ABSTRACT

Most scholars have always viewed Emperor Kang Xi’s (1661-1721) Buddhist policies as a mean to gain favour and trust from the Mongolian and Tibetan Nobles, who were all strong believers of the Yellow Faith. However, David M. Farquhar has a different view. He believed that although Kang Xi’s Buddhist activities and policies were tools to control the Mongolians or Tibetans, however, it also comprised Kang Xi’s personal believe in Buddhism.

Although Farquhar has different views as compared to most scholars, his views still lack a satisfactory explanation of Kang Xi’s actions. Thus this paper attempts to clarify and develop on Farquhar’s theories, if any, to prove: (1) Kang Xi was implementing Buddhist political ideology for effective rule of the Mongolians and Tibetans. (2) He had used either the image of Bodhisattva Manjusri or Buddha Amitabha as his Buddharaaja image. (3) It is true that Kang Xi was involved in Chinese Buddhist activities, however, there is insufficient prove that Kang Xi was implementing Buddhism throughout the Qing Empire.

This paper comprises five chapters: the first chapter is the introduction chapter. In the second chapter, issues on Kang Xi’s Buddharaaja image will be discussed. Evidence will be given to prove his Buddharaaja status. In the third chapter, the reason behind Kang Xi’s frequent pilgrimage and promotion of Mount Wutai will be mentioned. Its implications with Empress Wu Zetian (690-705) will also be explained. In the fourth chapter, issues on Kang Xi’s Buddhist activities and policies will be discussed. This chapter would show that, Kang Xi’s Buddhist policies were meant to target the Mongolians and Tibetans. Hence, this proves that his implementation of Buddhism as a state political ideology was regional instead of nation-wide. The last chapter will be the concluding chapter.