, it is clear that the Mongols primarily adhered to shamanism and only a minority of tribes practiced Nestorianism. During its subsequent global wars of conquest, Mongolia battled religious figures from various parts of the world. Consequently, the courts of the great Mongol khans consisted of shamanistic sorcerers and religious practitioners of Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, and Islam. The presence of these religious figures in the Khan's court served several purposes. It reflected Mongolia's inclusive policy of accepting diverse religions, a policy rooted in the tradition of shamanism. Furthermore, given Mongolia's cultural backwardness and its inability to impose a "policy of forced assimilation", adapting to Mongolia's strategy of rule was a pragmatic decision. (Xiao 1999, p. 47)

During Mongke Khan's reign, numerous elite Buddhist monks were sent to Mongke, Kublai and other places to participate in politics in the name of Handi Buddhism. During Kublai Khan's reign, a monk named Zi Cong served as a clerk. Together with a group of Chinese scholars, he emphasized the importance of restoring Handi's rule within Kublai's feudal government. They adapted Kublai's strategy of rule by applying the law and involving the population in two ways. (Chen 2005, p.362) In this context, Chinese Buddhist monks in Handi functioned primarily as political advisors in the Greater Mongol Empire. During Mongke Khan's reign, debates arose between Buddhists and Taoists. The Mongol rulers made political adjustments to the religious landscape in Handi, resulting in the appointment of Haiyun to manage Buddhist affairs in Handi and Li Zhenchang, a Quanzhen priest, to oversee Taoist affairs in Handi. With Kublai's support, Quanzhen Dao's influence declined and Tibetan Buddhism assumed a prominent position in the political life of the Yuan dynasty.

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