

SANGA AND YANG-LIEN-CHÊN-CHIA

A Phase of History of Religion during the Yüan Period of China

The Imperial Household of the Yüan Dynasty particularly revered and believed Lamaism. The building of vast Lamaist temples was carried through as a national undertaking. The performance of gorgeous Lamaist rites was continually repeated by the order of Emperors at the expence of national funds. Naturally, the patronage bestowed by Emperors and the State upon Lamaist temples and priests was preposterously great. Immense land was presented to temples and abundant gift was offered to priests. As a result, those Lamaist priests who grew accustomed to the patronage are said to have gone to the extremes of having it all their way. That Yüan Dynasty was overthrown partly by Lamaist priests was a remark arising from such a circumstance. Yang-lien-chên-chia who wielded great power at the time of Shih Tsu 世祖 (A. D. 1260~1294) is generally looked upon as a type of Lamaist priest of such kind. It is true. But, to the present writer's view, there was always in the back-ground of such a Lamaist priest some subtle politician of vicious nature in league with him. In the back-ground of notorious Yang-lien-chên-chia, there was Sanga, a so-called 'chien ch'en' 姦臣, who wilfully dealt with the state affairs of the time of Shih Tsu. The chief cause of confusion of the religious world of the Yüan Period is to be sought in a situation such as this. This is the present writer's position.

Shunjō Nogami