

Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines

**Asian Influences on Tibetan Military History
between the 17th and 20th Centuries**

Edited by
S.G. FitzHerbert and Alice Travers



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The point of departure for this thematic issue of the *Revue d’Études Tibétaines* was a conference co-convened by the two guest editors of the present volume, George FitzHerbert and Alice Travers, on June 18, 2018 at Wolfson College, Oxford, entitled “Military Culture in Tibet during the Ganden Phodrang Period (1642–1959): The Interaction between Tibetan and Other Traditions”, at which preliminary versions of these papers were presented and discussed. In addition to the authors of the eight articles published here, we would also like to express gratitude to all those involved in that conference, including Ulrike Roesler, Nicola Di Cosmo, Charles Ramble and Qichen (Barton) Qian, all of whom contributed indirectly to the contents of the present volume. While several of the contributors (George FitzHerbert, Ryosuke Kobayashi, Yasuko Komoto, Diana Lange, Federica Venturi and Alice Travers), are themselves members of the TibArmy project, the volume also includes papers by other invited scholars (Hosung Shim and Ulrich Theobald) who participated in the conference.

The guest editors would also like to thank Jean-Luc Achard and the *Revue d’Études Tibétaines* for accepting this thematic issue on Tibet’s military history and culture. We are indebted to the external reviewers for their instrumental role in improving the content of these contributions, to Yola Gloaguen and Ryosuke Kobayashi for their translation of Yasuko Komoto’s article (submitted in Japanese), and to Estelle Car for help with the layout.

Many uncertainties remain in this nascent field of study, but we hope that the material presented here will foster further interest and research on Tibetan military history, and on the many interactions and mutual influences that shaped Tibetan history in this period.

George FitzHerbert and Alice Travers



Notes on Transcription and Transliteration of Terms in Asian Languages

In order to make this volume accessible to readers not familiar with the variety of languages used as sources, phonetic transcriptions have been used to render Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese, Mongol, Nepali and Manchu names and terms. These phonetic transcriptions are based on the pronunciation and spelling found in each of these languages, and thus can vary, depending on the sources used, even when in some cases they refer to the same people or places. Rather than impose a single hegemonic system for all articles, authors have used phoneticisations which reflect their sources. For Tibetan, phoneticisations are based on the THL Simplified Phonemic Transcription system, intended only as a guide (indeed in certain cases we have deviated from it to reflect an accepted usage in English language scholarship or to better reflect regional pronunciations in Tibetan). For Chinese, the *pinyin* system is used.

In addition to phonetic renderings, all foreign terms are also given in full scientific transliteration in brackets after first use. In the case of Tibetan, these are according to the Wylie system of transliteration, in the case of other languages, these are explained at the beginning of the relevant articles. These transliterations are referred to using the following abbreviations:

Tib.	Tibetan
Ch.	Chinese
Mo.	Mongolian
Ma.	Manchu
Jap.	Japanese
Skt.	Sanskrit
Nep.	Nepali



Introduction: The Ganden Phodrang's Military Institutions and Culture between the 17th and the 20th Centuries, at a Crossroads of Influences*

Solomon George FitzHerbert and Alice Travers

(CNRS, CRCAO, Paris)

Military Institutions and Culture in Light of "Connected Histories"

ne often thinks of military history in general as a domain in which nationalist or nation-state historical approaches prevail, since military history often pertains (at least in recent centuries) to the history of a country's territorial integrity and national sovereignty, and military history is often taken as the yardstick by which such issues are measured and assessed. But military history is rarely as simple as the national narratives in which it is often couched might like to suggest. Like other cultural constructs, military institutions and military culture in any nation are shaped by encounters with external elements and contact with other military traditions and technologies. Tibetan military history between the 17th and 20th centuries clearly exemplifies this, reflecting an always unique, though ever-changing synthesis of influences and elements, in which older Tibetan traits, structural features, cultural orientations and nomenclatures, were mixed with those borrowed from foreign cultures.¹ Predominant among such foreign influences before the modern period were Mongol, Manchu, Chinese, Nepali, and somewhat later Japanese, Russian, Indian and British. It is therefore as relevant in this field of historical study as in any other, to take account of "global history" and "connected histories". This latter term is particularly associated with the

* Research for this article was funded by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement 677952 "TibArmy"). The content reflects only the authors' views and the ERC is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

¹ Such syntheses have been observed in many other areas of Tibetan cultural history such as art, astrology, medicine, and even religion. Pre-communist Tibetan forms of civil administration also bore the imprint of a long historical evolution and the importation of many norms and nomenclatures from outside the Tibetan cultural region.

work of Sanjay Subrahmanyam, whose writings on South Asian history have helped re-frame narratives often simplistically presented in “colonial” terms,² to look at phenomena beyond the local and particular, and beyond issues of power and hegemony, to see wider historical trajectories in light of many complicating and influencing factors.

In terms of military history, these include structural and contingent situations of contact with external or extraneous military forces and traditions, whether under conditions of conflict (war being the most obvious example),³ or of alliance, cooperation, supremacy or subordination.

Our premise in framing the broad theme of this volume was that although the Ganden Phodrang (Dga' ldan pho brang)'s military institutions were heir to a strong Tibetan martial tradition with roots extending back as far as the period of the Tibetan Empire (7th to 9th centuries) and perhaps beyond—a tradition whose traces were still visible in the Ganden Phodrang's army until 1959 and whose importance we do not want to underestimate—, it is also abundantly clear that our understanding of the formation and evolution of the Tibetan army and its traditions from the 17th to 20th centuries would be woefully inadequate if it were analysed solely in the Tibetan context.

As such, this volume is an attempt to place the study of the Ganden Phodrang's military institutions and “military culture” more generally, within the broader context merited by the dynamics of Tibetan history during this period.

There are different definitions of “military culture” so it is worth reprising here four such distinct meanings of the term as presented by Nicola di Cosmo in his work on Imperial China:

First, military culture refers to a discrete, bounded system of conduct and behaviour to which members of the military are supposed to adhere, made of written and unwritten rules and conventions as well as distinctive beliefs and symbols. Second, military culture can mean strategic culture (in Chinese, *zhanlüe wenhua*), which involves a decision-

² Subrahmanyam's transnational paradigm of “connected histories” has been expressed in his studies of early modern South Asia and its relationships with Europe (see for example Subrahmanyam 1997).

³ The conflicts or wars fought in Tibet during this period are not the main focus of this volume, but insofar as they represent moments of contact and influence they are of course very significant, as reflected in the contributions by Hosung Shim and Ulrich Theobald. The specific topic of wars fought during the Ganden Phodrang period is a subject addressed in a separate publication of the TibArmy project, based on a panel convened on this theme as part of the 2019 International Association for Tibetan Studies held in Paris. The proceedings of that panel are currently being edited as a separate volume.

making process that transcends the specific behaviour of military people and involves instead the accumulated and transmitted knowledge upon which those involved in making strategic choices, from both the civil and military side, base their arguments, validate their positions, and examine a given situation. Third, military culture can be understood as the set of values that determine a society's inclination for war and military organization. [...] Fourth, military culture may refer to the presence of an aesthetic and literary tradition that values military events and raises the status of those who accomplish martial exploits to the level of heroes and demigods in epic cycles and poetry, visual representations, communal celebrations, and state rituals.⁴

The first two meanings target the culture of the military, while the latter two address the relationship between the military and society. While some of the articles in this volume focus on the former—reforms to military institutions, personnel and organisational issues, as well as evolutions in strategic orientations and technologies—, other articles hope to shed light on features of military culture as they were projected into social, cultural, political or religious spheres. For example, the Tibetan literary and ritual traditions related to the Chinese martial deity Guandi—which emerged in the wake of Qing's military involvement in Tibet—and this figure's cultural association with the Tibeto-Mongol figure of Gesar, illustrate both the impact of the military on cultural life, and also the highly connected military cultures of Inner Asia during this period.

*The Ganden Phodrang's Military History
between the 17th and the 20th Centuries*

In one perspective, the establishment of the Ganden Phodrang as the government of a reunified Tibet in 1642 represented the re-assertion and concrete realisation of a long-aspired-to Tibet-centric political order that had been nurtured in Tibetan literature, myth and historiography for centuries. Namely, the reunification of Tibet under the enlightened rule of an emanation of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, in the form of the successive incarnations of the Dalai Lama. However the year 1642 also, in another perspective, marked the beginning of a period of even greater political and cultural *connectedness* between Ti-

⁴ Di Cosmo 2009: 3–4. The term “military culture” is also sometimes understood in an even broader way, encompassing for instance military institutions and administration, as for example in Wilson 2008, which is the definition referred to in Ulrich Theobald's article.

bet and its neighbours, and in particular of increased military dependence on its northern (and later) eastern neighbours. Indeed, as a Buddhist government, the Ganden Phodrang's choice to relinquish—albeit to a highly variable degree depending on the period—part of the military defence of its territory to foreign troops, first Mongol and later Sino-Manchu, in the framework of “patron-preceptor” (*mchod yon*) relationships, created a structural situation involving long-term contacts and cooperation between Tibetans and “foreign” military cultures.⁵ As such, the Ganden Phodrang's military institutions as well as its military culture were in large part shaped over these centuries by fluctuating and changing relations with various neighbours and allies, and

⁵ The use of the terms “foreign” and “foreign culture” in the period under discussion raises particular methodological difficulties. The politically-ascendant Geluk—and more generally Buddhist—establishment, that served as the basis for the Tibetan Ganden Phodrang government, was one founded upon a religious identity which transcended ethnicity. So although Tibetan sources of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries do often present ethnic markers and distinctions in relatively simple terms, it is also clear that questions of identity in this period were complex, and ethnic markers and nomenclatures could, and did, shift. Ethnic Mongols for example had been settling on the Tibetan plateau since the late 13th century, so those referred to as “Hor” in Tibetan sources of the mid-17th century might refer to individuals and communities with varied degrees of Tibetan indigenisation. Similarly, the Manchu elite which rose to dominance in the 17th century in China and came to play a dominant role in Tibet from the early-mid-18th century, were an elite which had extensively intermarried with Mongol families, making notions of distinct ethnic or national identities problematic. Many of the key political and diplomatic figures in Tibet's relations with the Qing Dynasty were, as is well known, what Perdue has called “transfrontiersmen”—individuals such as Changkya Rölpe Dorjé (Lcang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje, 1717–1786) or Sumpa Khenpo Yeshe Penjor (Sum pa mkhan po ye shes dpal 'byor, 1704–1788), whose own identities traversed a conjunction of linguistic and cultural areas and defied simple identifications as either “Tibetan” or “Mongol”. At the same time however, the Qing Imperium was deliberate in its preservation of ethnicity as a marker of status in codes of dress and so on. This peculiar and sometime paradoxical blend of syncretism on the one hand, and the preservation of distinction in the domain of identity on the other, was indeed one of the hallmarks of the Qing's complex “transnational” but at the same time ethnically-based politics, which in recent decades has been explored by several scholars in the wave of so-called New Qing History. An appreciation of these nuanced complexities and how they shifted over time is crucial for an understanding of the crucial role that Tibetan Buddhism played within the Qing imperial culture, providing as it did, a whole arena of markers of fidelity and solidarity which transcended nation and language. Notwithstanding such complications in the use of the terms “Tibetan” and “foreign”, we still feel that a Tibet-centric approach to this period of Tibetan military history remains both relevant and important, since the Tibetan Ganden Phodrang government, even prior to its period of *de facto* independence (1913–1950), maintained between 1642 and 1911 a high degree of cultural and political autonomy, despite its varied degrees of incorporation into extraneous imperial projects.

thus cannot be fully understood without reference to alternative centres, cultures and agendas.

The aim of this volume is not to reprise the general history of this period, but rather to focus on particular aspects of Tibet's changing military history—in both institutional and cultural terms—which were impacted by situations of contact with other Asian military traditions.⁶ As is well-known, the military power which brought the Ganden Phodrang to power as the government of Tibet in 1642, was an alliance of Tibetans and Mongols.⁷ Militarily-speaking, the Qoshot (also Kho-shuud) Mongol forces of Gushri Khan played the dominant role in these campaigns, while a supporting role was played by Tibetan troops and the monks of the major Geluk monasteries of Lhasa.⁸ With the establishment of this new Geluk government under the titular leadership of the Fifth Dalai Lama,⁹ it was entirely natural that Mongol forces, under the command of Gushri Khan himself, would continue to play a dominant role in Tibetan military affairs.¹⁰ Nevertheless, it is also clear, though still somewhat obscured from the historian's eye by the paucity of available documentary evidence and the difficulties of access to those documents that may actually exist, that Tibetan military forces and Tibetan militias, serving under Tibetan military command-

⁶ The most comprehensive study to date on the military history of Tibet itself is the Tibetan-language work by the former military officer Gyantse Namgyel Wangdü (Dwang slob mda' zur spyi 'thus rgyal rtse nam rgyal dbang 'dus 2003), later translated into English (Gyaltse Namgyal Wangdue 2010 and 2012). For a brief discussion of the status of this source, see Travers and Venturi 2019: 20.

⁷ The influence of Mongols in Tibet, in terms of military organisation and traditions, of course predates the Ganden Phodrang period. Tibet had been militarily dominated by Mongols for a century in the mid 13th-mid 14th century during the Sakya-Mongol period (see *inter alia* Petech 1990). However, with the fall of the Yuan, the Mongol presence appears to have decreased, whether through departure or indigenisation or a mixture of the two. During the Ming dynasty there appears to have been no significant Imperial troop presence in Tibet, and the period also saw a burgeoning nationalist discourse of "Mongol-repelling" in Tibetan literature (Gentry 2016).

⁸ As attested to in the autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama; Karmay 2014: 156–157.

⁹ The practical day-to-day control of the Fifth Dalai Lama himself over his government increased after the deaths, both in the 1650s, of his manager, *zhal ngo* Sönam Raptan (*zhal ngo* Bsod nams rab brtan), and his military patron Gushri Khan.

¹⁰ The Tibetan government acknowledged and commemorated the key role played by Gushri Khan in bringing it to power in the 17th century, through the institutionalisation of annual state ceremonies, which continued into the 20th century, in which people would don the full centuries-old military attire of Gushri Khan's troops during the festivities of the Mönlam Chenmo (Smon lam chen mo). For descriptions of the Mongol-style costumes worn by the two *Ya sor* commanders leading the two wings (*ru*) and their Mongol troops, see Richardson: 1993: 31–37 and Karsten 1983. See also photographs 9 and 10 in the appendix of this introduction.

ers, also continued to be a key feature of the military-political landscape, and played a significant role in the various conflicts and campaigns (such as those in Ladakh and Bhutan) fought on behalf of the early Ganden Phodrang.

With the rise of the Manchu dynasty in China, and towards the later decades of the reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama, the balance of influence in Tibet increasingly shifted from the Qoshot Mongol royalty towards the Manchu emperor, who came to be regarded as a significant source of authority for the Fifth Dalai Lama himself, as indicated by chancellery Tibetan archive documents from the 1670s.¹¹ The Manchus had since the beginning of their rule taken a keen interest in Tibetan affairs, and that of the Geluk establishment in particular. As Peter Schwieger puts it, “even at this early stage of their imperial history, the Manchus tried to form their Inner Asian face by promoting Tibetan Buddhism—alongside Chinese Buddhism and other religious beliefs”,¹² and the Ganden Phodrang’s distinctive model of government, known in Tibetan as the “two systems” (*lugs gnyis*), which was rendered into Mongolian and Manchu as “religious government” (Mo. *törü šasin*, Ma. *doro shajin*),¹³ came to be regarded as “an accepted basis for the Inner Asian diplomatic relations among the Mongols, Tibetans, and Manchus”.¹⁴

The military landscape of Inner Asia in the late 17th century was dominated by the conflict between the Manchu Qing Dynasty under Emperor Kangxi (r. 1661–1722) and the Zunghar Khanate led by Galdan Tenzin Boshugtu Khan (Tib. Dga’ ldan bstan ’dzin, 1644–1697), who had himself been educated in Tibet as a prestigious Geluk *triilku* (Tib. *sprul sku*) incarnation at Tashilhunpo monastery.¹⁵ The significance of Tibet for the early Qing was therefore largely—though not entirely—based on considerations of the Tibetan (and especially Geluk) influence over the various Mongol tribes and the Zunghars in particular. The history of the protracted Qing-Zunghar war, including the

¹¹ See Schwieger 2015: 63–64. The fact that the Fifth Dalai Lama used the authority of the Manchu emperor to augment his own status does not mean that he considered the Emperor could interfere directly in Tibetan affairs (*ibid.*: 64).

¹² *Ibid.*: 34.

¹³ See Ishimhama 2004: 19–24.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*: 35.

¹⁵ A grandson of Gushri Khan, he had been identified as the Fourth Ensa *triilku* (Dben sa sprul sku) and educated by the Panchen and Dalai Lama as his personal teachers; see Schwieger 2015: 73. This figure is not to be confused with Galden Tsewang Pelzang (Dga ldan tshe dbang dpal bzang), also a grandson of Gushri Khan and a leading lama of Tashilhunpo. Galden Tsewang Pelzang was leader of the Ganden Phodrang’s forces during the Tibet-Ladakh war (1679–1684) and Galdan Tenzin Boshugtu Khan sent Galden Tsewang Pelzang reinforcement troops in 1684; *ibid.*: 70 and 250 fn 82.

sometimes disingenuous role of Tibetan religious dignitaries as mediators, has been greatly clarified by Peter Perdue's pioneering work *China Marches West*.¹⁶

As this intensely-fought Inner Asian power struggle continued decade after decade, Tibet—being the centre of the Buddhist religion predominantly embraced by the Zunghars—became increasingly embroiled¹⁷ as different powerful individuals and factions in Tibet (both Tibetan and Mongol) took different sides. In the power vacuum left by the killing of the last regent of the Fifth Dalai Lama, Dési Sanggyé Gyatso (*sde srid* Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, 1653–1705) and the demotion of his protégé, the wayward Sixth Dalai Lama (d. 1706), a period of intense manoeuvring and scheming ensued, involving a variety of Tibetan and Mongolian players with their own independent abilities to muster armies. The military history of this and ensuing periods is treated expertly by Luciano Petech in his *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century*, whose work in this field remains unrivalled.¹⁸

From the military perspective, Tibet's involvement in the Zunghar war reached its apex with the 1717 Zunghar invasion and occupation of central Tibet.¹⁹ This occupation (1717–1720) spurred an escalation of the Qing's military involvement in Tibetan affairs, and in 1720 the Kangxi Emperor sent an army of 4,000 troops to expel the unpopular Zunghars and install the Seventh Dalai Lama (whom they had been protecting) as Tibet's ruler.²⁰

From this time onwards, and until the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911, the Manchus maintained (with many fluctuations along the way) some form of "protectorate" in Tibet,²¹ which involved imperial representatives, known as *ambans*, staying at Lhasa along with a small imperial military guard. A series of military interventions by the Qing in Tibet over the course of the 18th century saw the gradual expansion and institutionalisation of this imperial garrison, along with a number of imperial reforms aimed at reshaping Tibet's own political and military institutions.²²

The fluctuations in Qing military presence in Tibet during the 18th century reflected the level of political stability there. It is worth observing, that through all these fluctuations, not once did the Tibetan military forces of the Ganden Phodrang and the Qing imperial army meet

¹⁶ Perdue 2005.

¹⁷ Waley-Cohen 2006: 93.

¹⁸ Petech [1950] 1972: 8–32.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*: 33–65.

²⁰ *Ibid.*: 66–83.

²¹ To use the expression favoured by Petech (*ibid.*: 74 and *passim*).

²² See Travers 2015 for a discussion of the development of the Tibetan army as it appears in the successive Manchu reforms of the 18th century.

on opposing ends of a battlefield (with the exception of the battles that took place during the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911–1912 when the Tibetans expelled the remaining Sino-Manchu soldiers stationed there). Rather, despite moments of considerable tension—most notably around the events of 1750–1751—the dynamic between the Tibetan and Imperial forces tended to be one of co-operation and alliance. This co-operation was based on a convergence of political purpose, since both armies were ultimately oriented towards the same goal, namely the preservation and defence of the Dalai Lamas and the Ganden Phodrang's government of Tibet.

The Qing Imperial force sent to Tibet in 1720 was withdrawn in 1723.²³ But when the Tibetan minister Khangchenné (Khang chen nas Bsod nams rgyal po, also known in Tibetan sources by his Mongolian title Dai-ching Batur) was murdered by rival ministers in 1727, Tibet was plunged into a short civil war. This prompted the Qing again to send a force, which although it did not appear to have engaged in any fighting, gave its imprimatur to the ensuing peace, and imperial commanders oversaw the public execution of the conspirators in Lhasa. As with other periods, establishing the precise size of the military force sent on this occasion remains uncertain, with scholars' estimates ranging from 6,500²⁴ to 15,400²⁵ troops. It is interesting to compare this with available figures concerning the relative size of the Tibetan forces in the same period. Citing Qing archival documents, the contemporary Chinese scholar Feng Zhi states that Tibetan troops led by the Tibetan military leader Pholhané (Pho lha nas, 1689–1747) in 1728, numbered some 9,000,²⁶ while another 4,000 were also present at Lhasa, implying a total of at least 13,000 Tibetan soldiers,²⁷ i.e. larger or similar in size to the imperial expeditionary force. Even given the uncertainties over these numbers, the temporary presence in central Tibet of some 30,000 troops in total—both Tibetan and Sino-Manchu—at this time (and possibly more if the erstwhile troops of the ministerial conspirators that both these forces opposed are also factored in) at this time indicates the start of a period of unprecedented militarisation in Tibetan affairs.

Pholhané, a talented military commander and an astute politician, had quickly emerged victorious from this civil war. He then created a

²³ Petech [1950] 1972: 92–93.

²⁴ Feng 2006: 37.

²⁵ Petech 1972: 145. Composed of 400 Manchu bannermen and 15,000 Green Banner troops. Shakabpa (2010: vol. 1, 448) mentions the figure 10,000.

²⁶ As also stated by Petech 1972: 137.

²⁷ Feng 2006: 38. Comprising 9,000 soldiers under the command of Pholhané, and 4,000 more soldiers led to the Potala. The authors would like to express their indebtedness to Tamdrin Yangchen (Minzu University, Beijing) for her help translating Feng Zhi's article from Chinese.

new permanent Tibetan army, which laid the institutional foundations for the Tibetan army structure that would continue into the 20th century. According to Petech's sources, Pholhané's army around 1740 consisted of some 25,000 soldiers in total, including both infantry and cavalry.²⁸ If accurate, this would be a high-water mark in terms of troop numbers in the pre-20th century military history of the Ganden Phodrang.²⁹

The 1728 Manchu intervention also marked the beginning of a permanent Qing imperial garrison stationed in Tibet, initially of 2,000 troops.³⁰ The size and significance of this garrison over the ensuing decades and centuries would vary greatly. In 1733 the number of imperial troops was reduced to a contingent of just 500, which in order to reduce pressures on the local population—and there is some evidence of resentment towards the foreign soldiery—was moved to a purpose-built barracks constructed outside Lhasa, at the nearby plain of Trapchi (Tib. Gra/Grwa bzhi).³¹

In 1747, Pholhané was succeeded as *de facto* "king" of Tibet by his son, Gyurmé Namgyel ("Gyur med rnam rgyal, also known by his Mongolian title Dalai Batur), who immediately took a very assertive attitude towards the Qing, demanding payment for the upkeep of the Qing garrison and the *ambans* at Lhasa, and clearly intent on the departure of the last remaining imperial soldiers. As a result of these pressures, the imperial garrison was further reduced in 1748 to just 100 men, a very small number when compared to the local Tibetan army. However, the conflict between Gyurmé Namgyel and the Qing representatives in Lhasa continued to intensify and in 1750, the Tibetan leader was murdered by the two *ambans* leading in turn to a Tibetan revolt against them—which Shakabpa suggests was led by the Tibetan military—³²in which the two *ambans* were themselves killed.

The upshot of this was the Qing again sending a military force to restore peace. It was in the wake of this 1751 intervention—the closest we have to a Qing force entering Tibet in an oppositional role to the

²⁸ Petech [1950] 1972: 251. Petech states that "some incomplete accounts, extracted from the *Ta-ch'ing i-tung-chih*, depicting conditions about 1740, are found in Fr. Amiot, *Mémoires concernant les Chinois*, XIV, pp. 142–143 and 147, and in *Eine chinesische Beschreibung von Tibet* p. 22 and 24"; *ibid.*: 250 fn 1.

²⁹ See Travers 2015 for a discussion on the variation in numbers of the Tibetan army over this period.

³⁰ Petech [1950] 1972: 156.

³¹ Mdo mkhar ba Tshe ring dbang rgyal 1981: 832; Petech [1950] 1972: 169; Feng Zhi 2006: 39.

³² *Ibid.*: 469–470.

Tibetan army (though by the time they arrived the rebellion had already been quelled)—³³that significant political and military reforms were instituted. These included the abolition of the secular role of a “king” (Ch. *wang*) figure in Tibet (occupied by Pholhané and then his son),³⁴ and instead the formal concentration of political (and military) power in the hands of the Dalai Lamas and the *ambans*.

The reforms of 1751 saw not only a major reduction in the size of the Tibetan army from the time of the Pholha dynasty, but also its regularisation and reform. It also appears to be from this time that Tibetan troops began to be quartered next to the imperial barracks at Trapchi, a situation that would continue into the 20th century.³⁵ The extent to which the Tibetan and the Qing garrisons would henceforth interact and cooperate in matters such as training, lines of command and so on, remains little known in its details.

Over the course of the 18th century, as Waley-Cohen has shown, the Qing were recasting their own imperial culture in an increasingly martial mould.³⁶ One can only assume this also impacted the Tibetan army. From 1751 until the 20th century, the permanent Qing garrison in Tibet consisted (at least on paper) of 1,500 men.³⁷ These imperial troops included Manchu bannermen and Chinese soldiers from the western provinces in varying proportions.³⁸ It seems that most of the soldiers posted by the Qing in Lhasa were of Sichuanese origin, belonged the Green Standard Army, and served in three-year stints.³⁹ The Green Standard Army (Ch. *lüying guanbing* 綠營官兵), which made up the larger part of the Qing's imperial forces and consisted predominantly of ethnic Han soldiers, operated concurrently with the more prestigious Manchu-Mongol-Han Eight Banner armies. At present, the precise relationship between the Green Standard troops and the Banners, and the likely difference between their respective military cultures, is not very clearly understood and would benefit from further research.

³³ See Petech [1950] 1972: 223–225.

³⁴ As cited by Petech, “it was prescribed that henceforward no Tibetan could be granted the titles of Kha, *wang* or *beise*”; Petech [1950] 1972: 231.

³⁵ Shakabpa 2010: 473. As an illustration, see the Tibet and Chinese camps at Trapchi represented in the *Wise Collection* and reproduced in Diana Lange's article in this volume.

³⁶ Waley-Cohen 2006: 93.

³⁷ Petech [1950] 1972: 257.

³⁸ *Ibid.*; Dai 2009: 82–83.

³⁹ *Ibid.*; Elliot 2001: 412. Petech gives the example of the expeditionary force in 1728, composed of 15,000 Green Standard soldiers and 400 Manchu bannermen, see Petech [1950] 1972: 257.

It was in the late 1780s that central Tibet once again became an intense focus of military concern for the Qing authorities. The newly-ascendant Gorkha dynasty in Nepal invaded and occupied several southern Tibetan districts in 1788. This led to an unsatisfactory peace settlement negotiated by both Tibetan and Qing imperial officials, upon which the Tibetan authorities quickly reneged, leading to a second punitive invasion of central Tibet by the Gorkhas in 1791, in which Tashilhunpo monastery was raided and looted. This in turn spurred the largest military intervention by the Qing into Tibet—a force of some 20,000 under the command of the senior Manchu General Fuk’anggan (a confidante of the Qianlong emperor), and the veteran Evenk General Hailanca who led a contingent of crack Solun troops from China’s far northeast. The success of this major military intervention and the ensuing restructuring of Tibetan military and political affairs under the so-called *Twenty-nine Articles*, brought Tibet into greater formal integration with the Qing Empire than ever before, and began the period of Tibetan history that Petech has qualified as a “semi-colonial period”.⁴⁰

There can be little doubt that the Qing imperial military presence in Tibet during the 19th century and beyond had a significant impact on Tibetan military culture. Nevertheless, Tibet throughout this period maintained its own distinct and separate army, whose degree of integration or subordination to the Qing garrisons remains unclear,⁴¹ and likely fluctuated considerably over the decades. We do know however that formal relations between the two were strong. This is attested to by the simple fact that the regular Tibetan army of 3,000 troops are regularly referred to in Tibetan-language sources right up until the early 20th century as *gyajong* (Tib. *rgya sbyong*) meaning “Chinese-trained”.

⁴⁰ Petech 1959: 387. In this regard it is worth noting that, despite an apparently greater degree of alignment between the Tibetan military and the Qing Empire in this period, the Qing authorities were nevertheless unable to send reinforcement armies to assist Tibet in times of war, as for example in the case of the Tibetan-Dogra War of 1841 and Nepal-Tibetan War of 1855–1856. However, as recent scholarship (Schwieger 2015) has shown, the withdrawal of the Qing military involvement in Tibet in the 19th century did not mean the discontinuity of the Tibetan rulers’ reliance on the Qing emperor as a source of authority. This is also shown by the continued use of the “Golden Urn” for the selection of high incarnates into the 19th century as described by Oidtmann (2018).

⁴¹ Fredholm (2007: 12) mentions that Tibetan troops and the Chinese garrison, which had previously operated together as a single army, separated in 1846. However, he does not give any primary source to back up this suggestion. For a discussion of this point, see Travers 2015: 256.

After the fall of the Qing Dynasty in China, the remnants of the imperial garrison were expelled from Tibet in 1912, inaugurating the period of Tibet's *de facto* independence (1913–1950). This was then followed by a major programme of military reform and modernisation initiated by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. The strategic choice taken by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1916 to adopt a British model for this programme, once again saw a foreign military model exerting a huge influence on Tibet's military history. This episode represents a particularly clear example of what we can call "influence through contact": in this case, contact first through invasion (1904), then military co-existence: from 1908 the British stationed small military escorts, which included Gurkha and Sikh soldiers, for their trade agents at Yatung (see photographs 3 and 4 in the appendix to this introduction) and Gyantse (see photograph 5). This presence contributed to perceptions of organisational and technological superiority, and spurred the will for reform and modernisation within Tibet's own military, particularly from 1916. Over the following decades, British influence on the Tibetan army became so strong that by the 1920s the Tibetan army was clothed in British-style military uniforms, marched to the tune of "God Save the Queen" played by its military band,⁴² and was answering drill commands in English despite the soldiers' lack of familiarity with that language. In the late 1940s, these British-inspired practices were abandoned and gave way to a belated attempt by the Tibetan government to reclaim its national military identity and "re-Tibetanise" its army.⁴³ Compared to other periods of Tibet's military history, the period of British influence is relatively well-documented through photographs, diaries and personal testimonies, and has already attracted considerable amounts of research.

*A Focus on the Asian Influences on
Tibet's "Military Culture" and Institutions*

The period of British influence on the Tibetan Army in the early 20th century is well-documented and certainly the best-known of the "foreign" influences exerted on Tibet's military history, and it is for this reason that this period has been excluded from the theme of the present volume, which instead focuses only on hitherto less-well-researched Asian influences. Our hope in doing so is to reclaim Tibet's military history from this well-known period of European dominance

⁴² In the 1940s, the British observer could not recognise anymore the melody, see Stoddard 1985: 84.

⁴³ See Travers 2016.

by highlighting instead the almost three centuries of the Ganden Phodrang's military history *before* the adoption of the "British model".

Over the course of these centuries, from 1642 onwards, as this introduction has shown, Tibetan military forces were in many kinds of contact with other Asian military institutions and traditions, whether in situations of conflict, alliance, cooperation, rivalry or subordination, and in many cases, these had a major impact on Tibet's own army and its wider military culture. While by no means exhaustive, the eight articles of this volume explore some of these significant contacts between the Tibetan military and Mongol, Manchu, Chinese, and Japanese military models, based on sources not only in Tibetan but also in these respective languages. The very diversity of the source languages used for these articles, and hence the diversity of perspectives they embody, is thus a first step towards a "global history" of the Tibetan military that necessarily must be based on "multiple voices".

Federica Venturi's article, mainly based on the Fifth Dalai lama's own autobiography, ventures into some intriguing questions concerning relations between Mongol and Tibetan forces during the many military campaigns undertaken on behalf of the Ganden Phodrang government in the late-17th century. Hosung Shim analyses the strategic and technological innovations brought to Tibet by the Zunghar invasion and conquest of 1717–1720. Concerning the establishment of the Qing military protectorate in Tibet, George FitzHerbert's article looks at the establishment of "garrison temples" in Tibet serving Chinese troops there, and the contemporaneous adoption and adaptation of the Chinese martial deity, Guandi, worshipped at these temples, into Tibetan Geluk Buddhism and the popular conflation of this figure with the Inner Asian culture-hero Gesar/Geser.

Two of the articles relate more particularly to the *Twenty-nine Articles* of 1793 and their consequences for Tibetan army organisation and military culture. Ulrich Theobald discusses the way Chinese sources present the post-Gorkha War reforms as a paradigm shift for Tibetan military administration. Alice Travers' article addresses the question of whether and to what extent the military sections of the *Twenty-nine Articles* were actually implemented, both in the immediate aftermath of the Gorkha Wars (as reflected in the military career of Zurkhang Sichö Tseten) and in the longer run.

Diana Lange discusses visual representations of the Qing's political and military presence in central Tibet, as reflected in (among other sources) the map and illustrations of the so-called *Wise Collection* made by a Tibetan lama in the mid-19th century, which represent a precious primary source on a little-known period of Tibet's military history.

The volume also includes two illuminating articles on lesser-known aspects of Asian influences on Tibetan military history from the early

20th century. One concerns Zhang Yintang's attempts at a military reform of the Tibetan army from 1906 onwards, just before the fall of the Qing dynasty, which is the subject of Ryosuke Kobayashi's article (see photographs 1 and 2 in the appendix, illustrating the Sino-Manchu military presence in Tibet in the early 20th century). And the other concerns the role of the Japanese officer Yasujiro Yajima (see photograph 7), who was resident in Tibet between 1912 and 1918 and was employed by the Tibetan government both as an instructor for the Tibetan army, and to design a new Tibetan military barracks. This constitutes one of the last episodes of "Asian influence" on the Ganden Phodrang's army before it began to be disbanded following the Chinese Communist invasion and the ensuing *Seventeen-Point Agreement* of 1951.⁴⁴ The period between 1951 and 1959, when the remaining Tibetan regiments were incorporated into the People's Liberation Army, represents a final chapter of "Asian influence" on the Tibetan army during our period of research, but is not a topic covered by the contributions here.

This small ensemble of articles is by no means an exhaustive treatment of our theme. Among the more conspicuous gaps are the absence of any articles relating to the Dogra-Tibetan War of 1841–1842; the Nepal-Tibet war of 1855–1856; or the presence of a small Gorkha guard stationed in Lhasa to protect the Nepali trade representative until the 20th century (see photograph 6 in the appendix). Despite such *lacunae* the editors hope that this volume will represent a significant step towards a better understanding of the interconnectedness of Tibet's military history with that of its neighbours over the long period of the Ganden Phodrang's political ascendancy in Tibet.

⁴⁴ The *Seventeen-Point Agreement*, signed in May 1951, itself constitutes the beginning of the final important chapter in the history of the Ganden Phodrang army. Article 8 of that agreement stated that "Tibetan troops shall be reorganised by stages into the People's Liberation Army, and become a part of the national defence forces of the People's Republic of China". Following the flight into exile of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in 1959, all remaining remnants of the former Tibetan army were then integrated into the People's Liberation Army. In exile, another situation of contact with an Asian military culture occurred when the Indian Army created the Special Frontier Force in 1962, also known as "Establishment 22", in which Tibetan refugees were enrolled, including some former Tibetan soldiers of the Ganden Phodrang army.

Photographic Appendix



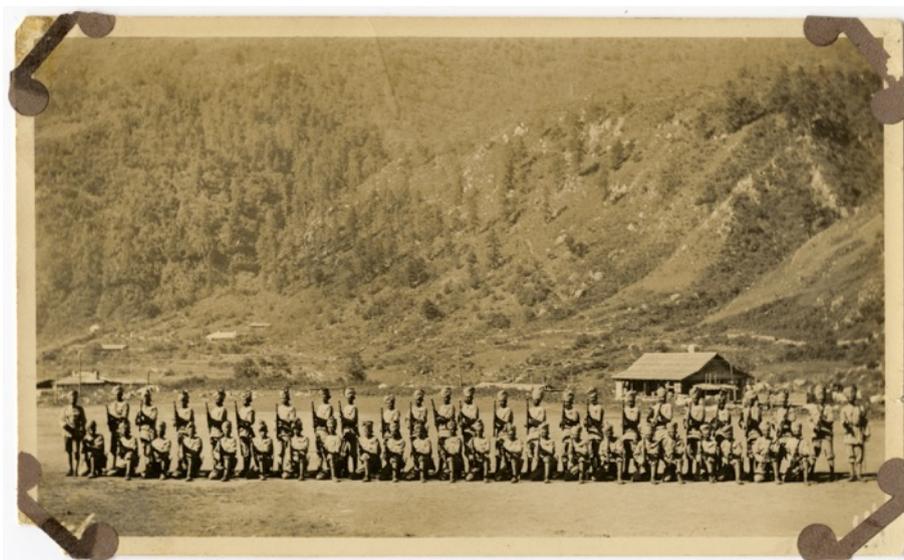
Photograph 1. "Chinese (Manchu) official with bodyguards at Yatung c. 1911". Photograph by Henry Martin. Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. PRM-Martin-1998.293.136.



Photograph 2. "Chinese Firing Party", probably c. 1911. Photograph by Henry Martin. Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. PRM-Martin-1998.293.130.



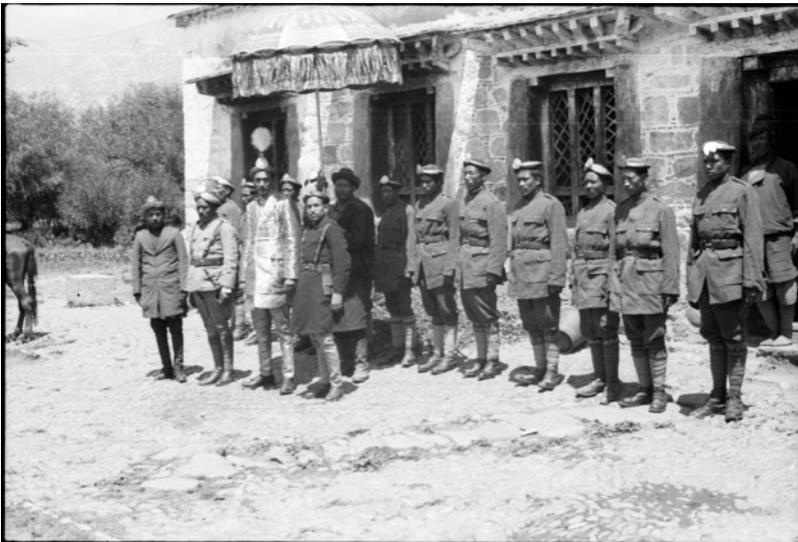
Photograph 3. "David McDonald [British trade Agent] with Gurkha Police Escort in Yatung". Photograph by Henry Martin (no date). Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. PRM-Martin-1998.293.25.



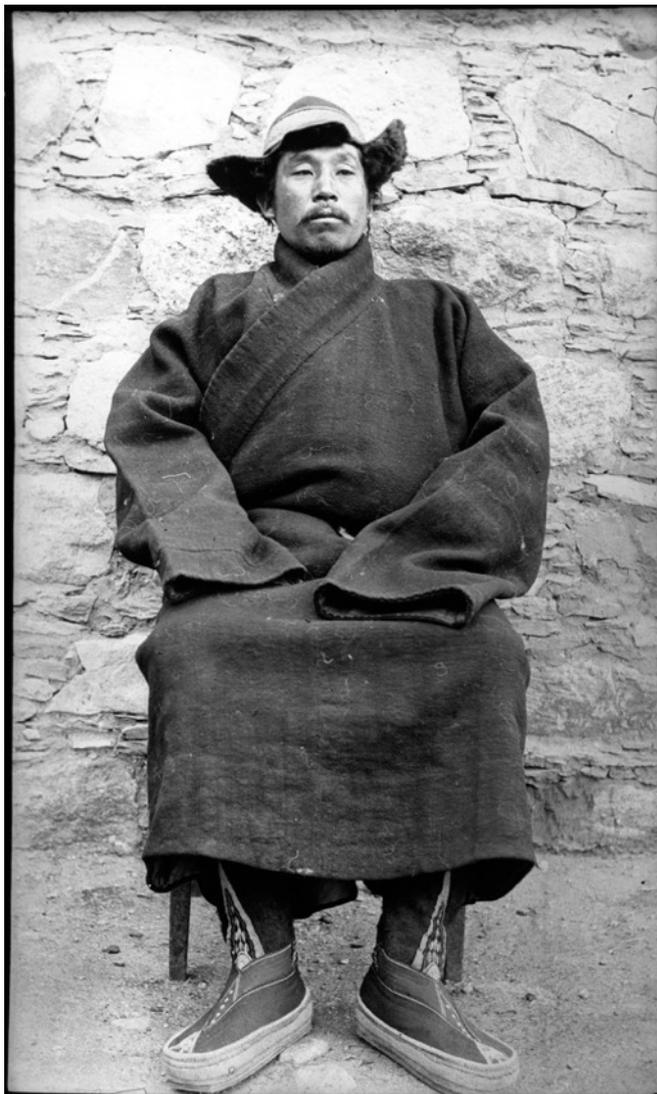
Photograph 4. "Detachment at Yatung" [residence of the British Trade Agent] in 1914. Photograph by Henry Martin. Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. PRM-Martin-1998.293.11.



Photograph 5. Sikh Soldiers in the Mounted Escort of the British 13th Frontier Force at Gyantse [residence of the British Trade Agent] in 1927–1928. Photograph by A.J. Hopkinson. © The Trustees of the British Museum, London. N° RF148657. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.



Photograph 6. “Nepalese Agent Major Gambir Shamsheer Thapu Chattri and escort at Dekyi-lingka 19 August 1933”. Photograph by Frederick Williamson. The Museum of Archeology and Anthropology, Cambridge. This image is copyright. Reproduced by permission of University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology (P.96952.WIL).



Photograph 7. "Yashojiro Yajima". Charles Bell Collection, Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.
PRM-1998.285.584.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ This photograph was almost certainly taken during Yasujiro Yajima's stay in Lhasa (i.e. between 1912 and 1918). The Pitt Rivers Museum's *Tibet Album*, based on a comment about the photo in Charles Bell's "List of Illustrations" attributes it to Willoughby Patrick Rosemeyer and dates it tentatively to "1922?" (this being the earliest known date of Rosemeyer's presence in Tibet). However, Yajima is known to have stayed in Lhasa only until 1918, so one can surmise the photo must have been taken before that time. On Yasujiro Yajima, see the articles by Kobayashi and Komoto in this volume.



Photograph 8. "Ruthog Depon in the clothes of a Yaso with attendant", 1948. Photograph by H.E. Richardson British Museum n° 576537001© The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.



Photograph 9. Parade of cavalymen representing the standard bearers of Gushri Khan in the Mönlam State ceremonies. Photograph by A.J. Hopkinson, n°576575001© The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.

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Mongol and Tibetan Armies on the Trans-Himalayan Fronts in the Second Half of the 17th Century, with a Focus on the Autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama*

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(CNRS, CRCAO)

It is well known that the formation of the Ganden Phodrang (Tib. Dga' ldan pho brang) state was made possible by the intervention of Oirat armies against the rivals of the Gelukpa (Dge lugs pa school) in Kham (Khams) and in Tsang (Gtsang). Without the military push and the generous and steady economic support of these Mongol groups, it is likely that the internal rivalries and skirmishes for predominance on the plateau would have continued for some time, as the ongoing conflicts between Ü (Dbus) and Tsang in the first half of the 17th century demonstrated no clear dominance of one party over the other. In contrast, not only did the intervention of Oirat troops enable the establishment of the supremacy of the Fifth Dalai Lama (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, 1617–1682) and his school over a vast area of the plateau, but their continued support solidified his new government's position against rebel provinces and strengthened its hold on contested territories for the entire period of his reign.

Mongol troops of both Oirat and Khalkha stock fought in combat against Karmapa rebels in 1642 and 1644, against Bhutan in 1648–1649 and 1656–1657, and against the kingdom of Ladakh between 1679 and 1684.¹ Similarly, Mongol generals were also at the head of troops

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¹ In 1642, reports describe 300 Mongol troops commanded by the Khalkha Dayan Noyon (Karmay 2014: 175); in 1644, sources (*ibid.*: 191; Shakabpa 2010: vol. 1, 350) mention a Tibeto-Mongol army (*bod sog gi dmag*); accounts of the war of 1656–1657 refer to the employment of Mongol soldiers as well as troops from Ü, Kham, and Kongpo (Kong po) (Karmay 2014: 374); in the war against Ladakh of 1679–1684 Mongol troops fought alongside reinforcements from Tsang (Petech 1977: 72). It is likely that at least some Mongol troops were employed also for the suppression of the 1659 rebellion of the *depa* Norbu and his nephew Gonashakpa (Sgo sna shag pa), as the advance platoon of 100 soldiers commanded by the Thaiji of Ukhere (U

fighting for the Ganden Phodrang in Kham between 1674 and 1675.² While on some of these occasions, especially the earlier ones such as the rebellions of 1642, Mongol soldiers seem to have fought unaided by local troops, already from 1644 Tibetan and Mongol fighters were employed side by side, sometimes under the double generalship of a Tibetan and a Mongol commander, and at other times led by a Mongol chief alone.³

Given this co-mingling of Tibetan and Mongol troops in times of war, one may wonder how reciprocal relations between these two groups unfolded on the battleground, and how their different approaches to warfare coexisted. In particular, this paper examines what can be gleaned about the use of Mongol forces from the autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama himself,⁴ so as to ascertain at what level he was aware of the usefulness of the Mongols as a martial resource; whether he showed preference for the use of one army over another; and whether he was cognisant of the rivalries or disagreements between Mongol and Tibetan troops.

The reasons for taking the autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama as a key primary source on this subject are multiple. First, the autobiography is written in a diary-like style, i.e. its entries are generally dated, thus allowing us to follow the temporal progression of a particular state of affairs. Secondly, sources on war in Tibet are often scattered and hard to find because of the prevalence given to religious-based topics even in Tibetan historiographical literature. The autobiography

khe re'i tha'i ji) probably included (and might even have exclusively comprised) Mongol troops. The rest of the soldiers that fought to retake the fort of Shigatsé in 1659 were recruited in Ü (Karmay 2014: 412).

² In 1642, Dayan Noyon of the Khalkha and Aldar Khoshorchi were in charge of Mongol troops; in 1644 Gushri Khan himself participated in the conflict; in 1656–1657 two of the commanders were Dalai Baatur and Machik Taiji (Ma gcig tha'i ji); in 1674–1675 Uljō Taiji was among the commanders; in the war against Ladakh of 1679–1684 the general of the troops from Lhasa was Ganden Tsewang Pelzang (Dga' ldan Tshe dbang dpal bzang), a grandson of Gushri Khan.

³ For a general overview of the wars fought in the period of the Fifth Dalai Lama see Venturi 2018: 23–47. For example, in the war against Bhutan of 1644 there was a dedicated Mongol division (*sog dmag dum bu*). The TibArmy project is preparing a timeline of the wars fought during the Ganden Phodrang, to be published online on the TibArmy website.

⁴ *Za hor gyi ban de ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho'i 'di snang 'khrul pa'i rol rtsed rtogs brjod kyi tshul du bkod pa du kū la'i gos bzang*, composed between 1667 and 1681 and comprising three volumes, of which only the first so far has been entirely translated in English (see Karmay 2014). Although the Fifth Dalai Lama is technically the author, the drafting of the text itself involved the work of multiple hands, that combined handwritten notes, official records, and personal recollections into a coherent whole. This process is illustrated in detail in Schaeffer 2010: 272–273.

of the Fifth Dalai Lama, although it too is of course predominantly concerned with religious questions, also contains comprehensive information on political and military situations requiring his own top-down attention, since he regarded himself as the spiritual and secular ruler of Tibet, and theoretically all major decisions taken by the Ganden Phodrang were subject to his oversight.⁵

Last, the personal viewpoint of the Dalai Lama as expressed in his diary allows to focus on how a Buddhist figure at the head of a Buddhist government tackled issues of war and violence and justified their use, both in his own eyes and in the eyes of his prospective audience (including his immediate cabinet at the time of writing and those who would read his autobiography in the future). Naturally, one of the drawbacks of using a single source is that the particular viewpoint it represents, its bias, cannot be counterbalanced. But in fact this disadvantage can be turned into an advantage when one considers that the single perspective it presents affords an insight into the official position of the Ganden Phodrang vis à vis the military confrontations in which it was involved. Thus, it allows us to reconstruct the formal processes by which the Ganden Phodrang endorsed the employment of violent methods which were theoretically proscribed by Buddhism.

However, before delving into the theme of what the Fifth Dalai Lama may or may not have known about the various troops fighting on behalf of his government, it may be useful to look briefly at the general question of the reputation of Mongol troops. Among the more informative descriptions of the perils that Mongol troops posed for autochthonous Himalayan armies are a few passages from the early-18th century source, the *Miwang Tokjö* (*Mi dbang rtogs brjod*),⁶ which dedicates some space to describing the conflict between the Ganden Phodrang and Ladakh in the years 1679 to 1684. In particular, this text summarises the events preceding the first battle of the war in 1679,⁷

⁵ On the Fifth Dalai Lama's self perception of his simultaneous secular and spiritual rule in Tibet see Schwieger 2015: 52–53; note however that determining who actually wielded secular power in Tibet at this time (the Fifth Dalai Lama, Gushri Khan and his successors, or the regents of the Dalai Lama) is a much less clear matter. On this see again Schwieger (*ibid.*: 53–61). To this uncertain picture must be added, after 1652, also the influential figure of the Qing emperor, whose authority as the chief political figure in East Asia could not be easily dismissed (see *ibid.*: 61–64).

⁶ This is the biography of Pholhané Sönam Topgyel (Pho lha nas Bsod nams stobs rgyal, 1689–1747) composed by Dokhar zhapdrung Tsering Wanggyel (Mdo mkhar zhabs drung Tshe ring dbang rgyal, 1697–1763), who after 1728 was one of Pholhané's most loyal friends and allies. It was completed in 1733, while Pholhané was still alive. For this paper I have used three editions of this text, but I limit references to the 2002 edition.

⁷ The first battle occurred in Ngari (Mnga' ris), near Tashigang (Bkra shis sgang) and close to the confluence of the Senge Khabap (Senge kha 'bab/upper Indus) and the

and illustrates the general perception of Mongol armies in the eyes of both the Ladakhi troops and the Ladakhi generals, as understood and represented by a Tibetan author. In itself, the account is rather partisan toward the Mongol and Ganden Phodrang side,⁸ as it illustrates in un-subtle terms the naïveté and greed of the Ladakhi commanders. Still, it reflects the perceived abilities—and perhaps the prejudices—of the armies about to engage in confrontation:

In accordance with that, when the troops gradually approached the region of Ngari, the army sentinels (*mel tshe ba*) of that side understood and left in a hurry (*tab tab pos*) to report how it would turn out (*ji ltar 'gyur*).

At that time, in front of the lord of Ladakh, the commanders (*kha lo sgyur ba po*) of the army that had been deployed (*'don dpung*)⁹ called

Gar (Sgar) rivers. As detailed in Petech 1988a: 27, sources provide different names for the site proper: “Zhwa dmar ldir” in the *Ladak Gyelrap* (*La dwags rgyal rabs*), “Ra la” in the “Account of the Deeds of General Sha kya rgya mtsho” by the Ladakhi King Nyi ma nram rgyal (1694–1729), and “Dalang Kharmar” in Alexander Cunningham’s *Ladāk, Physical, Statistical, Historical*.

⁸ The devotion of Dokhar *zhapdrung* Tsering Wanggyel towards Pholhané, and the subsequent partiality of the *Miwang Tokjö*, can be easily understood when one considers the author’s own life story. He was born in one of the highest aristocratic families in Tibet, the house of Dokhar (Mdo mkhar), which traced its origins from the imperial dynasty and was attached to the estate and monastery of Taklung (Stag lung), just north of Lhasa. After studying at Sera (Se ra) monastery, he became a tax-collector in the area of Shigatsé (Gzhis ka rtse) during the reign of Lhasang (Lha bzang) Khan (1698–1717). During the Zunghar occupation of Lhasa (1717–1720) he collaborated with the invaders, and was appointed district governor (*rdzong dpon*) of Chaktsé drigu (Lcag rtse gri gu) and later *drönnyer* (*mgron gnyer*), or chamberlain, of Taktsepa (Stag rtse pa), the main collaborator of the Zunghars, who was severely punished by the Chinese when they arrived in Lhasa. He managed to escape punishment by fleeing Lhasa and hiding in Naktsang (Nag tshang), while his father, also of the pro-Zunghar faction, was saved by the intercession of Pholhané. This was the first show of magnanimity of Pholhané in Tsering Wanggyel’s regard, but other important ones ensued in the course of the tumultuous period that followed. During the civil war of 1727–1728 he fought on the side of the “Lhasa army”, i.e. against Pholhané and in support of cabinet members Lumpané (Lum pa nas) and Jarrawá (Sbyar ra ba), but when the Tsang troops captured him, he was set free by Pholhané, who pardoned him and also issued a proclamation protecting his estate. Later, after the Tsang army took Lhasa and Pholhané established a new government, the latter chose Dokhar Tsering Wanggyel as one of his ministers. In this capacity, he discharged his duties at least until 1757, well after the death of Pholhané. The generosity and open-mindedness of Pholhané on all these occasions made a strong impression on Tsering Wanggyel, who understandably adopted a tone biased in favour of his protector in his biography of the “great man”. On the bias of of the *Miwang Tokjö*, see Petech [1950] 1972: 3–4; on the life of Dokhar *zhapdrung* Tsering Wanggyel see Petech 1973: 71–73 and [1950] 1972: *passim*; Dung dkar 2002: 1137–1140.

⁹ See *'don dmag* = “army of laymen”, “troops that are drawn up”, lit. “recruited/supplied/provided troops”. Note that in the Ganden Phodrang, *'don* is a unit of land

Nono Shakya (No no Shākya)¹⁰ and Jorrà (Sbyor ra),¹¹ while stroking [their] beard with the hands, issued an order with words of fearless arrogance: “Hear! Troops, understand [this]! Concerning certain people who have come from the direction of the Mongol borderlands, they are like this: for instance, you brandish the maul and get ready to strike (*rdeg par gzas pa*) and they duck (*btud pa*) with the head. Likewise, they have clearly arrived to despise the magnificence of Senggé Namgyel (Seng ge nam rgyal),¹² the lord of this land appointed by heaven!” When [the troops] heard [this], they were at ease and there was no need to doubt.

“As for [our] opponents, since it is known that they have great wealth: good clothes, soft and light; good horses to ride; a gradational iron-mesh coat of mail to fully protect the body from weapons; garment linings of *mandasu*;¹³ fierce and cruel firearms (*mtshon cha me'i 'khrul 'khor*); swords with sharp points, etc., go and strive to acquire [them], and become wealthy for all kinds of needs!”¹⁴

used for tax-paying purposes; a certain number of men were drawn from each *'don* of land to serve as soldiers. The ratio of recruits likely changed with time and from place to place, but I am not aware of specific research on its fluctuation, which is a desideratum. Notice, however, that in this context the term *'don dpung* refers to the Ladakhi army, and thus may have no connection at all with the system used under the Ganden Phodrang. In fact, the use of this term here may be simply a transposition of a Ganden Phodrang administrative structure, with which Tsering Wanggyel was familiar, to a different context, that of Ladakh.

¹⁰ His full name was Nono Shakya Gyatso (No no Shā kya rgya mthso). A brief entry on him in Dung dkar 2002: 1210 merely states that he was an important minister of the king of Ladakh, skilled at subjugating external enemies with both peaceful and wrathful [methods], as well as a trusted and expert regent of the king. A royal decree extolling his activities and his lineage was produced during the reign of Nyima Namgyel (Nyi ma nam rgyal, r. 1694–1729) and is reproduced and translated in Francke 1926: vol. 2, 242–244. He is the same as the Shākya rgya mtsho mentioned in Petech 1977: 68 ff. and 72 ff.

¹¹ This is the Jorwa Gyatso ('Byor ba rgya mtsho) of Petech 1977: 68. He seems to have been the chief minister of Ladakh, with the title of *chölön chenpo* (*chos blon chen po*), after the death of Agu Garmo (A gu 'Gar mo) in 1646. Petech adds that he was also “in charge at the time of the Mongolo-Tibetan attack of 1679” (*ibid.*).

¹² As it is well known, the *Miwang Tokjö* uses the name of the King Senggé Namgyel (r. 1616–1623, 1624–1642) in place of the name of his *de facto* successor, Delek Namgyel (Bde legs nam rgyal, r. 1680–1691). On this see Petech 1998: 23 fn 6.

¹³ A fabric insulated with a layer of silk; see Dung dkar 2002: 1595.

¹⁴ Mdo mkhar zhabs drung Tshes ring dbang rgyal [1733] 2002: 22 (hereafter *Miwang Tokjö*): *de ltar dpung gi tshogs mthar gyis yul mnga' ris kyi sa'i char lhags pa na* [23] *phyogs de'i dpung gi mel tshes ba dag gis rtogs nas tab tab pos song ste ji ltar gyur pa'i gtam smras so* // *de'i tshes la thag kyi rje bo'i mdun na 'don dpung gi kha lo sgyur ba po no no shākya dang sbyor ra zhes bya bas sma ra la lag pas byi dor byed bzhin du 'jigs pa med par rlom pa'i tshig gis bsgo ba / kwa ye / dpung gi tshogs rnams go bar gyis shig yul mtha' 'khob mong gol gyi phyogs nas lhags pa'i skye bo 'ga' zhid ni 'di lta ste dper na / tho ba 'phyar zhing rteg par bzas (gzas) pa la / mgo bos btud par byed pa de bzhin du / gnas gyis bskos pa'i sa'i bdag po seng ge rnam par rgyal ba'i dpal 'byor la mngon par 'khu bar lhags so zhes thos na dwogs pa mi dgos kyi bag phebs par byos shig / rgol ba de dag ni 'byor ba*

While we do not know whether this anecdote is based on factual events that may have reached the ears of Dokhar *zhapdrung* Tsering Wanggyel through the oral narratives of soldiers, or whether it is simply the product of his imagination and partisan feelings, it still provides a rather vivid snapshot of what may have been typical preparations for war. It illustrates the role of the sentinels sent to spy on the movements of the enemy, i.e. the Mongols fighting for the Ganden Phodrang, and report back on what their activities portended. It recalls the rousing call to arms of two of the generals entrusted with the command of the Ladakhi troops, Nono Shakya Gyatso and Jorwa Gyatso, both of whom served as ministers to the king of Ladakh during their careers. It shows that age-old tactics such as minimising the peril posed by the enemy were used as effective tools to galvanise the troops, together with the longstanding practice of enticing the soldiers with the prospect of riches obtained through despoliation of the enemy. Finally, by providing a list of the items that could be the object of such pillage, this passage provides a valuable catalogue of the weapons, armour and general provisions that were expected as part of the booty when plundering Mongols in 17th century war in the Himalayas.¹⁵

The continuation of this narrative, however, shows that some disagreed with the rosy perspective put forth by Nono Shakya and Jorwa Gyatso. A more temperate character, Nono Bitadzoki (No no Bi ta dzo ki),¹⁶ intervened and emphasised that both the physical abilities of the Mongol soldiers and their technical and strategic skills should be taken in serious consideration and not rashly dismissed:

chen po dang ldan pa zhig ste / gyon pa bzang po srab 'jam yang ba dang / gzhon pa'i rta bzang po dang / lus mtshon cha las nye bar skyob pa'i ya lad kyi rim pa lcags kyi dra mig can dang / man+da su'i nang tshangs can dang / mtshon cha me'i 'khrul 'khor drag cing rtsub pa dang / ral gri rno dbal dang ldan pa sogs mchis par grags pas rnyed pa don du gnyer ba yod na 'dengs shig dang / mkho dgus mngon par 'byor bar 'gyur ro zhes [...].

¹⁵ When I presented a preliminary version of this research at Wolfson College, Oxford, it was pointed out that an unusual feature of this list of objects to plunder is that it does not include the weapon that may have been most commonly in use among Mongols, i.e. the bow and arrow. One might speculate that it was exactly the prevalence of this weapon that made it less valuable as an item of pillage. In addition, bow and arrow could be self-produced comparatively easily with readily available materials, while the other arms mentioned, the firearms, swords, and iron coats of mail, could only be produced by a skilled craftsman possessing the required technical knowledge, the ability to procure the raw materials, and access to specialised tools and workplace (a blacksmith shop). Hence, coats of mail, firearms and swords, being more costly to produce and less widespread, were more valuable as items of pillage.

¹⁶ Except for this mention in the *Miwang Tokjö*, his historical role is otherwise unknown. He is only mentioned, apropos of this same episode, in Petech 1988a: 26.

When they proclaimed haughtily this clandestine roar of aggression, Nono Bitadzoki, being an honest, measured (*brtags pa*) speaker, vastly intelligent, spoke.

“Wise men (*shes ldan dag*)! To speak of war is easy, [but] to engage in war, that is not so easy. Also, the enemies who arrive are not deprived of cause or without confidence, and as for those who arrive to this place acting rashly (*gya tshoms = gya tsom*), there are none. [They have] ability for self control, fearless power, understanding of the workings of the enemy’s methods, and because they are clearly expert in the condition of physical skills, I have no doubt they have come to fight as promised (*khas ’ches*).

Because of that, having examined carefully, we [should] engage in war activities; therefore, as for those who have approached from the country of the Mongols, because they have the skill to strike with force while controlling (*bskyod*) [their] excellent horses, and to hold a single-point spear (*mtshon rtse gcig pa*) from above their mount, we should not engage (lit. “mix”) in battle [with them] in the desert plain (*mya ngam gyi thang du*).¹⁷ As for our own army, it should consider strong crucial points the areas with mountain sides and river rocks. By remaining in the stronghold castles, we will subdue [them] with skill-in-means”, thus [Nono Bitadzoki] well ordered.

Others again spoke: “Hey, handsome ones, as for those who make speeches that are like this, they are not appropriate for men but they are suitable to say by those who have the support body of a woman! You are just not keen to engage in battle; as for us, we are very eager to fight. Like a thorn in the heart, [we] will not tolerate (*mi bzod*) those who are enemies of the offensive, but [we] will annihilate them; [we] will make garlands of [their] heads as a mark of valour (*dpa’ mtshan du*). [We] will take useful goods and also whatever we like!”.

Having thus proclaimed, they moved on with many of those troops.¹⁸

¹⁷ On the possibility, still unconfirmed, that “Mya ngam gyi thang” may have been the place name of the first battle between the Ladakhis and the Ganden Phodrang, see Petech 1988a: 27.

¹⁸ *Miwang Tokjö*: 23. *dregs pa’i nga ro gsang mthon por sgrog par byed pa na / gzu bor gnas pa / brtags pa’i gtam smra ba / blo gros kyi ’jug pa yangs pa no no bi Ta dzo ki zhes bya bas smras pa / shes ldan dag g.yul gyi gtam bya ba ni sla yi / g.yul du ’jug pa ni de tsam du sla ba ma yin no / r’gol ba mngon par lhags pa yang rgyu dang bral ba / gdengs ma rnyed pa / gya tshoms su phyogs ’dir lhags pa ni ma yin gyi / rang gi brtul zhugs rngo thogs pa dang / ’jigs pa med pa’i mthu thob pa / dgra thabs kyi las khong du chud pa / sgyu rtsal gyi gnas la mngon par byung chub pas khas ’ches te r’gol bar lhags pa gdon mi za’o / de’i phyir legs par brtags nas g.yul gyi bya ba la ’jug par bya ba yin pas / de yang yul mong gol nas lhags pa rnam ni gzhon pa’i steng nas mtshon rtse gcig pa bzung nas rta mchog bskyod pa’i shugs dang lhan cig tu rdeg par mkhas pa yin pas mya ngan gyi thang du g.yul bsre bar mi bya’o / rang cag gi dpung ni ri [24] bo’i ngogs dang / chu brag gi sa’ gnad btsan po bzung bar bya’o / mkhar btsan po la gnas nas thabs mkhas pas ’dul bar bya’o zhes legs par bsgo ba las / gzhan dag gis yang smras pa / kwa bzhin bzang dag de lta bu’i gtam smra ba ni sgyes pa la ’os pa ma yin te bud med kyi lus rten can gyis gleng bar ’os so / / khyod cag g.yul gyi bya ba la ’jug par mi spro de tsam du bdag cag ni g.yul du ’jug pa la ches spro’o / / tshur r’gol gyi dgra snying gi tsher ma lta bu mi bzod kyi de dag tshar bcad de mgo bo’i*

This insight into the contrarian view of Nono Bitadzoki is useful to assess other implications of warfare against the Mongols. In this case, his speech illuminates the importance of considering the war tactics employed by the Mongols and adapting one's warring style in order to better confront them. After having pointed out their physical and technical skills, particularly the facility with which they were able to steer a horse and strike with their weapons at the same time, he emphasised the clear risks of fighting against them in an open space, and indicated the most desirable kinds of topography to seek out: mountainous areas, river escarpments, and strongholds.

This passage also reveals that his opinion was not well received. The *Miwang Tokjö* intimates that the soldiers, boastful and lured by the rich booty, vowed not to tolerate what they deemed a cowardly speech. They eagerly marched to war, and contrary to the advice of Nono Bitadzoki, their first battle against the mostly Mongol forces of the Ganden Phodrang occurred in a plain. It concluded in a solemn defeat for the Ladakhis. The end of the war eventually involved the retreat into strongholds on the part of the Ladakhis, an action that, in the long run, tired and demoralised the Mongol troops camped in the valleys below. Only in around 1682–1683, with the arrival of Mughal soldiers called as allies by the king of Ladakh, were the troops of the Ganden Phodrang forced to abandon their sieges and engage in open warfare.¹⁹ The Mughals proved to be tougher opponents than the Ladakhis; at the first confrontation the troops of the Ganden Phodrang were severely defeated and began a retreat. They were pursued for a long stretch, and they were able to bring their flight to an end only after crossing the border, by using a combination of enemy-repelling rituals and the payment of a substantial bribe.²⁰ In the end, the Ganden Phodrang was able to secure Ngari as a region within the purview of

phreng ba yang dpa' mtshan du blangs par bya'o / / mkho dgu'i yo byad kyang ci dgar blang bar bya'o zhes dril bsgrags nas de dag dpung tshogs du ma dang chabs cig tu bskyod nas.

¹⁹ On the help sent to the Ladakhis by Ibrahim Khan of Kashmir see Petech 1977: 74 and 1988a: 31–32.

²⁰ According to the *Miwang Tokjö*, the Mughal army pursued the troops of the Ganden Phodrang from the plain between Basgo (Ba sgo) and Nyemo (Snye mo) to Spituk (Dpe thub), just south of Leh (2002: 28); in contrast, the *Ladak Gyelrap* asserts that the flight of the Ganden Phodrang soldiers occurred between Spituk and Tashigang, in Ngari; see Petech 1988a: 34. Concerning the method to stop the pursuit of the Mughal army, the *Miwang Tokjö* (2002: 29) mentions that rituals performed by the Dalai Lama in Lhasa were the only cause of the interruption of this chase, while the so-called "Namgya document", a treaty drawn between the government of the Ganden Phodrang and the king of Bashahr (Khu nu/Kinnaur) asserts that the Mughals were bribed by officials of both governments; see Petech 1988a: 34 and 40–44. On the use of "war magic" by the Fifth Dalai Lama, see FitzHerbert 2018: 49–120.

the government in Lhasa, while Ladakh remained outside its administrative domain, and closer to the broader sphere of influence of Kashmir.

Still, independently from the conclusions of the war, the citations above emphasise how the different abilities and combat techniques of the Mongol troops seem to have been well known to their opponents. But, if the Ladakhi generals were aware of the risks of confronting Mongol soldiers, and of the possible gains to be obtained if they defeated them, then is it possible to say that, for example, the Fifth Dalai Lama, who authorised this conflict,²¹ was equally aware of the impact of Mongol forces on the battlefields?

While the Great Fifth's autobiography has no passages relevant to this question for this particular war, other wartime episodes narrated here suggest that he was well aware of the warfare techniques used by the Mongols, and did not object to their use for the purpose of supporting the Ganden Phodrang. One instance of this can be found in a resolution to the long-standing feud between the Gelukpa and the Dalai Lama on one hand, and the Karmapa (Karma pa) powers in Tsang and in Kham on the other.²²

As is well known, after the defeat of the Tsangpa *desi* Karma Tenkyong Wangpo (*sde srid* Karma Bstan skyong dbang po, r. 1620–1642), the 10th Karmapa Chöying Dorjé (Chos dbyings rdo rje, 1604–1674) fled first south, to Lhodrak (Lho brag), and then east, where he established himself with a small entourage in the area of Gyeltang (Rgyal thang) in Kham.²³ As it happens, since at least 1652, a grandson of Gushri Khan (1582–1655) Khandro Lobzang Tenkyong (Mkha' 'gro Blo bzang bstan skyong, d. 1673),²⁴ had settled in the area of Dzachuka

²¹ On the role of the Fifth Dalai Lama in sanctioning this conflict, see Venturi 2018: 41–46.

²² Even though a translation of the first volume of the autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama already exists (Karmay 2014), the reader will notice that certain passages found there have been re-translated for this article. This in no way indicates any fault in Karmay's translation, which is excellent and represents a fundamental research tool for scholars of Tibet. However, I have found it necessary to adhere more literally to the text than he ordinarily does in order to understand with more clarity the details of military organisation, as well as the awareness of such matters on the part of the Fifth Dalai Lama.

²³ On the Tenth Karmapa and his role in Tibetan history, as well as his contributions to literary, artistic and folkloric facets of Tibetan culture, see Debreczeny and Tuttle 2016; Mengele 2012a, 2012b. On the flight of the Tenth Karmapa from Shigatsé, the destruction of his encampment in Lhodrak and his subsequent flight towards Kham, see Mengele 2012a: 190–211.

²⁴ A grandson of Gushri Khan, and the son of the latter's fifth son Ildüci (Yamada 201: 80). His full name was Khandro Lobzang Tenkyong (Mkha' 'gro blo bzang bstan skyong), even though the biography of the Dalai Lama often shortens it to Mkha' 'gro only. He controlled the area of Dzachukha (Rdza chu kha) in Kham,

(Rdza chu kha) in Kham²⁵ and acted as the local leader there, representing the authority of the Ganden Phodrang in the region. Both his relationship with the Fifth Dalai Lama and his support of Gelukpa institutions appear to have been solid. In 1652, when the Dalai Lama crossed Kham on his way to the imperial court in Beijing, Khandro welcomed him and accompanied him along his route, facilitating his travel by providing coracles to cross the Marchu (Dmar chu).²⁶ Similarly, in 1653, while returning from China, the Dalai Lama again rested in the area and received gifts from him.²⁷ Later, in 1660, Khandro is recorded as the major sponsor for the reconstruction of a monastery in Lithang (Li thang) that had been severely damaged during the wars with Beri Dönyö dorjé (Be ri Don yod rdo rje, d. 1641).²⁸

However, late in the same year, Khandro unwittingly began to tarnish his reputation as a reliable Gelukpa supporter. According to the autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama, a Kagyüpa (Bka' brgyud pa) monk by the name of Ling Wönpo (Gling dbon po) pretended to convert to the Gelukpa and convinced Khandro of his sincere change of heart.²⁹ Khandro then interceded on behalf of Ling Wönpo to the Dalai

where he seems to have been originally sent to “suppress local rulers” (Shakabpa 2010: vol. 1, 378 fn 68). However, possibly also on account of the relative prevalence of the Karmapa in the area, he began to entertain relations with them. This complicated his relationship with both his family, loyal supporters of the Gelukpa, and the Dalai Lama. In addition, as it will be shown below, his newly established power at the border with China created an element of disruption in Sino-Tibetan relations that must have eventually become intolerable. According to Karmay 2014, 5: “In 1673 he was therefore surrounded at Dzachukha by an expeditionary force led mostly by members of his own family from Kokonor, and murdered”. However, a so far unidentified biography of the Tenth Karmapa ascribes this event to a preceding year (1669) and states that Khandro was merely arrested at this time, and subsequently died in prison. A passage from this biography is reported in Shakabpa 2010: vol. 1, 378 fn 68, but its original source is yet unknown. For a comprehensive article about Khandro and his wider role in Inner Asian politics as an important figure whose control extended in an area of interest both to the Qing Emperor Kangxi and to the Fifth Dalai Lama, see Yamada 2015: 79–103 (in Japanese). Also note Qinggeli 2014, in which a set of letters exchanged between the Kangxi and the Fifth Dalai Lama’s administration offer tantalising hints regarding the unsettling presence of the Karmapa in the area, which upset the balance between Han and Mongols at a time in which it was already destabilised by Khandro’s southward push in search of a share of the tea-trade business and Wu Sangui’s increasing sphere of authority. I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out the work of Qinggeli.

²⁵ According to Yamada 2015: 82, Khandro had settled in Kham around 1650.

²⁶ See Karmay 2014: 272–273.

²⁷ *Ibid.*: 319.

²⁸ *Ibid.*: 423.

²⁹ *Ibid.*: 441. Fifth Dalai Lama 2009: vol. 1, 443 (hereafter *Za hor gyi ban de*): *khams nas kar lugs kyi gra rigs gling dbon po dge lugs su 'gyur khul gyi pad las la mkha' 'gro 'khrul bas sdings thang nang so rang phyogs rnga ma nag po'i tshos mdog can gyi bskul ma'i las*

Lama, asking that His Holiness himself ordain him as a new Gelukpa monk. While apparently unconvinced of the latter's sincerity, the Fifth Dalai Lama led the ceremony as a personal favour to his loyal supporter, who for good measure also happened to be a close relative of his ally Gushri Khan. However, simultaneously with the announcement of the ordination, the Great Fifth's autobiography ominously declares: "Later, Ling Wönpo deceived many officials of Khandro, in order to get them killed".³⁰ This comment, clearly recorded *ex post facto*, is meant to indicate that if there had actually been any suspicions surrounding the real intentions of the Karmapa, they were effectively confirmed. In addition, the remark reveals that Khandro had been unwise in supporting Ling Wönpo.

In fact, the decline in Khandro's fortunes seems to have begun at this point. When, four years later, in 1664, he requested the composition of a non-sectarian prayer from the Dalai Lama,³¹ the latter hurriedly complied, but in view of what I am going to relate it seems likely that also this entreaty contributed to seal his fate. In fact, an entry dated 26–XII–1673 in the autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama, sheds light on the eventual end of Khandro:

sna phrogs te kho par sprad / no po dge tshul sgrub par btang byung ba sa rul gyi chu thub bsam pa ma shar yang 'dod sbyar bzhin byas / rjes su kho pas bslus nas mkha' 'gro'i mi bzang mang du bsad pas nyos pa'i chang skyur gyi dper song /.

Gling dbon po, a Karma Kagyu from Khams, by pretending to convert to the Geluk, flattered and deceived Khandro, therefore [the latter] took various exhortations of Dingtang, who is endowed with the black coloured tail of our side, he gave [them] to him [and] sent [him to me] to bring about [his] monkhood. Even though I did not think that wet soil (*sa rul*) is water resistant, I did as he desired. Afterwards, he deceived and killed many good men of Khandro, therefore he became an example of "sour beer that was bought".

³⁰ *Ibid.*: 442.

³¹ *Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 1, 503–504, The entry, dated 17–I of the Wood-Dragon year (1664), is the following: *mkha' 'gros chos sde tshor 'dzugs rtsis kyis bstan pa / bstan 'dzin / sbyin bdag 'gro ba kun la 'jug pa'i smon lam gang gis bton kyang ris bcad du mi 'gro ba zhig dus kyis gtugs pas myur du dgos tshul byung ba thun 'tshams shig la brtsams pa mtshams grol nas gtad /.*

Khandro planned to establish in the monasteries a prayer of practice for the doctrine, the doctrine holders, the patrons and all the sentient beings, by which if intoned one would not go (behave) in a sectarian way; because the time had arrived (*dus kyi gtugs*) it had to occur quickly; [I] composed it in one night (*thun 'tshams = thun mtshams*) and I gave (*gtad*) [it] after having freed [myself] of the retreat.

Compare this translation with the same passage in Karmay 2014: 503. Evidently Khandro was pleased about the prayer mentioned here, since he is recorded as having donated to the Dalai Lama, only one week after its composition, "thousands of gifts, including gold, silver, tea and hides" (see Karmay 2014: 503). The production of a non-sectarian Gesar *bsang* text in the area of Dzachuka (Rdza chu ka) in this period has also been discussed as a possible indication of Khandro's involvement in non-sectarian activities; see FitzHerbert 2016: 30–31.

In Bar Kham ('Bar Khams), as for the relation as kins of Khandro and the Garpa (Sgar pa), etc. through the example of the juniper's wish to be born in the rock [i.e.], like the impossible is possible, [there was] an intensification of misfortune on our side, the doctrine of those who wear the tiara of the yellow hat, as when Langdarma Udumtsen (Glang dar ma 'U dum btsan) arose in the family of the ancestral religious king, the unblemished lineage of the "friend of the Sun" (*nyi ma'i gnyan*, the Buddha).

On the occasion of the inexhaustible vajra power of the ocean of vow-holders and the grace of the [three] precious jewels, the punishment for the time when [they] obstructed the final object of knowledge became near, and Dalai Hung Taiji's heroic bravery [made him] take up the responsibility of general (*dmag dpon*) of a great army that is like a sky filled with myriads (*rdul*) of horse's hoofs.

[His] assistants (*gnyer pa*):³² Ganden Dargyé (Dga' ldan dar rgyas), Tsewang Raptan (Tshe dbang rab brtan), Tarpa (Thar pa), Erkhé Jinong (Er khe ji nong), Sechen Teji (Se chen Tha'i ji), [and] Tenzin (Bstan 'dzin), completely surrounded [them, i.e. Khandro and the Gar pa], and as soon as they reached the centre of Bar Kham, all the wicked enemies of the opposing faction (*mi mthun phyogs*) that were ill-intentioned (*ma rungs pa*) toward the other side, like the stirring of a forest-fire by the wind, were cornered in a suitable ravine, and all the insolent ones hung their heads [...].³³

This passage rather vividly illustrates the juncture that led to the decision of purging Khandro, whose undivided loyalty to the Gelukpa establishment could not be relied upon. When it became known that he was in close relation with the Garpa,³⁴ it became evident that his uncertain support of the Gelukpa could be no longer tolerated, and Dalai

³² *gnyer pa*, lit. "one who manages a task or an activity".

³³ *Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 2, 274; *bar khams phyogs su mkha' 'gro dang sgar pa sku nyer 'brel ba sogs skye 'dod brag la shug pa'i dyes rang phyogs zhwa ser cod pan 'dzin pa rnams kyi bstan pa'i sku chags (sku chag) bdo ba'i mi srid pa srid pa lta bu rnam pa gcig tu nyi ma'i gnyen gyi brgyud dri ma med pa chos rgyal mes dbon gyi gdung la glang dar ma 'u dum btsan byung ba bzhin shes bya mtha' ma bkag pa'i dus kyi chad pa 'byung bar nye bar gtso bor dkon cog gi thugs rje dang dam can rgya mtsho'i mthu stobs rdo rje mi bzad pa'i stengs (steng) gnas skabs su da la'i hung tha'i ji'i dpa' mdzangs brtul phod pa rta rmig gi rdul gyis nam mkha' 'geng ba lta bu'i dpung chen po'i dmag dpon gyi khur gzung / dga' ldan dar rgyas / tshe dbang rab brtan / thar pa / er khe ji nor / se chen tha'i ji / bstan 'dzin / gnyer pa rnams kyis yongs su bskor te bar khams kyi lte bar 'byor ba tsam gyis pha rol ma rungs pa'i mi mthun phyogs kyi ngan dgra mtha' dag nags me rlung gis bskyod pa bzhin mthun pa'i g.yang du khugs nas dregs ldan thams cad gdong pa smad de rang zhabs su 'dus /.*

³⁴ In this context, the term Garpa seems to identify in general the Karmapa side. However, this term has multiple meanings. According to Tucci 1999 (1949): 68, the term *sgar pa* came to denote "powerful Lamas of the Karma sect", but originally was the family name of the *sde pa* of Rin spungs, which derived from a toponym in Khams (*ibid.*: 67). Richardson (1998: 353) followed a similar reasoning when he

Hung Taiji³⁵ dispatched his officers to Kham. Interestingly, the description of the Dalai Lama strongly suggests that the method they used to capture him was the typical hunting technique of the *battue*, in which a number of people form a gradually decreasing circle in order to prevent any possibility of escape for the prey. Khandro, thus cornered nearby a ravine, was captured (and likely killed) by his own relatives and compatriots, and the Fifth Dalai Lama was duly informed of the fact.³⁶

The passage in the autobiography concludes as quoted above and does not furnish any clues as to what the Dalai Lama thought of the punishment of his ex-supporter, with whom he had met numerous times and from whom he had accepted gifts, as well as for whom, in

stated that “the Sgar-pa were an east Tibetan clan, perhaps originating in the neighborhood of Karma Gdan-sa, from which sprang the line of Rin-spungs princes”. However, Petech (1977: 43 fn 2) distinguished between *sgar* as “the military camp and court of the high Kar-ma-pa and ‘Brug-pa Lamas” and “the sGar-pa Lamas belonging to the Karma-pa sect, who played a great role in the revolts against Guśri Khan and the Dalai Lama after 1642”. According to him, the two have “nothing to do” with each other. The use of Sgar pa as a family name resurfaces in Shakabpa 1987: 111, where it is stated that in 1642 “a Karmapa supporter named Garpa Yapse planned a revolt against Ganden Phodrang”. In other contexts, the term *sgar pa* has been variously translated as “field commander” (Jackson 1989: 48) and “general of the encampment” (Martin 1991: 340) when the term refers to the Rin spungs pa *sde pa*, and particularly Dönyö Dorjé (Don yod rdo rje). However, when it appears in a Karmapa context, it is most often directly rendered as “encampment” (Mengele 2012a: 193 and *passim*). In this regard, the biography of the Tenth Karmapa gives ample indications that his entourage habitually camped in the open. For example, on the arrival of Chöying Dorjé near Shigatsé in 1616, the ruler of Tsang Karma Phüntsoḱ Namgyel (Karma phun tshogs rnam rgyal, 1587–1620) welcomed him in a tent specifically built for his reception and enthronement. Later, when it was discovered that Chöying Dorjé’s father had broken the rule forbidding consumption of alcohol, the Tenth Karmapa’s own family was expelled from the encampment. Around 1618, the Karmapa travelled to Neudong (Ne’u gdong) with his encampment. In 1644, the troops of Gushri Khan commanded by the *depa* Kyishöpa (Skyid shod pa), surrounded his encampment, which was then ransacked, while the Tenth Karmapa managed to flee to Lhodrak, and from there to Kham. In Kham, the Tenth Karmapa eventually set his encampment in the area of Gyeltang (Rgyal thang) before his journey north (1648–1653) to meet the *Zhamarpa* Yeshé Nying po (*Zhwa dmar pa* Ye shes snying po, 1631–1694). The terms Garpa and Garchen, thus, may also refer broadly to Chöying Dorjé. On his biography, see Mengele 2012a, 2012b.

³⁵ Also known as Dalai Baatur (see footnote 40 below), he was the sixth son of Gushri Khan. In a sign that points at how skills and roles were seemingly transmitted within a family, also his son, Ganden Tsewang Pelzangpo (Dga’ ldan tshe dbang dpal bzang po, d. 1699?), became an important general of the Ganden Phodrang army during the tenure of the Fifth Dalai Lama, and led the campaigns against Ladakh in the years 1679–1684. On Ganden Tsewang Pelzangpo see Venturi 2018: 41–46 and Venturi 2019.

³⁶ On this episode, see also Shakabpa 2010: vol. 1, 365 and Yamada 2015: 95–96.

the past, he had written prayers and performed ritual authorisations. Similarly, nothing in the autobiography hints at an opinion on the particular method with which he was apprehended. Still, even the terse language of this passage shows that the Dalai Lama was fully aware of the event, and one may venture to infer such matter-of-fact approach denotes that he was not too stunned by the occurrence. On the contrary, the comparison between Khandro and the Emperor Lang-darma (Glang dar ma), the most notorious traitor of Buddhism in Tibetan canonical history, indicates that the treatment of Khandro was, in the eyes of the Fifth Dalai Lama, as justifiable as the famous regicide committed by Lhalung Pelkyi Dorjé (Lha lung Dpal kyi rdo rje) in 842. In fact, when some years later in 1675 the Manchu emperor sent a reward for the removal of Khandro, the Fifth Dalai Lama seems to have accepted this without any particular qualms.³⁷

While this passage provides a window into what may have been the knowledge of Mongol military techniques on the part of the higher Gelukpa administration, another excerpt from the autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama illustrates his awareness of the sometimes rocky relations between Mongol and Tibetan divisions of the army. Combined Mongol and Tibetan detachments had been in use since 1644, when the flight of the Karmapa hierarchs to Lhodrak instilled the fear that this southern region could become a new centre of opposition for the Ganden Phodrang. Thus, a contingent of 700 troops referred to as *bod sog gi dmag*, i.e. comprising both Mongols and Tibetans, was dispatched there. It seems possible that at this early stage the two nationalities operated separately on the battlefield, since their subsequent foray from Lhodrak into Bhutan resulted in the imprisonment of three Tibetan commanders, while the Mongol division (*sog dmag dum bu*) is said to have escaped.³⁸

³⁷ See *Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 2, 334: *dpon mkha' 'gros rgya bod kyis mtshams mi bde ba byas par brten gnas nas phyungs shig par gong nas lung byung ba ltar tshul bzhin bsgrubs pa'i bya dgar tshes brgyad kyi nyin gong gi bka' shog rten du gser srang chig brgya so lnga las grub pa'i maN+Dal dang srang chig brgya yod pa'i lcug (= lhag?) / dngul gyi mdong mo / rta rmig ma sogs srang bzhi brgya dang bcu / gan gos yug gnyis brgya / nyin bde ma dang rtags brgyad kha btags sogs khyon lnga brgya rnam kyi gnang sbyin byung ba blangs /*. Because the chief Khandro had created difficulties at the border between China and Tibet, according to the emperor's orders he should be chased away from the area, and as a reward for accomplishing [this] properly, on the eight day [of the third month of 1675] I received gifts: a *maṇḍala* made with one hundred thirty five *srang* of gold and more than one hundred *srang*, a silver churn, four hundred and ten *srang* of horse-hoof-shaped ingots, two hundred bolts of fabric, five hundred differently sized *kha btags* and "*nyin bde ma*" ceremonial scarves with the eight auspicious symbols, etc.

³⁸ On this episode, see Venturi 2018: 33–34.

As the next anecdote will show however, by 1656–1657 the two armies appear to have been more integrated. In those years the Ganden Phodrang was at war, for the third time, against Bhutan. In the previous conflicts between the two nascent polities the troops of the Ganden Phodrang had been repeatedly overcome, and this third engagement was to conclude in the same way. In this case, however, we have some information concerning the internal disagreements within the army of the Dalai Lama which likely contributed to weakening its position vis-à-vis the enemy.

To begin with, even though there was no unanimous agreement on the accuracy of the divinations performed to pinpoint the correct time and *modus operandi* of the expedition,³⁹ the two Mongol generals, Dalai Baatur⁴⁰ and Machik Taiji (Ma gcig Taiji),⁴¹ received the spiritual au-

³⁹ At the beginning of the seventh month of the Fire-Bird year, the regent Sönam Raptan (Bsod nams rab brtan) asked Zur Chöying Rangdröl (Zur Chos dbyings rang sgröl, 1604–1669) to make an astrological prognostication about the upcoming military enterprise. In addition, the Dalai Lama himself performed a divination using the *yangchar* (*dbyangs 'char*) method (Karmay 2014: 367). Although the predictions apparently gave similar responses, later the Nechung (Gnas chung) oracle complained that the Tibetan army was performing badly because his own specific instructions on how to enter Mön (Mon) had not been followed (*ibid.*: 374). This critique may perhaps be seen as a sign of the rivalry for influence on the Dalai Lama among different parties. On one side were the Gelukpa, and on the other Nyingmapa (Rnying ma pa) masters such as the Dalai Lama's root guru Zur Chöying Rangdröl, who had much influence on the formation of the Great Fifth's ideas on the importance of magic rituals for an effective government. On Zur Chöying Rangdröl and the transmission of key rites of destructive magic to the Dalai Lama, see FitzHerbert 2018: 89–108.

⁴⁰ Dalai Baatur was the sixth of the ten sons of Gushri Khan. Although at the death of the latter the regency over Tibet passed to his eldest son Tenzin Dayan, the control of the Blue Lake region was in the hands of Dalai Baatur. He is mentioned in the autobiographical diary of the Fifth Dalai Lama for the first time in 1646, when Lobzang Gyatso wrote a prayer on his request. In the successive years the Dalai Lama continued to perform many *rje gnang* and *dbang* especially for him. In 1648 he left Lhasa for Kham (Karmay 2014: 220), but in 1652 and 1653 he was in Kokonor, as he welcomed the Dalai Lama and offered him gifts on both legs of his trip to the Qing court (Karmay 2014: 273, 320). In 1658 the Dalai Lama conferred on him the title of Dalai Hung Taiji (Karmay 2014: 391). As a consequence of this, the Great Fifth's autobiography alternatively mentions him either by the name Dalai Baatur or Dalai Hung Taiji. This dual nomenclature can be used to reconstruct some portions of the text that have been recorded *ex-post facto*. On his reign in the area of Kokonor as the leader of the group of other eight sons of Gushri Khan ("the eight Khoshuts"), see Petech 1988b: 206; Ahmad 1970: 66–67.

⁴¹ The autobiographical diary of the Fifth Dalai Lama provides a little information on Machik Taiji before his role as commander of the army on this occasion. His first appearance in the text is in 1642, when he was sent to invite the Dalai Lama to Tsang soon after Gushri Khan achieved control over all of Tibet (*Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 1, 159; Karmay 2014: 164). In 1648 he received the *lung* of Tsegön (Tshe mgon)

thorisation of the protective deity Gönpo (Mgon po) from the Fifth Dalai Lama as a form of protection.⁴² Then, the march south began in the seventh month of 1656, with the *depa* Sönam Raptan (*sde pa* Bsod nams rab brtan) following its progress from Tsang.⁴³ However, already the following month, attempts to postpone the invasion began to be made by another commander, the *nangso* Norbu. The younger brother of the regent Sönam Raptan, Norbu's political career had led him from the position of governor of Shigatsé, to which he had been appointed in 1644, to the role of commander of a division of Tibetan troops in the second conflict between Tibet and Bhutan in 1648. However, in this particular campaign he did not cover himself with honour. Apparently discouraged by the arduous conditions and the effective counteroffensive of the Bhutanese, he fled the field so precipitously (*'ur zhogs*) that he left behind his tent, equipment, and saddle, thus fomenting much gossip and complaints about his cowardice.⁴⁴

Thus, his reinstatement as commander of another portion of the army for the war of 1656–1657 is puzzling, and can perhaps only be explained by his close family relationship to the regent Sönam Raptan. At any rate, in this conflict his behaviour was again not praiseworthy. The diary of the Fifth Dalai Lama records that in the eighth month of 1656:

(*Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 1, 219; Karmay 2014: 219). In 1656, just before the departure of troops for the military expedition against Bhutan, he had a personal meeting with the Dalai Lama, in which it can only be surmised that the conversation focused on the imminent attack (*Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 1, 370: *zla ba bdun pa'i tshes gcig la ma cig hung tha'i ji dang phrad*; Karmay 2014: 367). In the same month, together with Dalai Baatur, he received the *dbang* of longevity and the spiritual authorisation of Gönpo (see footnote below). In the first month of 1657, when the expedition was taking place, the Dalai Lama wrote a prayer on his request (*Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 1, 375; *ma gcig tha'i jis bskul ba'i gsol 'debs smon lam [...] brtsams*; Karmay 2014: 372). His last mention is in the passage quoted below, concerning his viewpoint on the progress of the war and his sudden death.

⁴² *Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 1, 371; *da la'i bā thur dang ma cig tha'i ji gnyis la grub rgyal lugs kyi tshes dbang dang mgon po'i rjes gnang bar chad kun sel phul /*; Karmay 2014: 368.

⁴³ *Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 1, 371; *'di skabs mon du dpung chen phyogs shing sde pa dpon g.yog kyang zhal bkod la gtsang du phebs pa'i drag zhan thams cad 'tshub ling nge ba'i skabs su yod /*. At this time [when] the great army was going to Mön and also the *sde pa* and his entourage (*dpon g.yon*) were going to Tsang to give orders (*zhal bkod*), it was a time of anxiety for all people, of high and low rank (see the translation in Karmay 2014: 368).

⁴⁴ A biography of Nangso Norbu by Sean Jones, mostly based on the Fifth Dalai Lama's autobiographical diary, has been published online: Sean Jones, "Depa Norbu", Treasury of Lives (last accessed on 20/02/2019 at <https://treasuryof-lives.org/biographies/view/Depa-Norbu/13614>). On his behaviour during the war with Bhutan in 1648 see Venturi 2018: 34–35.

With regard to the *depa* Nyiru⁴⁵ (*sde pa* Nyi ru)'s arrival to Chutsam (Chu mtshams),⁴⁶ the officer (*nang so*) Jangöpa (Byang ngos pa)⁴⁷ recognised it as the fault of the high terrain; Tsarongné (Tsha rong nas)⁴⁸ had

⁴⁵ The *depa* Nyiru is otherwise unknown.

⁴⁶ So far, I have been unable to identify the location of Chutsam. Literally meaning “water shore”, it may refer either to a place by the water (a lake?) from which were directed military operations, or it could be a place name. Smith (2001: 324 fn 734) mentions a place called Chutsam zangi sokpari (Chu mtshams bzang gi sogs pa ri) as one of the borders of Yeru (G.yas ru). However geographically this would not fit with the approximate location of the quote above (the border between southern Tibet and Bhutan).

⁴⁷ This *nangso* (official) was in fact the personal physician (*drung 'tsho*) of the Dalai Lama. He is also referred to as *pöntsang* (*dpon tshang*) or *pöntsang* Jangöpa menpa (*smän pa*). Even though more commonly translated as “ruler’s residence”, Das’s *Dictionary* defines *dpon tshang* as “physician”, after Friedrich Schröter (1826: 147). Note that Schröter’s dictionary in fact reflects the Tibetan language as it was spoken at the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama, as it is a translation of the original 25,000 entry Latin-Tibetan dictionary composed by the Capuchin missionary Orazio Della Penna (1680–1745); see De Rossi Filibeck 2019: 97–98. *Pöntsang* Jangöpa menpa seems to have been the younger brother of another doctor by the same name, who is mentioned in the autobiographical diary as personal physician of the Fifth Dalai Lama between 1644 and 1653, the year in which he died (see Karmay 2014: 296). A younger brother of Jangöpa is mentioned a propos of an epidemic of smallpox in the year 1642; the Dalai Lama states that although highly educated, this younger brother was not very experienced (*Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 1, 150: *byang ngos nas gcung po sku yon che'ang myong byang chung ba*; see Karmay 2014: 154). Also, a “young Jangöpa” (“*byang ngos nas sku gzhon pa*”, *Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 1, 225) is mentioned for the first time in 1649 (Karmay 2014: 229), as the recipient of religious teachings. In any case, his career as a physician to the Dalai Lama seems to have started only in 1654, after the death of his family member. In this year he was called for the first time to attend the Great Fifth, who, affected by severe pain in the right leg (probably gout) could no longer preside over the assembly. Jangöpa’s treatments were effective after about ten days, but as the regent Sönam Raptan was insisting that the Dalai Lama reach him quickly in Tsang, the appropriate cures could not be completed, and the Dalai Lama only partially recovered (see Karmay 2014: 330). Later in the same year, Jangöpa’s services were retained—together with those of another physician, Lingtö Chöjé (Gling stod chos rje)—to preserve the rapidly declining health of Gushri Khan, who, however, died of old age (*ibid.*: 343; note that on this occasion the Dalai Lama shows his scepticism toward the basic services administered by “Buddhist lamas, tantrists, Bonpo and physicians”—*bla ma sngags bon sman pa mtha' dag gi zog mthil 'di rigs kyis 'don par mchis /*; see *Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 1, 343). On the occasion of the preparation for the attack on Bhutan in 1656, the Dalai Lama mentions in his diary that there was fear that the *pöntsang* Jangöpa and another official, the *nangso* Ngödrup (Dngos grub) might “suffer from epilepsy” (Karmay 2014, 367; *Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 1, 370: *nang so dngos grub dang dpon tshang byang ngos drung 'tsho gnyis la steng grib kyi dogs pa zhig snang ba*), and the Dalai Lama performed a ritual to avert this. However, in this case it is clear from the context that the two officials were getting ready to leave in the wake of the military expedition, and thus *steng grib* cannot be “epilepsy”, but rather some kind of disturbance caused either by the altitude reached when crossing the passes or by the warmer, more humid climatic conditions in Bhutan. In fact, we see in the passage quoted above that Jangöpa was present, if not on the battlefield, then at

a heavy phlegm (? *sten babs* = stick+flow) combined with (*btags*) red mouth and uncomfortable breathing, and the *depa* Norbu [said], in secret circumstances, that a suitable method [would be that I] should tell the regent (*sde pa*) the reason to delay the army from now on [was that] the pair of armies' [campaign] did not agree with any divination or prophecy. But, even in the mind of the people, this was illogical and they would have objected; in their minds it should not be again [of] a sudden nature.⁴⁹

Two major points transpire from the quoted passage. First, some of the officials sent to Bhutan were returning to a base or headquarter in Chutsam on account of health problems caused by altitude. Doctors,

least in Chutsam, where he diagnosed officials who fell ill. This proves that from the start of the Ganden Phodrang period physicians were dispatched in the train of the army to provide medical services, possibly only for officials of higher rank. As shown by Van Vleet 2018, in the later period of the Ganden Phodrang, particularly the first half of the 20th century, graduates of both the Chakpori (Lcags po ri) and Mentsikhang (Sman rtsis khang) medical colleges served as medical military officials. She ascribes the institutionalisation of the role of medics in the army as part of a global trend of modernisation of the military. Significantly, from the passage of the Fifth Dalai Lama's autobiography just reviewed, it seems that the presence of medics at or nearby the front was an established practice in Tibet already in the 17th century.

⁴⁸ Tsarongné, sometimes also called *pöntsang* Tsarongpa (Tsha rong pa) in the autobiography of the Great Fifth, was also a physician in attendance to the Dalai Lama. He seems to have enjoyed a good reputation already in 1641 (Iron-Snake), when he is mentioned regarding an outbreak of smallpox. The specific nature of the disease was not well established, and while the younger Jangöpa (see note above) was unable to pronounce a definite identification, Tsarongpa was consulted and provided a final judgement on the contagiousness of the infection. See *Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 1, 150: *de skabs 'brum dkar dang 'brum yan re mang zhig 'dug pas gang yin kyang 'gos par byang ngos nas gcung po sku yon che'ang myong byang chung pas 'di ni 'di'o zhes lung ston rgyu ma byung / rjes su dpon tshang tsha rong pa sogs la dris par na lugs kyis 'brum yan du thag bcad song zhing rang yang de ltar du sems so /*; see Karmay 2014: 154. As shown in the quote above, in 1656 he was among the medical officials sent to accompany the military expedition to Nepal, but evidently became ill at one point. In 1664 he is mentioned on the occasion of the establishment of medical schools (*gso dpyad bshad grwa*) by the government of the Ganden Phodrang. He was the teacher of a group of students from Tsang, two of whom came to the attention of the Dalai Lama for their thorough preparation in the Four Tantras. See *Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 1, 515: *dbus gtsang gnyis kar gso dpyad kyi bshad grwa tshugs pa gtsang pa tsho blo gsal ba'am brtson 'grus che ba gang yin yang tsha rong nas kyi slob ma bstan 'dzin dang dar rgyas can gyis rgyud bzhi'i rgyugs sprad /*; see Karmay 2014: 515.

⁴⁹ *Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 1, 371–372; *sde pa nyi ru chu mtshams su phebs thog nang so byang ngos pas ma mthos pa'i skyon du ngos bzung zhing tsha rong nas kyis dbugs mi bder kha dmar btags pa'i sten babs lci ba zhib byung ba'i sde pa nor bus lkog tu gnas tshul dang sbrags da cha dmag bshol ba'i sde bar* (read: *sde par*) *rgyu mtshan zer dgos lugs byung rung dmag gi cha mo rtsis lung bstan gang la'ang ma babs shing der ma zad mi dmangs kyi blor yang mi 'thad pa nas bshol btob kyang thugs la ma sag gshis yang bskyar la dgos pa mi 'dug [...]*. See translation of the same passage in Karmay 2014: 369.

such as Jangöpa and Tsarongné, appear to have been waiting there, on the fringes of the conflict, to assist ill soldiers, most likely higher-ranking officials.⁵⁰ The early date of this entry (this occurred in the eighth month, and the army had started south in the seventh month) shows that the return of sick personnel likely occurred while the troops were crossing the passes toward the lower valleys of Bhutan. In any case, the absence of a quantity of officials in the field would have weakened the structure and organisation of the army of the Ganden Phodrang even before the first action of the campaign had started.

Secondly, it appears that the *depa* Norbu, either because of his cowardice, already shown in the previous war, or because of his awareness of the difficulties that an army lacking part of its command structure could encounter, attempted to convince the Dalai Lama to employ a little subterfuge in order to delay the progress of his troops. This involved explaining to the regent Sönam Rapten that since none of the prophecies and divinations performed were in agreement with the progress of the campaign, it was necessary to slow down the movement of the army. The Dalai Lama did not implement this idea, both because he disagreed with the interpretation of the omens suggested by *depa* Norbu and because he reasoned that public opinion would not have understood a sudden change in the course of the matter.

However, the conclusion of this failed attempt at delaying the march toward Bhutan can be seen in an entry dated to 1657, though no precise month and day is provided.⁵¹ It says:

In the beginning the great protector Nechung (Gnas chung) prophesied that the manner (*phyogs*) of frequently producing (*yong*) the army was not in agreement [with the wishes] of the common people.⁵² He said

⁵⁰ This seems to have been the case in the 20th century, as shown by Van Vleet 2018: 183–190.

⁵¹ Readers will notice that the passage that follows is interpreted in a rather different manner in this version and in the one by Prof. Karmay. While the general essence of the discourse remains unaltered, i.e. that there was a serious dispute between Tibetan and Mongol commanders during the war, and that their spat assumed “ethnic” dimensions, some uncertainties on the details remain, especially around the exact contours of the quarrel. The ambiguities of the passage also show that there was much fingerpointing among all parties concerned, and one may wonder whether the Fifth Dalai Lama or his staff of compilers for the biography might have deliberately obfuscated the details of the dispute. I would like to thank George FitzHerbert for suggesting this intriguing hypothesis.

⁵² Karmay (2014: 374) translates *dpung 'gro khyab yong* as “military expedition”. The literal translation above approximates this meaning. However, other alternative renderings of the same compound are possible. One could be “the manner of producing (*yong*) pervasive (*khyab*) going (*'gro*) [to] the army (*dpung*)”; this rather renders the idea of some form of widespread recruitment going on in order to prepare for the impending conflict. I thank Gedun Rabsal (Department of Central Eurasian

that because the army had not gone in accordance with what he thought hereafter was the time for entering Mon, they were not proceeding properly.⁵³ From Pakri (Phag ri) onwards, they postponed (*zhag phul*) and whiled away the time (*nyin phul*), attempting not to go, and moving slowly; [but] if they had begun without hesitation to besiege with force at Hungrelkha (Hung ral kha),⁵⁴ that year, with enemy shouts that said: "There are all: Tibetans, Mongols, Khampas and [soldiers from] Kongpo!", they [would have] certainly abandoned the fortress. Nevertheless, the *depa* Norbu appeared to err by being unable to [enforce the] discipline, therefore, as for the religious protector, it is not necessarily the case (*dgos rigs su mi gda'*) to view [him] wrongly.

In that regard, if we weighed the religious protectors' prophecies and divinations and whatever kinds of speech by the people, it was not appropriate to produce a widespread military expedition (*dpung 'jug*) to the south. At the time when the armies from Ü, Kham and Kongpo entered in Bumtang ('Bum thang) and its monastery, by just cutting off near the lower [part] of Bumtang, they [could] have flanked and subsequently surrounded all of Paro (Spa gro). [But] not only they did not go, "waiting for the *depa* Norbu to grow old" (lit.: for the coming of age of the *depa* Norbu, i.e. they were procrastinating): on account of the duration of the war, that had generated effeminate males (*pho ma*),⁵⁵ they wasted many valuable men due to the conditions (*tshad*) in the south and to epidemic diseases such as measles (*be ge*).

Taklung Mendrönpa (Stag lung Sman gron pa), a servant of the Gekhasa (Gad kha sa) [house],⁵⁶ in a letter that he gave to the *depa* (i.e. Sönam Raptan, aka Sönam Chöpel) in Gyantsé (Rgyal rtse) [said that]

Studies, Indiana University) for suggesting this interpretation. Another possibility could be: "the manner of producing (*yong*) pervasive (*khyab*) army movement (*dpung 'gro*)"; this translation supports the meaning of "military expedition" chosen by Karmay.

⁵³ Alternatively: "as for the estimate (*tshod la*) of the army's entrance inside Mön, because now was not in agreement with his thought, it would not proceed properly".

⁵⁴ The 15th century site of Hungrelkha comprised a fort (*rdzong*) and a Drukpa Kagyu ('Brug pa bka' brgyud) monastic site. It was founded by Hungrel Drungdrung (Hung ral Drung drung) in the Paro (Spa gro) valley on land donated by local patrons. It was five storeys high and Hungrel Drungdrung is said to have employed men by day and supramundane beings by night for its construction. On the history and legends connected to this fort and monastery, see Sangye Dorji 2004, 32–34. I would like to thank Gedun Rabsal for pointing out this reference.

⁵⁵ Karmay (2014: 375) refers the expression *pho ma skyes pa* to the *depa* Norbu only ("he made cowardly delaying tactics"), while here the expression *pho ma* is rendered as "effeminated males" by modifying *pho* ("man, male") with the feminine particle *ma*. The passage could thus be interpreted to mean that the length of the war had made the men "effeminate" in the sense of not ready to fight. Compare this notion with the passage of the *Miwang Tokjö* quoted above, where the cautious speech of Nono Bitadzoki was mocked by the soldiers for being suitable to the reasoning of a woman.

⁵⁶ The *depa* Norbu had married a woman of the Gekhasa clan; as a consequence, this servant should be loyal to him.

both Dalai Baatur and Machik Taiji were the bulwark (*lcags ri*) of the doctrine, and that the *depa* Norbu, because of the great loss of precious [lives] (*gces 'phangs [=phangs] che bas*) of which he must bear the burden,⁵⁷ had withdrawn ('*then = 'then srung*) to Phakri during the summer.⁵⁸ Furthermore, because there were no difficulties ('*thogs = thogs* "hindrance, obstruction") in [finding] men, even if they died, this should be recorded. [A messenger] was sent to Drepung ('Bras spungs) especially to demonstrate [this], exactly with the purpose of showing [and] providing the reason of [their] indifference, even if Tibet should empty of all the Tibetans in mass.

Even though the calculation was to withdraw, because the two Mongol generals (*dpon po*) were brave and heroic unlike [any] other, they said: "If the great army is withdrawn, we shall certainly both come, [but] we would not be able to show our face among the Mongols and to bear the offensive speech [that] the common folks remained [to fight]", thus they did not listen to [the idea of] returning.

Machik Taiji suddenly died; it was said that perhaps it was the conditions in Mön, [but] many managers (*mgron gnyer*) and attendants (*drung pa*), [in] profound and secret talks, said that there had been a food preparation (*zas sbyor* i.e. poisoning) on account of the great hostility of the Taiji to the *depa* Norbu.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ This sentence is also open to different interpretations. Karmay (2014: 375) renders it as: "Dalai Pathur and Machig Taiji were the ramparts of the doctrine and they caringly insisted that it was the *depa* Norbu who should take responsibility". In the version above, it transpires that the *depa* Norbu, through his servant, intimated he was the only one feeling the pangs of the loss of life the war was causing.

⁵⁸ According to Karmay (*ibid.*), it was the two Mongol commanders who remained behind in Phakri, but it seems to me that the subject of the discourse has changed at this point to the *depa* Norbu. However, Gedun Rabsal, whom I have consulted for clarifications on this passage, thinks that all three generals, the two Mongols and the *depa* Norbu, stayed back in Phakri. These uncertainties highlight the ambiguity of the language in the passage. Note that the Fifth Dalai Lama's autobiography seems to be a text prone to eliciting contradictory interpretations. In this regard, see Schwieger 2015: 37 and 241 fn 108, which presents three very different translations of the same passage.

⁵⁹ *Za hor gyi ban de*: vol. 1, 378: *gnas chung chos skyong chen po thog mar dmangs dang mi mthun pa'i dpung 'gro kyab yong pa'i phyogs kyi lung bstan pa / dpung mon nang du chug tshod la da cha bsams pa bzhin byas ma song bas tshul ldan mi yong bar gsung ba phag ri nas bzung zhag 'phul nyin 'phul du ma song ba'i rtsol khyad kyis phyin te hung ral khar tsha shugs kyis bskor 'tshangs the tshom med pa zhig brtsams na de lo bod sog khams kong tshang ma yod zer ba'i dgra skad kyis rdzong bskur byed nges yin 'dug kyang sde pa nor bus tshul ldan ma nus pa'i skyon du snang bas chos skyong la log lta dgos rigs su mi gda' / de'ang chos skyong rnams kyi lung bstan mo rtsis / mi dmangs kyis brjod rigs gang la dpags kyang lho'i dpung 'jug de 'gro khyab che ba zhig yong rigs min 'dug rung dbus dpung dang khams kong rnams dgon dang bum thang du bcug tshe bum thang du man chad tshur chod pa tsam gyi mtha' brten pa'i rjes yong rigs la tshang ma spa gror dril ba sde ba nor bu'i che 'don la mi 'gro ba'i khar khong pas pho ma skyes pa'i dmag yun gyis be ge sogs nad rims dang lho tshad kyis mi gces mang du gron /gad kha sa'i sger g.yog stag lung sman grong pas / rgyal rtser sde par phul ba'i zhu yig la da la'i bA thur dang ma gcig tha'i ji gnyis bstan pa'i lcags ri dang sde pa nor bu khar (= khur) bzhes mdzad dgos pa'i*

Despite difficulties of interpretation, this passage illustrates the complex concatenation of events that both preceded and followed the withdrawal of the army of the Ganden Phodrang from the expedition to Bhutan in 1656–1657. To begin with, it appears that the oracle of Nechung disapproved of the conflict and had argued against waging war too often, because the general populace would not approve. In addition, he had explained to the Dalai Lama that the reason why the troops were not being disciplined and were wasting time instead of going directly toward Bhutan, was that his advice on the appropriate time in which to start the expedition had not been followed. On the contrary, if they had pressed forward, the enemies would have been easily overwhelmed by the united forces of Mongols, Tibetans, Kham-pas and soldiers from Kongpo.

On the basis of this report, the Dalai Lama determined that an error had indeed been made, but not by the oracle, rather by the *depa* Norbu, who had been unable to enforce the soldiers' discipline. In fact, the Dalai Lama reasoned, if the oracle's prediction and the people's will had been heeded, it would have been best not to proceed at all with the military expedition. However, he seems to have been well aware of the tactical mistakes that had been made, as he ventures to offer strategic advice on how the army should have proceeded. He specifically indicates that once the army had reached the area of Bumtang, instead of taking the town, it should have bypassed it, encircling it from the south and enabling the opportunity to flank and surround Paro also.⁶⁰

However, while vindicating the oracle of Nechung, by asserting that the operation had not gone as hoped because the latter's predictions had not been followed, he was much less forgiving with regard to the *depa* Norbu. Not only had this commander not followed proper methods, but his time-wasting, mockingly referred to as "waiting for his coming of age", had led to widespread loss of life and the spread

*gces 'phangs che bas dbyar gyi ring phag ri tsam la 'then / gzhan su shi'ang mi la mi 'thogs pas lo sbrel 'jog dgos zhes bod gangs can pa thams cad sdebs su stongs kyang ji mi snyam pa'i rgyu mtshan phul snang ba dgos don ji ltar yang 'bras spungs su ched bstad sten par btang byung / tshur 'then rtsis mdzad 'dug rong sog po'i dpon po gnyis gzhan dang mi 'dra ba'i dpa' mdzangs rtul phod pas dpung chen 'then na nged gnyis yong ba gzhir bcas / dimangs ma bzhas ste log pa'i gtam khur nas sog po'i khrog du gdong ston mi nus zhes 'byon ma nyan / ma gcig tha'i ji glo bur du grongs pa mon tshad yin nam zer / mgron gnyer drung pa can mang dag gis zab khog nas brjod rigs tha'i jis sde pa nor bur sdong zug ches par brten zas sbyor zhig byung 'dra gleng /; see translation of the same passage in Karmay, *The Illusive Play*: 374–375.*

⁶⁰ This hardly seems feasible, as Bumthang is in central Bhutan and the Paro valley (where the fort of Hung ral kha is located) is in the west of the country. The distance is further exacerbated by the craggy topography of Bhutan. More details on this campaign can be found in Ardussi 1977: 297–298.

of infectious diseases. Moreover, the extended duration of the war had weakened the strength and resolve of the soldiers.

The passage continues by outlining the scheme employed by the *depa* Norbu to finally convince the Dalai Lama that it was not advisable to push forward into Bhutan. He (Norbu) sent one of his household servants to explain that while the Mongol generals had been paragons of loyalty and heroism, they did not seem to mind how many people perished in combat, not even if the whole of Tibet should become empty of people. The *depa* Norbu wanted the Mongols' indifference toward the loss of life to be recorded, and sent his servant first to Gyantsé and then to Drepung specifically to press this point. In brief, the *depa* Norbu squarely placed the blame on the Mongols, at the same time exonerating himself from any responsibility.

Yet, when the two Mongol generals became aware of *depa* Norbu's intention to withdraw the troops, they refused to do so on account of their reputation: how could they face other Mongols after such behaviour? In this regard the Dalai Lama's autobiographical diary shows not only that he was well aware of their refusal, but also that he imputed their reasons to have been their unparalleled bravery and heroism. His words do not betray disappointment, but rather admiration for their unswerving loyalty and courage. However, while appreciated by the Fifth Dalai Lama, their valour and their refusal to halt the attack created a severe rift with the *depa* Norbu. The result was that one of the two generals suddenly died in suspicious circumstances, and the troops of the Ganden Phodrang effectively withdrew. Again here, the Dalai Lama does not openly point the finger. His language is oblique and nuanced. Instead of openly accusing, he apparently maintains the official line that the conditions in the south had caused the death of Machik Taiji, but at the same time gives ample indication of being fully conscious of the rumours which insinuated that Machik Taiji had been poisoned on orders of the *depa* Norbu.

Thus, the Dalai Lama seems to have been well aware of the disagreements that developed between the Tibetan and the Mongol sides of his army during this campaign, but he also presents himself as having been *super partes* and not interfering in their disputes. The story of the poisoning is narrated very briefly in the few lines quoted above, with no further comments or personal judgements. The only additional information we are given is that the Dalai Lama officiated at the funerary rituals for Machik Taiji.⁶¹

Nevertheless, the autobiography shows that the Great Fifth was aware of several aspects concerning the army used to defend the interests of the Ganden Phodrang. It shows that he was cognisant of the

⁶¹ See Karmay 2014: 375.

Mongols' usefulness as a martial resource, as he considered their bravery and determination to be unparalleled. While he did not specifically indicate that he preferred the use of Mongol forces over Tibetan ones, he seems to have intuited, as in the example of the story of Khandro, that their methods were effective and often inexorable. Likewise, he was conscious of the existence of disagreements and rivalries between Tibetan and Mongol divisions, and of the larger political impact of these tactical disagreements. Whether his awareness of these issues was superficial or more profound, the Fifth Dalai Lama seems to have maintained his equanimity by not interfering or overtly taking sides in any of these disputes. However, while he maintained his equipoise, he also did not object to the use of the army and to their methods as long as they were used in support of the Ganden Phodrang.

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Za hor gyi ban de: see under Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 2009.



The Zunghar Conquest of Central Tibet and its Influence on Tibetan Military Institutions in the 18th Century*

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Introduction

The Oirads and the states they built in central Eurasia had intimate relationships with Tibet from the turn of the 17th century when they officially adopted Tibetan Buddhism as their state religion.¹ With respect to politics and international relations, the relationships between the Oirads and the Tibetans have been well-researched by Luciano Petech.² In contrast, the military aspect of these interactions has hardly been addressed. However, the Oirads did make a significant impact on Tibetan military institutions and practices during the 17th and the 18th centuries. Over the course of a century, the Oirads twice made audacious military ventures into central Tibet. The first was carried out under the leadership of G^üüshi Khan (Mo. G^üüsi; Tib. Gu shri; 1582–1665) of the Khoshuud (also Qoshot) in the late 1630s and resulted in the establishment of what is known in Mongolian historiography as the Khoshuud Khanate in Tibet (1642–

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¹ The Oirads, commonly referred to as “western Mongols” by modern scholars, maintained a unique history, quite distinct from that of the eastern Mongols, ever since the fall of the Mongol Empire in the mid-14th century. Although the Oirads were unquestionably a part of the broader Mongolian world ethnically, culturally, and linguistically, they were distinguishable from their eastern neighbours in terms of their political institution. More specifically, the Oirad aristocratic dynasties (e.g., the Zunghar, Dörböd, Khoshuud, Torghuud, and Khoid) did not descend from Chinggis Khan’s golden lineage, whereas the eastern Mongols did. Among the Oirads, the Zunghars succeeded in building a dominant independent state in Central Asia during the 17th and the 18th centuries, while all the eastern Chinggisid Mongols were integrated into the Qing Empire by the end of the 17th century. For more information on the Oirads, see Atwood 2004: 419–423.

² Petech 1966: 261–292; Petech [1950] 1972: 8–73.

1717), which also corresponds to the period known in Tibetan scholarship as the early phase of the Ganden Phodrang (Tib. *Dga' ldan pho brang*) government of the Dalai Lamas.³ The second campaign to central Tibet was led by Tseringdondob (Ma. Tsering dondob; Mo. Čering dondub; Tib. *Tshe ring don grub*) of the Zunghar Principality in 1716–1717,⁴ as a result of which the Zunghars succeeded in terminating the Khoshuud Khanate in 1717 and establishing a military government which was the *de facto* ruling apparatus in central Tibet from 1717 to 1720.⁵ Due to these vigorous military activities, the Oirads functioned as a dominant source of military power in central Tibet for the entire period from the 1630s to 1720. Naturally, this prolonged Oirad presence in central Tibet considerably influenced the Tibetans with regard to their military institutions and customs.

This article focuses on the second military enterprise by the Oirads, namely the Zunghar conquest of central Tibet from 1716 to 1720. Compared to the first military venture commanded by Gūūshi Khan of the Khoshuud, the Zhunghar military operations are better documented and thus reveal with greater clarity the Oirad influences on Tibetan military institutions. In particular, this article delves into the Zunghar military activities in central Tibet by analysing Qing palace memorials written in Chinese and Manchu, which have rarely been used by Tibetologists; the account—accessed in its English translation—of the Italian Jesuit missionary Ippolito Desideri (1684–1733) who was a first-hand witness to some of these events; and several Tibetan sources, to wit, *The Annals of Kokonor* (Tib. *Mtsho sngon gyi lo rgyus sogs bkod pa'i tshangs glu gsar snyan*) and *The Biography of Pholhané* known in Tibetan as the *Miwang Tokjö* (Tib. *Mi dbang rtogs brjod*), accessed in their English

³ As a result of Gūūshi's conquest of Tibet, the Khoshuud Khanate was established in central Tibet in 1642. Its political and military centre was located around Lhasa and the Dam plain. The Khoshuud Khanate claimed its rule over the whole Tibetan regions (e.g., Ü, Tsang, Kham, Amdo, and later Ngari). Regarding the Khoshuud Khanate in Tibet, see Petech 1966: 266–281; Borjigidai 1988: 70–74; Borjigidai 2002: 181–195; Sperling 2012: 195–211.

⁴ To denominate the two states that the Oirads built in Tibet and Central Asia, this article utilises two terms, namely khanate and principality. In Tibet, the supreme rulers of the Khoshuud dynasty held the title of khan. Therefore, this article names their state the Khoshuud Khanate. In contrast, the Zunghar rulers rarely used the title of khan. Instead, they ruled their state in Central Asia in most cases as *taiji* or *khungtaiji*, meaning prince or crown-prince in Mongolian. For this reason, the author designates their state as the Zunghar Principality.

⁵ On the Zunghar invasion and occupation of central Tibet, see Petech 1966: 290–292; Petech [1950] 1972: 32–65; Chayet 2003: 83–89; Schwieger 2015: 121–142.

and Chinese translations respectively.⁶ Based on these sources, this article argues that the Zunghar conquest and their ensuing rule of central Tibet considerably influenced Tibetan military institutions in the following years in three main respects, namely: the defence system, military strategy, and weapons. Although previous research on the Zunghar conquest of central Tibet has already tapped into many of the sources that this article is consulting (the account by Desideri and *The Biography of Pholhané* in particular), the existing scholarship reveals a strong tendency to focus only on political and international aspects of Tibetan history of the time.⁷ As a result, rich materials containing numerous hints at the military history of Tibet have often been overlooked by historians.

In the first section, the article explores the opening phase of the Zunghar campaign in central Tibet. Specifically, it investigates the itinerary of the Zunghar army which enabled the successful surprise attack on Lazang Khan (Mo. Lazang; Ma. Ladzang; Tib. Lha bzang; r. 1703–1717). The fact that the Zunghars had utilised an unexpected route at that time left a lasting imprint upon the defence system of central Tibet during later periods. In the second section, the article examines an atypical military strategy which the Zunghars actively used in central Tibet. Interestingly, Tibetan forces appear to have actively adopted this peculiar military scheme in the aftermath of the Zunghar rule. And finally, the third section scrutinises a couple of new weapons that the Zunghars favoured in battle. As a result of the Zunghar rule in central Tibet, the Tibetans also came to extensively employ these novel arms, which the Zunghars had first brought to central Tibet, in their own warfare.⁸

⁶ Due to the present author's lack of command of Tibetan, Tibetan sources have been consulted in translation. In the case of *The Annals of Kokonor*, I have used the English translation by Ho-Chin Yang (1969), which translated the second chapter of *The Annals of Kokonor*. With regard to *The Biography of Pholhané*, I have utilised the Chinese translation by Chi'an Tang (1988). Here, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Dr. Soyong Choi for helping me check a number of original Tibetan words in the Chinese version of *The Biography of Pholhané*. I would also like to express gratitude to Dr. George Fitzherbert, Dr. Alice Travers, and Mr. Joseph Cleveland for helping me edit this article.

⁷ For example, Petech 1966: 290–292; Petech [1950] 1972: 32–65; Shakabpa 2010: vol. 1, 414–427.

⁸ Numerous place names in Central Asia and Tibet appear throughout this article. To figure out the locations of these place names, the author has consulted the maps in Tan 1987: 52–53, 59–62 and Ryavec 2015: 110–151. See also the list of place names in different languages in Appendix 1 of this paper.

1. *The Zunghar's New Route to Tibet and its Impact on Tibetan Military Institutions*

1.1. *Two Traditional Routes between Zungharia and Tibet*

1.1.1. *The Eastern Khökhe-nuur Route*

Prior to the Zunghar campaign, the Oirad people had typically used two conventional routes to travel to Tibet, one in the east and the other in the west (see the map in Appendix 2 of this paper). The eastern route (the “eastern Khökhe-nuur route”) passed through eastern Xinjiang and the region of the “Blue Lake” or Khökhe-nuur (Mo. Köke naγur; Oir. Kükü nour; Ma. Huhu noor; Tib. Mtsho sngon; Ch. Qinghai 青海).⁹ This route was used for example when Gūūshi Khan and his Oirad forces advanced to Tibet, and later when the Oirad Zaya Pandita (1599–1662) made pilgrimages to Tibet.¹⁰ According to the Tibetan-educated Mongolian historian Sumpa Khenpo (Tib. Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor, 1704–1788), Gūūshi had travelled from Zungharia to Tibet to investigate the actual situation of Tibet before he and his fellow Oirad princes officially launched their military campaign.¹¹ On the way, he reportedly met Arslan Taiji (Mo. Arslan tayiji; Tib. Ar sa lan tha'i ji; d. 1636), a son of Tsogtu (Mo. Čoytu; Tib. Chog thu; 1581–1637) Taiji of the Khalkha Mongols,¹² in the upper part of the Driчу River (Tib. 'Bri chu) in 1635, and in the following year went back to his country by the same route.¹³

In 1636, Gūūshi and his forces began to advance towards Tibet along with other Oirad allies. During this time, they passed through the regions around the Ili (Mo. Ili; Tib. Yi le) and the Tarim (Tib. Tha

⁹ When it comes to the transcription and transliteration systems used in this article, the present author employs phonetic transcriptions as well as the Wylie transliteration system for Tibetan, the Pinyin transcription system for Chinese, and the Möllendorff system for Manchu. For Mongolian names and terms, phonetic renderings are presented according to the Atwood system (see Atwood 2002: xv–xviii), while more bookish transcriptions are presented according to the Mostaert system with the sign “Mo.”. Lastly, for personal names and place names written in the Clear Script in *The Biography of Zaya Pandita*, the article uses the standard romanisation system for the Clear Script, as found in Rakos 2002: 49–50 and Luwsanbaldan 2015: 24–31, with the mark “Oir.”.

¹⁰ Concerning the Oirad Zaya Pandita, see Atwood 2004: 618. He is not to be confused with the roughly contemporaneous Khalkha Zaya Pandita.

¹¹ Sum pa mkhan po (trans. Yang) 1969: 34–35. In this article, the term “Zungharia” signifies a geographical area encompassing the Altai Mountains, the Irtysh River, Lake Balkhash, the Ili River, the Chu River, the Talas River, and the Tianshan Mountains.

¹² Regarding Tsogtu Taiji, see Atwood 2004: 550 and Schwieger 2015: 41–48.

¹³ Sum pa mkhan po (trans. Yang) 1969: 35.

rim) Rivers and then also traversed the great swamp of Tsaidam (Tib. 'Dam chen po). After that, they arrived at Bulunggir (Mo. Bulunggir; Tib. Bu lung ger) on the border of the Khökhe-nuur region and encamped there.¹⁴ In the first month of 1637, Gūūshi's ten thousand soldiers fought a great battle with Tsogtu Taiji's thirty thousand troops at a place later known as Ulaan-khoshuu (Mo. Ulayān qosiyun; Tib. U lan ho sho) on the northern shore of Lake Khökhe-nuur. Then, in 1639, Gūūshi arrived in Ü (Tib. Dbus) of central Tibet where the Fifth Dalai Lama honoured him with the name Tenzin Chögyel (Tib. Bstan 'dzin chos rgyal).¹⁵ In summary, then, Gūūshi and his Oirad forces reached central Tibet by the following route: Tarbaghatai (in today's northern Xinjiang where Gūūshi's original appanage was)—the Ili River—the Tarim River—the Tsaidam Basin—Bulunggir—Ulaan-khoshuu—the Drichu River (as seen in Gūūshi's preparatory travel to Tibet in 1635)—Ü of central Tibet.

The Oirad Zaya Pandita also used an eastern route when he made his pilgrimages to Tibet. According to *The Biography of Zaya Pandita*, in 1650 and 1651 (when he made his first pilgrimage) he travelled from a place called Khöörge-yin Khool (Oir. Köürgeyin xöl) to Lhasa (Oir. ʃou) in central Tibet (Oir. Baroun tala) via Bulunggir, Khökhe-nuur, and Ereen-nuur (Oir. Erēn nour; Tib. Mtsho sngo ring; Ch. Eling hu 鄂陵湖).¹⁶ In all likelihood, he passed the Tsaidam Basin after Bulunggir because his biography states that he sent some of his entourage back to the Greater Tsaidam (Oir. Yeke čayidam) before proceeding from Khökhe-nuur to Tibet.¹⁷ In addition, *The Biography of Zaya Pandita* reports that in the spring of 1651 Zaisang Balbaachi (Oir. ʃayisang balbāči), a nephew of the Oirad Zaya Pandita, caught up with his uncle at Khökhe-nuur after spending the previous winter in Barköl (Oir. Bars kül).¹⁸ Considering this, Zaya Pandita and Zaisang Balbaachi were then participating in the same pilgrimage to Tibet, and thus both must

¹⁴ *Ibid.*: 36. There were at least two Bulunggir Rivers, each north and south of the Qilian Mountains (祁連山), during the Qing period. The first was the better-known, modern Shule River that runs near Dunhuang north of the Qilian Mountains. The second Bulunggir was located south of the Qilian Mountains, flowing into the little Tsaidam lake. For the first Bulunggir, see Tan 1987: 28–29; for the second one, refer to *ibid.*: 59–60. The Bulunggir that Gūūshi and his Oirad forces passed by must have been the second one south of the Qilian Mountains given their itinerary.

¹⁵ Sum pa mkhan po (trans. Yang) 1969: 37.

¹⁶ Radnaabadraa 2009: 104–105/12r–12v. It seems that the place name “Bulunggir” in *The Biography of Zaya Pandita* denotes the Bulunggir River north of the Qilian Mountains.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*: 105/12v.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

have used similar routes on their way to Tibet, although they sometimes travelled separately from each other.¹⁹ Hence, the entire itineraries of the Oirad pilgrims led by Zaya Pandita and Zaisang Balbaachi can be reconstructed as: Khöörge-yin Khool—Barköl—Bulunggir—the Tsaidam Basin—Khökhe-nuur—Ereen-nuur—Lhasa. This constitutes a different route from that of Güüshi.

In 1662, Zaya Pandita tried to make a second pilgrimage to Tibet but passed away en route. In the first month of the summer of 1662, he departed from a place called Balugtu (Oir. Baluqtu), which was probably on the southern side of the Chu River in Central Asia,²⁰ and then arrived at Khajir (Oir. Xajir) in the far western part of the Khökhe-nuur region, where he died on the 22nd day of the middle month of the autumn of 1662.²¹ According to *The Biography of Zaya Pandita*, the entire itinerary was thus as follows: Balugtu—the Ösöq and Saamal Rivers (Oir. Ösöq sāmāl; i.e. two tributaries of the Ili River)—the Khünggis River—Aduun-khürü—Jultus—Kheree-khada (Oir. Kerē xada)—the Middle Tashikhai (Oir. Dundadu Tašxayi)—Khurtag (Oir. Xurtaq)—the Khaidu River (Oir. Xayidu)—the Tarim River—Nükhütü—Khoruli (Oir. Xoriuli)—Gas (Oir. γas)—Khajir.²²

In 1669, a large number of disciples of the late Zaya Pandita led by Erke Tsorji (Oir. Erke čorji) left Lebshi (Oir. Lebši) to meet the reincarnation of their master who had been identified in Tibet.²³ *The Biography of Zaya Pandita* provides detailed information concerning their itineraries. First, after having set off from the Lebshi River, they passed along the shores of many lakes—probably Lake Alaköl and other small lakes neighbouring it, and Lake Ebi-nuur. Then they proceeded

¹⁹ Zaya Pandita spent the winter at a place called Gurban-bag (Oir. γurban baq) near Bulunggir, while Zaisang Balbaachi wintered in Barköl at that time. Why, then, did Zaya Pandita and Zaisang Balbaachi travel separately? According to *The Biography of Zaya Pandita*, at that time Zaisang Balbaachi was accompanied by two great princes of the Oirads, viz., Tsöökür Ubashi (Oir. Čöükür ubaša) and Targun Erdeni Khungtaiji (Oir. Taryun erdeni xong tayiji), while Zaya Pandita travelled only with his own retinue. In light of this, it is plausible that the pilgrimage to Tibet from 1650 to 1651 was not a personal pilgrimage but an official, state-sponsored visit which included not only Oirad princes and officials but also numerous religious figures. If this is correct, one may surmise that the secular section of this delegation was led by Zaisang Balbaachi, while the religious participants were headed by Zaya Pandita. For details, see *ibid.*: 105/12r–12v.

²⁰ Cheng 1990: 82n168.

²¹ Radnaabadraa 2009: 127/23v, 129/24v.

²² *Ibid.*: 127–128/23v–24r. After the death of Zaya Pandita, his disciples carried his body to Lhasa. Due to the lack of detailed information on their itinerary, it is impossible to know exactly what route they took to reach Lhasa from Khajir. From the context, however, it is likely that they proceeded from Khajir directly to central Tibet towards Lhasa without visiting Khökhe-nuur.

²³ *Ibid.*: 144/32r.

through Minggan-tayag (Oir. Mingyan tayaq), Mt. Ereen-khabirga (Oir. Erēn xabirγa, west of Ürümchi), Dörböljin (Oir. Dörböljin, east of Ürümchi), and Tal-nachin (Oir. Tal način, east of Hami)²⁴ to reach the Gobi, or desert. To cross it, they split into two groups. The first group, which was composed of Erkhe Tsorji and other disciples, traversed the desert through Khoyor-saikhan (Oir. Xoyor sayixan). The second, composed of a group of interpreters, went by way of Üibeng-kharaat (Oir. Üyibeng xarāt). After this, the two groups together reached a place called Bolodoi in the “Desert of Salt” (Oir. Dabusuni γobi) via Khara-dabaa (Oir. Xara dabā) and eventually reached Khökhe-nuur. After spending the winter there, Erkhe Tsorji headed for central Tibet via a place called Orooichee (Oir. Orō ičē), while the interpreters departed from the Desert of Salt in the first month of the summer of 1670 and arrived at Dam (north of Lhasa) through Khulusun-sübe (Oir. Xulusun sübe) in the last month of the summer. Finally, some pilgrims reached Lhasa via Yangpachen (Oir. Yangpaĭin; Tib. Yangs pa can; Ch. Yangbajing 羊八井).²⁵

On their way back, the Oirad pilgrims travelled an almost identical route. In the middle month of the summer of 1671, they set off from Lhasa and then arrived at Serteng and Bulunggir. From there, they started to cross the desert and reached Barköl. The disciples of Zaya Pandita finally came back to Emil by way of Ereen-khabirga, Tesket, Bugu-usun (Oir. Buγu usun), and Shara-bogochi (Oir. Šara boyoči).²⁶ In light of these place names, the pilgrims this time appear to have taken a route that went along the northern slope of the Tianshan Mountains and then approached the Khökhe-nuur region via Barköl, Hami, the desert to the south of Hami, Bulunggir, and Serteng. This route was almost the same as the one used by Zaya Pandita and Zai-sang Balbaachi from 1650 to 1651. From these data, we can surmise that when Oirads attempted to travel to central Tibet in sizeable groups (including people, livestock, and materials), they most often favoured the eastern Khökhe-nuur route which connected Zungharia to Tibet via eastern Xinjiang and the Khökhe-nuur region. This eastern route furthermore consisted of two branch lines (see the map in Appendix 2): the first took a more south-western itinerary through the Ili River, the Khünggis River, Jultus, the Khaidu River, Lake Bosten, the Tarim River, Gas, the Tsaidam Basin (from the west side), Bulunggir (south of the Qilian), and Khökhe-nuur. The second took a more north-eastern route via Bortala, Mt. Ereen-khabirga, Ürümchi, Barköl, Hami, the desert south of Hami, Bulunggir (north of the Qilian),

²⁴ Cheng 1990: 83n182–183.

²⁵ Radnaabadraa 2009: 144–145/32r–32v.

²⁶ *Ibid.*: 147–148/33v–34r.

Serteng, the Tsaidam Basin (from the north side), and Khökhe-nuur.²⁷ The first “south-western” branch line was utilised by Gūūshi Khan in 1636–1637 and then by Zaya Pandita in 1662, while the second “north-eastern” route was used by Zaya Pandita as well as Zaisang Balbaachi in 1650–1651 and the disciples of Zaya Pandita in 1669–1671.

Later, in 1704, a Torghuud prince named Arabjur (d. 1729) made a pilgrimage from the Volga River to Tibet via Zunghar territory.²⁸ It is evident that he and his entourage also used the north-eastern branch of the Khökhe-nuur route to reach Tibet because, on his way back, Prince Arabjur memorialised the Kangxi Emperor, informing him that he and his companions were stranded outside the Jiayu Pass (Ch. Jiayu guan 嘉峪關)—probably around Lake Serteng (Ch. Se’erteng hai 色爾騰海) where he was later enfeoffed—and unable to go back to their home country due to the Zunghar lord Tsewang Rabdan’s (r. 1694–1727)²⁹ prohibition of their entry into the Zunghar territory.³⁰ In other words, Prince Arabjur travelled from Central Asia to central Tibet by way of the route which passed through Hami and the Khökhe-nuur region at the turn of the 18th century.

It is clear that this “eastern Khökhe-nuur route” continued to be the main route from Zungharia to Tibet even after the period of the

²⁷ When it comes to the itineraries from Khökhe-nuur to central Tibet (esp. the Ü region), the situation was more complicated, since there were numerous routes connecting the two regions. A Chinese palace memorial composed by Baling’a (巴凌阿) confirms this, stating that there were a variety of routes traversing the Khökhe-nuur region and thus linking Barköl to central Tibet. Baling’a further states that the two most important traffic hubs in the region were Kurlug (Ch. Ku’erluke 庫爾魯克, probably east of the Greater Tsaidam) and Solomu (Ch. Suoluomu 索洛木; Tib. Rma chu). These led to Murui-usu (Ch. Mulu wusu 木魯烏素; Tib. ’Bri chu), Yushu (玉樹; Tib. Skyes dgu mdo), and finally to central Tibet (Ch. Xizang 西藏). Therefore, roughly speaking, the route from Barköl to central Tibet was as follows: Barköl—Suzhou (肅州), Chijin (赤金), or Anxi (安西)—Kurlug—the Solomu River—the Murui-usu River—Yushu—central Tibet. For details, refer to *The First Historical Archives of China, Gongzhong zhupi zouzhe* (宮中硃批奏摺; henceforth *Gongzhong zhupi*), doc. no. 04–01–01–0040–002 (Baling’a, Qianlong 4. 6. 3). Baling’a, however, did not mention Khökhe-nuur in his explanation of the various routes across the region. Therefore, Oirad/Zunghar people travelling from their homeland in Central Asia to central Tibet could reach their destination without passing Lake Khökhe-nuur at all. Regarding the itineraries from Khökhe-nuur to central Tibet, Gombozhab Tsybikov’s early 20th century travel journal provides us with much detailed descriptions of the routes between the two regions. For more information, see Tsybikov 2017: 28–53.

²⁸ Regarding the Torghuud prince Arabjur, see Hummel 1943: 785; Atwood 2004: 7.

²⁹ Concerning the Zunghar ruler Tsewang Rabdan (Tib. Tshe dbang rab brtan), refer to Atwood 2004: 550.

³⁰ Zhunga’er shilüe bianxiezhu 1985: 218.

Zunghar invasion and occupation of Tibet (1717–1720) that is this paper's main focus. In the 1740s, we again find Oirads—especially Zunghars—actively using these eastern Khökhe-nuur routes when they brought offerings for the “Tea-Offering” (Tib. *manja*; Mo. and Ma. *manja*; Ch. *aocha* 熬茶) religious-cum-trade festival in Tibet. The Zunghars participated in the *manja* three times in total. For the first in 1741, the Zunghar delegation of envoys, monks, and merchants employed the north-eastern branch line of the eastern Khökhe-nuur route, which went through Hami, and then visited Dongkor (Ma. Dongk'or; Tib. Stong 'khor) for trade.³¹ For their second and third *manja* pilgrimages, however, they travelled by the south-western branch of the eastern Khökhe-nuur route. In 1743, the Zunghar mission was led by Lama *shangjudba* (Mo. *šangjudba*; Ma. *šangjotba*; Tib. *phyag mdzod pa*; i.e. lama treasurer of a monastery) and Zaisang Choinamkha (Ma. Jaisang Coinam' a) and entered the Khökhe-nuur region via Gas. They then travelled from Gas to Dongkor via Khajir (Ma. Hajir), Khadan-khoshuu (Ma. Hadan hošo), and Urtu-mörün (Ma. Urtu murun).³² It was reported that the Zunghar pilgrims, after having conducted trade in Dongkor, came back to Khadan-khoshuu and then reached central Tibet via Khara-usu (Ma. Hara usu; Tib. Nag chu).³³ Their entire itinerary therefore was represented thus: the Tarim River—Gas—Khajir—Khadan-khoshuu—Urtu-mörün—Dongkor—Khadan-khoshuu—Khara-usu—Lhasa. On their third visit for the Tea-Offering ceremony in 1747–1748, the Zunghar envoys used almost the same route as in 1743. Reportedly, they travelled from the Tarim River to Lhasa via Gas, Khajir, and Debter.³⁴ This time, the Zunghars carried out their trade not in Dongkor but in Debter.³⁵ After having finished their trade in

³¹ The First Historical Archives of China, *Junjichu manwen lufu zouzhe* (軍機處滿文錄副奏摺; henceforth *Manwen lufu*), doc. no. 03-0173-1230-006 (Ortai, Qianlong 6.11.27); Perdue 2015: 6–7. From Dongkor, the Zunghar pilgrims were supposed to go to central Tibet via the Solomu River. Regarding the detailed routes of the Zunghars envisioned by the Qing court, see *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03-0173-1221-015 (Ortai, Qianlong 4.12.17). This time, however, the Zunghar mission never made it to central Tibet since they left for their homeland—again through Hami—from Dongkor without visiting Lhasa by October 5, 1741 (QL 6. 8.26). For details, see *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03-0173-1230-006.

³² *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03-0173-1244-017 (Ioi Boo, Qianlong 8. 7.20).

³³ For details, see *Qingdai Xinjiang manwen dang'an huibian* (清代新疆滿文檔案匯編; henceforth, *Xinjiang huibian*), vol. 6: 322–332; *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03-0173-1252-006.1 (Sobai, Qianlong 9.1.20).

³⁴ Perdue 2015: 15–16; *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03-0174-1272-015 (Sobai, Qianlong 12.11.4).

³⁵ *Xinjiang huibian*, vol. 7: 325–329. On the third *manja* pilgrimage, only six people out of the whole Zunghar envoys visited the Dongkor region to present offerings to four monasteries in and around Dongkor. These six Zunghar envoys did not go to

Debter, the Zunghar Tea-Offering pilgrims departed from Debter and then headed for Lhasa through the Khashikha Pass (Ma. Hasiha dabagan), Mt. Bayan-khara (Ma. Bayan kara alin), the Murui-usu River (Mo. Murui usu; Ma. Muru usu; Tib. 'Bri chu), Khara-usu, Tengri-nuur (Mo. Tngri nayur; Ma. Tenggeri noor; Tib. Gnam mtsho), Dam, and Yangpachen.³⁶

To conclude, the eastern Khökhe-nuur routes were the most important highways connecting Zungharia to central Tibet throughout the 17th and the 18th centuries, even though these routes were often interrupted in the 18th century by the protracted military conflict between the Qing Empire and the Zunghars. Both of the branch lines of this route were equally important for Oirad travellers to central Tibet, so that one did not eclipse the other in terms of usage.

1.1.2. The Western Ngari Route

The second traditional route which linked Zungharia to central Tibet went through Ngari (Tib. Mnga' ris) in the far west of the Tibetan Plateau. Father Ippolito Desideri first made a detailed record of this important path. Desideri travelled from Kashmir to central Tibet via Ladakh and Ngari in 1714–1716. After leaving Kashmir, his route went as follows: Ladakh (Leh)—Tashigang—Gartok (Tib. Sgar thog)—Rutok (Tib. Ru thog)—Saga (Tib. Sa dga' rdzong)—Sakya (Tib. Sa skya)—Shigatsé—Lhasa.³⁷ As per his account, Tashigang, the first locality under the jurisdiction of Tibet, was a border region and considered sensitive primarily due to its proximity to the Zunghars.³⁸ Moreover in Gartok, which was two days' journey from Tashigang and the residence of the Tibetan governor of Ngari,

there is always to be found a sizeable army of Tartars and Tibetans subject to the king of the third Tibet. They are there in part to defend Tashigang and the other villages east of this remote region's border but primarily to search for anyone entering the country through that area and to prevent any enemy forces slipping in through secret roads and suddenly and unexpectedly falling upon the kingdom.³⁹

central Tibet from Dongkor. Instead, they just returned to Debter after finishing making offerings. For details, see *ibid.*: 303–310.

³⁶ For details, see *ibid.*: 325–329; *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0174–1272–010 (Sobai, Qianlong 12.8.10). The itineraries of the Zunghar Tea-Offering pilgrims also confirm that Oirad/Zunghar travellers could reach central Tibet without visiting Khökhe-nuur. They could travel from Gas or Khajir directly to Khara-usu of central Tibet, and *vice versa*, via the route of Maljan-khucha (Ma. Maljan kūca) and Akhayak.

³⁷ Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 167–176.

³⁸ *Ibid.*: 167.

³⁹ *Ibid.*: 168.

These forces at Gartok were quartered there due to the fear of an invasion by the Zunghars.⁴⁰ Desideri also stated that Gartok bordered on “the rugged and impenetrable peaks that lead to the kingdom of Yarkand”,⁴¹ which was then under the rule of the Zunghar Principality. He also stated that from Gartok “one enters Independent Tartary, which is also called the country of Dzungar”.⁴² Therefore, the western Ngari route which connected Zungharia to central Tibet via Yarkand and Ngari was already well-established by the time Desideri travelled to Tibet in the early 18th century.

Contrary to Desideri’s description, however, it is plausible that this western Ngari route did not proceed directly from Ngari to Yarkand, but instead passed through the Kingdom of Ladakh en route, since we know that Ladakh served as a crucial intersection between Ngari and Yarkand during the 18th century. We have, for example, numerous Manchu palace memorials indicating that not inconsiderable numbers of Zunghar and Muslim people went to Ladakh annually from Yarkand to conduct trade.⁴³ Likewise, from the Tibetan side, many people visited Ladakh for various reasons.⁴⁴ For example, when Pholhané (Tib. Pho lha nas Bsod nam stob rgyas; Ma. Polonai; 1689–1747) attempted to dispatch two Mongol noblemen from Ngari to Yarkand to carry out a politico-diplomatic manoeuvre in 1733, he first sent them to Dejung Namjal (Tib. Bde skyong rnam rgyal, r. 1729–1739), the king of the Ladakh Kingdom at the time, who in turn dispatched the two noblemen to Yarkand.⁴⁵ This case indicates that travellers from Ngari to Yarkand often went through Ladakh. Therefore, during the 18th century,

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*: 264.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*: 211.

⁴² *Ibid.*: 253.

⁴³ *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0174–1295–001 (Namjal, Qianlong 16.3.20). Besides this document, there are a large number of Manchu palace memorials indicating that Zunghar missions—including envoys, lamas, and merchants—travelled to Ladakh from Yarkand almost every year to fulfil diplomatic, religious, and commercial tasks. As examples, see *Manwen lufu* doc. no. 03–0173–1117–005 (Mala, Yongzheng 9.3.3); doc. no. 03–0173–1148–004.1 (Cingboo, Yongzheng 11.10.21); doc. no. 03–0173–1236–006 (Sobai, Qianlong 7.8.21); doc. no. 03–0173–0983–007 (Bandi, Qianlong 16.1.18); doc. no. 03–0173–0985–006 (Bandi, Qianlong 16.9.28); and so on.

⁴⁴ For example, Tibetan people frequently visited Ladakh via Ngari for trade. It is interesting to note that Gyurmé Namgyel (Tib. Gyur med rnam rgyal; Ma. Jurmat namjal; d. 1750), the younger son and successor of Pholhané, commissioned his officials going to Ladakh on the pretext of trade to have a covert meeting with Zunghar envoys and deliver a secret personal message to Tsewang Dorji Namjal, the ruler of the Zunghar Principality. For details, see *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–0983–009 (Bandi, Qianlong 16.1.28).

⁴⁵ Unfortunately for the Qing Empire, this attempt by Pholhané failed to achieve its goal because local rulers in Yarkand captured the two Mongol noblemen from

the main itinerary of the western Ngari route was: Yarkand—Ladakh—Tashigang—Gartok—Rutok—Saga—Sakya—Shigatsé—Lhasa.

This western Ngari route functioned as one of the two main paths between Zungharia and central Tibet when the Zunghars conquered and ruled Tibet from 1717 to 1720. According to Desideri, when the Zunghars succeeded in occupying Tibet, a certain Targum Tashi took flight and retreated to Gartok, where he gathered the scattered remnants of the militias that had previously been sent by Lazang Khan to defend this region.⁴⁶ “With these forces he took up a position between the mountains and closed the pass between Independent Tatar and Tibet, thus cutting off all communication between them”.⁴⁷ By doing so, Targum Tashi significantly inconvenienced the Zunghars, since neither the reinforcements sent from Zungharia to Tibet nor messengers from Tibet to the Zunghar court ever arrived at their destinations.⁴⁸ From this description, it is evident that the western route to Zungharia via Gartok of Ngari was a crucial conduit during the period of Zunghar rule in Tibet.

In 1719, a group of Zunghars attempted to go back to their homeland by this Ngari route bringing with them prisoners of war and booty from Tibet. As narrated by Desideri, this mission was sent by Tsering Döndrup, the commander-in-chief of the Zunghar army in central Tibet. When the Zunghar forces conveying this booty arrived in Gartok, Targum Tashi and his soldiers enticed the Zunghars into a fake welcoming feast and then killed all of them after they had become

Ngari and then sent them to Zungharia. For details, see *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1148–004.1 (Cingboo, Yongzheng 11.10.21).

⁴⁶ Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 253. In the original Italian text, the name “Targum Tashi” is written “Targum-treêscij”. For this name, Michael J. Sweet uses instead the transcription “Targum Tashi” throughout his translation, considering the second part of this name as coming from Tibetan: “Darqan Bkra shis (*ibid.*: 650)”. In contrast, Luciano Petech suggests that the term “Targum-treêscij” might also transcribe the Mongol title *terigün taiji* (“first-class *taiji*”) (Petech 1966: 279). In fact, if the name is taken as deriving from Mongolian, there are three possible interpretations: namely, Targun Taiji (“fat prince”), Darkhan Taiji (“prince free from taxes and official duties”), and Terigün Taiji (“head” or “first-class prince”). Regarding his personage, Desideri’s Targum-treêscij is based at least partially on Lazang Khan’s prime minister, known by several different titles in Tibetan sources but best known as Khangchenné Sönam Gyelpo. Petech argues that in Desideri’s account, this figure is somewhat fictionalised and cannot be directly identified with the historical Khangchenné, who in any event was a Tibetan and not a Khoshuud Mongol. Pomplun opines that Targum-treêscij is a “literary amalgam” of Khangchenné and Pholhané and that Desideri may have exaggerated the extent of his friendship with powerful figures of the court. For details, see Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 684–685 n506; Petech [1950] 1972: 36 n4, 62–63; Pomplun 2010: 176.

⁴⁷ Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 253.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

drunk and fallen into a deep sleep.⁴⁹ *The Biography of Pholhané* relates a similar story: a group of Zunghars tried to go to Zungharia through the Ngari region along with some of the Mongols who had formerly been subordinate to Lazang Khan. When the Zunghars reached Ngari, Khangchenné (Tib. Khang chen nas, d. 1727) and his Ngari followers killed the Zunghar troops and liberated the former retinue of Lazang Khan.⁵⁰ A couple of Manchu palace memorials also provide some information about this event. According to the testimony made by a Zunghar fugitive named Samdan (Ma. Samtan), when a Zunghar *zaisang* named Sanji (Ma. Sanji; Tib. Sangs rgyas) went back to his home country in the third month of the 58th year of Kangxi (1719), he travelled via the Ngari route (Ma. Ari *jugūn*) because he considered the Keriya route (Ma. Keriye *jugūn*) inferior. Samdan also heard from a Zunghar called Sirig that a Tibetan from Ngari had informed Diba Tagtse (Ma. Diba Daqtsa; Tib. Sde pa Stag rtse) that when Sanji arrived

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*: 253–254.

⁵⁰ Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 190. Here, both Desideri and Tsering Wanggyel apparently exaggerated Khangchenné/Targum Tashi's military success since according to Qing imperial sources the Zunghar forces, led by several *zaisangs* such as Sainchag and Sanji, did in fact successfully arrive in Zungharia during the sixth month of the 58th year of Kangxi (1719) along with some prisoners taken from Tibet. For details, see *Kangxichao manwen zhupi zouzhe* (康熙朝滿文硃批奏摺; henceforth *Kangxi manwen*), the document by Funingga (Kangxi 59. 4.12) [*Kangxichao manwen zhupi zouzhe quanyi* (康熙朝滿文硃批奏摺全譯; henceforth *Kangxi quanyi*), no. 3501]. Therefore, it seems more likely that Khangchenné did not actually achieve a sweeping victory over the Zunghar forces at this time but just succeeded in detaining the Zunghar troops to some degree, at best. The report by Yansin (Ma. Yan sin; Ch. Yanxin 延信) also narrates that in 1719, Khangchenné lured the Zunghars, who were carrying some precious materials of Lazang Khan to Zungharia, and then killed about sixty people. For more information, see Wu 1991: 199. It appears therefore that in 1719 Khangchenné attained only modest military success in Ngari. Also, the reason why Khangchenné and his people disrupted the Zunghar forces at that time might not have been the sublime cause of liberating central Tibet and Lazang Khan's former officials from the evil Zunghars as suggested by Desideri's writing and Tsering Wanggyel's heroically-tinged account (i.e. *The Biography of Pholhané*). According to another Manchu palace memorial, the leader of the Ngari region sent his soldiers and stopped the Zunghar forces, saying that the Zunghar people had pillaged the merchants of Ngari. For details, refer to *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Yinzhèn 胤禛) (Kangxi 58. 7. 9) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3436]. Therefore, it is possible to say that this much-vaunted first military resistance of the Tibetans against the Zunghar forces may actually have been motivated not by heroic or patriotic sentiments, but rather by practical, local, and mundane reasons. Despite the relative insignificance of this victory and its actual causes, it was indeed probably the first-ever military success on the part of the anti-Zunghar Tibetan faction. Therefore, Desideri and Tsering Wanggyel both embellished this event as the great starting-point of the Tibetans' military resistance against the Zunghars.

in the Ngari region, a leader of Ngari took soldiers and stopped Sanji.⁵¹ From these accounts, it is possible to make several observations. First, the leader of Ngari who stopped Sanji and his Zunghar soldiers in the Ngari region in 1719 must have been the same Targum Tashi of Desideri's account and Khangchenné of *The Biography of Pholhané*. Next, it was Zaisang Sanji who led the Zunghar forces carrying booty and prisoners from central Tibet to Zungharia. And lastly but most importantly for the present discussion, at least some Zunghar people preferred the Ngari route to the Keriya route when they travelled between central Tibet and Zungharia.⁵²

As discussed so far, this western Ngari route was traditionally one of the two principal paths connecting Zungharia to central Tibet and, during the Zunghar rule in central Tibet, was also preferred by some Zunghar travellers as a better way to reach Zungharia. Most sources, however, agree that this route was much less convenient than the eastern Khökhe-nuur route, on account of the harsh environment encountered on this road. Desideri, for example, wrote of the rugged and impenetrable peaks between Gartok and Yarkand, and also said that travellers would have to make a journey of two and a half months through

⁵¹ *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 7. 9) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3436]. Interestingly enough, another Manchu palace memorial imparts a different version of this event. A lama named Tsetsen Gelüng Dondob Jiamtsu testified that on April 13, 1719 (Kangxi 58. 2.24), Sanji Zaisang, Gomang Lama, Dagba Zangbu, a judge (Ma. *jargūci*), and a scribe (Ma. *bithesi*) went to Zungharia via the Keriya route carrying Daiching Baatur and Baatur Noyan who had previously belonged to Lazang Khan. For details, see *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 8.22) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3453]. This document provides a more detailed list of the Zunghar travellers and the war prisoners they were taking to Zungharia. This deposition, however, presents conflicting information on the itinerary of Sanji Zaisang and his companions (i.e. the Keriya route as opposed to the Ngari route in Samdan's report). Considering the consistency between such various sources as Desideri's writing, *The Biography of Pholhané*, and the Qing palace memorials, it seems clear that Sanji Zaisang did travel from central Tibet to Zungharia in 1719 via the Ngari route. In addition, the informant Samdan was possibly more reliable than Lama Tsetsen Gelüng Dondob Jiamtsu regarding internal information of the Zunghar ruling party in central Tibet because Samdan was an Oirad soldier who had participated in the Zunghar conquest of Tibet. Before he fled to Gashuun via Dung-büreetü, he was stationed in the Dam plain as a member of the Zunghar garrison, whereas Lama Tsetsen Gelüng Dondob Jiamtsu never belonged to the Zunghar side since he reportedly kept wandering around many places in central Tibet to avoid the Zunghar conquerors. Therefore, it seems that Samdan had more accurate information on Sanji Zaisang's trip back to Zungharia, while Lama Tsetsen Gelüng Dondob Jiamtsu probably obtained the news from hearsay.

⁵² As will be discussed later, the Keriya route was the new path connecting Zungharia to central Tibet developed by the Zunghar forces in 1716–1717. Considering these Manchu palace memorials, the Ngari route was clearly not the only road between central Tibet and Zungharia. In other words, during the Zunghar rule in Tibet, travellers used both routes.

inhospitable territories to get from Gartok to Saga.⁵³ According to Desideri, the Zunghar troops who attempted to travel to Zungharia via the Ngari route were also “weary of the discomforts suffered during their long journey, especially through the great desert of Ngari Jungar they had had to cross in order to reach the border”.⁵⁴ A Manchu palace memorial concurs that the Ladakh region was distant from central Tibet, and the road from Ladakh to Tibet was so precipitous that it was very difficult for a large army to advance along it. According to this source, on the road between Yarkand and Ngari, the mountains and passes were high, grass and water were scarce, and there were many deserts, making it a highly difficult route to travel.⁵⁵

Due to the inconvenience of the western Ngari route, the size of the Zunghar caravans using this route tended to be much smaller than that of the Oirad and Zunghar travellers along the eastern Khökhe-nuur road. For example, only ten Muslims came to Ladakh from Yarkand to trade in 1733,⁵⁶ and in the summer of 1742, fifty Muslims led by Zaisang Bambar and Erkhe Darkhan Beg visited Ladakh from Yarkand to conduct trade.⁵⁷ In contrast, the Zunghar missions for the Tea-Offering ceremony and its associated trade mart which utilised the eastern Khökhe-nuur route were typically composed of around three hundred people along with sizeable quantities of merchandise.⁵⁸ And when Güüshi Khan had entered Tibet via the eastern Khökhe-nuur route in the 1630s, he was accompanied by some ten thousand Oirad soldiers. This may be contrasted with the observation that when Gyurmé Namgyel requested Zunghar forces to be sent to Ladakh in 1750, his request was for just fifty to one hundred men.⁵⁹ In light of these observations, it can be concluded that when compared to the eastern Khökhe-nuur route, the western Ngari route was fit only for small scale pilgrimages, trade, and military expeditions. It follows that the western Ngari route was only of primary strategic significance when the eastern Khökhe-nuur highway was shut-down because of military conflicts between the Qing and the Zunghar. This was the situation during the early 18th century.⁶⁰

⁵³ Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 211–212.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*: 254.

⁵⁵ *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0174–1311–004 (Jao Hūi, Qianlong 18.6.8).

⁵⁶ *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1148–004.1 (Cingboo, Yongzheng 11.10.21).

⁵⁷ *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1236–006 (Sobai, Qianlong 7.8.21).

⁵⁸ *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1221–015 (Ortai, Qianlong 4.12.17); Perdue 2015: 7, 16.

⁵⁹ *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–0983–009 (Bandi, Qianlong 16.1.28).

⁶⁰ With Galdan Boshugtu Khan’s downfall in 1697, the Khökhe-nuur Khoshuud nobility led by Dashi Baatur submitted to the Kangxi Emperor in a personal audience at Xi’an, receiving rich titles and gifts from the Qing emperor. From this point,

1.2. *A New Route for the Zunghar Forces*

In 1715, the Zunghar ruler Tsewang Rabdan had dispatched two thousand soldiers north of Hami to attack five fortresses on the pretext that his envoys and merchants had been blocked there. However, this military action failed. The Zunghar soldiers were defeated by the local Hami troops led by Emin Beg and the two hundred Qing soldiers garrisoned in Hami.⁶¹ Later, Tsewang Rabdan also sent forces to Gas and stole some livestock from the Qing garrison troops stationed there.⁶² At first glance, it might seem that these two military enterprises conducted by the Zunghars were unrelated. However, given the fact that these two actions took place just before the Zunghar invasion of central Tibet in 1716–1717, it is probable that Tsewang Rabdan had dispatched these forces in an effort to secure the two entries to the eastern Khökhe-nuur route. Hami was the portal to the north-eastern branch of the eastern Khökhe-nuur route, while Gas was the entrance to the south-western branch. The failure of these speculative military forays, however, meant that the entire eastern Khökhe-nuur route to Tibet remained inaccessible to the Zunghar troops at this time, necessitating a new strategy.

The situation on the western Ngari route was similarly difficult. Khangchenné was stationed in Ngari as the governor of this region when the Zunghar forces invaded central Tibet in 1716–1717. It was also Khangchenné who first detected the presence of the Zunghar army in Tibet and reported it to Lazang Khan.⁶³ Travelling via the western Ngari route would therefore have been hazardous for the Zunghar forces and would not have yielded any element of surprise for an attack on Lazang Khan in central Tibet.

Under these circumstances, the Zunghar forces opened an entirely new route from Zungharia to central Tibet. This route was previously completely unknown so that many informants—Tibetans, Muslims, and even Zunghars—were confused about the exact itinerary at first. For this reason, particularly during the early phase of the Zunghar invasion, some reports erroneously stated that the Zunghar troops had

most of the Oirad princes in the Khökhe-nuur region became pro-Qing, if not subordinate to the Qing, even though they continued to have marital and diplomatic relationships with the Zunghar princes. For details, see Atwood 2004: 574. Therefore, during the 18th century, it was almost impossible for the Zunghars to use the eastern Khökhe-nuur route without permission from the Qing court.

⁶¹ Zhunga'er shilüe bianxiezu 1985: 166; Enkhsuud 2017: 310, 368.

⁶² Kraft 1953: 130, 150; *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3088.

⁶³ Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 137.

entered Tibet via the western Ngari route.⁶⁴ This information was incorrect. Instead, various pertinent sources on the Zunghar movements reveal some very unlikely and unfamiliar place names, such as Keriya (Ma. Keriye) in southern Xinjiang and Nagtsang (Ma. Naktsang; Tib. Nag tshang) in northern central Tibet.

First, regarding the place name Keriya, Samdan's deposition is noteworthy. It reads:

Previously, Tsewang Rabdan only said that he would send soldiers to Keriya in the Muslim region after he assigned Tseringdondob and others to the military task. Then, we did not know exactly where we would go to war. The Zunghar commanders propagated that they had six thousand soldiers, but the true number of the soldiers was just five thousand and five hundred. Among these forces, Zunghars comprised one third, while our Torghuuds made up two thirds. To each soldier were assigned four to five horses, a camel, and an adequate amount of sheep and grain. Thereupon, Tsewang Rabdan dispatched us, and we arrived in Keriya. At that time our livestock perished, and we left about five hundred ill soldiers in Keriya. Then we travelled on from Keriya for twenty days, then Tseringdondob informed us that we were going to war in Tibet. Because our horses and other livestock were dying due to the very bad grass and water on the way, we suffered great hardships, and our soldiers travelled for seven to eight months on foot. After that, about five thousand soldiers arrived in Tibet. Some of them were killed while we fought several battles, and others died of diseases. Besides the people whom we sent back to our homeland, now there are only about three thousand soldiers left in Tibet. The route that comes from the Ili River to central Tibet via Keriya is very precipitous, and the grass and water en route are also bad (emphasis by the present author).⁶⁵

Samdan's testimony reveals several interesting points about the Zunghar campaign. First, the Zunghar army kept such close guard on the intelligence concerning the new route that even the soldiers themselves participating in the invasion did not know where they were heading until they were about to enter the Tibetan Plateau. Second, it was neither Yarkand, Hami, nor Gas but Keriya that functioned as the halting point on the itinerary of the Zunghar expeditionary forces. Third, the conditions on the route between Keriya and central Tibet

⁶⁴ For example, see Xizang shehui kexueyuan xizangxue hanwen wenxian bianjishi (ed.), *Pingding Zhunga'er fanglüe* (平定準噶爾方略; henceforth, *Zhunga'er fanglüe*) 1990: 92; Kraft 1953: 128; *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3088 and no. 3129; Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 137.

⁶⁵ *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (胤禛) (Kangxi 58. 7. 9) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3436].

were extremely arduous. The entire route was very high and steep, and there was little water and grass to sustain livestock.

As such, it is quite understandable that so many people, during the early phase of the Zunghar warfare in Tibet, assumed that the Zunghar army's route to Tibet was via the western Ngari route. The military campaign of the Zunghars to Tibet was so confidential that no one except for the highest echelons of the Zunghar leadership knew even the outlines of the operation, let alone any detailed plans. At that time no one would ever have guessed that so many Zunghar troops could have entered Tibet from Keriya. Before this invasion, the Keriya route was totally unknown and was therefore inconceivable as a route of military action.⁶⁶

The Zunghar army created the Keriya route to infiltrate central Tibet without being noticed by the Qing, the Khökhe-nuur Khoshuuds, or Lazang Khan's Tibetan government. As revealed by Samdan's deposition above, the Zunghar troops appear to have roamed around the vast region that lay between Keriya and central Tibet for an extended period of time in order to pioneer a completely new route. Considering the actual distance between Keriya and Nagtsang, it seems that the duration of seven to eight months mentioned by Samdan was too long a time to travel between the two places. Compared to the eastern Khökhe-nuur and the western Ngari routes, both of which were rather circuitous, Keriya–Nagtsang was as the crow flies a much more direct route, but the conditions made it near impassable, and there appears to have been no established route before this time, thus accounting for the length of time they took.⁶⁷ In other words, for the sake of their successful military campaign to central Tibet, the Zunghars attempted to create a whole new route to Tibet, bypassing the other famous and thus well-defended routes. This military venture yielded the Zunghars enormous success. No one foresaw such a bold military move until they had already reached the Nagtsang region.

Concerning Nagtsang, several sources attest to the importance of this location on the new route pioneered by the Zunghar invaders. First of all, Tibetan sources confirm that the Zunghar forces passed

⁶⁶ For this reason, Desideri depicted the regions between Keriya and central Tibet as "the impassable mountains that form a barrier to the kingdom of Independent Taryary". For details, see Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 212.

⁶⁷ The Zunghar forces reportedly needed to spend seven to eight months to go from Keriya up to Nagtsang. The Zunghars were required to travel for such a long time because they were then creating a new route which had hitherto not been used at all and even known to anyone. For this reason, the Zunghars must have gotten lost several times over the course of searching for possible routes. Moreover, since this was a completely new route, the Zunghars must have built some sort of milestones, probably in the form of cairn or *oboo*, along the itinerary for later use.

through Nagtsang on their way to the Dam plain. According to *The Biography of Pholhané*, “six thousand soldiers of the Zunghars advanced through a new desolate route. They claimed that they were escorting the eldest son of Lazang Khan and his wife back to Tibet. Thereupon, the stupid people of Nagtsang were deceived”⁶⁸ and provided the Zunghar soldiers with a feast and rest. The same source also relates that when the Zunghar forces began to retreat to their homeland in 1720, a Zunghar soldier fled to the military camp of Pholhané and testified that their troops had come to Tibet from Ngönmokhulung (Tib. Sngon mo khu lung) of Nagtsang.⁶⁹ Sumpa Khenpo also wrote that “in the fire-bird year (1717), five military officers, the elder Tshe ring don grub (Ma. *amba* Tseringdondob), Chos 'phel (Ma. Coimpel), Thob chi (Ma. Tobci), Sangs rgyas (Ma. Sanji or Sangji), and Gdugs dkar je'i sang (Ma. Dugar Jaisang), as well as their troops were dispatched from Dzungaria via such places as Dres pa nag tshong and Lā rgan, and arrived in Dam”.⁷⁰ Manchu palace memorials also provide detailed information on the events which took place in Nagtsang in 1717. According to a document sent by Lazang Khan to several Khoshuud princes in the Khökhe-nuur region and to Qing officials stationed in Xining, on August 10, 1717 (Kangxi 56.7.4) Tsewang Rabdan's forces pillaged a group of people in the Nagtsang region, which bordered Lazang Khan's domain.⁷¹ An envoy of Lazang Khan also imparted interesting information in his oral statement. His testimony attests to the fact that *hiya* Manggut,⁷² who was subordinate to the envoy and who had also conducted trade in the Nagtsang region, came back from Nagtsang and then reported that while he was trading there, he had noticed a large horde of camels raising a cloud of dust in the northwest on August 6, 1717 (Kangxi 56. 6.29). At that moment, he figured that this group of people and livestock must have been Tsewang Rabdan's forces because there were no camels in Tibet. Thus, he travelled for four days and nights in haste to report the sighting to Lazang Khan himself. Immediately after receiving this information, Lazang Khan sent Dural Taiji, Wei Zaisang, Darkhan Noyan, and Baatur Noyan along with one hundred soldiers to verify the report made by *hiya* Manggut.⁷³

Several important observations can be made from these sources. First, Nagtsang was then considered a border region of Lazang's

⁶⁸ Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 138.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*: 197.

⁷⁰ Sum pa mkhan po (trans. Yang) 1969: 46.

⁷¹ *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3088.

⁷² The term *hiya* (Ma.), or *kiy-a* (Mo.), is a title meaning “aide, guard, page, adjutant, or chamberlain”.

⁷³ *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3088.

Khoshuud Khanate in Tibet. The vast region to the north of Nagtsang was empty land, which no one claimed or defended. Therefore, the Zunghars were able to explore this region freely while travelling from Keriya to Nagtsang. Second, the Zunghar forces approached Nagtsang from the northwest driving a considerable number of camels. This would suggest that the Zunghars travelled from Keriya to Nagtsang through the extensive Jangtang (Tib. Byang thang) plain. Also, by *hiya* Manggut's description, it is apparent that the Zunghars still maintained sufficient livestock when they arrived in Nagtsang, as opposed to Samdan's report that suggests they had lost most of their livestock en route and thus moved on foot. These observations indicate that real reason why the Zunghar troops took so long to travel from Keriya to Nagtsang was not that they lost most of their livestock and then moved on foot, but because they were engaged in creating a new road as a shortcut between Zungharia and central Tibet.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the fact that it was *hiya* Manggut, then trading in Nagtsang, who first reported the arrival of the Zunghars reveals that there were no border guards or sentinels stationed in the Nagtsang region at this time. The lack of security forces in the region again confirms that the Zunghars pioneered this novel and previously unknown route in 1716–1717.

Some scholars might doubt that the Zunghar army took a direct route from Keriya to Nagtsang because each source quoted above mentions these place names—Keriya and Nagtsang—separately. Later Manchu palace memorials, however, clarify that the Zunghar troops indeed passed through Keriya and then Nagtsang consecutively on their expedition to central Tibet. For example, a report by the Tibetan minister *kalön* (Ma. *g'ablon*; Tib. *bka' blon*) Bandida states that according

⁷⁴ However, it is still true that the Zunghar army lost a considerable amount of livestock on the way in view of the testimony by a *rabjamba* (Ma. *ramjamba*; Tib. *rab 'byams pa*; i.e. doctor of Buddhist philosophy), who belonged to Galdan Shireetü Lama and was captured by the Zunghars while he was seeking to obtain offerings from the Nagtsang region. While in custody, he heard from the Zunghars that many horses and camels perished due to the long distance of the journey and heavy snow while the Zunghar soldiers came to Nagtsang. Thus, after the Zunghar troops first reached the region, they publicised that Galdan Danzin, the eldest son of Lazang Khan, came back to Tibet, thereby collecting livestock—i.e. five hundred cows and three thousand sheep in total—from the Nagtsang people. For details, see *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3088. Considering the actual number of the Zunghar soldiers who arrived in Nagtsang—i.e. about five thousand—in 1717, however, the amount of livestock that the Zunghars collected from the Nagtsang people was not that large. If they had lost most of their livestock en route, the Zunghars would have needed to collect a far greater number of animals from the people of Nagtsang. Therefore, it is plausible that the Zunghars were still able to keep a sufficient amount of livestock while they were pioneering this new route and that their requisition from the people of Nagtsang only represented a partial supplement to their overall number of animals at the time.

to some Tibetan elders, “previously, when Tseringdondob and others came to Tibet detouring via the Keriya route along with their soldiers, they arrived in Tibet very exhausted and suffered greatly because they had travelled more than a year. Only after they seized, by trickery, food and livestock from the people whom Lazang Khan had sent to the Nagtsang region, did they finally regain their vigour”.⁷⁵ This again confirms that the Zunghar troops created a new route which linked Keriya to Nagtsang through the Jangtang region. Putting together all the relevant sources, the entire itinerary of the Zunghar army in 1716–1717 was as follows: the Ili River—the Tekes River—Keriya—the northwest of Nagtsang (i.e. the Jangtang plain)—Nagtsang—Tengri-nuur—the Dam plain—Lhasa.⁷⁶

This Keriya–Nagtsang route continued to function as an alternative route between Zungharia and Tibet throughout the three years of Zunghar rule in central Tibet. For example, according to the deposition by Lama Tsetsen Gelüng Dondob Jiamtsu, some Tibetans of the Nagtsang region told him that when the Zunghars in central Tibet sent *hiya* Sereng—one of the Qing commanders captured by the Zunghars in 1718—to Tsewang Rabdan, he did not eat for more than ten days en route and died after reaching Keriya.⁷⁷ This case clearly shows that Sereng was sent to Zungharia via the Nagtsang–Keriya route in 1719. *The Biography of Pholhané* also provides evidence. It narrates an incident in which the Zunghars captured several Mongols, who had been former officials of Lazang Khan, and sent them to Zungharia. On the way, these Mongols fled from Nagtsang to the estate of Pholhané, who received them with good food and hid them in an underground shelter in his house.⁷⁸ This again indicates that these captured Mongol officials were also sent to Zungharia via the Nagtsang–Keriya route.

In sum, between 1716 and 1720, the Zunghars used two main routes between central Tibet and Zungharia. One was the western Ngari route, and the other was the new Keriya–Nagtsang route. It was via these two routes that the connection between Tibet and Zungharia was maintained during the Zunghar rule of central Tibet. Although both were less than ideal, steady traffic indeed flowed along them. According to an oral report by a Zunghar envoy, “people who come from Tibet and go from our Taiji’s place (i.e. the Ili region) go back and forth

⁷⁵ *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0174–1295–001 (Namjal, Qianlong 16.3.20). A very similar report is also found in *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0174–1311–004 (Jao Hūi, Qianlong 18.6.8).

⁷⁶ As for the Tekes River, refer to *Zhunga'er fanglie* 1990: 110.

⁷⁷ *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58.8.22) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3453].

⁷⁸ Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 170.

ceaselessly [between Tibet and Zungharia]".⁷⁹ When the Zunghars withdrew from Tibet to their homeland in 1720, they also used both of these routes. *The Biography of Pholhané* relates that a ruler of Nagtsang informed Pholhané that some Zunghar soldiers moved towards Ngari to retreat to their homeland.⁸⁰ Next, a report by Yunti (允禔), the commander-in-chief of the Qing army in Xining (i.e. the same person as Yinzhen/In Jeng), states that when a branch of the Qing forces entered central Tibet on September 24, 1720 (Kangxi 59. 8.23) they obtained information that Tseringdondob and others had fled via the Keriya route.⁸¹ The testimonies of two Zunghar fugitives named Tegüs and Jakha on October 2, 1720 (Kangxi 59. 9. 1) also confirm that Tseringdondob and his followers had returned to Zungharia "from Nagtsang through the Keriya route by utilising the same path they had previously used when coming to central Tibet".⁸² Since the Zunghar forces returned to Zungharia separately via the two different routes, the Zunghar commanders arrived at their destination at different times. Tseringdondob, for example, came back to the Ili region in the first month of the 60th year of Kangxi, whereas Choimpel Zaisang only arrived back in the fourth month of the same year.⁸³

1.3. The Influence of the Zunghars' New Route on Tibet's Defence System

By the early 18th century, there existed three main routes between Zungharia and central Tibet, viz., the eastern Khökhe-nuur, the western Ngari, and the central Keriya–Nagtsang routes. The first two were the well-known traditional paths, while the Keriya–Nagtsang route was first opened by the Zunghars between 1716 and 1717. This new route enabled the Zunghars' surprise conquest of central Tibet and then also facilitated communication with the Zunghar headquarters on

⁷⁹ *Kangxi manwen*, the document by Funingga (Kangxi 59. 4.12) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3501].

⁸⁰ Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 196.

⁸¹ *Zhunga'er fanglüe* 1990: 162; *Jun gar i ba be necihiyeme toktobuha bodogon i bithei julergi banjibun* (henceforth *Jun gar bodogon i bithe*), Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, doc. no. Mandchou 144, vol. 8: 14–15. Desideri also wrote that Tseringdondob "took the road through the western desert [...] across the impassable mountains that flank the nearly untrodden roads in this region". This description is reminiscent of his portrayal of the regions along the Keriya–Nagtsang route. For details, refer to Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 259.

⁸² Wu 1991: 192, 196.

⁸³ Regarding the other commanders, it was reported that Tobchi Zaisang was killed together with his five hundred soldiers en route, and Dugar Zaisang died of a disease. Only fifteen hundred soldiers, from among the five thousand that Tseringdondob initially took to Tibet, managed to come back to Zungharia in 1721. For details, see Kraft 1953: 158.

the Ili River during their rule in Tibet. From Tibetan and Qing perspectives, however, this unexpected attack by the Zunghars was a disaster that left a traumatic imprint in the minds of future policymakers. Thus, the Zunghar conquest of central Tibet and the new route the Zunghars had created, in particular, exerted a lasting influence on Tibetan military system under Qing rule. Specifically, after the Qing forces ousted the Zunghars from central Tibet in 1720, both the Qing court and the Tibetan government paid close attention to the Nagtsang region by establishing watch posts (Ma. *karun*) and border patrols along this route. This is one of the most visible changes that the Zunghar conquest of central Tibet engendered in Tibetan military institutions, since previously there had been no defence system whatsoever in the Nagtsang region, let alone the vast Jangtang region north of it.

After the Qing forces pacified central Tibet in 1720, Tibetan troops were stationed at the two strategic points of the Zunghars' two principal routes, namely, Ngari and Nagtsang. According to *The Biography of Pholhané*, after the new ruling apparatus backed by the Qing was established in central Tibet, Khangchenné went back to Ngari. A year later, Pholhané reached Nagtsang and the wilderness beyond it with a small number of soldiers.⁸⁴ By the time that Pholhané reached Nagtsang, a Tibetan general from Tsang (Tib. Gtsang) as well as a Mongol commander were already stationed there.⁸⁵ Evidently, the purpose of stationing Tibetan troops at these two key locations in 1720 was to forestall any possible return of the Zunghars.⁸⁶

During this early period of Qing political and military influence in Tibet, Pholhané and his soldiers often went to Nagtsang and even patrolled the wilderness north of it. As related in his biography, a Qing general said to Pholhané, "beforehand, you were quite good at overcoming the long march [to Nagtsang] and patrolling [the region. Thanks to your service,] we were able to sleep on high pillows without any worries. Now, I ask you Taiji to go with [your] soldiers to Nagtsang which the Zunghar bandits used as their route when they invaded [Tibet]"⁸⁷ Following this, Pholhané and his forces advanced to Nagtsang, where he sent out scouts in every direction. Since Pholhané

⁸⁴ Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 209.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*: 210.

⁸⁶ At this time, with the coming of the winter, Pholhané came back from Nagtsang because the high mountains and plains of the region became covered with snow with all grass withered away. It is interesting that this is precisely the pattern that later watch-posts and border patrols in Tibet followed. In general, they went off-duty and then came back to their headquarters during winter when everything became carpeted with heavy snow. Therefore, this pattern of border defence was already in operation as early as 1720. For details, see *ibid.*: 212.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*: 213.

and his Tibetan troops had a firm knowledge of the region, there was reportedly no need to worry about the Zunghars stealthily re-entering Tibet.⁸⁸ Later, the Qing Emperor issued a decree saying “You Khangchenné, go to the Ngari region! I think that the adjacent regions of Ngari, such as Nagtsang and Saga, are the areas where the Zunghar bandits may frequently appear. Therefore, I order you to watch over and patrol these regions diligently”.⁸⁹

Such close attention to the regions that linked Zungharia to central Tibet, especially the Nagtsang region, continued during later periods. For example, when the Qing court detected the rumour that the Zunghar ruler Galdan Tsereng would send Surza (Ma. Surdza), the youngest son of Lazang Khan captured by the Zunghars after the Zunghar conquest of central Tibet, back to Tibet in 1731, the Qing officials in Tibet reported the Yongzheng Emperor that they were maintaining nine watch posts in central Tibet, three each in the Nagtsang (Ma. Nakcan), Tengri-nuur, and Khara-usu regions, and just sent out patrols to all the sentry posts.⁹⁰ Soon after, in preparation for the possibility that Surza would come back from Zungharia to Tibet with Zunghar forces, Qing officials investigated possible routes through which the Zunghars could approach Tibet. According to their survey, there were only three routes that the Zunghars could utilise to come to Tibet; that is, the Ngari, Jesken Turu (Ma. Jesken turu; i.e. the south-western branch of the eastern Khöke-nuur route), and Keriya routes.⁹¹ Later, in 1736, when the Qing court obtained intelligence that Galdan Tsereng had sent a person named Namkha Jamba (Ma. Namk’a jamba) to Tibet to invite a doctor, Pholhané, then at the rank of *beile*, dispatched scouts to three routes to verify whether the intelligence was accurate or not. To collect relevant information, Pholhané sent Tsagaan Khashikha, along with nine soldiers, to important mountain passes linking Yarkand with Ngari; Süg Zaisang, also with nine companions, to critical passes, such as Nagtsang and Musu Jegen (Ma. Musu jegen), of which roads came from Keriya; and Nachin Khashikha, together with nine followers, to the Akhayag route that was a crucial path connecting Gas with central Tibet.⁹²

In 1747, Fuching (Ma. Fucing; i.e. a Grand Minister Resident of Tibet in 1745–1748 and 1750; Ch. Zhuzang dachen 駐藏大臣)⁹³ conducted a survey on the routes linking Zungharia with central Tibet in the face

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*: 215.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*: 228.

⁹⁰ *Xinjiang huibian*, vol. 1, 66–69.

⁹¹ *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1117–010 (Fengšengge, Yongzheng 9.8.19).

⁹² *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1189–016 (Nasutai, Qianlong 7.9.18).

⁹³ Concerning Fuching, see Hummel 1943: 249–251; Petech [1950] 1972: 285.

of the imminent third *manja* ceremony and trade by the Zunghars. Fuching's investigation indicates that there existed five routes in total between Zungharia and central Tibet, all equipped with sentry outposts (see table 1). At each sentry post, one hundred soldiers were stationed under a commander.

Name of the routes	Name of the <i>karuns</i> installed
The Akhayag route (Ma. Ahayak <i>jugūn</i>)	Khajir-debter
	Jungga-rimar
	Nomkhon
The Tengri-nuur route (Ma. Tenggeri noor <i>jugūn</i>)	Muskijegen
	Sengge-ojo
The Nagtsang route (Ma. Naktsang <i>jugūn</i>)	Gukstang
	Tebke-tolugai
	Omo-kulum
The Rutok route (Ma. Rutok <i>jugūn</i>)	Tsetang-ritang (in Ngari)
The Nure route (Ma. Nure <i>jugūn</i>)	Nuru (in Ladakh)

Table 1. The routes and karuns between Zungharia and central Tibet in 1747.⁹⁴

In the aftermath of the downfall of Gyurmé Namgyel, Bandi and Namjal (i.e. the *ambans* or Grand Ministers Resident in Tibet in 1751–1752), following the Qianlong Emperor's order, significantly reinforced the defence system of central Tibet by installing additional sentry posts in 1751. As a result, a line of successive sentry posts (or *karuns*) was constructed along the northern frontiers of Tibet, from Ngari in the west up to Akhayag in the northeast (see table 2).

⁹⁴ *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0174–1272–010 (Sobai, Qianlong 12.8.10). Among the five routes, the Akhayag and the Tengri-nuur routes constituted the eastern Khökhe-nuur route. The Nagtsang route represented the Keriya–Nagtsang route. Lastly, the Rutok and the Nure routes comprised the western Ngari route.

Name of the main regions	Name of the <i>karuns</i> installed
From Yarkand to Rutok (of Ngari)	Kargem
	Belgun
	Nangma
From Rutok to Nagtsang	Duidangjilgar
	Tsunduba
	Tsemaninja
From Nagtsang to Tengri-nuur	Dzalashan (or Tsalashan)
	Labsai-namu (outside Dzalashan/Tsalashan)
	Rag'gajongmar
	Tsamardilbu
	Rajukyakdu
From Tengri-nuur to Khara-usu	Gangsiba
	Sejuk
	Sengga'nojor
From Khara-usu to Akhayag	Musijergen
	Bungga-rimar (or Jungga-rimar)
	Akhayag
	Shuntugur (outside Akhayag)

Table 2. The karuns along the northern frontiers of Tibet in 1751.⁹⁵

Lastly, in 1753, Jao Hūi,⁹⁶ then the Grand Minister Resident of Tibet, presented the Qianlong Emperor with a comprehensive plan for the defence of Tibet against the Zunghars:

In total, there are four routes which connect Zungharia to central Tibet. Apart from the four routes of Ngari, Nagtsang, Tengri-nuur, and Akhayag, there is no other route.⁹⁷ Previously, when Tseringdondob and others invaded Tibet surreptitiously, they came to Tibet through the Nagtsang route. This route, however, traversed large deserts and was difficult to pass. Beforehand, Tseringdondob and others had travelled for

⁹⁵ *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03-0174-1295-001 (Namjal, Qianlong 16.3.20).

⁹⁶ Regarding Jao Hūi, see Hummel 1943: 72-74.

⁹⁷ The Akhayag and the Tengri-nuur routes constituted the eastern Khökhe-nuur route.

about a year detouring from the Keriya route. [...] On this route, it is a one-month journey from Nagtsang up to the Labsai-namu *karun*, which was installed at the frontier region north of Nagtsang. If we receive any information about a Zunghar advance, *diba* (Tib. *sde pa*) of the Nagtsang region will take soldiers and attack the Zunghar forces [...] From Lhasa, I, Jao Hūi, your servant, will take three hundred imperial soldiers and will also send out a *kalön* and a *daibung* (Tib. *mda' dpon*; i.e. general of the Tibetan army) along with the eighteen hundred Tibetan troops, who are already on stand-by, to important strategic passes on the way to Nagtsang to defend those crucial places. We will also assemble and dispatch the one thousand soldiers who are standing ready in such places as Dam, Khara-usu, and Yangbajin, and with our well-provisioned soldiers, we will kill the Zunghar forces who will be arriving exhausted. Thus, there will be nothing to worry about. Next, although it is quite close from Ladakh to Ngari, the king of Ladakh only admits a small number of merchants from Zungharia. So, how could the Ladakhi king allow many Zunghar people into [Tibet]? Although there is a road that runs from Yarkand of the Zunghar [Principality] directly to Ngari, people say that between Yarkand and Ngari, there are colossal mountains and passes, that water and grass are scarce, and that there are many deserts, making it thus significantly difficult to pass. Furthermore, it is a two-month journey from Ngari to central Tibet. Now, we have installed *karuns* in all the frontier regions of Ngari. Thus, even if Zunghar forces come to Tibet through this route, if the *diba* stationed in Ngari attacks the Zunghars with the three thousand five hundred soldiers he has at his disposal, we can surely repel the Zunghars easily. [...] These two routes of Ngari and Nagtsang are therefore all strong [in terms of defence]. There is nothing to worry about. The two routes of Akhayag and Tengri-nuur are both broad. The Zunghar Tea-Offering envoys visited central Tibet twice using the Akhayag route. [...] Now, on this route, we have installed *karuns* in such places as Musijergen, Bungga-rimar, and Akhayag. Also, at Shuntugur outside Akhayag, we have placed a *karun* to watch over the route. [...] The sentry outposts are densely installed, their inspection of the border regions is strict, and the defence is dependable. Therefore, it is unnecessary to add or amend anything.⁹⁸

To sum up, the Qing court and the Tibetan government both paid close attention to the various routes that connected Zungharia to central Tibet until the collapse of the Zunghar Principality in 1755. More importantly, the Nagtsang–Keriya route which the Zunghars newly created in 1716–1717 continued to remain as a critical target of close observation and defence from the perspectives of the Qing and Tibetan authorities. In other words, the Zunghar conquest of central Tibet, and

⁹⁸ *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0174–1311–004 (Jao Hūi, Qianlong 18.6.8).

the opening of the new Nagtsang–Keriya route in particular, indeed left a lasting imprint on the Tibetan defence system of later periods.

2. A Military Scheme of the Zunghars and its Impact on Tibetan Military Strategy

2.1. The Battles between the Zunghar Troops and Lazang Khan's Forces

After having travelled the new route between Keriya and Nagtsang, the Zunghar forces set up their military camps in Nagtsang in the summer of the 56th year of Kangxi (1717). According to the report by a *rabjamba*, a follower of Galdan Shireetü Lama, the Zunghar troops installed a sentry post (Ma. *karun*) of two hundred soldiers near the shore of Lake Tengri-nuur and established two separate headquarters in Nagtsang with three to four thousand soldiers in total.⁹⁹ After learning that the Zunghar army had already arrived in the Nagtsang region, Lazang Khan dispatched one hundred soldiers to investigate. Thus, the first skirmish between the two sides broke out close to Lake Tengri-nuur. After that, Lazang Khan also installed sentry outposts at the same lake. In preparation for the imminent battles with the Zunghars, Lazang Khan and his son, Surza Taiji, both then stationed in the nearby Dam plain, assembled a force of some ten thousand soldiers, consisting of about two thousand Oirads (Ma. *Ület*) and around seven thousand Tibetans (Ma. *Tanggūt*).¹⁰⁰

Soon afterwards several major battles were fought in the Dam plain. On August 25, 1717 (Kangxi 56. 7.19), the Zunghar troops advanced to Dam through the Largin pass (Ch. La'erjin ling 拉尔金岭; probably corresponding to Sumpa Khenpo's *Lā-rgan*, "old pass"). The Zunghars successfully broke through the mountain pass with only a small number of casualties, even though Lazang Khan had dispatched five hundred soldiers to defend it. At this point, the Zunghar army made an interesting move. As soon as they crossed the pass, they struck west and ascended the mountain. In the midst of the mountain, they pillaged the monastery of Kundui Lama (昆堆喇嘛), who was affiliated with the Panchen Lama, and built a stronghold there from which to confront Lazang Khan's military camps. In contrast, Lazang Khan reportedly built his fortress in an open field on the Dam plain as the headquarters of his army.¹⁰¹ On August 31, 1717 (Kangxi 56. 7.25),

⁹⁹ *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3088.

¹⁰⁰ *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3088, no. 3129.

¹⁰¹ There is an interesting report regarding Lazang Khan's military deployment. According to the oral testimony by Sonom, a subject of Achi Lobzang Taiji, Lazang

Lazang Khan, Taiji Surza, and Taiji Achi Lobzang commanded fifteen hundred Mongolian and ten thousand Tibetan soldiers in an attack on the Zunghar troops, who were then just about five thousand. Even though Lazang Khan's forces considerably outnumbered the Zunghars, Lazang Khan and his followers were unable to defeat their enemies because the Zunghar troops had occupied a high position on a mountain and built a fortification there as their military camp. Later, Lazang Khan's troops assailed the Zunghars repeatedly on September 2, 1717 (Kangxi 56. 7.27), September 3, 1717 (Kangxi 56. 7.28), and September 23, 1717 (Kangxi 56. 8.19). Over the course of these major battles, Lazang Khan's army, whose headquarters was in an open field, was barely able to inflict any damage on the Zunghar troops, who had the advantage of having their military camp on a high mountain.¹⁰² According to the report by Sonom (Ma. Sonom; Tib. Bsod nam), Lazang Khan's forces led by Taiji Achi Lobzang only killed about one hundred Zunghar soldiers during the four main battles. Considering that the informant Sonom was a subject of Achi Lobzang and thus highly inclined to aggrandise his master's deeds, his statement ironically reveals the extent of Achi Lobzang's, and by extension Lazang Khan's, failure in the battles. The Zunghar soldiers were then able to advance on Lhasa with their entire force almost intact and attack the city on the dawn of October 8, 1717 (Kangxi 56. 9. 4).

A similar description of these battles is also found in *The Biography of Pholhané*. This source narrates that after having received information that a large number of Zunghar forces were approaching the Dam plain from Nagtsang, Lazang Khan dispatched some Mongol scouts to examine the situation. This reconnaissance party encountered some Zunghar patrols at Lake Tengri-nuur where the two sides engaged in their first skirmish. After thus confirming that the Zunghar forces were indeed hostile to him, Lazang Khan sent Pholhané to Lhasa to muster Tibetan soldiers from the Ü and Tsang regions. Having dealt with his task quickly in Lhasa, Pholhané came back to the Dam plain, where,

Khan rejected Achi Lobzang's useful suggestions three times and finally built a rampart in an open field of Dam to fight the Zunghar army. First, Achi Lobzang suggested Lazang Khan send two to three thousand soldiers to Lake Tengri-nuur to proactively attack the Zunghar forces who were then exhausted after their long journey. After that, Achi Lobzang's second proposal was to attack the Zunghars on the farther side of the Largin pass before the Zunghar forces crossed it. After Lazang Khan decided to wage a battle with the Zunghar forces on the near side of the Largin Pass, Achi Lobzang made his final suggestion that they had better construct a bastion on a high mountain to facilitate their attacks on the Zunghar forces. Denying all these proposals by Achi Lobzang, Lazang Khan finally installed his main military camp in an open plain of the Dam area. For details, see *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3129.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

following Lazang Khan's orders, he constructed palisades and trenches to prepare for the impending battles with the Zunghars. At this juncture, Pholhané reportedly argued that they needed to station musketeers on the Khudü Mountain (Tib. Khu 'dus) for defence.¹⁰³ However, Dawa Erkhe Taiji, the father-in-law of Lazang Khan, refuted Pholhané's suggestion saying:

Pholhané Taiji! You are a boy born and raised in Tibet, not a Mongol who is good at war and conquering. You do not know anything. [...] Previously, I went to war and fought for a long time following Ablai, Tsetsen Khan, and Boshugtu Khan. When we notice enemies coming, the only proper way to deal with them is to attack them directly. It is never righteous to defend mountains and cliffs to the death.¹⁰⁴

As a result, continues the biography, it was the Zunghar forces that encamped on a mountain while Lazang Khan's troops remained on the open field. Soon, several major battles ensued. During these battles, Lazang Khan's troops endeavoured to attack and to occupy the Zunghar camp in its elevated position, but to no avail. Despite the hard efforts of Lazang's soldiers, it was Lazang Khan's side that suffered most casualties. For example, a Tibetan commander named Arongpa (Tib. A rong pa), together with his soldiers, moved stealthily for a night along a ridge of the mountain behind the Zunghar camp. But because a spy informed the Zunghars of this secret operation, the Zunghar forces were able to lay an ambush in advance on the mountaintop. As a result, the Zunghars annihilated the Tibetan troops. In the ensuing *melée*, the renowned Tibetan commander Arongpa was shot and killed by the Zunghars. A few days later, a Tibetan army again moved to a mountainous area to attack the Zunghar stronghold on the mountaintop. Pholhané and his fellow Tibetan commanders assailed the Zunghar camp where Chöpel (Tib. Chos 'phel), one of the five

¹⁰³ According to Sonom's report discussed above, it was not Pholhané but the Mongol Taiji Achi Lobzang who urged Lazang Khan to build a stronghold on a high mountain in the Dam region. For now, it is hard to tell which record is more reliable since both writers had reasons to embellish their own masters—i.e. for Sonom, Taiji Achi Lobzang and for Tsering Wanggyel, Pholhané. It is possible that both Pholhané and Taiji Achi Lobzang made similar proposals to Lazang Khan at that time. In any case, from these accounts, it can be inferred that both Mongols and Tibetans in central Tibet believed in the wake of these defeats that Lazang Khan's failure to defeat the Zunghar forces in the Dam plain was because he had not installed his military camp on a high mountain while the Zunghars did so. Also, one can confidently surmise that the Mountain Khudü mentioned in *The Biography of Pholhané* refers to the western mountain on which the Zunghars had pillaged the monastery of Kundui Lama and installed their military camp with ramparts, as appears in Sonom's report.

¹⁰⁴ Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 139.

Zunghar generals, was in charge of the defence. Despite the bravery of the Tibetan troops, a personal attendant of Pholhané as well as the famous Tibetan commander Bumtangpa (Tib. 'Bum thang pa) were both killed during the battle. Soon after this defeat, the Zunghars descended from the mountain and advanced to Lhasa through the Dam plain.¹⁰⁵

Lazang Khan's report to the Qing court also corroborates these events with some variation. According to this source, Tseringdondob and his six thousand Zunghar soldiers arrived at a mountain called Jingkorting (Ma. Jingk'orting) and occupied a steep and critical location on the mountain. After that, the Zunghars attacked Lazang Khan's army from the upland. Later, at night, they crossed a mountain pass to come to the Dam plain, where they encamped.¹⁰⁶ Once again, this confirms that the Zunghar forces had occupied a high and strategic position before the main battles with Lazang Khan's troops. Therefore, all the evidence presented so far leads to the conclusion that the Zunghar military success was in large part because of their strategy of occupying an elevated position. In this way, they were able to overcome Lazang Khan's forces despite their numerical inferiority.

2.2. *The Battles between the Zunghars and Qing Forces*

After the Zunghars had defeated Lazang Khan and occupied central Tibet by the end of 1717, they continued to employ the same field strategy in their engagements with Qing forces. For instance, when Sereng, a Duty Group Commander (Ma. *idui ejen*) of the Qing troops, assailed Zunghar forces at a place called Tsagaan Obootu (Ma. Cagan obotu) on August 17, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.21), the Zunghar soldiers were reportedly stationed on four different mountains. Specifically, Sereng departed from Khökhe-saya (Ma. Kukusai), north of the Murui-usu River, and headed towards central Tibet on July 8, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 6.11). On August 15, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.19), he and his forces crossed the Khara-usu River and encamped there. On August 17, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.21), Sereng's followers succeeded in capturing a Zunghar soldier named Damba. According to Damba's deposition, some Zunghar forces had encountered the Qing troops led by the General Erentei at a place called Chilun-gol (Ma. Cilun gol), between the Murui-usu and the Khara-usu rivers, and had engaged Erentei's army twice. Since the Zunghars were defeated by the Qing forces in both of these battles,¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*: 138–142, 147.

¹⁰⁶ *Zhunga'er fanglüe* 1990: 105; *Jun gar bodogon i bithe*, vol. 4: 81–82.

¹⁰⁷ Another report provides a more detailed depiction of the Chilun-gol battle. In the first place, the Qing general Erentei left Khökhe-nuur along with his fifty soldiers on June 5, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 5. 7) and caught up with Sereng on the Murui-usu River on July 6, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 6. 9). Thereupon, Sereng again advanced southward

the Zunghar troops were then retreating towards Dam and were expected to arrive in the region, where Sereng's forces were quartered, at the mealtime of the very same day. Having obtained this information, Sereng immediately took fourteen hundred soldiers and advanced towards the Zunghars. When Sereng and his forces reached Tsagaan Obootu, they met the Zunghars. Sereng's troops engaged their enemy and were successful in seizing the three mountain strongholds which the Zunghars had occupied. Thereupon, when the Qing troops arrived at the fourth mountain the Zunghars were occupying, the Zunghar forces immediately fled without fighting. In these battles, the Zunghar troops were reportedly composed of about three thousand soldiers utilising arrows, muskets, and other weapons.¹⁰⁸ Even though the Zunghars failed to defeat the Qing forces on these occasions, it is worth noting that the Zunghar troops had once again set up their military camps on mountains. Furthermore, it seems that the Zunghars, who were then only transiting from Chiluun-gol towards the Dam region, did not anticipate these battles. Thus, it is possible to assume that it had become a routine military procedure for the Zunghars to occupy mountain positions when setting up military camps.

Later, when the Zunghar troops achieved their biggest victory against the Qing army in central Tibet, they also employed this strategy. Specifically, after having gained a major victory at Tsagaan Obootu on August 17, the Qing commander Sereng asked the General Erenteï, then encamped at Chiluun-gol, to join him on August 22, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.26). Upon receiving Sereng's request, Erenteï crossed the

with his troops. At that time, Erenteï continued to remain to the north of the Murui-usu River—probably at Khökhe-saya—and made about one thousand of his two thousand soldiers cross the river in vessels made of cowhide. Later, Erenteï received information that his personnel transporting grain and silver to Sereng failed to catch up with Sereng's troops and returned to his camp. No sooner had Erenteï obtained this news than he departed with his twelve hundred soldiers who had already crossed the Murui-usu River to catch up with Sereng. On August 12, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.16), Erenteï and his forces arrived at Chiluun-gol. That night, some Zunghar troops stole about one hundred horses from the Qing forces. On the night of August 15, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.19), more than two thousand Zunghar soldiers attacked Erenteï's camp. From night until noon the next day, the battle continued, with the Zunghar forces eventually retreating. During these battles, the Zunghars utilised muskets, lances, bows, and arrows but no cannons. For details, see *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 5.12) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3402]. It is interesting to note that the Zunghar forces had reportedly just *returned* after the prolonged battle. Therefore, it is plausible that the Zunghar troops were not necessarily defeated by Erenteï's forces at Chiluun-gol. A more reasonable interpretation would be that the battles between the Zunghars and the Qing forces at Chiluun-gol were indecisive.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Khara-usu River along with four hundred soldiers on August 24, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.28) and caught up with Sereng's forces. At that time, the rest of Erenteï's soldiers remained at Chiluun-gol, north of the Khara-usu River. On August 25, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.29), the unified Qing forces led by Erenteï and Sereng harried the Zunghars, but no major battles ensued. Later, on August 30, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 8. 5), after the Zunghars learned that the Qing soldiers who had been left behind at Chiluun-gol were approaching, they set off from a northern mountain and attacked the flank of the Qing forces in an attempt to cut the Qing forces in two. At this time, approximately sixteen to seventeen hundred Zunghar soldiers pillaged more than half of the Qing provisions. From then on, the Zunghar forces assailed the Qing military camps every day. To this end, the Zunghars built a rampart on top of a mountain and fired muskets towards the Qing camps. On September 14, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 8.20), all the Zunghar troops finally withdrew. Later, on September 24, 1718 (Kangxi 57. intercalary 8. 1), the Zunghar forces suddenly descended from two mountains simultaneously and drove away the horses that were grazing outside the Qing camps. At this point, the Qing forces had fallen into dire straits because their livestock had perished, and their grains and provisions were exhausted. On November 20, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 9.28), Erenteï's forces left the camp and again crossed the Khara-usu River in an attempt to re-supply their grain and provisions. The next day, however, Erenteï was shot and killed when a large group of Zunghar soldiers chased and attacked the Qing troops with muskets.¹⁰⁹

Another report by a lieutenant and a soldier of Erenteï's division offers some more details on these battles. When the Qing forces attacked the Zunghars on August 25, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.29), five hundred Zunghar soldiers stood on top of a mountain on the opposite side brandishing a white military standard. Later, when the Qing troops went to obtain provisions from their military camp north of the Khara-usu River, the Zunghars, having learnt that they were in disarray, chased and assailed them. The Zunghars sent out about seven to eight hundred soldiers, who were lying in ambush behind a mountain ridge and then came down from the top of the mountain, to besiege Erenteï and his forces. After realising that he was surrounded, Erenteï summoned Sereng two to three times, but Sereng did not reach Erenteï in time.¹¹⁰ These descriptions all confirm that a key military strategy of the Zunghar forces in central Tibet was to occupy mountain strong-

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

holds and fight their battles from such vantage points whenever possible. It seems that this tactic served them well, giving them a strategic advantage both defensively and offensively.¹¹¹

2.3. *A Zunghar Military Strategy on Battlefields*

As discussed so far, on the battlefields of central Tibet, the Zunghar forces usually established their military camps and strongholds in mountainous terrain. They would then attack their enemies with various weapons, but most prominently with muskets. This Zunghar military strategy bears little resemblance to the traditional tactics of nomadic armies, which usually relied on mounted archery (e.g., the Parthian shot), ambushes, sudden appearance and disappearance, and feigned retreats followed by a volley of arrows and a sudden charge in open grassland.¹¹² Why did the Zunghars not employ such traditional ways of fighting in central Tibet? Was it because Tibet is a region full of high mountains?

For the Zunghars, the military strategy of installing camps on mountains was not a one-time event customised for the battles in central Tibet. Rather, the Zunghar forces utilised this strategy whenever and wherever possible. One sees an early example of this tactic being employed in *The Biography of Zaya Pandita*, which portrays the war between the Khoshuud forces of Ochir Tsetsen Khan and the Zunghar troops of Galdan in 1676.¹¹³ We see another example in 1690, when the

¹¹¹ Unfortunately, there remain no detailed descriptions of the last battles between the Zunghars and Qing troops in 1720. Only Yansin's report provides some glimpses. According to this report, the Zunghar troops attacked the Qing forces three times, all at night, but were seriously defeated because the Qing army had prepared heavy ambushes with cannons and muskets around their military camps in advance. However, it is unknown if the Zunghars installed their military camps on mountains at that time. After these severe defeats, Tseringdondob and his Zunghar soldiers reportedly fled and hid in a mountain valley and dispatched people to high mountains in all directions to keep watch. For details, refer to Wu 1991: 195. From this account, it is possible to see that the Zunghar forces were again using mountains for various strategic military purposes.

¹¹² Atwood 2004: 348.

¹¹³ According to the brief descriptions found in *The Biography of Zaya Pandita*, the Zunghar troops, led by Makhan (Oir. Maxan) and Kūbūkūi Ui Zaisang (Oir. Kūbūkūi ui jayisang), actively utilised mountains or hills especially when they were attacked by the Khoshuuds, who usually progressed along the lower slope of a mountain or an open field. Specifically, when Makhan found himself in a disadvantageous situation during the battle, he ascended a mountain and probably built a military camp or rampart there. By doing so, Makhan succeeded in gaining an advantage in the battle and then eventually triumphing. Likewise, Kūbūkūi Ui Zaisang, when his opponents surrounded him, defended himself and his soldiers by constructing palisades on a mountain or a hill. As a result, the Zunghars led by

Zunghar troops led by Galdan Boshugtu Khan invaded Khalkha Mongolia and then engaged in battle with Qing forces in Inner Mongolia, again using the strategy of encamping on mountains.¹¹⁴ Similar strategies can also be observed in the famous battle of Ulaan-butung (Ma. Ulan butung; Mo. Ulayan butung), also in 1690,¹¹⁵ and during the battle of Zuun-modu (Mo. ʒayun modu) in 1696.¹¹⁶ Therefore, it is clear that installing military camps on mountains or some other upland areas was already a well-established battle tactic of the Zunghars long before their expedition to central Tibet in 1716–1717. Indeed, such a battlefield strategy had been used in all the major battles the Zunghars fought across Central Asia, Inner Mongolia, and Khalkha Mongolia. Also, at around the same time that Tseringdondob and his followers were fighting their last battles in central Tibet against the Qing, another division of Zunghar army, stationed around Turfan, was using a similar mountain strategy in their battles with Qing forces in the summer of 1720.¹¹⁷

Kübüküi Ui Zaisang were able to earn enough time for Galdan's troops to come to rescue them. For details, see Radnaabadraa 2009: 151–152/35v–36r.

¹¹⁴ When the Zunghar army won the battle of the Ulkhui River (Ma. Ulhūi bira; Ch. Wu'erhui he 烏爾會河) in eastern Inner Mongolia, they installed at least some of their military camps on a mountain. During the battle, such a military disposition brought substantial benefits to the Zunghars in that the Zunghar soldiers stationed on the top of the mountain served as reinforcements in ambush and successfully made a surprise attack on the Qing forces. For details, see Xizang shehui kexueyuan xizangxue hanwen wenxian bianjishi (ed.), *Qinzheng pingding shuomo fanglüe* (親征平定朔漢方略; henceforth, *Shuomo fanglüe*) 1994: 156.

¹¹⁵ At the beginning of the battle of Ulaan-butung, the Qing forces led by Prince Fuquan (福全) gradually approached the Zunghars and then arrived at the bottom of a mountain. When the Qing troops looked up, the Zunghars resisted them while encamping in a forest on a high bank on the opposite side of a river and utilising crouched camels as shields. Even though the Zunghars did not occupy a peak of the mountain at that time, they did install their military camp in a more elevated place on the mountain than the Qing forces. For details, see *Shuomo fanglüe* 1994: 181; *Beye dailame wargi amargi babe necihiyeme toktobuha bodogon i bithe* (henceforth *Wargi amargi ba bodogon i bithe*), Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, StaBiKat PPN3346228908, vol. 8: 3.

¹¹⁶ At the battle of Zuun-modu, the Zunghars, as soon as they encountered Qing troops in Terelji, hurriedly installed their military camp and deployed their soldiers on a small mountain ridge to fight the Qing forces who had already set up their camp on a higher location. Also, the Zunghars fired their muskets down towards the Qing forces from the mountain ridge. For details, see *Gongzhongdang kangxichao zouzhe* (宮中檔康熙朝奏摺; henceforth *Kangxi gongzhongdang*) vol. 8, 1977: 246–249.

¹¹⁷ Specifically, when the Zunghar troops stationed at the Ilbur-khoshuu (Ma. Ilbur hošo) sentry post were assailed by Qing forces and then lost most of their horses, they took flight upward to a precipitous place of the Ilbur-khoshuu mountain and shot arrows and muskets from there. Afterwards, when the Qing commander Kesitu reached in the middle of the Ilbur-khoshuu mountain, the Zunghar soldiers

The Zunghars continued to employ this military strategy in years following their Tibetan occupation. For example, during the battle of Khotong-nuur (Ma. Hotong noor; Mo. Qotung nayur; located in the midst of the Altai Mountains) in the summer of 1731, the Zunghars installed their military camps on high mountains, and such a battlefield tactic led to one of their biggest military successes.¹¹⁸ Later in a battle with the Kazakhs in the spring of 1732, the Zunghar troops again utilised strategic mountain encampments.¹¹⁹ Lastly, at the battle of Erdeni-zuu in the summer of 1732, once the Zunghar forces had arrived at the battlefield, a Zunghar general named Dorjidamba (Ma. Dorjidamba) reportedly rushed to a high ground of a nearby mountain to install his military camp, despite another general, Tseringdondob, firmly opposing this plan and arguing that they needed to encamp together on a flat place.¹²⁰

These examples demonstrate that in almost all their major battles, the Zunghars used this strategy of encamping on mountains or other upland areas, which thus constituted one of their most basic and customary military practices. A departure from the traditional nomadic military customs, this strategy provided the Zunghars with many advantages, as has been seen. It afforded them a superior vantage point on a given battlefield; it gave them excellent opportunities for ambush;

were standing on a highly steep location of the mountain. For details, see Kraft 1953: 139–140.

¹¹⁸ During this battle, the Zunghars continuously lay in ambush in the mountains and fired muskets from their shelters. For details, see Zhang 2012: 148; *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1152–007 (Siboo, Yongzheng 11.5.4); The National Central Archives of Mongolia, *Khiireend suuj khereg shiitgegch manj saidyn yam* (*Küriy-e-dü sayuju kereg sidkegči manju sayid-un yamun*; henceforth *Khiiree manj saidyn yam*), doc. no. M–1–1–2553 (1731), the third document; *Khiiree manj saidyn yam*, doc. no. M–1–1–2553 (1731), the second document.

¹¹⁹ In this case, the Zunghar forces led by Zaisang Khojimal (Ma. Jaisang Hojimal) installed three military camps each at the foot, on the top, and at the rear of a mountain in preparation for impending battles with the Kazakhs. For details, see *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1152–010 (Siboo, Yongzheng 11.5.22).

¹²⁰ Although the Zunghar general Tseringdondob objected to Dorjidamba's tactic of occupying a high mountain as their military camp, Tseringdondob's main point was not that they should install their camp in an open field but that they should concentrate their whole troops in one place or, at least, in close proximity. Given that there are no huge mountains in the region around Erdeni-zuu, when the entire Zunghar forces, of which size reportedly amounted to about thirty thousand at that time, intended to encamp on mountains, they needed to divide their troops onto several separate mountains. Because the Qing side also maintained sizeable troops at that time and mountains in and around the battlefield were not big enough, the Zunghar tactic of making mountain encampments turned out unbeneficial for the Zunghars at that time. For details, see *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1150–014 (Fupeng, Yongzheng 11.11.4); *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0172–0440–004.1 (Fupeng, Yongzheng 12.4.13).

it gave them a defensive advantage; and lastly but perhaps most importantly, it made most advantageous use of their firearms. In view of the various descriptions of these battles, it was musket that the Zunghar soldiers used on the battlefields most frequently. By taking high positions, the Zunghar musketeers could secure better sights and had more time to reload. Hence, they were able to improve their accuracy and sometimes even fire more shots than on flat places. Also, shooting muskets from elevated positions considerably enhanced the range of their weapons. The Zunghars' adaptation of their basic military strategy to make best use of the relatively new technology of firearms gave them an advantage over their slower-to-adapt rivals. As such, this new military scheme delivered numerous decisive victories to the Zunghars, even when they were considerably outnumbered by their enemies.¹²¹

2.4. *Zunghar Influence on Tibetan Warfare Strategy*

This Zunghar strategy likely influenced Tibetan military practices in later periods to a considerable degree. Historians might suppose that the Tibetans, who have lived on the highest plateau of the world for a long time, would have utilised mountains strategically in their warfare long before the Oirads came to Tibet. However, ever since the Khoshuud Oirads came to dominate Tibet militarily from 1637, the Tibetans do not seem to have employed the strategy of installing military camps on mountains at all.¹²² In this regard, *The Biography of Pholhané* is a key source since it describes numerous battles which took place in and around Tibet during the 17th and the 18th centuries. First of all, the biography briefly narrates Güüshi Khan's battles against Karma Tenkyong (Tib. Karma bstan skyong, 1606–1642) in Tsang and against the Kagyupa (Tib. Bka' brgyud pa) rulers in the region of Dakpo (Tib.

¹²¹ The fact that the Zunghars had considerable numbers of firearms on the battlefields was not *per se* the critical factor, since all their opponents, such as the Khoshuuds, the Kazakhs, the Russians, and the Qing, also had various firearms at their disposal by the early 18th century. I argue here that it was the Zunghars' ability to devise strategies and tactics to optimise this weaponry that was the decisive factor in their success.

¹²² It is indisputable that many Tibetan fortresses and castles are located on mountain strongholds. Therefore, it is likely that Tibetans had long considered higher positions militarily advantageous, especially when they built defensive apparatuses. At least with the rise of the Khoshuud rule in Tibet in the early 17th century, however, it seems that the Tibetan forces did not prefer to occupy elevated and fortified positions when they launched offensives against their enemies. This tendency might have originated from the Khoshuud military presence in Tibet. After Güüshi and his successors became khans of Tibet, Khoshuud khans or generals functioned as commanders-in-chief in most of the battles that broke out in the whole Tibetan regions.

Dwags po) and Kongpo (Tib. Kong po) soon afterwards. These accounts relate how Dargyé (Tib. Dar rgyas; i.e. the great-uncle of Pholhané) fought courageously in those battles in support of Gūūshi Khan. There is no mention in these descriptions, however, of mountain redoubts being used tactically.¹²³

The Biography of Pholhané also gives a relatively detailed account of Ganden Tsewang (Tib. Dga' ldan tshe dbang)'s campaigns to Ngari and Ladakh in 1678–1683. When Ganden Tsewang's Mongol troops arrived in Ngari, a reputable general of the Ladakh Kingdom stated that "it is unsuitable to combat the Mongol soldiers in an open field because all of them are good at fighting on horseback. Our troops need to occupy a strategic location on a mountain and a river and defend a solid fortress in order to obtain a victory by employing strategies".¹²⁴ The other Ladakhi commanders, however, rejected this opinion arguing that such a plan was unmanly and unheroic. As a result, the two sides clashed on a level plain in Ngari, and the Ladakhi forces were crushed by Ganden Tsewang's Mongol troops. Thereafter, the Ladakhis reportedly no longer dared to fight in the open field, and instead retreated to inside firm ramparts of Taklakhar in Puhreng, Tsahreng Tashigang, and others. Since the Mongol forces were not skilled in laying siege to fortresses on foot, about five thousand Tibetan soldiers were sent to Ngari from the Lhasa region. With the assistance of these Tibetan troops, Ganden Tsewang was able to capture Tsahreng Tashigang smoothly. Finally, the Mongol and the Tibetan armies led by Ganden Tsewang reached Leh, the capital of the Ladakh Kingdom, and installed their military camps and strongholds on the outskirts of the town.¹²⁵ These accounts suggest that neither Ganden Tsewang nor his Ladakhi opponents assumed elevated positions for their principal military bases. Only after the Ladakhis suffered a crushing defeat in the open field, were they forced to use several fortresses in the Ngari region as strongholds of last resort.¹²⁶

¹²³ Regarding the battle in the Tsang region, there is no description of the battle scene. Concerning the combat in Dakpo and Kongpo, the only relevant depiction imparts that Dargyé, at a terrifyingly narrow and difficult part of the route, in a deep defile, joined with the enemy in battle and fought dauntlessly with bows and arrows. Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 13–14; Sperling 2012: 197–198.

¹²⁴ Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 22.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*: 22–24; Sperling 2012: 202.

¹²⁶ According to *The Biography of Pholhané*, when Ganden Tsewang's forces reached the area around Leh, the Ladakhis deployed their forces in the region of Zangla. From the context, the Ladakhis seem to have installed their military camps in an open field again. For details, refer to Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 25.

The Biography of Pholhané also provides a detailed record of Lazang Khan's campaign against Bhutan in 1714. It states that Lazang Khan divided his Mongol and Tibetan forces into three wings and then advanced. Lazang Khan himself marched to Padro (Tib. Pa gro/ Spa gro), the western domain of the king of Bhutan. Pholhané, Erkhe Daiching (Tib. Er khe da'i ching; Mo. Erke dayičing; i.e. Khangchenné in Mongolian), and Bumtangpa, along with a large army, advanced on Bumtang in central Bhutan. And Baarin Taiji, Surkhang Guyang Khashakha (Tib. Zur khang Gu yang kha sha kha), and others attacked the eastern territory of the king of Bhutan.¹²⁷ During the battles that ensued, the Bhutanese predominantly defended themselves in elevated fortresses, using firearms to shoot down towards their enemies. As a result, the troops led by Pholhané, Khangchenné, and Bumtangpa had to use several defensive apparatuses and various cannons to lay siege to the Bhutanese strongholds.¹²⁸ Although the Tibeto-Mongolian forces had won some battles, they were finally compelled to retreat from Bhutan after suffering major losses during the siege of the capital of the Bhutanese Kingdom. The battle descriptions from central Bhutan also indicate that the Tibeto-Mongolian forces led by Pholhané and others did not employ mountain encampments as a battlefield strategy, even when they were at a serious tactical disadvantage (e.g., when they tried to attack a fortress constructed on a high location from below).

As discussed earlier, when the Zunghar troops led by Tseringdondob reached the Dam plain in 1717, Lazang Khan set up his military camps in an open field of Dam, even though some of his officials (e.g., Achi Lobzang Taiji and Pholhané) suggested that he build a stronghold or install a regiment of musketeers on a mountain. *The Biography of Pholhané* provides important insight into the reason why the top echelons of the Khoshuud leaders rejected these proposals. According to the biography, Dawa Erkhe Taiji, the father-in-law of Lazang Khan, rebutted Pholhané's idea by arguing that the only correct and honourable way to deal with enemies was to attack them directly, and that it was never righteous to defend mountains and cliffs to the death. Here, it is worth noting that the Ladakhi commanders had made similar arguments when they encountered Ganden Tsewang's Mongol troops in the Ngari region thirty to forty years prior. One may conclude therefore that the prevailing military orthodoxy among both Mongol and

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*: 122. On Surkhang Guyang Khashakha, see also Alice Travers' article in this volume.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*: 123, 125–127.

Tibetan troops, before the Zunghar invasion of 1717, was to meet their enemy in the open field.¹²⁹

However, after the Zunghar rule from 1717 to 1720, there seems to have been a change in Tibetan basic military strategy. During the Tibetan civil war following the death of Khangchenné in 1727, both sides almost invariably attempted to occupy high mountain positions and fire their cannons from elevated locations. This can be seen in the account of the war provided in *The Biography of Pholhané*. For example, when the Tibetan troops led by Pholhané and Changlo Chenpa (Tib. Lcang lo can pa) of the Tsang region first encountered the troops commanded by Lumpané (Tib. Lum pa nas), the soldiers of the Ü, Dakpo, and Kongpo areas under the command of Lumpané took up a position at the beginning of the battle on a mountain above the Nyangchu (Tib. Nyang chu) River. Later, the troops from Ngari and Tsang led by Pholhané and his allies surrounded and attacked this mountain position. Although Pholhané's side won the battle that day, the result over the ensuing days was indecisive.¹³⁰ Soon afterwards, we hear that most of Pholhané's foot soldiers climbed a mountain while he deployed his mounted forces on the open field. At dawn, Pholhané ordered a series of volleys of cannon fire from the mountain position, which had a decisive effect on the opposing troops of Ü, Dakpo, and Kongpo.¹³¹ However, despite this victory, Pholhané and his allies eventually had to retreat to Saga due to the onslaught by the Hor Mongols (i.e. various Mongol groups dispersed in the plains of northern Tibet, such as Dam, Yangpachen, and Nagchu) in support of Lumpané.¹³²

¹²⁹ Why then did Pholhané argue that Lazang Khan's forces should position their musketeers on the mountain? Regarding the pertinent section in the biography, I argue that in many episodes, the contents of *The Biography of Pholhané* should not be read literally. First, the biography was written in 1733. Thus, most of the chapters of the book were composed retrospectively. Second, the author of the biography often reveals his intention to embellish the protagonist of this writing. Lastly, the author Tsering Wanggyel apparently wrote this biography in an era when the strategy of making military camps on mountains and shooting firearms from above had already become a new standard way of combat in central Tibet. Therefore, it is likely that Tsering Wanggyel made up this astute utterance of Pholhané to glorify the intellectual side of his military capabilities.

¹³⁰ Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 290–292.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*: 295.

¹³² *Ibid.*: 296. Here, it is quite interesting that the Hor Mongol forces still functioned as a crack contingent in Tibet and determined the result of the entire battle, although cannons seemingly predominated the overall battle scenes in central Tibet. Indeed, according to *The Biography of Pholhané*, one of the main reasons why Pholhané finally emerged triumphant in the Tibetan civil war was that he was able to win over the various Mongol forces in Yangpachen, Dam, and Nagchu to his side before his advance on Lhasa. For details, refer to *ibid.*: 311–313. It appears therefore that the Mongol forces in and around the Dam plain continued to serve as a crucial military factor in the military history of Tibet even after the collapse of Oirad sovereignty—

On his way to Saga, however, Pholhané came back to Ngamring (Tib. Ngam ring) with his troops. At the same time, he dispatched a contingent of forces to occupy Gyantsé (Tib. Rgyal rtse) before his enemies reached there. Two days later, the Tibetan troops from Ü, Dakpo, and Kongpo arrived at Gyantsé but failed to capture its fortress. For this reason, they encamped around the small towns called Gyelkhar (Tib. Rgyal mkhar) and Tashigang (Tib. Bkra shis sgang) near Gyantsé. From the tenth month of 1727, skirmishes broke out almost every day in this region, but neither side could win a significant victory.¹³³ One day, when Pholhané launched an attack, his enemies were stationed on the summit of a southern mountain. Pholhané and his troops successfully assaulted and captured this mountain position, whereupon they fired cannons from there towards the enemy headquarters at Gyelkhar.¹³⁴ Later on, the Tibetan troops led by Pholhané maintained a sustained barrage of cannon fire from the Gyantsé stronghold and the neighbouring elevated places, killing many enemy soldiers, horses, and mules. As a result, the soldiers from Ü took refuge in a military camp at the foot of a desolate mountain named Ganden Chöpel (Tib. Dga' ldan chos 'phel). In the face of a sustained artillery assault from Pholhané's forces, the stranded Ü troops soon ran out of provisions and fodder.¹³⁵ In an attempt to rescue them, Lumpané then brought artillery reinforcements from Ü, but despite a ferocious cannon-led attack, they failed to gain any meaningful advantage. Finally, Lumpané decided to ask the monks of the Tashilhunpo and the Sakya Monasteries to mediate a ceasefire. This military success, which was reliant on holding the Gyantsé fortress and other mountain positions, eventually led to Pholhané's final victory in the Tibetan civil war.

In the last stage of the Tibetan civil war, both sides tried once again to capture a high mountain for a strategic purpose. When Pholhané marched towards Lhasa, Lumpané reportedly occupied a high mountain called Gamotreng (Tib. Dga' mo 'phreng) with his soldiers fanned out from the summit down to the foot of the mountain. One night, Pholhané dispatched three thousand soldiers carrying cannons to the summit of the same mountain and destroyed the enemy positions on the entire mountain.¹³⁶ As a result of this triumph, Pholhané was able to occupy Lhasa and obtain the final victory in the Tibetan civil war. Over the whole course of the civil war, therefore, both sides repeatedly

—i.e. the Khoshuud Khanate and the Zunghar military government—in central Tibet.

¹³³ *Ibid.*: 298–299.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*: 300.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*: 306–307.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*: 314–315.

used mountain positions for their artillery.¹³⁷ This was unheard of before the Zunghar invasion.

One may conclude therefore that this strategy was adopted from the Zunghars. According to several Manchu palace memorials, Tibetans constituted a major portion of the Zunghar troops in central Tibet during 1718–1720.¹³⁸ They would have observed and appreciated the efficiency of the Zunghar military strategy during the period of 1717–1720. It is also possible to assume that at least some of the Tibetan troops were trained by the Zunghars in the use of this scheme. As a result, even after the Zunghars had retreated from Tibet in 1720, the Tibetans continued to use the Zunghar mountain-firearms strategy in their own battles. Quite simply, the Zunghar military scheme was better designed to maximise the impact of firearms and thus left its mark on Tibetan military tactics henceforth.

3. Weapons Favoured by the Zunghars and their Influences on Tibetan Weaponry

3.1. Two Weapons Favoured by the Zunghars

The Zunghar forces utilised various weapons in central Tibet. *The Biography of Pholhané* states that the Zunghar cavalry who came to the Dam plain in 1717 carried lances (Tib. *mdung ring thogs*), muskets (Tib. *me'i 'khrul 'khor*), bows and arrows, swords, and daggers.¹³⁹ A Manchu palace memorial also enumerates the weapons that the Zunghar army used in central Tibet: muskets, lances, bows and arrows (Ma. *miyoočan, gida, beri, sirdan*).¹⁴⁰ Although all these weapons were typical for Zunghar soldiers, the first two (i.e. muskets and lances) were the weapons most frequently alluded to in our sources. Muskets are mentioned repeatedly in the accounts of the Zunghar campaigns in *The Biography of Pholhané* and the Manchu palace memorials. Bows and arrows, by contrast, which had long been the emblematic weapons of

¹³⁷ Between the expulsion of the Zunghars from central Tibet in 1720 and the Tibetan civil war in 1727–1728, there were other military activities involving Tibetan forces led by Pholhané. For example, Pholhané mobilised his forces in 1723 to pacify the Mongols of Nagchu, Sogchu, Yushu, and the neighbouring regions who had joined Lobzang Danzin's rebellion. The biography does not, however, include any battle accounts from this period. For details, *ibid.*: 234–239.

¹³⁸ *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 5.12) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3402]; *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 7.26) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3445]; *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 8.22) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3459]; Wu 1991: 195, 196.

¹³⁹ Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 139.

¹⁴⁰ *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 5.12) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3402].

nomadic archers, appear to have become almost obsolete among the Zunghars in the 18th century. In addition to the muskets, lances were also regularly used by the Zunghars, especially in hand-to-hand combat. To sum up, a wide range of pertinent sources indicate that the Zunghar troops normally used muskets—and often cannons as well—when they confronted their enemies at a distance. When they fought their adversaries at close range, the Zunghars usually chose lances as their most preferred weapon.

A couple of Manchu palace memorials are revealing in this regard. First, a Manchu letter sent out to the Khalkha Mongol princes, which includes a description of the battle at Lake Khotong-nuur (located in the midst of the Altai Mountains) in 1731, clearly states that:

At present, what we clearly know about the Zunghar forces is that Zunghar men are incompetent on horseback. [*On horseback,*] they are unable to shoot arrows. [*In the battle of Khotong-nuur,*] they depended entirely on the way that they stirred other people (i.e. enemies) by taking lances and rushing upon them in several squads.¹⁴¹

This account reveals that Zunghar mounted soldiers were, in general, clumsy in handling bows and arrows and instead preferred to use lances on horseback when they assailed their foes. Moreover, when Zunghar soldiers engaged in hand-to-hand combat, they were organised into several squads of mounted lancers, who charged their adversaries.

A deposition by a Zunghar petty officer named Boguya (Ma. Bogoya) also demonstrates another important aspect of the use of lances by the Zunghars. In this testimony, Boguya was offering the Qing commanders military advice on how to defeat the Zunghars. In part, it reads:

When it comes to the vanguard forces, musketeers are useless. ... Since your arrows are frightening, if a half [of the vanguard troops] are composed of soldiers using lances and the other half [of them] are archers, it will be good. Previously, there were only a few lances in your troops [i.e. the Qing forces]. *In my view, lances are very important. When using a lance, if [a soldier] holds the shaft of it under his armpit and then places the two thirds of the shaft in front while putting [the remaining] one third behind, he will obtain strength in wielding the lance. If [the part of the shaft which is placed] in front is longer [than the two thirds of the shaft], although [a soldier] wields the lance [intensely], on the one hand, he cannot obtain [enough] might, and, on the other hand, [the movement of the lance] will slow down and be useless.*¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ *Khiiree manj saïdyn yam*, doc. no. M-1-1-2553 (1731), the third document.

¹⁴² *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03-0173-1147-019 (Jalangga, Yongzheng 11.10.10).

In light of these instructions, it is clear that the Zunghars regarded the lance as one of their crucial weapons, and that among the Zunghars, there was a kind of field manual instructing their horsemen how to wield lances more effectively in battle. These tactics—through which the Zunghar cavalry used muskets and lances more actively than bows, arrows, and swords—seem to have been quite effective, when one considers the significant number of Qing soldiers who were reportedly captured by the Zunghars in the wake of their musket and lance attacks. Preliminary research by the present author on runaway captives who were originally Qing officers and soldiers leads to the conclusion that the Zunghars captured most of their prisoners of war using lance charges. The next largest group of captives were captured after Zunghar soldiers fired muskets at them. In only a few cases were prisoners seized after Zunghar attacks with bows and swords.¹⁴³

A good example of this Zunghar battlefield practice was the battle of Zuun-modu fought in 1696. When the Zunghar forces first engaged the Qing army, they did so from a distance, using firearms from a mountain ridge. Then, only when the Qing soldiers had drawn near to the Zunghar camps and started pillaging their provisions and livestock, did a group of Zunghar forces rush at their enemies with lances and swords.¹⁴⁴ Likewise, at the battle of Khotong-nuur in 1731, the Zunghars employed the same tactic.¹⁴⁵ As witnessed in these cases, the Zunghar soldiers indeed preferred to use muskets (often cannons as well) against their enemies from a distance and then use lances when they needed to fight hand-to-hand.

¹⁴³ *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03-0172-0440-003 (Fupeng, Yongzheng 12.3.21); doc. no. 03-0172-0440-004.1 (Fupeng, Yongzheng 12.4.13); doc. no. 03-0173-1134-001 (Siboo, Yongzheng 10.2.9); doc. no. 03-0173-1150-017 (Fupeng, Yongzheng 11.12.13); doc. no. 03-0173-1152-002 (Siboo, Yongzheng 11.4.16); doc. no. 03-0173-1152-007 (Siboo, Yongzheng 11.5.4); doc. no. 03-0173-1152-008 (Siboo, Yongzheng 11.5.14); doc. no. 03-0173-1152-010 (Siboo, Yongzheng 11.5.22); doc. no. 03-0173-1152-014 (Siboo, Yongzheng 11.7.17).

¹⁴⁴ *Kangxi gongzhongdang*, 1977: 248–250.

¹⁴⁵ When the Zunghars besieged and attacked the Qing forces led by Dingsio (Ch. Dingshou 丁壽), they first fired muskets towards the Qing army. During this barrage, the Qing general Dingsio was reportedly shot in his knee. Later, the next morning, the Zunghars deliberately made an opening to lure the Qing soldiers into an attempt to escape the siege. When the Qing troops began (as intended) to flee through the gap, the Zunghars chased and slaughtered them using lances. As a result, only forty soldiers out of two thousand managed to reach the headquarters of the Qing army. For details, see *Khiiree manj saidyn yan*, doc. no. M-1-1-2553 (1731), the second document.

3.2. *A New Firearm of the Zunghars and its Influence on the Tibetans*

The Zunghar battle tactics used in central Tibet also reflect the same basic pattern (i.e. the active use of firearms and lances), which considerably influenced Tibetan military practices in the following era. First, it is likely that the Zunghars introduced a new type of firearm to the Tibetans. A couple of Manchu palace memorials mention the presence of a particular sort of musket favoured by the Zunghars being used in central Tibet. According to a report by a Qing commander named Shuming, the Zunghar forces he previously confronted in Tibet in 1718 had three to four hundred muskets, and among them were about thirty muskets called *dzamra* (sic. *dzamara*).¹⁴⁶ This *dzamra/dzamara* musket was associated almost exclusively with the Zunghars in Manchu and Chinese sources.¹⁴⁷ For instance, when the Zunghar ruler Tsewang Rabdan dispatched his envoy Dagba Lama to Tsagaan Danzin (i.e. a Khoshuud prince in the Khökhe-nuur region) in 1709, he reportedly sent a *dzanbara* musket as a gift.¹⁴⁸ While confirming that the Zunghars were using this kind of musket from the first decade of the 18th century at the latest,¹⁴⁹ this anecdote also suggests that this *dzanbara* musket was not previously available to the Khoshuuds in the Khökhe-nuur region. This indicates that the Zunghars pioneered the use of *dzanbara* musket in the eastern half of central Eurasian steppe during the early years of the 18th century.

The name of this musket, viz., *dzamara*, *dzanbara*, *dzambarak*, and so on, comes from the Persian words *zambūr*, denoting “a bee or a camel-swivel” and *zambūrak* which means “a cross-bow, a small cannon, or a camel-swivel”.¹⁵⁰ This *zambūrak* or lightweight camel-mounted cannon was first invented by Mamluk soldiers in Egypt in the 16th century. In battle, the *zambūrak* cannon was deployed on camelback alongside the cavalry. After the Ottoman Empire conquered the Mamluk Sultanate in 1517, this novel firearm quickly spread to Safavid Persia, Mughal India, and various regions of Central Asia, such as Afghanistan,

¹⁴⁶ *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 5.12) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3402].

¹⁴⁷ In Manchu and Chinese sources, one finds several variants of this name, for example, *dzamra*, *dzamara*, *dzamura*, *dzanbara*, *dzanbarat*, *dzanbura*, *dzambarak*, and so on.

¹⁴⁸ *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3446.

¹⁴⁹ According to *Qinbian jiliue* (秦邊紀略), Galdan loaded his cannons on camels. Although there is no further information on Galdan's cannon on camelback, it probably indicates the *dzanbara*. If this conjecture is correct, the Zunghars were already using the *dzanbara* from the time of Galdan Boshugtu Khan, probably from the 1680s. For details, refer to Zhang 2012: 81; Perdue 2005: 305.

¹⁵⁰ Steingass 1892: 624. The Persian word *zambūrak* is a diminutive form of the Arabo-Persian word *zambūr* combined with the Persian diminutive suffix “-ak”.

Transoxiana, and even the Tarim Basin.¹⁵¹ This *zanbūrak* was particularly suitable for battlefield conditions in Central Asia because it was light, convenient, reliable, and mobile. In general, a *zanbūrak* was bigger than an ordinary musket and smaller than a cannon. Therefore, it had greater destructive power and a longer range than a normal musket, while being easier to transport and manoeuvre than a cannon. Thus, the *zanbūrak* was advantageous in mobile warfare; hence, a perfect match for the battlefield tactics of mounted forces in Central Asia.¹⁵²

Among the nomads of central Eurasia, the Zunghars were among the earliest adopters of the *zanbūrak*. It is therefore likely that it was the Zunghars who introduced the *zanbūrak* to central Tibet for the first time in 1717–1720. We know that the Zunghars used the *zanbūrak* muskets in central Tibet, as demonstrated above. Desideri also provides some interesting information on this. He wrote that the Tibetans “also have some iron cannons that they transport on large wheeled carriages, large double muskets, and large culverins”.¹⁵³ These large culverins (Ita. *colubrina*) probably correspond to the *zanbūrak*, since a certain type of Central Asian *zanbūrak* can be classified as culverin.¹⁵⁴ It is notable that during the Tibetan civil war of 1727–1728, the Tibetan forces led by Pholhané reportedly used their cannons not only in conventional artillery combat but also in guerrilla operations.¹⁵⁵ This suggests that the Tibetan soldiers were likely using the *zanbūrak*—or some variant thereof—in their civil war, which broke out in the aftermath of the Zunghar rule in central Tibet. Lastly, LaRocca, in his survey of Tibetan armaments, notes the Tibetan word *dzambur* (Tib. ‘*dzam bur*) meaning “a gun or cannon”.¹⁵⁶ Undoubtedly, this was a loanword derived from the *zanbūr/zanbūrak* of the Zunghars. Therefore, a significant outcome for Tibetan military history of the Zunghar invasion was the adoption of the *zanbūr/zanbūrak* in central Tibet in the early 18th century.

However, it should be noted that the Zunghars did not have a monopoly on the influence on Tibetan firearms. As a matter of fact, firearms such as muskets and cannons were already widespread across all the regions of Tibet well before the Zunghars invaded central Tibet in 1716–1717. For example, *The Biography of Pholhané* states that

¹⁵¹ Zhang 2012: 83.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*: 83–87.

¹⁵³ Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 264.

¹⁵⁴ Zhang 2012: 83.

¹⁵⁵ Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 307.

¹⁵⁶ LaRocca 2006: 282. Dr. Alice Travers has informed me that there is another Tibetan word *dzamdrak* (Tib. ‘*dzam grags*), meaning “an ancient firearm dating from the Zunghar time”. Unquestionably, this word also originated from the *zanbūr/zanbūrak* of the Zunghars.

Pholhané's father, Pema Gyelpo (Tib. Pad ma rgyal po), was adroit at shooting both arrows and muskets from horseback.¹⁵⁷ Dradül (Tib. Dgra 'dul), Pema Gyelpo's younger brother, is also reported to have killed wild animals with muskets.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, according to the same biography, Ganden Tsewang utilised muskets on horseback when he attacked the Ladakhi troops in the Ngari region, while the Ladakhis also seem to have used muskets in the battle.¹⁵⁹ At this point, it is interesting to note that the Tibetans are depicted having used muskets from the generation of Pholhané's father. *The Biography of Pholhané* attests that Dargyé, the great-uncle of Pholhané, had only shot arrows while fighting the Kagyupa rulers in Dakpo and Kongpo in support of Güüshi Khan in 1642.¹⁶⁰ One may surmise therefore that muskets—and probably cannons as well—only became widespread in central Tibet with the advent of the Oirad forces led by Güüshi Khan. In fact, according to a report by a Russian envoy to the Zunghar Principality, some seven hundred out of the twenty thousand Oirad soldiers that marched from Central Asia to Khökhe-nuur and central Tibet under Güüshi Khan carried firearms.¹⁶¹ *The Biography of Pholhané* also states on numerous occasions that Pema Gyelpo, Ganden Tsewang, Pholhané, and others, who reportedly used muskets in Tibet, were able to fire muskets *on horseback* quite well. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the Oirad nomads contributed considerably to the dissemination of firearms in central Tibet from the mid-17th century. Given the fact that firearms were first introduced to Ladakh and Bhutan in the earliest decades of the 17th century at the latest,¹⁶² firearms probably began to be used in central Tibet before the Oirads advanced to Tibet. Therefore, the Oirads were probably not the first people to introduce firearms to central Tibet. However, the Oirads undeniably popularised the use of muskets in central Tibet once they dominated the region. Consequently, it is only from the 17th century on that realistic depictions of matchlock muskets were sometimes included in paintings of offerings to the guardian deities in central Tibet.¹⁶³

Pholhané is also reported to have had excellent skills in both archery and shooting muskets from horseback since he was very young.¹⁶⁴ Likewise, Lazang Khan's attendants, Mongols and Tibetans alike, are described in the biography as having enjoyed the pastimes

¹⁵⁷ Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 17.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*: 31.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*: 22–23.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*: 14; Sperling 2012: 198.

¹⁶¹ Gol'man and Slesarchuk 1974: 179.

¹⁶² LaRocca 2006: 199–200.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*: 200.

¹⁶⁴ Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 105, 109, 176, 187, 241.

of shooting arrows and muskets from horseback and competing against one another in various military skills on the Dam plain.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, during Lazang Khan's campaign against Bhutan in 1714, the Mongol, Tibetan, and Bhutanese troops alike frequently used varieties of firearms in their battles.¹⁶⁶ Lastly, during the battles between the Zunghar forces and Lazang Khan's troops in 1717, muskets were the main weapons used by both sides.¹⁶⁷

The Tibetans also already possessed remarkable expertise in producing various kinds of firearms before the arrival of the Zunghars in central Tibet. In this regard, Desideri wrote that the Tibetan people knew how to make gunpowder and remarked on their expertise in casting statues, vases, and musket barrels.¹⁶⁸ Also, according to *The Biography of Pholhané*, during the siege of the capital of the Bhutanese kingdom in 1714, the Tibetan troops led by Pholhané and his fellow commanders produced various cannons (Tib. *sgyogs kyi 'khrul 'khor*) for eight consecutive days to break through the stalemate of the battle. Among the cannons they built in Bhutan at that time, there were grand cannons (Tib. *rgyal po khri sgyogs*); big cannons supported by six legs (Tib. *sgyogs chen rkang drug*); and shotgun-like cannons which discharged projectiles that spread "like peacock plumage" (Tib. *rma bya 'khrul sgyogs*).¹⁶⁹

Due to this reputed excellence of the Tibetans in making firearms, it is likely that the Zunghars also employed cannons—and possibly muskets—produced in Tibet by Tibetan craftsmen when they fought the Qing troops in central Tibet. According to the Manchu report by Shuming and Bayantu, the Zunghars had never previously used cannons in their engagements with the Qing forces, until they used them on September 28, 1718 (Kangxi 57. intercalary 8. 5). At that time, the Zunghars reportedly had five to six cannons, and their cannonballs were as heavy as thirty to forty ounces.¹⁷⁰ Interestingly, the Zunghar forces did not use cannons immediately in their war against the Qing army in central Tibet. Instead, they only began employing cannons about three months after the Qing soldiers first entered central Tibet in 1718 and about one and a half months after their first military engagement in mid-August. Presumably, the Zunghar military governors in central Tibet had commissioned their Tibetan subjects to produce cannons for their troops only subsequent to the beginning of the

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*: 117.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*: 123–126.

¹⁶⁷ *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3088, no. 3129; Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 138–142, 145.

¹⁶⁸ Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 279.

¹⁶⁹ Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 126.

¹⁷⁰ *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 5.12) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3402].

actual combat with the Qing troops. Moreover, considering the hardships that the Zunghars had to overcome in transporting cannons from Zungharia to central Tibet, via either the western Yarkand–Ngari route or the new Keriya–Nagtsang route, it is reasonable to assume that the Zunghars did not bring cannons from their homeland when they first marched to central Tibet in 1716–1717. An intelligence report by Nian Gengyao (年羹堯) appears to confirm this when it notes that the Zunghars obtained iron from the Chamdo (Tib. Chab mdo) region after they first occupied Tibet.¹⁷¹ One may surmise from this that once they conquered central Tibet, the Zunghars collected iron from the Chamdo area and with this started to produce weapons in Tibet. The weapons that Zunghar or Tibetan artisans would make at that time must have included cannons. Furthermore, according to a deposition by a Zunghar fugitive called Tegüs, the Zunghar troops led by Tseringdondob had nine Tibetan cannons around September 26, 1720 (Kangxi 59. 8.25). When they retreated to Zungharia, however, they reportedly discarded all nine cannons—burying five and dispersing all of their gunpowder and cannonballs. The remaining four cannons were entrusted to the *kalön* Tashi Tsepa (Tib. Bka' blon Bkra shis rtse pa; Ma. G'ablon Jasi dzeba).¹⁷² This indicates quite clearly that the Zunghar forces were using firearms, cannons in particular, made in Tibet by Tibetan artisans. The precise Zunghar influence on Tibetan firearm manufacturing cannot be ascertained with any degree of specificity, but it seems merited to surmise some level of technological impact.¹⁷³ The Zunghars also clearly introduced the *zanbūrak* / *dzambur* musket to Tibet.

3.3. *The Use of Lances by the Zunghars and its Impact on the Tibetans*

The Biography of Pholhané attests that during the battles between the Zunghars and Lazang Khan's forces on the Dam plain, the Zunghar soldiers used lances and swords to great effect, especially in combats at close range.¹⁷⁴ Then, after they had entered Lhasa, Pholhané reportedly witnessed a Zunghar soldier bearing a lance pursuing five hundred frightened Tibetan forces at Lubuk (Tib. Klu sbugs; i.e. a meadow

¹⁷¹ *Gongzhong zhupi*, doc. no. 04–01–30–0105–002 (Nian Gengyao, Kangxi 58.3.13).

¹⁷² Wu 1991: 196.

¹⁷³ According to Dr. Alice Travers, Tibetan firearms were mostly imported from Mongol areas and described as being “sog (Mongol)” in the 18th century. Such Mongol influence on Tibetan firearms was still remembered in Tibet of the early 20th century.

¹⁷⁴ Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 140.

south of the Potala) of Lhasa.¹⁷⁵ According to a Qing palace memorial by the General Yansin, a Tibetan fugitive also stated that:

When the Zunghar forces reached the region of Chinu-a Gol (Ch. Qi'nuan guo'er 齊暖郭爾) [in the early autumn of 1720], Tseringdondob and others said: "For the past few days, it has snowed every day. The Qing forces must be exhausted because they have defended themselves for a long time. If it snows again tonight, we will attack their military camp. *Due to snow, we will not use muskets. [Instead,] every soldier will carry a lance.* We will take only twenty of the Dalai Lama's people captive. Also, we will capture their commander alive".¹⁷⁶

This once again corroborates the fact that muskets and lances were the two crucial weapons on which the Zunghars relied. The reported remark of Tseringdondob also indicates that the Zunghar muskets were rendered less reliable when it snowed or, one can infer, when it rained. In such weather conditions, the Zunghar forces preferred to use lances.

The Zunghar inclination towards the use of lances possibly influenced Tibetan battlefield tactics in the following years. *The Biography of Pholhané* illustrates the military competence of Pholhané throughout his lifetime. Both before and during the period of the Zunghar rule in Tibet, Pholhané is depicted as having had exceptional military talent and capability regarding archery, shooting muskets, using swords, and horse riding, but there is no mention of his proficiency in wielding lances.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, in the sections describing the combat scenes in which Pholhané was involved before the Zunghar conquest, Pholhané only used a sword or a dagger when he needed to fight hand-to-hand. For instance, in the middle of the campaign to Bhutan, Pholhané, in solid armour, is said to have assailed his enemies wielding a sharp-edged sword, and along with his soldiers killed thirty Bhutanese.¹⁷⁸ Later, during the war with the Zunghars in 1717, when Pholhané observed a Zunghar lancer chasing five hundred Tibetan soldiers at Lubuk, he was infuriated and snatched a dagger from the hand of his attendant. When he was about to stab the Zunghar soldier in the stomach with the dagger, his friends and aides restrained him.¹⁷⁹

Following the eviction of the Zunghars from central Tibet in 1720, however, Pholhané is depicted having actively employed lances on the

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*: 151.

¹⁷⁶ Wu 1991: 195.

¹⁷⁷ Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 105, 109, 124, 151, 176, 186–187.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*: 124.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*: 151. Moreover, in 1718, when Pholhané was preparing for defence against a possible assault from the Zunghars, he again equipped himself and twenty of his bodyguards with armour and swords. For details, see *ibid.*: 181–182.

battlefields. First, in 1723, when he advanced to the Nagtsang region to serve as sentinels in the frontier area, his soldiers are said to have practised a variety of military skills on a daily basis, namely archery, artillery, and shooting arrows, firing muskets, and wielding lances on horseback.¹⁸⁰ Second, during the Tibetan civil war in 1727, when the Tibetan troops led by Pholhané were seriously defeated near the Nyangchu River by the Hor Mongol troops in support of Lumpané, Pholhané, resolving to fight to the end, then snatched a lance from the hand of his attendant, and holding it firmly, galloped on horseback towards the military camp of his enemies. As a result, Pholhané, with his twenty aides, reportedly killed forty enemies.¹⁸¹ In the ensuing battle, Pholhané's soldiers were once again routed by the Hor Mongol forces, abandoning their military camps and fleeing towards the mountains. Thereupon, Pholhané was about to charge the enemy wielding a lance on horseback, but was restrained by his attendants who grabbed his hands and the reins of his horse.¹⁸² These anecdotes illustrate that sometime between 1718 and 1723 Pholhané and his soldiers changed their principal weapon for hand-to-hand mounted combat from swords to lances. This change can be credited to the influence of the Zunghars, given the fact that the Zunghars preferred to use lances on horseback in hand-to-hand fights.

However, it should be clarified that the argument being made here is not that the Zunghars were the first to *introduce* spears, lances, and the like to central Tibet in 1717–1720. There is no doubt that spears had existed in Tibet since ancient times and were still widely used by Tibetan soldiers in the 17th century.¹⁸³ When Pholhané himself was fighting in Bhutan, he reportedly made a makeshift bridge by binding ten spears to ford a rushing stream, attesting to the ubiquity of spears among his troops.¹⁸⁴ The main Tibetan word for a spear in *The Biography of Pholhané*, especially in the sections dealing with events before the Zunghar conquest, is *tsöntsé* (Tib. *mtshon rtse*), which means simply “spearhead” or “weapon tip”.¹⁸⁵ In contrast, when the biography describes the military events after the Zunghar advance of 1716–1717, the

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*: 215.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*: 292.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*: 296.

¹⁸³ For instance, *The Biography of Pholhané* attests that Ganden Tsewang carried a musket, a bow, arrows, a sword, and a spear on horseback when he attacked the Ladakhi forces in the Ngari region. According to the account, when he rushed the enemies, some of them were trampled to death by horses, others were killed by swords, and the others were stabbed to death with spears. For details, see *ibid.*: 22–23.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*: 123.

¹⁸⁵ LaRocca 2006: 275.

Tibetan word for a spear tends to be *dungring* (Tib. *mdung ring*) meaning “a long spear”.¹⁸⁶ Considering that the Zunghars, and the Tibetan soldiers who had experienced the Zunghar rule in central Tibet, frequently utilised lances on horseback on the battlefields, this change of term from *tsöntsé* to *dungring* probably reflects an actual transition of weapon usage in Tibet. That is to say, the long spear referred to here as *dungring* was likely different in design from the traditional pre-Zunghar Tibetan spear referred to as *tsöntsé*. According to depictions in *The Biography of Pholhané*, a *dungring* was elongated and was usually used on horseback. One may surmise therefore that *dungring* actually referred to a Zunghar-style lance. In conclusion, as with the case of the *zanbūrak* / *dzambur* musket, the Zunghar forces, in all probability, introduced a new type of spear to central Tibet in 1716–1720 in the form of a lance, which was well-suited to hand-to-hand horseback combat.

Conclusion: The Zunghar Influence on Tibetan Military History

This article has investigated various aspects of the Zunghar military activities in central Tibet which had lasting impacts on the military practices of the Tibetans in the 18th century. First, the Zunghars created a completely new route connecting Zungharia to central Tibet through the vast wilderness of the Jangtang region. The Zunghar opening of this Keriya–Nagtsang route, which served as a crucial path between Zungharia and central Tibet in 1716–1720, left a lasting impact on Tibetan military institutions under Qing rule. Specifically, after the Zunghars withdrew to their homeland in 1720, the Qing court and the Tibetan government paid close attention to Nagtsang and the surrounding areas by constantly installing sentry posts. Along with the Ngari, Tengri-nuur, and Khara-usu areas, the Nagtsang region continued to be one of the most important defence points in Tibet until the fall of the Zunghar Principality. Thus, the influence of the Keriya–Nagtsang route on the Tibetan defence system is undoubtedly the best-documented example among the Zunghar impacts on Tibetan military institutions.

Second, the Zunghars preferred to install their military camps on mountains or other upland areas when they engaged in battle during the 17th and the 18th centuries, in contrast to the typical military strategies of Mongol nomads which had long favoured the deployment of mounted archers, feigned retreats, volleys of arrows, and sudden charges in an open field. The principal reason for the Zunghars chang-

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*: 273; Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 139, 215.

ing this basic battlefield strategy was the desire to maximise the efficacy of their firearms. This new military orthodoxy influenced Tibetan military practices in the following years to a substantial degree.

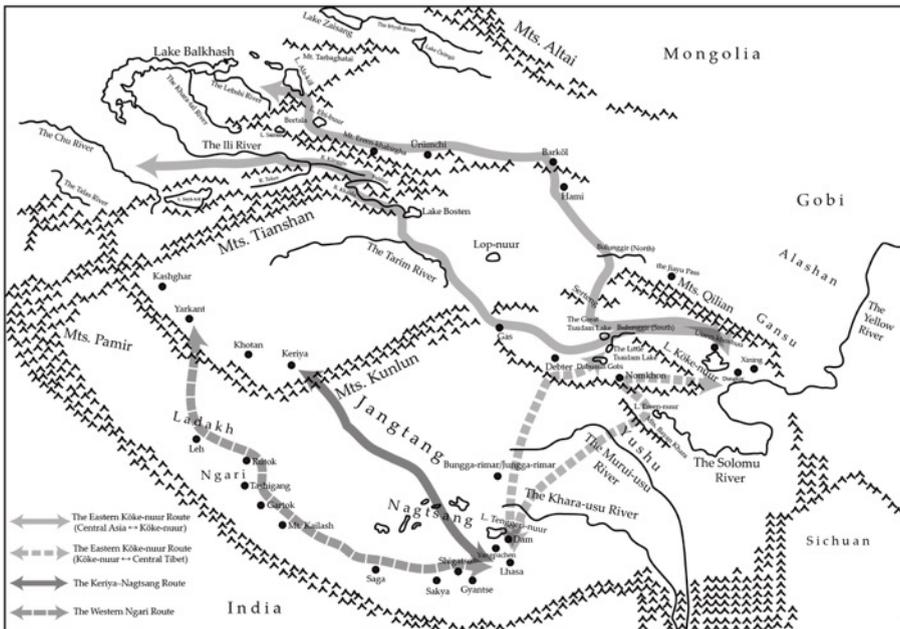
Third, it is highly likely that the Zunghars introduced a couple of novel weapons to central Tibet. The first was a kind of heavy musket (or lightweight cannon) called *dzanbara* (and variants), a weapon adopted by the Zunghars from Central Asian Muslims who had adopted its use from the gunpowder empires of Asia, such as the Ottoman, the Safavid, and the Mughal Empires. The Zunghars employed this new weapon in numerous places including central Tibet. During the Tibetan civil war in 1727–1728, some guerrilla forces led by Pholhané reportedly used cannons to cut off supply routes of their enemies. Moreover, there is a Tibetan word *dzambur* (Tib. 'dzam bur) meaning "a gun or cannon". These observations indicate that the mobile *zanbūrak* muskets of the Zunghars were likely adopted by the Tibetans during the period of the Zunghar rule in central Tibet. In addition to firearms, the Zunghars also preferred lances to swords and bows as their weapon of choice for close-quarters mounted combat. Their reliance on the lance influenced the military practices in the post-Zunghar central Tibet because the Zunghars introduced the lance (Tib. *mdung ring*) and the way it was used on horseback to central Tibet in 1717–1720.

Although Zunghar rule in central Tibet was short-lived, its impacts on Tibetan military history were considerable. The Zunghar conquerors of the time probably did not intend to transmit their military know-how and novel weapons to the Tibetans. The Tibetan people, however, were able to adopt various military skills and tools from the Zunghars because, first, they had observed the military success of the Zunghars in central Tibet first-hand; second, because native Tibetan troops had constituted a considerable portion of the Tibeto-Zunghar joint forces when the Zunghars fought the Qing in central Tibet; and third, because Tibetans had often been commissioned by the Zunghars to produce a variety of weapons, including firearms. Thus, the Zunghars inadvertently stimulated the Tibetans to a considerable advancement in their military technology and tactics. In conclusion, the Zunghar conquest of central Tibet in 1716–1720 exerted substantial influence on Tibetan military institutions of the ensuing era.

Appendix 1: Place Names in Different Languages

Mongolian (Atwood)	Manchu (Mö-lendorff)	Tibetan (Wylie)	Chinese (Pinyin)
Khökhe-nuur	Huhu-noor	Mtsho sngon	Qinghai 青海
	Dongk'or	Stong 'khor	Dongke'er 東科爾
Ereen-nuur		Mtsho sngoring	Eling hu 鄂陵湖
	Solomu	Rma chu	Suoluomu 索洛木
Murui-usu	Muru-usu	'Bri chu	Mulu wusu 木魯烏素
Khara-usu	Hara-usu	Nag chu	
Yangpajin		Yangs pa can	Yang-bajing 羊八井
Tengri-nuur	Tenggeri-noor	Gnam mtsho	

Appendix 2: Routes between Zungharia and Tibet



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Tibetan and Qing Troops in the Gorkha Wars (1788–1792) as Presented in Chinese Sources: A Paradigm Shift in Military Culture*

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Introduction

With the elevation of the status of the Qing *ambans* (imperial residents) over that of the Tibetan council of ministers or *kashag* (Tib. *bka' shag*, Chinese transcription *gasha* 噶厦) in 1793, the representatives of the imperial court took over political affairs in Tibet, particularly those concerning foreign policy. This field of policy is closely connected to military matters, and it was therefore necessary for the Qing to make substantial changes to the organisation of the military in Tibet. The reform project instituted from 1788 reached from the reorganisation of command structures to recruitment, training, armament, and supply. The plans were so far-reaching that one might say that they constituted a fundamental shift in the military culture of Tibet, in particular in the area of military administration.

This article will scrutinise the reasons why, and in what areas, these military reforms were carried out. By comparing the *modus operandi* of Tibetan troops with that of Qing troops, differences in military administration will become apparent. These variables will be discussed in light of the reforms attempted after the First Gorkha War (in 1788) and then the much more extensive reform programme imposed after the Second Gorkha War (1791–1792).¹ It is clear that from the perspective of the Qing, an effective defence of its borders was only possible by

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¹ This is how the two wars (often summarised to one continuous event) are referred to in modern Chinese sources. They are not to be confused with the Anglo-Gorkha, or Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814–1816. In Anglophone sources, the 1788–1791 wars are known collectively as the Sino-Nepalese, Sino-Gorkha, or Tibet-Gorkha wars.

overhauling the Tibetan military system, which had shown itself repeatedly ineffective.

The Gorkha wars, and the second war in particular, have been studied by many scholars. General overviews are presented by Dilli Raman Regmi,² Leo E. Rose,³ Rishikesh Shaha⁴ and Luciano Petech.⁵ Peter Schwieger⁶ has focused on the political institution of the Dalai Lama in this period and the significance of the wars to its political relations with Qing China. Two recent studies have made particular use of individual biographies of Tibetan protagonists in the events to approach the Sino-Nepalese war, one written by Franz-Karl Ehrhard,⁷ and the other by Li Ruohong.⁸ The reform of 1793, usually referred to as the *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance* or the *Twenty-nine Articles*, have been studied by several researchers. Fabienne Jagou's study has focused particularly on the cooperation between Tibetans and Manchus.⁹ Its impact on the Tibetan military have been studied by Anne Chayet¹⁰ and Alice Travers.¹¹ Information on military matters in this period is also found in a contribution by Leonard van der Kuijp on Tibetan jurisprudence.¹² Max Oidtmann's recent publication analyses the debates within the Qing court over the introduction of the Golden Urn as an institution, described in the 1793 reform.¹³ Lin Lei is currently working at a Ph.D. dissertation at Harvard University on trans-Himalayan border policy as an outcome of the Gorkha wars, pointing out the "limits of empire".

The main sources for this study are: the official chronicle of the war *Qinding Kuo'erka jiliie* (欽定廓爾喀紀略 "Imperially endorsed military annals of the [second] Gorkha war");¹⁴ published archival sources in

² Regmi 1961.

³ Rose 1971.

⁴ Shaha 1990.

⁵ Petech 1950a.

⁶ Schwieger 2015.

⁷ Ehrhard 2007.

⁸ Li 2002.

⁹ Jagou 2013.

¹⁰ Chayet 2005.

¹¹ Travers 2015.

¹² Van der Kuijp 1991.

¹³ Oidtmann 2018.

¹⁴ *Qinding Kuo'erka jiliie* 欽定廓爾喀紀略 (hereafter QDKEKJL). 1793, comp. by Fanglüeguan 方略館. This collection is an official account on the war. It belongs to a particular genre of military history called *fanglüe* 方略, for which specialised and temporary compilation bureaus (*fanglüeguan* 方略館) were created. The Gorkha annals were compiled in 1793 under the supervision of Bootai (Baotai 保泰) and con-

the *Kuo'erka dang* (廓爾喀檔 “Gorkha archive”);¹⁵ the *Qingchao zhi Zang fagui quanbian* (清朝治藏法規全編 “Complete collection of Qing laws for the administration of Tibet”);¹⁶ imperial edicts and regulations; as well as secondary sources in Chinese and other languages.

The term “military culture” describes the relationship between war, society, and thought, as military institutions and theory are shaped not just by political, but also by intellectual, civilian, and literary developments.¹⁷ The framework of “military culture” can also include the mission statement defining the purpose or legitimising the existence of an army; the internal structure of the military (as an embodiment of its institutional norms and assumptions); and the resources required to ensure its survival and functioning.¹⁸ This last feature is part of a set of subsystems which constitute the network of military administration, encompassing: human resource management (recruiting, sending out for missions); budgeting and finance; training and development including the acquisition of knowledge, skills and capabilities); and pro-

sist—apart from poetic “heavenly stanzas” (*tianzhang* 天章) written by the emperor—primarily of quotations from imperial edicts which themselves often quote from (published) memorials submitted by functionaries. The annals thus constitute a kind of source book. There exist two facsimile editions, one published in the series *Xizangxue Hanwen wenxian huik* 西藏學漢文獻彙刊 (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin 全國圖書館文獻縮微復制中心, 1992), and one in the series *Guoli Gugong Bowuyuan diancang zhuan dang'an ji fanglüe congbian* 國立故宮博物院典藏專案檔暨方略叢編 (Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan 國立故宮博物院, 2007).

¹⁵ *Kuo'erka dang* 廓爾喀檔 (hereafter KEKD). 1791–1793. Ed. 2006 by Guoli Gugong Bowuyuan 國立故宮博物院. Taipei: Shenxiangting. The *Kuo'erka dang* is a collection of archival documents consisting of a variety of text types, ranging from reports of commanding generals to the emperor, the latter's answers and instructions, reports of officers to the generals, records of interviews, lists of marches or transport routes, and the like. The collection was first published in facsimile form in the series *Guoli Gugong Bowuyuan diancang zhuan dang'an ji fanglüe congbian*.

¹⁶ *Qingchao zhi Zang fagui quanbian* 清朝治藏法規全編 (hereafter QCZFGQB), ed. 2001 by Zhang Yuxin 張羽新. Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe. This five-volume collection consists of extracts from administrative codexes that are related to Tibet. These are *Da-Qing huidian* 大清會典 “Administrative statutes of the Great Qing” (a general codex from 1899), *Lifanyuan shili* 理藩院事例 and *Lifanbu zeli* 理藩部則例 “Precedent cases on administration from the Court of Colonial Affairs” from 1886 and 1906, respectively. These are facsimile versions of contemporary editions. The last part of the collection, *Qingchao zhi Zang zhangcheng* 清朝治藏章程 “Qing statutes for the administration of Tibet” is a new typeset of administrative regulations, enriched by a selection of imperial edicts related to their compilation.

¹⁷ Di Cosmo 2009: 4.

¹⁸ Wilson 2008: 17.

curement (purchase of weapons, food, materials, as well as pay, benefits, allowances).¹⁹ Among these aspects of military culture, nearly all parts of the military administration are touched upon by the reform drawn up after the second Gorkha invasion, and therefore constitute the focus of the present research.

The First Gorkha War 1788

The primary context for the invasion of Tibetan border towns by the Gorkhas, or rather the Shah dynasty of the Gorkhas, was their seizure of power over much of present-day Nepal in 1769.²⁰ This regime change presented a challenge to the long-standing political and economic relations between Nepal and Tibet, notably with regard to tariffs on trans-border trade and the use of currencies. At the time Tibet had no currency of its own,²¹ but used Nepalese coins which was possible because of the extensive trade across the Himalaya Range. In particular, Tibetan merchants made use of a Nepalese silver-based currency called “*Mehnder-mulli*” (*mahindra malla*), and continued to circulate this type of coin after the takeover of the Nepalese government by the Gorkhas. Yet the latter had introduced a silver coin of higher quality and wanted to replace the older, inferior-quality coins.²² However such a replacement and the demonetisation of the old copper-silver coins would result in substantial losses for the Tibetans, who refused any exchange rate between the old and the new coins other than parity. For “three or four” (or even up to “eight or ten”) years, the trade between Nepal and Tibet even stopped altogether, after the Gorkhas had lost “lacks of rupees” to Tibet.²³

Many Chinese sources ignore, in the debate on the reasons for the Nepalese invasion, the inheritance battle over the estate of the late Sixth Panchen Lama. This was a competition between his erstwhile secretary the Drungpa Trülku (Tib. Drung pa sprul sku), and his half-brother (?) the Shamarpa Trülku (Tib. Zhwa dmar pa sprul sku).²⁴ During his visit to Beijing in 1780 the Panchen Lama had received lavish

¹⁹ Weber and Eliasson 2008: 2.

²⁰ Stiller 1975.

²¹ On Tibetan coins, see Rhodes 1990; Regmi 1961: 169.

²² Kirkpatrick 1811: 339. See also Wood 1912.

²³ Kirkpatrick 1811: 340, 342. One “lack” (*lākḥ*) corresponds to 100,000.

²⁴ Chinese sources use the Mongolian title *qutuqtu* (Ch. *hutuketu* 呼圖克圖) that was bestowed on high incarnates. On the role of the Shamarpa Trülku during the first Gorkha invasion, see Li 2002: 142. Concerning the overlapping of family relationship with sacred positions see Oidtmann 2018: 72.

gifts from the emperor, but had died while staying in the imperial capital. This material wealth all went into the hands of the Drungpa Trülku, who had accompanied the Panchen Lama. The Shamarpa Trülku protested, but was overridden and finally fled to Nepal, where he apparently urged the local rulers to take revenge on his behalf.²⁵

A last, rather indirect, issue was the emerging British interest in trade with Tibet. British overtures had elicited only a lukewarm interest from the Tibetan side, even after Samuel Turner had achieved the promise of a trade agreement with Tibet in 1784. But direct trade with Tibet would allow the British to bypass the Nepalese transit tax.²⁶ In contrast to the Tibetan reticence, the Gorkhas had taken an active interest in trade relations with the British and themselves initiated negotiations. This relieved the Nepalese regent Bahadur Shah (reg. 1785–1794) from the uncertainty over whether there would be a military threat from the south, allowing him to focus on the problem with Tibet in the north.²⁷ A commercial treaty between Nepal and the British was eventually signed in 1792.²⁸

After the settlement of the Zunghar question in 1757 and thus the elimination of the Mongol threat to Tibet, the Qing court assumed that Tibet was a “secure backyard” of the empire.²⁹ It seems that they were unaware of the rise of the Gorkhas and their involvement in Tibet and therefore did not initially understand the background of the conflict, believing it to be simply a matter of disputes on tariffs.³⁰ For apart from the monetary question, there was also the problem that Tibet raised tariffs on certain Nepalese goods, and that the quality of salt being exported to Nepal was being downgraded by the addition of sand. The Qing government was therefore caught by surprise when they learned of the Nepalese invasion.

The question of when the first border transgressions by the Nepalese occurred remains unclear. Some authors hold that the Gorkhas had “no contact with China” before 1788, yet archival sources prove that the Qing court learned about the border transgressions as early as autumn 1787.³¹ In any case, the Qing did not think about a potential threat from the south. In July 1788, the Nepalese invaded the towns of Nyalam/Nyanang (Tib. Nya lam, Ch. Nielamu 聶拉木), Rongshahr

²⁵ Shakabpa 2010: vol. 1, 508.

²⁶ Killigrew 1979: 45.

²⁷ Dai 2009: 136; Regmi 1961: 171.

²⁸ On the development of British-Nepalese and British-Tibetan trade see Camman 1951, Field 1972, Petech 1950b, and Regmi 1961. The reader might also consult Uprety 1996.

²⁹ Dai 2009: 135.

³⁰ Zhang 2015: 45.

³¹ Zhuang 1987: 429.

(Tib. Rong shar, Ch. Rongxia 絨轄), and Kyirong (Tib. Skyid rong, Ch. Jilong 濟隴 or 濟龍) in Tsang (Ch. Tsang 藏, Tib. Gtsang) or what was known from a Chinese perspective as “Farther Tibet” (Ch. Houzang 後藏) with a force of 3,000 men.³²

The standing troops in Tibet were not able to hold off this invasion. According to Chinese archival material they consisted, at the time of the first Gorkha invasion, of 360 Chinese Green Standard troops (*liuyingbing* 綠營兵) and 800 “Tangutan” (Ch. Tanggute 唐古忒 or 唐古特, i.e. Tibetan) troops in Ü (Tib. Dbus) or “Near Tibet” (Ch. Wei 衛 or Qianzang 前藏), 150 Green Standard troops and 400 Tibetan troops in Tsang, 200 Tibetan troops scattered over smaller posts throughout the country, 200 Mongolian Qoşod troops in Damu (Tib. 'Dam gzhung, Ch. Damu 達木, Dangxiong 當雄, north of Lhasa), and 1,200 Green Standard troops recruited from among the population according to standards varying from place to place, and garrisoned in eastern Tibet.³³ This means that the invaders were confronted by a dispersed army of at most 3,400 troops, among whom some 1,800 were Green Standard troops. This situation was as mandated by the (provisional) arrangements of 1751 (*Qinding/Zhuoding Xizang shanhou zhangcheng shisan tiao* 欽定/酌定西藏善後章程十三條).³⁴ These regulations had reduced, for financial reasons,³⁵ the number of Green Standard troops in central Tibet (as stipulated in 1733) to 500 (exchanged every three years), and those in the relay stations between Lhasa and Sichuan to c. 1,300.³⁶ It can be seen that in 1788, even less Green Standard troops were present in Tibet than the number stipulated in the regulations from the mid-century.

³² Chen and Gao 2014: 89. Concerning geography, the reader may consult Boulnois 1989.

³³ KEKD, document dated Qianlong (hereafter QL) 57/8/23 (57/7–8: 197; 3: 1525).

³⁴ The 1751 *Statutes*, Art. 7, raised the number of Tibetan *dapön* (Tib. *mda' dpon*, Ch. *daiben* 帶奔) officers from four to five, rearranged their distribution in the jurisdictions of Ü and Tsang (ensuring the security over the region of Tsang), and regulated the quick reoccupation of vacancies; see QCZZFGQB, 5: 1827–1828, based on a memorial by Ts'ereng (Celeng 策楞, d. 1756) from 23 April 1751 (QL 16/3/yichou). Alice Travers 2015 argues that the increase in *dapön* officers (see also the Chinese translation of the Tibetan version of the 1751 *Statutes* in QCZZFGQB 5: 1830), each of which commanded 500 soldiers, indicates that the total number of standing Tibetan troops grew, even if the 1751 *Statutes* do not fix any total number of troops. A synopsis of the two reforms of 1751 and 1793 is presented by Li 2016: 22–23.

³⁵ This regulation was adopted in 1733, see Feng 2007: 44.

³⁶ *Ibid.*: 45.

The claim reported by the British officer Kirkpatrick, that the Tibetans “have assembled 125,000 men at the border to Nepal” is thus immensely exaggerated.³⁷ Such large numbers were not even reached in the early 18th century, when there was, according to the book *Xizang zhi* 西藏志, a total number of more than 64,000 troops in Tibet, including 3,000 cavalry in Lhasa, 2,000 in Tsang, 5,000 in Ngari (Tib. Mnga'ris; Ch. Ali 阿里), and 1,000 in Keba 稞坝.³⁸ Further troops, it states, may also have been garrisoned in Kongpo (Tib. Kong po; Ch. Gongbu 工布), and 3,000 “Black-tent Mongols” (*hei zhangfang Menggu* 黑帳房蒙古) in various places, as well as 50,000 infantry all over Tibet.³⁹

The *amban* Ćingrin (Qinglin 慶麟, a Mongol bannerman in office 1783–1789) dispatched 500 Green Standard troops, as well as 200 Qoşod troops from Chamdo (Tib. Chab mdo, Ch. Chamuduo 察木多, also written 叉木多), 500 Mongols from Damu, making altogether 1,200 troops, to meet the invaders. They were supported by 1,300 Green Standard troops from Sichuan, 500 troops from among the Banner garrison in Chengdu (成都), Sichuan, and 1,200 “trained troops of military colonies” from the “subject” native population (*tunlian jiangfan* 屯練降番) in western Sichuan.⁴⁰ These 3,000 troops were seen as elite soldiers, either because they were veterans and experienced in fighting in mountainous terrain, or brought with them cultures of tactics, weaponry and modes of fighting other than those of China proper.

Troops from Sichuan had been used in the two Jinchuan (金川, Tib. Rgyal rong) wars (1747–1749, 1771–1776) in western Sichuan (or eastern Tibet, Kham).⁴¹ Dai Yingcong has demonstrated that the province

³⁷ Kirkpatrick 1811: 340.

³⁸ It is not clear what Tibetan toponym this corresponds to. It might be that Keba is not a transcription of a Tibetan place name at all, but rather a translation, meaning “level barley field between hills”. One spot with this name is found for example in Maizhokunggar district (Tib. Mal gro gung dkar rdzong, east of Lhasa), village Tangkya 塘加乡 (Tib. Thang skya) hamlet Naitang 乃塘村, compare Guge Qimeiduoji 古格·其美多吉 and Suolangrenqing 索朗仁青 2014: 87.

³⁹ *Xizang zhi*, 1, fol. 3a–b. Also quoted in Guo 2010: 31.

⁴⁰ *Qingshilu* 清實錄 [*Da-Qing lichao shilu* 大清歷朝實錄] (hereafter QSLGZSL) [Veritable records of the Qing], part *Gaozong Chun Huangdi shilu* 高宗純皇帝實錄 [Veritable records of Emperor Gaozong, i.e. Qianlong reign-period, also called *Gaozong shilu* 高宗實錄]. 1964 [1807]. Taipei: Huawen shuju, 1310: 1b (QL 53/8/gengyin). See also Zhuang 1987: 429. The “Veritable Records” are a vast collection of imperial edicts and quotations from the imperial diaries and represent the official version of court documents on which the “orthodox” history books were usually based. Documents related to Tibet are extracted and published in *Qingshilu zangzu shiliao*.

⁴¹ On the Jinchuan wars, see Theobald 2013.

of Sichuan had become the main base for border defence and the pacification of remote territories in the southwest of China.⁴² Among these veterans, Manchu Banner troops constituted the most useful contingent. They were well-trained and used excellent weapons, including the bow and the musket, in some cases also cannon. However these relief troops had to march from Chengdu across eastern Tibet before they could reach the war theatre in Tsang, an arduous journey which would take at least a month. The difficulties were not so much of logistics (as there was an established system of relay stations), but rather sheer distance that had to be covered and the altitude.

In addition to sending relief troops, the Qing court decided to evacuate the young Panchen Lama who resided in Shigatsé. In spring 1789, the Qing troops liberated the border fortress of Dzongkha (Tib. Rdzong kha, Ch. Zongka 宗喀), which was only defended half-heartedly. On March 24, 1789 (Qianlong 54/2/28) the Qing troops reached the border to Nepal.

The main reason for the quick advance of the Qing troops from Ü to the border was that the Tibetan government (namely the Sakya Trülku and the Tsongkhapa Trülku) had reached an “unofficial peace agreement” (*sixia jiaoyi* 私下交易) with the Gorkhas by “paying them off to vacate the territory [occupied by the Gorkhas]” (*xu yin shu di* 許銀贖地).⁴³ The Tibetan government, without consulting the Qing court, had apparently promised to pay the Gorkha court 300 gold bars annually, corresponding to 9,600 taels of silver⁴⁴ or 50,000 Rupees.⁴⁵ This resolution was quite natural, since it had been mainly economic issues between Tibet and Nepal that had led to the invasion. Yet the Qing court felt bypassed by this decision. They saw themselves responsible for the security of the Tibetan territory, and had sent quite a large body of troops to the Tibetan highland in its defence. The campaign had devoured a tremendous amount of money,⁴⁶ and the emperor had even

⁴² Dai 2009: 8.

⁴³ QSLGZSL, 1397: 6b (QL 57/2/dingsi); 1400: 28a (QL 57/4/dingwei). Regmi 1961: 173, searches in Nepalese sources “in vain the causes that led them [the Gorkhals] to withdraw”.

⁴⁴ Dai 2009: 136. Feng 2007: 45. Wei Yuan’s (魏源, 1794–1857) report *Shengwuji* (聖武記) 5: 26b speaks of 15,000 “pieces of money” (*wan wu qian jin* 萬五千金), which Imbault-Huart 1878: 361 translates as “taels”. This figure is adapted by Chen and Gao 2014: 90. Regmi 1961: 172, speaks of 3 lakhs (would be 300,000) of rupees, but says that this were “Tibetan ingots of silver”.

⁴⁵ Kirkpatrick 1811: 343. The first proposal had been 50 “lacks” (unless Kirkpatrick 1811: 342, is wrong), which would be 5 million rupees.

⁴⁶ Guo 2010: 32. Tao 1993: 38 speaks of 10.52 million taels. Chen 1992: 261, 332–334, and Lai 1984: 426–430, assess the cost of the two Gorkha wars at 9.3 million taels.

issued an edict in which he particularly appealed to the local population to support the troops, and force the invaders to retreat.

The truce between Tibet and Nepal had however found support from the Qing commander Bajung (Bazhong 巴忠), who had been *amban* in Tibet since 1788, spoke Tibetan from prior service there, and therefore knew the local situation better than the Qing court in Beijing. He was sent to Tibet in his function of Vice Minister of the Court of Colonial Affairs (*lifanyuan shilang* 理藩院侍郎).⁴⁷ After the second invasion from Nepal, Bajung would commit suicide, having confessed that the emperor had not been informed about the details of how the initial truce was negotiated⁴⁸ and because the minutiae of the agreement between the Tibetan government and the Gorkhas had been kept secret from the Qing court.⁴⁹ Interestingly Shakapba presents an alternative narrative of these events, namely that the Tibetans themselves did not have the intention of seeking a treaty agreement, and that the peace treaty had been initiated by officials on the Chinese side.⁵⁰

The First Proposed Reform of the Military System in Tibet in 1789

After the Gorkhas had been pushed back beyond the frontier, the Qianlong Emperor (乾隆帝) immediately ordered the Banner general of Chengdu, Ohūi (Ehui 鄂輝, d. 1798), to take on the highest command over the armies in Tibet and to prepare, in unison with Cengde (Chengde 成德, serving as Grand Minister Consultant, *canzan dachen* 參贊大臣) and Bajung, for the post-war arrangements (*shanhou shiyi* 善後事宜).⁵¹ The “Articles for the Post-war Arrangements in Tibet” (*Xizang shanhou zhangcheng shisan tiao* 西藏善後章程十三條, hereafter the *Statutes*), submitted to and approved by the emperor on August 17, 1789 (Chinese date Qianlong [henceforth QL] 54/6/27), and available in the official chronicle *Qingshilu* 清實錄 “Veritable Records of the Qing”, included thirteen paragraphs aimed at reinforcing the basic defence situation there.⁵²

These *Statutes* made the following stipulations concerning military administration:

⁴⁷ On the role of the Court of Colonial Affairs, see Jagou 2017.

⁴⁸ Deng 2010: 20.

⁴⁹ Oidtmann 2018: 52.

⁵⁰ Shakabpa 2010: vol. 1, 513.

⁵¹ QSLGZSL, 1318: 2a (QL 53/12/wuzi).

⁵² QSLGZSL, 1333: 28a–35a (QL 54/6/xinsi). Quoted in Zhuang 1987: 437–438, but not in complete form.

- 510 Green Standard troops were to be garrisoned in Lhasa under the direct command of the Manchu *ambans* in Tibet, and not the Tibetan government.

- A local contingent of 150 men was to protect Tashilhunpo monastery in Shigatsé in Tsang, consisting of sixty Green Standard troops (*liying guanbing* 綠營官兵) selected (*choubo* 抽撥) from the garrisons in Chamdo under the command of a detached officer (*waiwei* 外委), along with thirty men from Jiangka (江卡, today Markang, Tib. Mar khams; Ch. Mangkang zong 芒康宗) in Kham; twenty men from Shuobanduo (碩板多, near Lho rong) under a first captain (*dusi* 都司); and forty men from Lhasa.⁵³ Chinese-language officer titles indicate that these Tibetan troops were probably commanded or supervised by Chinese personnel. Among the cavalry officers, two men were to be selected to “hold together” the mounted troops in attacks (*jungong waiwei guanshu bingding* 軍功外委管束兵丁). Between Ü and Tsang, twelve way-stations (*tangxun* 塘汛) were to be built, and staffed by Tibetan troops (*Tanggute bing* 唐古忒兵, *Tanggute fanbing* 唐古忒番兵) in numbers of five or four each, selected from the villages nearby (*tiaoxuan fujin fanbing* 挑選附近番兵). Their provisions were to be paid by the Qing, but through the Tibetan Cabinet (*kalön*, Tib. *Bka' blon*, Ch. *gabulun* 噶布倫 or *galun* 噶倫). This was to be checked by the captain in Tsang (Art. 1).

- In Lazi (拉子, Tib. Lha rtse), a new garrison was to be created (*tianshe* 添設) with 200 Tibetan troops under the command of “two new *diba* (第巴, Tib. *sde pa*)”.⁵⁴ These personnel were to rotate once a year. Thirty men out of the 200 were standing in the border fortress of Shelkar (Tib. Shel mkhar, Ch. Xiege'er 脅噶爾, today Xiege'er 協格爾), and thirty as rotating (*lunfu* 輪赴) patrol troops (*xunshao* 巡哨) in Saka (Tib. Sa skya, Ch. Saka 薩喀 also written Sajia 薩迦) not far away.

- From Art. 3 it can also be learnt that apart from the above-mentioned troops, there were 800 Tibetan troops in Ü, and 400 in Tsang.

⁵³ Also found in Feng 2014: 7–8.

⁵⁴ The word *diba* 第巴, also transcribed *dieba* 碟巴, is the usual transcription for *depa* (Tib. *sde pa*), a kind of viceroy, and sometimes confounded with *disi* 第巳, i.e. *desi* (Tib. *sde srid*), meaning regent. A commander of 100 troops (*bing tianshe diba er ming guanli* [Lazi difang fanbing erbai ming] 并添設第巴二名管領 [拉子地方番兵二百名]) cannot have held such a high function, however. Unclear.

- In the border districts of Dzongkha, Nyalam and Kyirong, fortified posts with “war towers” (*kadio* 卡碉) were to be built, serving as watchtowers and for the defence of these remote, but strategically important spots (Art. 2). Each fortification (*zhailuo* 寨落) was to be commanded by a *diba* officer appointed by the Kalön. The latter was ordered to treat the *diba* candidates all alike concerning appointments and dismissals (*yiti bu fang* 一體補放), and to see to it that these *dibas* took personal responsibilities for duties in the garrison, and did not send a substitute person from their family (*bu xu shan chai jiading daili* 不許擅差家丁代理) (Art. 5).

The stipulations regulating supply and armament were that:

- “Government troops” in Tibet (*Xizang guanbing* 西藏官兵, i.e. Tibetan troops) were to be supplied with grain cultivated and live-stock raised by the garrisons themselves (*yi gengmu wei sheng* 以耕牧為生).

- The Tibetan troops were to be paid in grain rations by the Kalön, but only during the manœuvre season. For this purpose the exact number of troops in each village was to be checked in the future (*an zhailuo duogua bianding shumumu* 按寨落多寡編定數目). The payment of rations (or money to purchase them) during manœuvres was a novelty (*xiang wu qianliang* 向無錢糧) (Art. 3).

- Another new regulation was (planned to be) issued concerning the Mongols from Dam, who had previously not taken part in any formal military training and should be included now. Their provisions were paid, as before, “by the Dalai Lama”. The reason for this was firstly that the Tibetans could not rely on the supply by the imperial troops, and secondly, to force the Tibetan government to take care for the regular supply of their troops, and not leave them to take care for themselves. All garrisons were to receive an amount of grain of 3,000 *dan* annually,⁵⁵ to be stored in garrison granaries.

- The more than twenty iron cannons of different calibres stored in the Potala Palace were to be registered (*bingding shuhao* 編定號數) and tested regularly. The Green Standard troops were to take Tibetan troops with them to train them in the use of these guns. This paragraph indicates that until this time, Tibetan troops had not been very familiar with the use of cannon. The instruction in the use of artillery might have had the aim to demonstrate that there were indeed effective means of breaking fortresses occupied by the enemy. The Gorkhas had brought cannon with them and destroyed some Tibetan fortresses with the help of such artillery.

⁵⁵ *Dan* (written 石) is a volume measure corresponding to about 100 litres.

A third group of regulations refers to training and inspection:

- Training was to be carried out (by the Green Standard troops) in autumn, together (*yiti lianxi* 一體練習) with the Tibetan troops from Ü and Tsang (Art. 3).
- Regular training and manœuvres were to be part of the schedule for Chinese troops, and the Tibetans were to become accustomed to them.
- As for drills in the use of muskets and in archery, several dozen Green Standard troops with their officers and sergeants (*qian-ba-bianbing shu shi ming* 千把弁兵數十名) were to be selected to organise this training and establish a schedule for regular practice (*zhuri caoyan* 逐日操演) (Art. 3).
- Military exercises were to be supervised twice a year by one of the *ambans* in turn, so that each of them was present once a year.
- The Tibetan Cabinet Ministers for their part would inspect the military fortifications in a regular way, sending one of them in spring and autumn, during the farming season (Art. 6).
- The management of local military affairs was left to the Tibetans.

In spring 1791, more troops were sent to Tsang. These were expected to regularly train the local troops in their military prowess. In addition, the border fortress of Nyalam, heavily damaged by the Gorkhas, was rebuilt and reinforced.⁵⁶

As for these military reforms drafted by Ohüi, Bajung and Cengde, it appears most of them were never implemented. Even if the minutiae of the reforms had been approved and finalised, the reform programme itself was never issued as a public document, even though the leading commanders had been ordered to “draft statutes for discussion” (*zhuoyi zhangcheng* 酌議章程) or to “fix statutes” (*ding zhangcheng* 定章程).⁵⁷

The Second Gorkha War 1791–1792

In autumn 1791, the Gorkhas staged a second invasion of Tsang because the Tibetan government had not met its promises of annual tribute. Only at this point did the Qing government learn that the Tibetans

⁵⁶ Zhuang 1987: 445.

⁵⁷ QSLGZSL 1323: 10a–b (QL 54/2/yisi); 1326: 12a–13a (QL 54/2/jiawu).

had not fulfilled their monetary obligations to the Gorkhas.⁵⁸ Two Tibetan cabinet ministers (*kalön*) were abducted by the Nepalis while trying to renegotiate the truce of 1789 at a place called Kutu.⁵⁹ The border towns of Nyalam, Kyirong, and Dzongkha fell again into the hands of the enemy—apparently without much resistance—and the Gorkhas, “with 18,000 troops”,⁶⁰ advanced as far as Tashilhunpo monastery at Shigatsé and plundered the treasury of the Panchen Lama, where the gold and silver presented by the Qianlong Emperor was being stored. The *amban* Bootai (Baotai 保泰, in office 1780–1783, 1790–1791) evacuated the Panchen and the Dalai Lamas, lured the invaders farther into Tibet, and reported to the emperor, “exaggerating somewhat” the number of enemies.⁶¹

This time there was much dispute at the Qing court on how to repel the invaders. Ohüi, for instance, provincial Banner general of Chengdu, resisted the imperial command to once again send more Sichuanese troops to Tibet. He was of the opinion that the problem with the Gorkhas was an internal matter for the Tibetans, and of no concern to the Qing.⁶² Some dignitaries in the Chinese government were likewise reluctant to embark on a war that might prove expensive, would prove an arduous assignment to their troops, and also noted the emperor’s great age.⁶³

Yet the latter, chastising Ohüi for having supported the wrong assessment of Bajung, appointed Fuk’anggan (Ch. Fukang’an 福康安, 1753–1796) Grand Minister Consultant. The latter marched from Beijing to Lhasa, crossed the Qinghai Plateau during the winter season, and by June 28, 1792 (QL 57/5/10) had pushed the Gorkhas back beyond the border at Rasuwa Bridge (Resuo Qiao 熱索橋) and chased them as far as River Betravati (Ch. Palanggu He 帕朗古河?) not far from Kathmandu (Ch. Yangbu 陽布).⁶⁴ The Gorkhas, standing “against 40,000 men” according to Kirkpatrick,⁶⁵ prevented the Qing from

⁵⁸ QDKEKJL 1: 6a (1: 199), QL 56/8/22, no 2. One payment is attested in Chinese sources, see Zhang 1997: 84.

⁵⁹ Oidtmann 2018: 71. Regmi 1961: 174. QDKEKJL 1: 3a (QL 56/8/22a); 8b (QL 56/8/25).

⁶⁰ Rockhill 1910: 51. See also Kapstein 2006: 158, and Kirkpatrick 1811: 346. The first clash is recorded in QSLGZSL 1385: 8b (QL 56/6/30), see also Zhang 1987: 445. The real number of Gorkha troops on Tibetan soil was about 3,000 or somewhat more at that time, see Zhuang 1987: 449–450.

⁶¹ Imbault-Huart (1878: 362) does not give a number.

⁶² QDKEKJL 1: 9b (QL 56/8/25).

⁶³ Kunwar 1962: 289.

⁶⁴ QDKEKJL 35: 4ff. (4: 2095–2096, QL 57/7/14). The course of the battle is described over a dozen of folios, see Zhuang 1984: 466.

⁶⁵ Kirkpatrick 1811: 347; Regmi (1970: 186) says 10,000.

crossing the bridge. Both sides were exhausted. The Qing feared that their retreat across the Himalaya could be blocked by snowfall if they spent any more time in enemy's territory, and the Gorkhas were being threatened by other hot spots on their borders,⁶⁶ so they agreed to end hostilities and on October 4, 1792 (QL 57/8/19), and concluded a truce. The Gorkhas promised to return some of the goods stolen from Tashilhunpo, and to send a tributary mission to Beijing every five years. Significantly, the status of Nepal as a tributary state in the imperial system of the Qing was asserted from this time, meaning that Nepal (from the Qing perspective) had henceforth accepted the suzerainty of the Qing empire, and could in return expect military support from China.

While reports from the Qing side praised the heroic spirit of the Qing troops, other sources demonstrate that the Qing were rather lucky to have got so far. Over-confident because of their quick successes, the Qing were hardly pressed in the battle of Betravati. So much so, that Fuk'anggan (known in Nepali sources as Tung Thang, Tung-Thyang, or Thung Chang Chun) began to kill his retreating troops—as far as Nepali sources say.⁶⁷ During the war, Fuk'anggan had tried to establish contacts with the British, not knowing that the latter were siding with Nepal, though without giving them outright support.⁶⁸ British troops did not take part in the battles on Nepalese ground, yet some mediators were present.⁶⁹ This fact was, in the current state of my knowledge, not observed from the Chinese side.⁷⁰

In early 1792, large military contingents had arrived from Sichuan and other places. Qing chronicles list 300 Manchu Banner and Green Standard troops from Chengdu, 3,000 Green Standard troops from various garrisons in Sichuan. This last contingent included 500 Qoşods from Damu, 2,000 Tibetan troops from five military posts (*wu zhai tunfan* 五寨屯番)⁷¹ in the mountainous prefectures (Weizhou 維州,

⁶⁶ Sikkim, Limbu (today's Limbuwan), and Jumla, were perhaps enticed by the Chinese to rebel against the Gorkhals, to bind their forces, see Regmi 1961: 177.

⁶⁷ Regmi 1970: 181, 186. Even Wei Yuan, whose book *Shengwuji* is overly positive towards the military achievements of the Qing, admits that the Qing troops faced huge problems against the Gorkhas, see *Shengwuji* 5: 28b.

⁶⁸ Kunwar 1962: 290.

⁶⁹ The reasons for non-involvement are clarified in a letter by the East Indian Company quoted in Disalkar 1933: 384, see Regmi 1961: 178–179.

⁷⁰ Shakabpa 2010: vol. 1, 532–533; Kunwar 1962: 292.

⁷¹ The five "military agro-colonies" (*tun* 屯) in the former region of Jinchuan (new sub-prefecture of Maogong) were the garrisons Maogong 懋功營, Chonghua 崇化營, Suijing 綏靖營, Qingning 慶寧營, and Fubian 撫邊營. On the number of local troops there, see Theobald 2011: 405–406. Weizhou or Maozhou 茂州 was actually part of the sub-prefecture Zagu 雜谷, the former Tsha khog.

Maogong 懋功, i.e. Jinchuan and surroundings) in western Sichuan—among them 500 men from Zhanggu 章谷/Chonghua 崇化, and 1,500 “trained soldiers from the military colonies” (*tunlian* 屯練), 1,000 local troops (*tubing* 土兵) from Dergé (Tib. Sde dge, Ch. De’erge[te] 德爾格[忒]); and further contingents of 2,000 local troops from Chögyab (Tib. Khro skyab, Ch. Chuosijiabu 綽斯甲布) and Tzagu (Tib. Tsha khog, Ch. Zagu 雜谷).⁷² Furthermore a large contingent of 7,500 men, consisting of 2,300 Chinese troops from the military agro-colonies (*Han tunbing* 漢屯兵) at Batang (Tib. ‘Ba’ thang, Ch. 巴塘) and other places in Kham; 2,000 [Green Standard] troops from the province of Yunnan; 2,000 (Mongolian?) troops from Chamdo (Tib. Chab mdo); 1,200 troops already dispatched immediately after the second invasion;⁷³ and finally of particular importance from the point of view of logistics and fighting skill, though not large in numbers, were the elite troops sent from northeast China, namely between 600 and 1,000 Solun and Daghur troops from the Mongolian Hulun Buyir League under the command of the General of Heilongjiang (黑龍江), and 100 officers of the type *baturu hiya janggin* (*batulu shiwei zhangjing* 巴圖魯侍衛章京).⁷⁴ Wei Yuan’s (魏源) military book *Shengwuji* (聖武記) speaks of 2,000 Solun troops, while documentary sources only testify the use of 1,000 Soluns.⁷⁵

Although Gorkha sources speak of 70,000 Qing troops against their own number of between 20,000 and 30,000⁷⁶ the figures attested in these Chinese sources add up to no more than 17,000 or even less on the Qing side.⁷⁷

⁷² Zhuang 1987: 459. Gao 2013: 18. Cai 1993: 76. QDKEKJL 1: 23b (1: 234), QL 56/9/12, no. 2.

⁷³ Zhuang 1987: 451, 453. QDKEKJL 7: 12b (2: 562), QL 56/11/2, no. 2.

⁷⁴ The rare mixed Chinese-Manchu title *baturu shiwei janggin* literally means “hero commander of the guard”. The designation “hero” is a proof that they were highly decorated veterans. Documents using this term show that they fought as one coherent unit (“more than ten times better than the bravest Green Standard troops”), and were not “commanders”, i.e. officers, over a body of other troops.

⁷⁵ *Shengwuji* 5: 28a; see Imbault-Huart 1878: 366; Gao 2013: 18.

⁷⁶ Van Schaik 2011: 159. Li *et al.* 2004: 33. The higher figure of 70,000 is used by Kapstein 2006: 158, and is widely cited though erroneous.

⁷⁷ The calculation of Gao 2013: 18 compares several sources, and comes to the conclusion that the real figure of troops fighting on the Tibetan/Qing side was 13,000, including 1,000 Solun, 8,000 Tibetan troops from the Jinchuan region and from Sichuan, 560 troops from Tibet (including Tibetans and Green Standard troops), and a number of 4,000 troops composed of native troops (*zufan bingding* 族番兵丁), Chinese and Mongols. See also Li *et al.* 2004: 33. Regmi (1961: 176) leads the high figure of 70,000 back to “Kirkpatrick and Tibetan sources”, as well as to a letter of King

Based on Tibetan sources, Shakabpa gives the figures of 10,000 volunteer Tibetan troops from Ü, Tsang and other places, and 3,000 Chinese-trained Tibetan troops (Tib. *rgya sbyong*). Fuk'anggan brought further relief "with 20,000 Chinese and Solun troops".⁷⁸ This latter figure is again somewhat higher than the sum of all soldiers counted in the Chinese sources and secondary analysis.

The Second Reform of the Military System in Tibet in 1793

Right at the beginning of the second invasion, the *ambans* Bootai and Yamantai (雅滿泰, in office 1786–1789) had explained that as long as the imperial army was away, the Tibetan troops would avoid engaging the enemy, and would do the same in the future when the imperial army had returned to China.⁷⁹

Back in Lhasa therefore, where Fuk'anggan stayed over the winter, he ordered the compilation of revised post-war arrangements, and submitted to the emperor a draft called "Suggestions Regarding Statutes for the Tibetan Army" (*Chouyi fanbing zhangcheng* 籌議番兵章程). These suggestions were then transformed into the "Imperially-Endorsed Statutes for the Internal Post-War Arrangements of Tibet" (*Qinding Zangnei shanhou zhangcheng ershijiu tiao* 欽定藏內善後章程二十九條) with twenty-nine paragraphs (hereafter the *Twenty-nine Articles*).⁸⁰ These were much more detailed than the (preliminary) *Statutes* from 1789, and laid more stress on the recruitment of officers and on armament. The broader political and commercial arrangements concerning the relation between Tibet and the Qing empire addressed by these *Twenty-nine Articles* will not be discussed here in detail.

While the Tibetan version of the *Twenty-nine Articles* is well-known in two versions,⁸¹ it is still not known whether there was an original Chinese or Manchu version. Zhang Yun has suggested a solution to this problem by arguing that an original Chinese version had not been in the shape of twenty-nine articles, but rather was spread over various documents, for instance, memorials to the throne submitted by Fuk'anggan, Sun Shiyi 孫士毅 (1720–1796), Huiling 惠齡 (1743–1808)

Rana Bahadur to Gajaraj Misra. Regmi himself speaks of a Chinese relief army of 10,000.

⁷⁸ Shakabpa 2010: vol. 1, 530, 532.

⁷⁹ Deng 2010: 22.

⁸⁰ QCZZFGQB 5: 1837–1851. This is a Chinese translation of the original Tibetan version.

⁸¹ Li 2004: 35. Zhang 1993: 89 says "at least three versions" (*zhishao san zhong* 至少三種).

or Helin 和琳 (1753–1796), or rescripts by the emperor. Any Chinese versions in the shape of “articles” are thus (re-)translations from the Tibetan. At any rate, so far no original Chinese source has been discovered.⁸² One important Chinese “source” for the *Twenty-nine Articles* is a memorial suggesting six articles for the creation of a standing Tibetan army and (joint) training (*Zhuoding e she Zangbing ji xunlian shiyi liu tiao* 酌定額設藏兵及訓練事宜六條, that would become Art. 4–7), submitted and accepted on December 15, 1792 (QL 57/11/2). Another is a memorial suggesting six statutes for post-war arrangements (*Wei-Zang shanhou zhangcheng liu kuan* 衛藏善後章程六款, which would become Art. 10–13) from January 3, 1793 (QL 57/11/21). And a third source is a memorial pointing at eighteen issues “still to be regulated” by statutes (*Shang you ying xing banli zhangcheng shiba tiao* 尚有應行辦理章程十八條, corresponding to Art. 14–29) from January 22, 1793 (QL 57/12/11).⁸³ Most of these suggestions were eventually incorporated into what became known from Tibetan sources as the *Twenty-nine Articles*. Those articles accepted by the members of the Grand Council (*junji dachen* 軍機大臣) and the emperor were translated from Chinese into Tibetan on April 4, 1793 (QL 58/2/24), and presented to the Tibetan authorities. The most important Tibetan version of these *Articles* is the collection of documents from the year of the Water Buffalo/Ox (Ch. *Shuiniu nian wenshu* 水牛年文書).⁸⁴ An abbreviated manuscript

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*: 90. Li (2004: 34) lists furthermore the foundations of Art. 1. (memorial *Ni jiang qinban jinping zai Dazhaosi nei gongfeng shi* 擬將欽頒金瓶在大昭寺供奉事 “Proposal for the use of golden urns in the Jokhang Temple by imperial regulation”), Art. 2 (memorial *Zhoubian guojia shangren zai Xizang maoyi jiaowang xu li fa xicha* 周邊國家商人在西藏貿易交往須立法稽查 “The necessity to create a law to control the traffic of foreign merchants in Tibet”), Art. 3 (memorial *Xizang zhuoding guzhu qianyin zhangcheng* 西藏酌定鼓鑄錢銀章程 “Statutes suggested for issuing currency in Tibet”), as well as Art. 8–9 (memorial *Zhuoding xicha shangshang shouzhi bing quan yu Dalai Lama juanmian zufu deng shi* 酌定稽查商上收支并勸諭達賴喇嘛蠲免租賦等事 “Suggestion for a detailed accounting of revenue and expenditure and ordering the Dalai Lama to decree tax holidays”). Zhang (1993: 45) speaks of eight memorials altogether that have the “character of rules” (*faguixing wenjian* 法規性文件).

⁸⁴ An official, modern translation of this version back into Chinese was realised in the early 1950s. It was first published in Ya Hanzhang 牙含章, 1984, *Dalai Lama zhuan* 達賴喇嘛傳, Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 62–71. Zhang (1993: 44) says this translation includes several errors, and recommends her own translation in the propaganda collection *Xizang Shehui Kexue Yuan* 西藏社會科學院 *et al.* (eds.) 1986, *Xizang difang shi Zhongguo bu ke fenhe de yi bufen* (*Shiliao xuanji*) 西藏地方是中國不可分割的一部分(史料選輯), Lhasa: Xizang renmin chubanshe, 1: 313–322. Another translation is included in *Zhongguo Zangxue Yanjiu Zhongxin* 中國藏學研

version from 1811 is also included in the collection *Xizang lishi dang'an huicui* 西藏歷史檔案薈萃 “A collection of historical archives of Tibet”.⁸⁵

Among the Chinese versions translated back from Tibetan, a different arrangement in the order of paragraphs is found, as seen in the local gazetteer *Wei-Zang tongzhi* 衛藏通志, compiled under the supervision of the *amban* Sungyun (Songyun 松筠, 1752–1835).⁸⁶ Even though this version is also presented in twenty-nine paragraphs, there are slight differences in details.

In the context of the monetary issue which was one of the reasons for the first invasion, it is worth noting that in the wake of these conflicts the Qing also implemented a currency system in Tibet, with its own mint producing *tangka* coins (Ch. *zhangka* 章卡) in a mixed Nepalese-Chinese style (Art. 3).

Regarding military reforms, a standing army (*zhenggui jundui* 正規軍隊) was to be created, with the aim of strengthening its fighting power, and preventing the maltreatment of the local populace. The army of Tibet was henceforth to consist of 3,000 Tibetan troops, of which 1,000 were garrisoned in Ü, the same number in Tsang, and 500 in Dingri (Tib. Ding ri, Ch. Dingri 定日), and Gyantsé (Tib. Rgyal rtse, Ch. Jiangzi 江孜) each. The troops of Ü were under the command of a Chinese major (*youji* 游擊), while those of Tsang, Dingri and Gyantsé were commanded by a Chinese first captain (*dusi*). As such Tibetan troops were henceforth not longer under the overall command of Tibetans, but of Chinese officers. These central troops were also to give protection to the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Erdeni (Panchen Lama) (Art. 4).

The Chinese major (*youji*) of the Green Standard garrison in Ü had a staff of one assistant brigade commander (*shoubei* 守備), two company commanders (*qianzong* 千總), two squad leaders (*bazong* 把總),

究中心 *et al.* (eds.) 2007 [1994], *Yuan yilai Xizang difang yu zhongyang zhengfu guanxi dang'an shiliao huibian* 元以來西藏地方與中央政府關係檔案彙編, Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, vol. 5, 2124–2340. This book presents a synopsis of the translation and Fuk'anggan's original memorials. The *Shuiniu nian wenshu* includes sixty-six documents related to the 1793 Articles; see Zhang 1993: 44.

⁸⁵ Edited by Xizang Zizhiqu Dang'anguan 西藏自治區檔案館, 1995, Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe. This version was also translated into Chinese and English.

⁸⁶ *Xizang tongzhi*, 12 (1: 531–567). Sungyun's arrangement is also included in the collection *Xizang difang lishi ziliao xuanji* 西藏地方歷史資料選輯, ed. by Beijing daxue lishi xi 北京大學歷史系 *et al.*, 1963, Beijing: Sanlian shuju, where it is called *Qianlong wushiba nian qinding Xizang zhangcheng* 乾隆五十八年欽定西藏章程 “Tibetan statutes from 1793 as endorsed by the Emperor”. Also found in QDZZFGQB 5: 1844–1851.

and five detached officers (*waiwei*). The brigade comprised 450 Chinese troops. The Green Standard garrison in Tsang was commanded by a first captain (*dusi*), with 140 men under one *bazong* and one detached officer. In Gyantsé stood twenty Chinese troops, in Dingri forty, with an additional 680 troops at various military posts (*xun* 汛) and in Chamdo.⁸⁷

The 1793 *Articles* arranged the system for the Tibetan troops as follows: six Tibetan *dapön* (Tib. *mda' dpon* or “brigade commander”, fourth rank official) commanded 500 men each, and together controlled twelve *rupön* (Tib. *ru dpon* or “1st-class company commander”, fifth rank),⁸⁸ who controlled 250 men each (instead of formerly 100).⁸⁹ Each *rupön* was in control of two *gyapön* (Tib. *brgya dpon* or “2nd-class company commander”, sixth rank), who headed 125 men each. The lowest officers were *dingpön* (Tib. *lding dpon*, Ch. *dingben* 定本 or 丁本, “platoon commander”, seventh rank) of whom there were five under each *gyapön*, each leading twenty-five men.⁹⁰

The number of *dapön* was increased to six (two of them in Tsang), and the number of the other officers were accordingly twelve *rupön*, twenty-four *gyapön*, and 120 *dingpön* (Art. 5). There was a system of promotion if a higher post fell vacant. It worked with the help of registers (*mingce* 名冊) in two copies, one held by the archive of the *ambans*, and the other by the *kashag*.

Tibetan officers (*fanmu* 番目) were to be recruited from among young lay officials (Tib. *drung 'khor*, Ch. *dongke'er* 東科爾 or *zhongke'er* 仲科爾) and from the common populace. Noblemen had to begin with the post of *dingpön*, and could not automatically serve in higher positions because of birth. The traditional glass ceiling for commoners, restricting access to posts higher than *dingpön* or *gyapön* to men of the

⁸⁷ *Wei-Zang tongzhi*, 12: 10a-b (1: 551–552).

⁸⁸ The official ranks are defined in *Wei-Zang tongzhi*, 12: 7b-8a (1: 544–545). It provides individual names of then-incumbent officers.

⁸⁹ Guo 2010: 32, quoting from *Zhongguo Zangxue Yanjiu Zhongxin* 2007, quite probably commentaries or other documents than the *Twenty-nine Articles*.

⁹⁰ The book *Xizang zhi* from the early 18th century renders the ranks of Tibetan officers in the following way: Regional chief commanders (*ge di da touren* 各地大頭人) were called *dieba* 牒巴 (the above-mentioned *diba*). The chief cavalry commander had the title *daiben* 代奔 (i.e. *dapön*, Tib. *mda' dpon*, also transcribed 代本, *daibeng* 戴琫 or 戴綱) and commanded 500 men; *jiaben* 甲奔 officers (*gyapön*, Tib. *rgya dpon*) who commanded 200 men, *ruben* 如奔 (*rupön*, Tib. *ru dpon*) with 100 men, officers called *laiben* 賴奔 (Tib. *lding dpon*?) with forty-five men, and *juben* 局奔 (*chupön*, Tib. *bcu dpon*, also transcribed *jueben* 覺琫) with ten men under their command. There was furthermore the rank of “petty leader” (*xiao touren* 小頭人) called *guodu* 郭渡. *Xizang zhi* 1, 2a-b. The order *gyapön* – *rupön* might be an error of the author.

nobility (*guizu chushen* 貴族出身), was abolished. All officers had to go through the ladder of ranks, and could not directly be appointed to a higher post. In the older statutes, commoners (*pingmin* 平民) could only be appointed *dingpön*. The new reform from 1793 allowed commoners to rise to higher ranks, even to that of *dapön*,⁹¹ if they were educated, capable, and had gained military merits (*zhao qi xueshi jineng ji zhangong* 照其學識技能及戰功).⁹² The inheritance of military posts was formally abolished (Art. 5, 17).

The *Twenty-nine Articles* defined precise rules for the number of officers in each place (Art. 3, 4); for their payment (*rupön* were to be given 36 taels annually, *gyapön* 20, *dingpön* 14.8); as well as for their supplies (Art. 6), training, appearance, defence, weaponry, horses, etc. in each of the garrisons in great detail. All food and weapons, including gunpowder (Art. 26), was to be provided by the Tibetan government. The only exception was bullets, perhaps because lead was a rare commodity in Tibet and thus had to be imported.⁹³

Art. 6 particularly stressed the need to feed and equip the troops during military campaigns, otherwise they might harass the local population or desert. The annual supply in peace time for each soldier was 2.5 *dan* (250 litres) of barley (*qingke* 青稞), making a total required amount of 7,500 *dan* (750 m³) annually. During military campaigns, one *jin* 斤 (500 g) of tsampa was to be given out per day and per person. The garrisons were basically supplied in a self-sustaining way, like the traditional Chinese military agro-colonies (*juntun*).⁹⁴ If local granaries were unable to cover the need, then the barley fields of the disgraced Shamarpa and Drungpa trülkus, and the *kalön* Tenzin Peljor (Tib. Bstan 'dzin dpal 'byor/Rdo ring Pandita, Ch. Danjin Banzhu'er 丹津班珠爾) were to make up any shortfall. The provision of garrisons depended on the produce of the local farmers, for which reason they were at regular intervals to be exempted from corvée (Tib. 'u lag, Chinese transcription *wula* 烏拉) (Art. 6, 9).

The *Twenty-nine Articles* also stipulated that fifty percent of fighters be equipped with muskets, thirty percent with bow and arrow, and twenty percent with sword and lance (Art. 7). The Tibetan government was to provide fourteen cannons to Tsang, where this type of armament had not been available before (Art. 26).

⁹¹ Interpretation of Zhuang 1987: 478.

⁹² More about chances on career after the 1793 reform can be found in the contribution of Alice Travers in this volume.

⁹³ Guo 2010: 32 mentions Banbar (Tib. Dpal 'bar, Ch. Bianba 邊壩) in Chamdo, where lead was produced.

⁹⁴ Feng 2007: 48.

As in the 1789 *Statutes*, combined training of Green Standard and of Tibetan troops was to be carried out, and the *ambans* were to inspect the military organisation once a year (Art. 13). Troops were to be billeted in border towns near Nepal in three-year terms, and the local magistrates in these border areas (*bianzong zongben* 邊宗宗本 Tib. *dpal? rdzong rdzong dpon*) were to be selected from among local leaders and military officers (Art. 16).

Apart from the Tibetan troops, the 538 households of the Qošods of Damu were also reorganised in eight banners according to the Manchu model.⁹⁵ Eighty Qošods were to stay in Lhasa and be rotated twice a year. Like the Green Standard troops, they also took part in annual manoeuvres.⁹⁶

Reasons for these Changes in Military Administration

We will now scrutinise the details of military administration which led to the decision of the Qing court to carry out these reforms. From the list of troops that the Qing sent to Tibet to repel the Gorkhas, it can be seen that the imperial army consisted of a great variety of “ethnic soldiers”, as Dai Yingcong calls them.⁹⁷ This indicates that the Qing were already accustomed to managing mixed systems of military administration.

The Gorkhas are usually depicted as ferocious fighters, wearing “deadly kukries” (*khukuri*, a long, curved knife), but only equipped with ancient matchlocks, and “nothing but their short sturdy legs to carry them”.⁹⁸ Yet they were also known for their “merciless looting and pillaging”.⁹⁹ On occasion, when overwhelmed by Chinese attack, they also resorted to guerilla tactics.¹⁰⁰ The Tibetan troops were, according to Chinese documents, “no match for them [the Gorkhas]” (*Zangbing bu di* 藏兵不敵).¹⁰¹ They “ran away” (*fenfen taocuan* 紛紛逃竄)¹⁰² at first sight of the enemy (*yu di ji tui* 遇敵即退),¹⁰³ and “their rank

⁹⁵ Feng 2014: 6. The tribes of Mongolia were organised in banners at an earlier point of time.

⁹⁶ Ayinna 2012: 15.

⁹⁷ Dai 2009: 167.

⁹⁸ Kunwar 1962: 289.

⁹⁹ Van Schaik 2011: 157.

¹⁰⁰ Kunwar 1962: 291–292.

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Zhuang 1987: 430. Expressions insulting inefficient units of the imperial army or of allied armies are widespread in Chinese documents.

¹⁰² Quoted in Zhuang 1987: 449; QDKEKJL 34: 12b (4: 2048), QL 57/6/19.

¹⁰³ Quoted in Guo 2010: 32.

and file soldiers lack unity" (*renxin huansan* 人心涣散).¹⁰⁴ They did not dare make excursions outside their fortresses (*bu gan chu ji* 不敢出擊),¹⁰⁵ and were generally regarded as "wimps and cowards" (*Zangbing nuoque* 藏兵懦怯, *suxing nuoque* 素性懦怯,¹⁰⁶ *fengqi rounuo* 風氣柔懦, *mingbin queruo* 兵民怯弱, and the like).¹⁰⁷

While such expressions are the usual vocabulary of the Qing to insult lame ducks among their allies and their own officers, there are also some reasons given as to why the Tibetan troops were not able to defend their country. Many soldiers, of the militia type, were not professionals but were recruited from among the common people at the hour of need. As a result, they "did not have any idea of the job of a soldier" (*su bu zhi bing* 素不知兵), as a Chinese document says.¹⁰⁸ On a higher level, their officers were likewise not trained and made decisions in a rather spontaneous way, and "not according to standards", when going into battle (*zhengdiao yu yiding zhangcheng* 徵調無一定章程).¹⁰⁹ And at the most senior level, the central government of Tibet did not distinguish between the civilian and the military sphere, meaning that civilians or even clerics could decide military matters.¹¹⁰ Cabinet Minister Doring (Tib. Rdo ring) confirmed these observations by the Qing: "The Tibetan people have no training to resist her enemies".¹¹¹ An oft-quoted sentence reports that Tibetan troops launched just one or two volleys with their muskets and then withdrew behind shelters.¹¹² Though this might have looked like fear, it is not clear whether the Tibetan troops had sufficient ammunition. Moreover, line tactics with repeated firing as used in Europe was unknown in Asia.

However this is not to say that the Tibetans handed the Gorkhas the field without resistance. During the first Gorkha invasion, the fortress of Shelkar was successfully defended for months by 2,000 soldiers and civilians.¹¹³ Baotai soon had the idea to reward the Tibetan troops if they bravely resisted and held their positions, mainly by giving them silks—a tried and tested custom of the Qing to encourage the martial spirit of its allied troops.¹¹⁴ Yet even without such promises, there were

¹⁰⁴ QSLGZSL 1389: 9a (QL 56/10/xuwu).

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Zhuang 1987: 450.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Deng 2010: 22, from a memorial of Ohüi.

¹⁰⁷ Zhuang 1987: 451; Guo 2010: 34; Zhou 2015: 104, quoting Fuk'anggan.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Guo 2010: 34, from a memorial of Ohüi.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Tao 1993: 38–39.

¹¹¹ Shakabpa 2010: vol. 1, 512.

¹¹² Zhuang 1987: 449; QDKEKJL 2: 3b (1: 250), QL 56/9/15, no. 2.

¹¹³ Shakabpa 2010: vol. 1, 511.

¹¹⁴ QDKEKJL 4: 25a (1: 401), QL 56/10/11, no. 2; 5: 28a (1: 467), QL 56/10/22, no. 2.

instances, as in Zongka, when the Gorkhas “fiercely attacked” and climbed the walls of the fortress with ladders, but were effectively repelled by Tibetan defenders and relief troops.¹¹⁵

The derogatory comments made about the Tibetan troops is in contrast to the Mongolian Qošods, who are characterised in Qing sources as fighting with great bravery (*bingding qiangzhuang* 兵丁強壯, *fazheng fenyong* 打仗奮勇)¹¹⁶ and in defiance of death, so that half of them died on the battlefield in one instance.¹¹⁷ The Mongols were also known as “very unassuming, not demanding provisions or money for such” (*su qu qianliang* 素無錢糧), and were very happy when given material rewards such as silks, tobacco, tea and silver plates.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless another document expresses the fear that the Qošod troops at that time did not have sufficient experience in mountain warfare,¹¹⁹ and a further report gives evidence that they could not withstand the enemy (*dui di bu zhu* 對敵不住).¹²⁰

The reason for sending Solun troops from Heilongjiang in the northeast over thousands of kilometers to Lhasa and beyond, was that the Solun cavalry were deemed excellent riders and archers and could bear great cold, if equipped with winter clothing.¹²¹ Also better than the Tibetans were their “cousins” among the many native tribes of Kham and Jinchuan who were experienced in storming mountain fortresses, and could build multi-storied counter-fortifications (*diaoka* 碉卡) by themselves.¹²² They were rated as brave and reliable,¹²³ and had the advantage that they spoke Tibetan dialects and could thus be used as interpreters.¹²⁴

The Gorkhas advanced on foot and had no cavalry, according to Chinese sources.¹²⁵ The Tibetans, or at least part of them, were mounted and used bow and arrow, and also carried with them lances and swords.¹²⁶ However other sources say—and this is rather probable for an army consisting mostly of ad-hoc recruits, that the majority of

¹¹⁵ Zhuang 1987: 449. KEKD 56/10/23 (QL 56/9–10: 144; 1: 140).

¹¹⁶ Feng 1992: 86; QSLGZSL 1387: 18b (QL 56/9/dingyou).

¹¹⁷ Zhang 1987: 449; Ayinna 2012: 13.

¹¹⁸ To be used as markers and conferrals of authority; Feng 1992: 86.

¹¹⁹ QDKEKJL 1: 23b (1: 234), QL 56/9/12, no. 2.

¹²⁰ QDKEKJL 2: 1b (1: 246), QL 56/9/15.

¹²¹ Gao 2013: 18, 20.

¹²² QDKEKJL 3: 1a (1: 305), QL 56/9/25.

¹²³ Cai 1993: 76.

¹²⁴ QDKEKJL 1: 20a (1: 227), QL 56/9/11.

¹²⁵ Zhuang 1987: 433.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*: 433, 449.

them were infantry.¹²⁷ The case is quite clear for the Soluns who were, as cavalry, used to pursuing and striking down fleeing enemies.¹²⁸ The native soldiers from Kham finally were used to besiege and assail fortresses, to fight with hand grenades (*huodan* 火彈) and storm ladders, and to work as sappers to bring down fortifications with explosives.¹²⁹

Without going into further detail, one might conclude that the different “ethnic troops” cooperated in a kind of division of labour. Such cooperation can indeed be observed in the descriptions of several battles.

Standing units of the Tibetan army were, at least according the reforms envisaged in the 1789 *Statutes*, and quite probably because of the presence of both Tibetan and Green Standard units in most places as stipulated in the 1793 *Articles*, commanded by a Green Standard officer. Yet it can be seen that the officers of Tibetan units worked in an “ethnically” cooperative way. This is also true for Green Standard troops. Right at the beginning of the second invasion, for instance, a major named Urgungga (Wu’ergong’a 烏爾公阿, quite probably a Manchu) and a Tibetan *dapön*, whose name is not mentioned, led a joint force of Green Standard troops, Qošods, and Tibetan troops to bring relief to the besieged seat of the governor (*guanzhai* 官寨) in Sakya (?) Valley (Sajia Gou 薩迦溝).¹³⁰ On another occasion, the defence of Tashilhunpo was taken over by Qošods under the command of a Chinese captain.¹³¹

This cooperation between different types of troops can also be observed during the liberation of the fortresses occupied by the Gorkhas. During the attack on the castle of Mt. Pagya (Pajia Ling 帕嘉嶺, Pajia Ling 拍嘉嶺 or 拍甲嶺) under commander Cengde, 100 troops under a Banner colonel (*xieling* 協領) took up a position at a crucial spot overlooking the theatre. From the northwest, 200 Chinese and “local” (Khampa) troops (*Han-tun bianbing* 漢屯弁兵) under a Chinese major (*youji*), a Tibetan colony captain (*tunbei* 屯備) and the Tibetan vice-chief (*fu tusi* 副土司) of Batang (in Kham), as well as 70 Tibetan troops under the command of a *dapön*, crossed the mountain ridge and advanced on the castle. From the southwest, 200 Chinese and native troops under a Chinese first captain (*dusi*) and a colony captain (*tunbei*), and 60 Tibetan troops under the command of a *diba* (*dingpön*?) crossed another mountain ridge to engage the enemy. During the night, the Qing troops (*guanbing*) under Cengde’s direct command advanced to the

¹²⁷ Guo (2010: 31) compares the figures from *Xizang zhi* listed further above.

¹²⁸ Zhuang 1987: 461.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*: 455; QDKEKJL 19: 1b (3: 1174), QL 57/2/3.

¹³⁰ Zhuang 1987: 449; QDKEKJL 8: 7a (2: 613), QL 56/11/11.

¹³¹ Zhuang 1987: 450.

riverside close to Mt. Pagya and crossed the river by laying out wooden planks. At dawn, the two contingents liaised and attacked the castle together. The decisive charge was led by the Chinese major, whose troops used hand grenades to break through its gates.¹³²

The conquest of the castle of Nyalam was initiated by a feigned attack of Manchu, Han, and Tibetan troops from the northwest, while the real charge came from the southwest, this time again using hand grenades and other combustibles first to burn down the outer walls, and then, when buildings on the inner side could be reached, to break open the powder magazine, which eventually caught fire and exploded. Meanwhile the Gorkhas barricaded themselves in the northwestern part of the castle. During the night, “strong and brave Tibetan troops” dug a trench and began work on the wall behind which the granary chamber was located. After a week, a breach was created, and the grain ignited. Yet the enemy still resisted. Fresh troops were brought in to support the work of the sappers and shoveled away the snow. Finally, after nearly a month of siege, the 1,200-odd Qing/Tibetan troops ignited forty packs of gunpowder and thereby destroyed the wall of the inner fortification, and forced the surviving enemies to surrender.¹³³ Besides this engineering work, cannons were the most effective siege weapon of the imperial troops. They were usually fired from higher positions.¹³⁴

One of the aims of the *Twenty-nine Articles* was to shift military expenditure from the imperial treasury onto the Tibetan government. The cost of the Gorkha campaigns in the remote highland was immense and had mostly been shouldered by the Qing government, at least for the imperial troops. While prior to the *Articles* there had been some clear regulations for the supply of imperial troops—at least after the issuing of the *War Expenditures Code* (*Junxu zeli* 軍需則例) in 1776¹³⁵—these were not applicable in Tibet, where local troops were not provided with rations for campaigns lasting longer than one month. The troops therefore had to look after themselves, and also had to bring their own weapons (*qixie kouliang jun xi ge bing zi bei* 器械口糧均係各兵自備).¹³⁶ The result was that the Tibetan troops maltreated the local population (*zaorao renmin* 造擾人民).¹³⁷ For this reason, Art. 4 of the *Articles* saw to it that the Tibetan government took care for the regular supply of the garrisons.

¹³² *Ibid.*: 455; QDKEKJL 19: 1b (3: 1174), QL 57/2/3.

¹³³ Zhuang 1987: 456; QDKEKJL 21: 1a–1b (3: 1293–1294), QL 57/2/22.

¹³⁴ QDKEKJL 35: 7a (4: 2101), QL 57/7/14.

¹³⁵ Theobald 2016: 186.

¹³⁶ Guo 2010: 32, from a memorial of Ohūi.

¹³⁷ Tao 1993: 38, quoting from the 1793 *Articles*, Art. 4.

Their lack of uniforms and standard-issue weapons also made the Tibetan soldiers “look like a flock of crows” (*wu he zhi zhong* 烏合之眾) who were “dealing [with war] like a children’s game” (*dai tong er xi* 殆同兒戲), at least in the eyes of Chinese observers.¹³⁸

The militia system worked in a manner similar to the *corvée* system (*ula*) and operated according to local need, and without central registration. The local authorities decided not only when, but also how to recruit men. In some places, militiamen were drafted according to the size of a household, while in other places, ownership of fields was the criterion by which young men could be drafted or not. For this reason, no figures are available how many militia troops the Tibetan government was able to raise.¹³⁹

When assembled to fight an enemy, militiamen were not trained in any way, and did not obey central command (*wu tong shuai* 無統率). Disordered chains of command, bad equipment, and injustices in the recruitment system, together resulted in frequent desertion, especially as soon as there was an occasion for actual combat (*cheng jian ji tao* 乘間即逃).¹⁴⁰ The Qing commanders therefore decided to send some officers to the troops defending Kyirong in order to train the Tibetan troops trying to win back the fortress.¹⁴¹

Given such circumstances, it is important to question the mission of the armies involved in these events—the purposes for which they fought and existed. As for the Qing, these two Gorkha campaigns were the last two in a series of conflicts concerning “the pacification of the border regions” which had begun in the late 17th century with the suppression of the Three Feudatories in southwest China, culminated in the fights against the Zunghars, and then spread to the southeast, south, and southwest. These multiple wars had taught the Qing to suppress troublemakers by brute force, with overwhelming manpower, and monetary investment to feed the war machine. The aim was the pacification of the empire.

In Tibet, defence was mainly oriented towards the north, to ward off attempts by Mongol leaders to gain influence over Lhasa.¹⁴² This orientation was based on past experiences, but ignored the threat posed by new powers from the south, like the Gorkhas, or the British. The reduction in manpower of the Tibetan army since the mid-century

¹³⁸ Guo 2010: 34, from a memorial of Zhang Yintang 張蔭棠.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*: 34.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ QDKEKJL 1: 14a (1: 215), QL 56/9/5.

¹⁴² Compare the article of Hosung Shim in this volume.

hade made it nearly impossible to protect a territory as large as Tibet in case of conflicts in distant regions.

Conclusions

The *Statutes* of 1789 and *Articles* of 1793 were aimed at strengthening the Tibetan military system, so that the Tibetan government had no need to turn to the imperial government of the Qing for defence. Through this reform, Tibet was supposed to reorganise her own standing army and to reduce the reliance on the ad-hoc recruitment of militia troops.¹⁴³ This military restructuring in Tibet saved the Qing government both organisational effort and financial cost, and created an administrative apparatus for managing recruitment and training, providing clear-cut budgets and resources, and determining permanent and distinct structures of command and jurisdiction. The primary aim of the military reforms of 1793 was thus to convert the Tibetan military into a small but effective professional army standing under the command of the Tibetan central government. Thereafter, soldiers would receive regular and decent payment, would be trained, and were a body of troops answerable to clearly-defined command structures. Their mission was to defend Tibet against future foreign intrusions.

This analysis of the composition of the joint Tibetan/Qing army during the two Gorkha invasions demonstrates that the imperial forces were composed of military units of varying ethnic provenance, including troops from central Tibet, eastern Tibet, Qoşod Mongols, Chinese Green Standard troops, Manchu Banner troops, and Solun from the far northeast. All these contingents had different modes of fighting which could be applied to different specific circumstances. This diversity was a typical feature of armies during the high Qing period, and this type of "ethnic cooperation" was formally encoded into the model of the military administration in Tibet after 1793, by integrating Tibetan units further with the Chinese Green Standard troops standing in Tibet.

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Meritocracy in the Tibetan Army after the 1793 Manchu Reforms: The Career of General Zurkhang Sichö Tseten*

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1. Introduction

Biographical and autobiographical sources available for the military history of Tibet are numerous for the early 20th century, but much rarer for previous periods. It is therefore very fortunate that a manuscript of the autobiography of the early 19th century army general and cabinet minister Zurkhang Sichö Tseten (Tib. Zurkhang Sri gcod tshe brtan, 1766–1820) has recently come to light. This manuscript is composed of two distinct texts, namely the autobiography itself, entitled *Bka' gung blon gyi 'khur 'dzin pa'i rtogs brjod bung ba'i mgrin glu (stod cha)* in 150 folios (hereafter *Bka' gung blon gyi rtogs brjod*), and a much shorter biography compiled by his disciples and his son Tseten Dorjé (Tshe brtan rdo rje, ?–1844) entitled *Bka' zur zur khang pa blo bzang chos 'byor brtan 'dzin rgya mtsho'i rnam thar smad cha slob bu rnam nas phyogs sdebs su bgyis pa tshangs pa'i drangs thig ces bya ba bzhugs so*, in 21 folios (hereafter *Bka' zur zur khang pa'i rnam thar*).¹ The aristocratic house Zurkhang belonged to the high-ranking noble subgroup called *midrak* (*mi drag*).² The family claimed an illustrious ancestry going back to the *dharmarajas* of Gugé (Gu ge), taking its name from a

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¹ I would like to thank Tashi Tsering Josayma for having shared with me his copy of this rare and previously unknown source and for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper. My sincere gratitude also goes to George FitzHerbert for his editorial work and for his correction of my English. All remaining errors are my own.

² The Ganden Phodrang aristocracy—a group of a little more than 200 families in the first half of the 20th century—consisted of four hierarchically-arranged subgroups, namely the *depön* (*sde dpon*), four families who claimed ancestry going back to the former kings and ministers of the Tibetan Empire (7th–9th centuries); the *yapzhi* (*yab gzhis*), six ennobled families of the previous Dalai Lamas; the *midrak*, approximately eighteen rich and politically-influential families; and finally, the

branch family (*zur du chad pas*) descended from the royal lineage of Lha Lama Jangchup Ö (Lha bla ma byang chub 'od, 984–1078).³ Several members of the family are known to have served as prominent officials in the Ganden Phodrang (Dga' ldan pho drang) government, starting, according to Zurkhang Sichö Tseten, in the mid-17th century with an ancestor who served the Fifth Dalai Lama.⁴ Petech's research only attested the use of this family name in historical sources from the early 18th century, with a Zurkhang named Guyang Khashaka (Gu yang kha sha kha) appearing in the *Biography of Pholhané* (Pho lha nas), known as the *Miwang Tokjö* (*Mi dbang rtogs brjod*), as a commander during the Bhutan war of 1714.⁵ This information is corroborated by Sichö Tseten's autobiography, in which he states that one of his ancestors named Guyang Khashaka fought heroically with the army general or *dapön* Bumtangpa ('Bum thang pa)⁶ against the "Lhomön" (Lho mon).⁷

After a career in the army, Zurkhang Sichö Tseten was appointed cabinet minister or *kalön* (*bka' blon*) in 1804. In 1815, upon retirement from government service, he became a monk, taking the name Lobzang Chöjor Tenzin Gyatso (Blo bzang chos 'byor bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho) and passed away five years later.⁸ At the outset, it is worth briefly contextualising these newly-available historical texts within the historiographic genre to which they belong.

1.1. *Life Accounts by Government's Officials in Pre-modern Times and their Value for Military History*

Zurkhang Sichö Tseten's autobiography is extremely interesting from a general historical point of view because of the rarity of such sources,

gerpa (*sger pa*), a term referring to all other landowner families. For more on the Tibetan aristocracy in pre-1959 Tibet, see Travers 2009.

³ *Bka' gung blon gyi rtogs brjod*, folio 5b5. Dorje Yudon Yuthok mentions an even older origin in the 9th century: King Langdarma (Glang dar ma) would be the first known ancestor of her maternal family Zurkhang (Yuthok 1990: 28). Zurkhang Sichö Tseten's manuscript allows us to get much more detailed information on the family history and origins, but it is not within the scope of this paper to discuss it in more detail.

⁴ *Bka' gung blon gyi rtogs brjod*, folio 6b4.

⁵ Petech 1973: 144. In addition to the *Miwang Tokjö*, Petech browsed a great number of Tibetan sources including most of the Panchen and Dalai Lamas' life accounts, as well as primary Chinese-language sources for this period.

⁶ He most probably refers to the *dapön* (*mda' dpon*) of Ü (Dbus), Bumtangpa Ngödrub (Bum thang pa Dngos sgrub) who is mentioned by Petech as dying from his wounds shortly after having fought the Zunghar invasion; Petech 1973: 127.

⁷ *Bka' gung blon gyi rtogs brjod*, folio 6n1 and 6n6.

⁸ The date of his death is not precisely recorded in his biography, but he is said to have passed away when he was fifty-four (fifty-five *Tibetica more*) years old, i.e. in 1820 (*Bka' zur zur khang pa'i rnam thar*, folio 18b3).

i.e. life accounts by ministers in pre-modern times. Indeed, the Tibetan biographical (*rnam thar*) and autobiographical (*rang rnam*) genres were traditionally the preserve of religious masters, with their life-stories being offered as an edifying example for their followers. Around 2,000 biographies of prominent religious figures are known in Tibetan literature,⁹ with the earliest examples of autobiographical accounts dating to the 12th century. From the 17th century onwards, the autobiographical genre expanded considerably, spurred by the autobiographical writings of the Fifth Dalai Lama, particularly his “outer” biography in three volumes, which would serve as a model for such autobiographies until the 20th century.¹⁰ Janet Gyatso has counted as many as 150 book-length Tibetan autobiographies, a figure which excludes the various modern autobiographical accounts published since the Chinese occupation.¹¹ For the military historian, these (predominantly) religious autobiographies or hagiographies do occasionally include some information regarding the military history of Tibet, but it is very rare for such matters to be treated in any detail or with any precision. Instead, such sources inform the military historian more about the ongoing discourses and rhetoric around the legitimisation of violence by clerics, or on the use of rituals in warfare,¹² rather than on the precise state or activities of the Tibetan army.

However, in the 18th century there also emerged the custom of writing life accounts—whether biographical or autobiographical—of senior lay government officials (in particular cabinet ministers) in which their service to the government is presented as an example for future government servants.¹³ Such accounts—of which three others

⁹ Schaeffer 2004: 4.

¹⁰ Gyatso 1998: 101.

¹¹ More recently, in the Tibetan diaspora, a new form of autobiography has emerged: the life stories of lay people from various social backgrounds, though most often of high birth. These emerged first in English and only later in Tibetan (see McMillin 2002). See also Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy 2013. She has counted 157 biographical or autobiographical writings published in exile as of 2013 (*ibid.*: 4); several of these modern (auto)biographical accounts, are useful for our research on the military history for the 20th century. Also useful are other (auto)biographical accounts published in Tibet, in particular the collection entitled *Bod kyi lo rgyus rig gnas dpyad gzhi'i rgyu cha bdams bsgrigs* (*Materials for the Culture and history of Tibet*), which is part of the wider enterprise of the *wenshi ziliao* (cultural and historical materials) in China, on which see Travers 2013 and Travers forthcoming.

¹² For examples of the study of the Fifth Dalai Lama's writings in that sense, see Venturi 2018 and FitzHerbert 2018.

¹³ As Hartley (2011: 45) and Sperling (2015: 146) underline, there are known examples of secular biographies in periods prior to the 18th century, like the *Si tu bka' chems* (*Bka' chems mthong ba don ldan*) of Jangchup Gyeltsen (Byang chub rgyal mtshan,

are currently known—were all authored by high-ranking aristocrats. Because of their value (albeit variable) for Tibetan military history during the Ganden Phodrang period, it is worth mentioning each of these individually.

The first is the above-mentioned *Biography of Pholhané*, widely known by its abbreviated Tibetan title *Miwang Tokjö*, which was written in 1733 by Dokhar Tsering Wanggyel (Mdo mkhar Tshe ring dbang rgyal, 1697–1763).¹⁴ This is a very important source for military history insofar as Pholhané was himself a prominent military leader and it gives detailed accounts of several episodes of military engagement in late 17th and early 18th century Tibetan history.¹⁵

Second is the autobiography of Dokhar Tsering Wanggyel himself (author of the work above) which was written in 1762 and is usually referred to as the *Account of a Minister* or *Kalön Tokjö (Bka' blon rtogs brjod)*.¹⁶ This is currently our earliest example—though others might of course surface—of a Tibetan-language autobiography written by a layman. Dokharwa was himself appointed a colonel (*ru dpon*) in the Tibetan army in 1726¹⁷ and later (1752) was put in charge of Tibetan troops in the Tengri Nor/Namtso (Gnam mtsho) area.¹⁸

Third is the autobiography of yet another cabinet minister, Doring/Gazhi Tenzin Penjor (Rdo ring/Dga' bzhi Bstan 'dzin dpal 'byor, 1760–after 1810), usually referred to as the *Biography of Doring Pandita (Rdo ring PaNDita rnam thar)*, written in 1806, which gives an important

1302–1364). However, the *Si tu bka' chems* cannot be really considered an autobiography; see Hartley 2011: 45. At any rate, the 18th century represents an increase in the scope and scale of this particular genre; see Sperling 2015: 146.

¹⁴ Zhabs drung Tshe ring dbang rgyal [1733] 1981. The Dokhar family was also known under the name Rakhasha (Rag kha shag) in the early 20th century.

¹⁵ Pholhané's biography has been used by several scholars including Petech ([1950] 1972; 1966; 1973), Shakabpa (2010), Sperling (2012, 2015), as well as Federica Venturi and Hosung Shim in this volume, to name just a few. Sperling considers the emergence of "secular biographies" in the 18th century—and in particular the *Miwang Tokjö*, which is entirely dedicated to highlighting the political and military prowess of Pholhané—as representing "an innovation in eighteenth-century Tibetan historical writing, an innovation that reflected Tibet's inclusion in the larger Manchu Mongol order under the Qing, beginning in the seventeenth century [and] that the prevailing conditions in that order made the appearance of such works something more than just a literary development or an adjustment to a genre. They effectively made them into a harbinger of a sort of nascent modernity in Tibet"; see Sperling 2015: 143–144.

¹⁶ Mdo mkhar ba Tshe ring dbang rgyal [1762] 1981. Its full title is *Dpal mi'i dbang po'i rtogs brjod 'jig rten kun tu dga' ba'i gtam*. For an analysis of this autobiography as a whole, see Hartley 2011. Riga Shakya is currently undertaking a Ph.D. focusing on these ministerial biographies Columbia University, New York.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*: 21. Petech depicts his part in the civil war as a "lukewarm" one, as an officer of the Lhasa army; see Petech 1973: 71.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 72.

testimony concerning the events surrounding the two Tibet-Gorkha wars of 1788–1789 and 1791–1792.¹⁹

It is notable that although these life accounts by and about prominent lay Tibetans who held senior official positions, were innovative, they cannot be considered as entirely distinct from the wider Tibetan genre of religious biography/autobiography, because all their subjects/authors also carried strong religious identities: Doring Pandita and Zurkhang Sichö Tseten both became monks at some point, while the aristocratic house of Dokhar had a particularly strong religious identity: Dokhar Tsering Wanggyel himself held the religious title of *zhapdrung* (*zhabs drung*), usually reserved for some high incarnates and for the ecclesiastic heads of a few families of the high aristocracy;²⁰ and, by tradition, the Dokhar family counted among its number two lines of incarnates (*sprul sku*), always to be found among members of this family, one of Riwoché (Ri bo che) and one of Taklung (Stag glung) monastery.²¹ Even the lay aristocrat Pholhané had a significant religious dimension to his life and status, having been educated at Mindröling (Smin grol gling) monastery and recognised as an incarnation of Begtse (Beg tse).²² Likewise Zurkhang Sichö Tseten had already become a monk when he decided to write his autobiography.

In the first lines of the text, Sichö Tseten justifies his autobiographical project, placing himself in the tradition of his predecessors by naming his literary endeavour a *tokjö* (*rtogs brjod*; lit. “account”) both in the title—translatable as *The Humming of a Bee, Being the Life Account [tokjö] of the Holder of the Titles Minister and Duke*—and in the first folios, indicating perhaps that he took the *Account of a Minister* as a model. As explained by Luran Hartley, the term *tokjö*, which translates the Sanskrit *avadāna*, was usually used for religious figures only. Dokhar Tsering Wanggyel, though himself a “quasi-ecclesiastic official” as Hartley underlines,²³ had not in fact called his biography a *tokjö* himself, as this was probably a title only posthumously attached to the work.²⁴ Perhaps Sichö Tseten felt authorised to use it because he was a monk in

¹⁹ Its full title is *Dga' bzhi ba'i mi rabs kyi byung ba brjod pa zol med gtam gyi rol mo*. This work is available in three editions, one of them being Rdo ring pa Bstan 'dzin dpal 'byor [1806] 1986. This autobiography has been used in Li Ruohong's 2002 dissertation on the Doring/Gazhi family. It has also been studied by Franz Xaver Erhard (2019).

²⁰ Hartley 2011: 50, quoting Petech 1973: 238.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² See George FitzHerbert's paper in this volume.

²³ Hartley 2011: 66.

²⁴ As Hartley remarks (*ibid.*: 67), the actual title of this work is *Dīrghā yur indra dzi na'i byung ba brjod pa zol med ngag gi rol mo*, and the name of the author, Tshe ring dbang rgyal (“Long life-power/lord-ruler”), was rendered in Sanskrit.

the later part of his life when he composed it. Nonetheless, he underlines how far away from spiritual matters he has remained during the major part of his life, and adds some self-deprecation when qualifying his *tokjö*, as “summarised” or “rough” (*rtogs brjod rags rim*):

Even though I obtained a human body in a country possessing the *dharma*, I have been busy with worldly activities and have had no time for religious activities. This is an account of the life of an old layman without religion who, despite being familiar with religious activities, had fallen under the influence of laziness. [...] As for the majority of the worldly activities undertaken by myself and others in *samāsāra*, they are nothing other than like children’s games. For the rest, although not visible, there were nonetheless some things I did in my youth and some wonderful things I have seen which I could not include here as they were not related to these activities; therefore, I have arranged this rough account just in the manner of an experience arising naturally. It is not only because some elder relatives and some close friends exhorted me to, but also because I had some leisure for the activity of writing, that I passed my daytime doing it [...].²⁵

Let us now come back to the value of Sichö Tseten’s autobiography for the social history of the military in Tibet, which is the centrepiece of this article.

1.2. The Value of Sichö Tseten’s Autobiography for the Social History of the Military in Tibet

In addition to its value as a unique historical and literary source—which it is beyond the scope of the present paper to analyse in depth—Zurkhang Sichö Tseten’s autobiography sheds interesting light on one particular aspect of Tibet’s military history, namely the Manchu influence on the structural evolution of the Tibetan army hierarchy at the end of the 18th century. At that time, the Tibetan army consisted of two distinct elements: local militia (*yul dmag*; lit. “local army”), levied

²⁵ *Bka’ gung blon gyi rtogs brjod*, folios 4 and 5: *chos ldan yul du dal ’byor rten thob kyang / chos spyod long med za za’i bya bas brel / chos byar khoms kyang le lo’i dbang shor ba’i / chos med khyim pa rgas po’i gnas lugs gtam [...] rang gzhan ’khor bar spyod pa phal mo che ni byis pa’i rol rtsed dang mthun pa sha dag las / gzhan du ma dnigs mod / ’on tang ngos rang gzhon nu chung ngu’i dus su kun spyod dang / mthong snang ya mtshar zhing / rgyun bsgrigs kyi bya spyod rtag mi thub pa kha shas byung rigs rang bzhin nyams ’char gyi tshul tsam du rtogs brjod rags rim zhig ’god pa ’di ni sku ngo bgres gras dang / zla bo blo nye ba kha shas nas bskul bar ma zad / lag sor gyi ’du byed dal bas nyin mo’i dus tshod ’phul bar byed pa ni [...] / .*

or raised only at times of emergency;²⁶ and regular troops which from the mid-18th century could be called a standing army, or at least a semi-standing army, placed under the command of a variety of military officers²⁷ (as we will see in more detail below), the highest-ranking of whom enjoyed the status of government officials (*gzhung zhabs*).²⁸ As such, they were recruited from among the lay nobility, as was the case for Zurkhang Sichö Tseten.

Notwithstanding a number of remaining uncertainties, the 18th century seems to have been a crucial period for the creation of these regular troops and for the parallel and gradual stabilisation of its military hierarchy into a form that remained largely intact from 1793 at the latest, until 1959.²⁹ These developments seem to have been directly related to the successive Manchu reforms of the 18th century in Tibet.³⁰

The last and most significant of these 18th century Manchu reforms, the *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance* (also referred to as the *Twenty-nine Articles*) of 1793, promulgated in the immediate aftermath of the second Gorkha war (1791–1792), aimed at ensuring a higher degree of Qing imperial control over the Tibetan government, and among other significant aspects,³¹ at initiating a particularly strong change in the Tibetan army. In particular, the fifth article of this *Ordinance* intended to introduce some degree of meritocracy in the Tibetan army by regulating the rules governing the recruitment and advancement of military officers up to the highest position of army general or *dapön* (*mda'*

²⁶ In pre-Ganden Phodrang times, they had constituted the entirety of Tibetan military organisation, at least since the Mongol/Sakya (Sa skya) time. Such local militias continued to be utilised up until 1950.

²⁷ The military leadership in the militia was, to a certain extent, functioning according to a different system.

²⁸ Government officials of the Ganden Phodrang government received positions as well as honourific titles. Positions and honourific titles both being correlated to ranks (*rim pa*) on a ladder from the seventh up to the third grade. This ranking system, introduced in 1792, was modelled after the Manchu system, with the particularity that only five (the seventh to the third) out of nine ranks were used; see Petech 1973: 8. When an official received an honourific title conferring him a higher rank than the position alone gave him, then he held the highest rank attached to the honourific title.

²⁹ I am here talking only of the officers' hierarchy, not of other aspects of the Tibetan army such as its size, training, equipment, etc., which underwent drastic changes in the early 20th century.

³⁰ See Travers 2015.

³¹ Secondary literature in western languages on the *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance*, its contents and its various implications, is rich: see Petech [1950] 1972 and 1966; Dungdkar Blo bzang 'phrin las [1991] 1993; Jagou 2007 and 2013; Chayet 2005; Schwieger 2015: 186–192; Oidtmann 2018. To this can be added various articles in the present volume.

dpon).³² Thus, the military career of Zurkhang Sichö Tseten, which happened to take place between 1799 and 1804, i.e. in the years following this *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance*, can be considered as a starting point for an assessment of the degree to which the regulations concerning the advancement of the military officers in the *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance* were actually enacted.³³

Therefore, based on Zurkhang Sichö Tseten's autobiography, and taking the Zurkhang family as a case study, this paper will discuss the question of whether and how the 1793 *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance* impacted the Tibetan military officers' corps from the late 18th century onwards, and the more specific question of whether or not it succeeded in introducing some degree of meritocracy. The information available in Sichö Tseten's autobiography on his own military career, as well as the military careers of other Zurkhang family members, is documented and checked against secondary sources as well as an additional primary source, namely the recently-published transcription of several Ganden Phodrang archival documents listing lay government officials, including military officers, from 1794 to the early 20th century. These have been collated in a book entitled *Gzhung dga' ldan pho brang pa'i las tshan phyi nang tog gnas kyi go rim deb ther rin chen phreng ba* (hereafter *Go rim deb ther rin chen phreng ba*), published in 2016 by the Lhasa Archives.³⁴

³² I have discussed elsewhere (Travers 2015) other military aspects of the *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance* and discussed them in light of other legal texts of the Ganden Phodrang period, including other Manchu reforms. The present paper should be seen as a follow-up paper to this first work, trying to continue and bring the discussion there a step further. See also Ulrich Theobald in this volume for a discussion of other military-related articles of this reform and more generally on the Manchu policy regarding the Tibetan army.

³³ Prior scholars have underlined the significant question of whether the *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance* had been applied or not. In the conclusion to her paper "A propos du règlement en 29 articles de l'année 1793", Anne Chayet called for further research, if new documentation became available, on how the decrees were actually applied (Chayet 2005: 181). With regard to Article 14 of the *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance* this issue has already been addressed. This article forbade the Tibetan government from entering into correspondence with or replying to correspondence from foreign countries, without either prior validation by the *amban* or entrusting the *ambans* to reply themselves, for smaller countries. Schwiieger (2005) has studied a letter received by Lord Cornwallis from the Eighth Dalai Lama in June 1793, i.e. just a few weeks or months after the promulgation of the *Ordinance*. He has shown that the Eighth Dalai Lama's answer, though not being a direct translation of the Manchu general Fuk'anggan's own separate letter, was very close to it in content (*ibid.*: 159) and could be described as being almost "dictated" (Schwiieger 2015: 192) by the *ambans* and Fuk'anggan to the Dalai Lama—as well as to the Panchen Lama, who was also part of the correspondence.

³⁴ Bod rang skyong ljongs yig tshags khang 2016. The value of this source as being of an intrinsically more reliable—from the historian's point of view—nature than the

The next section starts by introducing the content of the military articles of the *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance*, and briefly recalling the innovations and progressive stabilisation of the military hierarchy in the course of the 18th century and up to 1793. Then we will analyse how the military career of Zurkhang Sichö Tseten, as described in his autobiography and the *Go rim deb ther rin chen phreng ba*, gives hints about whether the Article 5 of the *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance* was put in practice or not. The last part will broaden the analysis both to the Zurkhang family in general, and to later times, arguing that the fortunes of this house—along with a few others—were emblematic of a social shift in the military leadership, probably under Manchu influence, at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries.

2. The Military Provisions of the Twenty-Nine-Article Ordinance of 1793

The *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance*,³⁵ a decree generally aiming at improving the Tibetan administration, was introduced by Qianlong in March-April 1793 after the war against the Gorkhas, which had revealed the weakness of the Tibetans on the military field.³⁶ It is therefore no surprise that as many as a third of the articles of the reform tackle the question of the reorganisation of the Tibetan army (i.e. articles 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 16, 17, 24, 26, 27). They aim at establishing a permanent army, with strict rules regarding recruitment, promotion and pay, as well as the supervision of troops, weapons and ammunition. Among other things, it emphasises the importance of maintaining a meritocratic principle within the officer corps of the Tibetan army. The fourth and fifth articles are of particular significance from the point of view of the social history of the Tibetan army.

autobiographic genre, is here undermined by the fact that this publication does not include the facsimile of the archive documents themselves, but only their edited transliteration. This editorial choice deprives us not only of the possibility of seeing the outer form of the original documents, but also of checking the editors' choices in their reading of the cursive hand writing, etc. For a thorough discussion of the problems raised by this type of publication in the People's Republic of China, see Schwieger 2015: 3-4.

³⁵ The Tibetan text of the reform on which this paper is based is the one reproduced in Nor bu bsam 'phel 2008: 156-171. The transcription of the ordinance was first reproduced and described in Chab spel Tshe brtan phun tshogs (ed.) 1989; and in Chab spel Tshe brtan phun tshogs dang Nor brang O rgyan 1991: 315-347. For a detailed description of the Ordinance's two available versions (abridged and elaborate) either in facsimile and Tibetan transcription, and a critical analysis of their peculiarities as historical source, see Schwieger 2015: 186-187.

³⁶ Chayet 2005: 173.

2.1. *The Creation of a Sixth Dapön Position in Article 4*

Article 4 stipulates that the troops' strength should be fixed at 3,000 soldiers with the creation of a sixth general/*dapön* position. Incidentally, this addition is presented as taking place in the context of the "establishment of a new army" (*dmag mi gsar 'dzugs byas pa*), which has led some authors like Chen,³⁷ and after him Fredholm,³⁸ to date the first standing army of Tibet to this year of 1793. However, earlier attempts both by Tibetan rulers as well as by the Manchu power to create such a standing army are documented in secondary literature.³⁹ The most probable reason for this statement of the "establishment of a new army" as a goal of the reform, is that these previous attempts had—at least partially—failed.

It is worth emphasising here the significance of the appearance, during the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama, of the new officer title *dapön* as the highest-ranking Tibetan military officer, commanding the largest military unit, namely the *dashok* (*mda' shog*), a unit larger than the "wings" (*ru*), which had hitherto been the largest military unit since the time of the Tibetan Empire. Indeed, the title *dapön*, translatable as "general", appears to have been the main innovation, in terms of military officer titles, during the entire Ganden Phodrang period, since all other subaltern military titles in use by the Tibetan army during this period predated the Ganden Phodrang, and a number of them even dated back to the "ancient" period of the Tibetan Empire (7th-9th centuries).⁴⁰

Not only did the creation of this new title suggest a substantial change in military organisation, but an increase in the number of such high-ranking officers also indicated an increase in the opportunities for subaltern officers to access such a position. It is still unclear when exactly the title *dapön* (*mda' dpon*, lit. "chief of the arrow") started to be used formally as a rank in the Tibetan army. The term is first found in the writings of *desi* Sanggyé Gyatso (*sde srid* Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, 1653–1705), both in his biography of the Fifth Dalai Lama (the *Du ku la'i gos bzang*)⁴¹ and in his *Guidelines for Government Officials* (*Blang dor gsal bar ston pa'i drang thig dvangs shel gyi me long nyer gcig pa*)⁴² written in 1681, where it seems to designate the highest military officer after

³⁷ Chen 2005.

³⁸ Fredholm 2007.

³⁹ See Travers 2015 for a discussion on that point.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* Another new title created during the later period of the Ganden Phodrang, i.e. in the early 20th century, was the rank of "*me 'byar*", in imitation of the English "major".

⁴¹ Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 2009.

⁴² Norbu Samphel 2008: 73.

the *makpön* (*dmag dpon*), who is still mentioned there.⁴³ Its etymology likely lies in a borrowing from the Manchu military rank⁴⁴ with the same meaning (Ma. *niru-i ejen*, lit. “chief/lord of the arrow”).⁴⁵

This seems plausible, given the Fifth Dalai Lama’s fascination with Manchu military titles, as revealed in a passage of his autobiography describing his visit to Beijing in 1653.⁴⁶ So it seems likely the title was introduced during this period (especially in the period after the death of Gushri Khan when Manchu influence increased in the 1670s).⁴⁷

Now, regarding the number of available *dapön* positions at one given time: we already know from Petech’s work that the number of *dapön* grew, along with the size of the regular troops, during the course of the 18th century as reflected in the various Manchu reforms.⁴⁸ From an initial three it went to six *dapön* in the following steps: in the first quarter of the 18th century there were three *dapön*, two in Tsang (Tib. Gtsang), one in Kongpo.⁴⁹ In the *Miwang Tokjö* (1733), four different *dapön* are mentioned: two for Tsang, one for Kongpo and one for Ü (Dbus).⁵⁰ The Kongpo *dapön* position then disappeared, so there were three again. After 1728, a fourth *dapön* was added: one in Ü, three in Tsang (so the addition is here of a third one in Tsang).⁵¹ Then in 1751, with the seventh article of the *Reform in Thirteen Articles* (*Las don skor gyi rtsa ’dzin don tshan bcu gsum*), a fifth *dapön*—a second one in Ü—

⁴³ *Ibid.* The term *makpön* then disappears as a specific military title and become a generic term including all or any type of military officers.

⁴⁴ Fredholm (2007: 12) already suggested this Manchu origin.

⁴⁵ Personal communication with Nicola Di Cosmo.

⁴⁶ Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 1989 [1681]: 396, translated and discussed by Gray Tuttle in Schaeffer *et al.* (eds.) 2013: 542.

⁴⁷ It is important to note that after its introduction, the term *dapön* is not used exclusively in the historical sources, most probably for stylistic reasons, with other literary formulations also employed to designate the highest military officers. For example, in the *Miwang Tokjö* written in 1733, *dapön* is rarely used, as the author prefers ornate formulations to describe army leaders, like “helmsman of the force” (“*dpung gi kha lo pa*” or “*g.yul gyi kha lo pa*”). These titles in the *Miwang Tokjö*, sometimes indicate whether they led Ü or Tsang troops, i.e. “*dbus ljongs dmag dpung gi kha lo pa*”, “*dbus kong gi dpung tshogs kyi gtso bo*”, and “*yul dbus kyi g.yul gyi kha lo pa*”. The only army leader who is actually referred to as *dapön* is Lobzang Dargyé (Blo bzang dar rgyas). One century later, Zurkhang Sichö Tseten’s autobiography also uses both terms, sometimes appending one to the other, as in general Changlo (Lcang lo)’s title “*g.yul gyi kha lo pa mda’ dpon lcang lo*”; *Bka’ gung blon gyi rtogs brjod*, folio 34n2.

⁴⁸ See Travers 2015: 257.

⁴⁹ Petech 1973: 12.

⁵⁰ A pair of leaders of the army for Tsang termed “*gtsang ljongs g.yul gyi kha lo pa zung*”, and a pair composed of one *dapön* in Ü (named Orong) and one in Kongpo (named Bumtang): “*dbus kong gi dpung tshogs kyi gtso bo o rong pa dang ’bum thang pa zung*”.

⁵¹ Petech 1973: 200.

was added so there were three in Tsang and two in Ü.⁵² In 1793, a sixth was added, as per the *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance*.⁵³

This number of six *dapön* then remained the same until the beginning of the 20th century—when it started to rise again, until it reached seventeen *dapön* at its peak in 1950.⁵⁴

2.2. Article 5: Subaltern Officers and the Introduction of Meritocratic Rules for Recruitment and Promotion

The fifth article of the *Ordinance* starts with the statement that in previous times there had been no officer other than the *dapön* (*sngar nas dmag gi 'go yod mda' dpon tsam las med 'dug kyang*) and that from now on, the *dapön* would have *rupön*, *gyapön* (*brgya dpon*) and *dingpön* (*lding dpon*) under their command. However, the general development of these military officers' titles and the prior existence of the officer titles *rupön*, *gyapön*, *dingpön*, and *chupön* (*bcu dpon*)⁵⁵ have already been shown elsewhere.⁵⁶ This assertion thus appears to have been either an exaggeration intended to emphasise the value of the reform, or to mark a new meaning in terms of men under the command of these officers.

In any case, from at least this time onward, there was stability in the subaltern officers' titles, structure and meaning until the early 20th century.⁵⁷ This hierarchical structure was as follows (from senior to junior): *dapön*, *rupön*, *gyapön*, *dingpön* with a stable number of soldiers under their orders (see table 1).

⁵² See Travers 2015. The Tibetan text is available in Norbu Samphel 2008: 140–155. A translation in English of the whole reform is available in Schwieger 2015: 152–153. Translated passages from Articles 4 and 5 in this paper are my own.

⁵³ Strangely enough, Petech has this sixth position of *dapön* appear only in the mid-19th century, when a fourth position was added in Tsang, permanently detached to Dingri. Petech has obviously not consulted the *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance*, which already mentions the “Ding ri mda' dpon” in its fourth article; see Norbu Samphel 2008: 158.

⁵⁴ Khreng ping 1981: 184.

⁵⁵ See Travers 2015: 258. *Rupön*, *gyapön*, *dingpön*, and *chupön* appear already as military titles in the *Zhal Ice bcu drug*, a text dating from just before the beginning of the Ganden Phodrang in the early 17th century. In the *Miwang Tokjö* (1733), a few *rupön*, *gyapön* and *dingpön* are mentioned. In the *Kalön Tokjö*, the author himself is appointed as “*g.yas ru'i ru dpon*” (Mdo mkhar ba Tshe ring dbang rgyal [1762] 1981: 21), but there are no further mentions of this or any other of these titles, including *gyapön*, *dingpön*, or *chupön*. Most probably this is simply because such officers were too low-ranking to deserve mention. The same is true of Zurkhang Sichö Tseten's autobiography, where lower officers below the rank of the *dapön* are not mentioned, except when he himself is appointed to these positions. Also, the meaning of these titles obviously underwent some changes over time.

⁵⁶ Travers 2015.

⁵⁷ As remarked by Petech 1973: 12.

Tibetan title	<i>dapön</i>	<i>rupön</i>	<i>gyapön</i>	<i>dingpön</i> ⁵⁸	<i>chupön</i>
English translation	general	colonel	captain	lieutenant	sergeant
Rank as government official	Fourth rank	Fifth rank	Sixth rank	Seventh rank	no rank
Head of	500 soldiers	250 soldiers	100 soldiers	25 soldiers	10 soldiers

Table 1. Table of the officers' hierarchy from 1793 to the mid-20th century.⁵⁹

The rest of the fifth article focused on the meritocratic principle that should be developed in the military careers, it reads:

Article 5: Since the past, as the head of the army, there was nobody except the *dapön*. In the future, under the *dapön*, there will be twelve *rupön*, and under each *rupön*, there will be 250 soldiers. Under the *rupön* there will be 24 *gyapön* and under each *gyapön* 125 soldiers; under each *gyapön* there will be *dingpön* and under each *dingpön* 25 soldiers. All these [officers] should be engaged after having been chosen only from healthy young and capable men and they should also be certified by a diploma. Promotion should be gradual: to be chosen as a *dapön*, a *rupön* is suitable; to replace a *rupön*, a *gyapön*, and in place of a *gyapön*, a *dingpön*. Even if they are aristocrats and lay officials, it is not allowed to ascend to a high position by “jumping” ranks, like before. It looks like there is a custom of denying a higher rank than *dingpön* to soldiers who come from the commoners (*mi ser*). From now on, it is allowed to gradually promote soldiers when their own bravery, intelligence and value make them suitable, and this should not be opposed.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ In the 20th century, one finds also the term *zhelngo* (*zhal ngo*) as an alternative for the military title *dingpön*.

⁵⁹ The English translations for these titles more or less follow the English and American hierarchical order, with the omission of intermediate ranks. These translations are offered purely for convenience. The smaller size of the Tibetan army compared to its western counterparts during this period renders any assertion of direct equivalence inappropriate.

⁶⁰ Nor bu bsam 'phel 2008: 158–159: *don tshan lnga par / sngar nas dmag gi 'go yod mda' dpon tsaam las med 'dug kyang / da cha mda' dpon gyi thog tu ru dpon bcu gnyis dang / ru dpon re'i 'og tu dmag mi nyis brgya lnga bcu re / ru dpon gyi 'og tu brgya dpon nyi shu rtsa bzhi / brgya dpon rer dmag mi brgya dang nyi shu rtsa lnga re / brgya dpon gyi 'og tu lding dpon / lding dpon re'i 'og [tu] dmag mi nyi shu rtsa lnga re bcas de dag tshang ma mi na gzhon rtsal ldan sha stag 'dem sgrug gis 'jug pa dang / bka' shog kyang sprod dgos / mda' dpon gyi 'os la ru dpon / ru dpon gyi tshab tu brgya dpon / de tshab lding dpon bcas rim bzhin 'phar dgos la / mi drag dang / drung 'khor yin kyang gong bzhin gnas rim 'phar las / mtho 'dzeg byas mi chog pa dang / mi ser byings dmangs kyi khongs nas lding dpon*

Here it is written that officers' ranks should be open to soldiers coming from the lower social strata. It also seems to create new rules for promotion, based mainly on merit and open to commoners—unlike the rest of the administration—who could advance step by step from *dingpön* to *rupön*. It also stipulates that all officers, even aristocrats, should only be promoted step by step from the lowest to the highest rank.⁶¹

As a matter of fact, we know that in the 20th century almost all *dapön* were aristocrats and ninety-five percent of them had never held any military position before being appointed to this highest position.⁶² This situation casts some doubt on whether the 1793 articles had ever been enforced at all. It is in offering some evidence on this particular point that Sichö Tseten's autobiography is crucial.

2. Sichö Tseten's Background and Military Career

Zurkhang Sichö Tseten's military career needs to be placed in a particular family context. The first folios of his autobiography describe at length his ancestry on his paternal and maternal sides, introduced as follows:

And to begin with my family and lineage, as far as the origins of my main ancestors and their descendants are concerned, although it is not necessary to establish extensively the origins of my white paternal bone/lineage (*rus*), in the same way as is not necessary to praise a self-arisen golden image, or as it is not needed to comb the hair of Drugmo [Gesar's wife], I will nevertheless give an abbreviated account.⁶³

What he seems to be implying here is that his ancestors were so worthy and well-known, that they need no introduction. However, luckily for

*gyi go sa byas mi chog pa'i srol zhig yod tshod la / de yang phyin chad so so'i blo stobs shes
'khos sogs kyiis 'pher ba yod tshe rin bzhin 'phar chog pa las / bkag 'gegs mi chog / .*

⁶¹ A special case is made for the recruitment of *dapön*, who can be selected among *rupön*, of course, as well as among district governors (*rdzong dpon*) of the borders and among officials working as assistants in the cabinet (*bka' shag mgron gnyer*). It is worth underlining that this particular provision might reflect an existing practice since this is exactly what had happened to Sichö Tseten's uncle, whose career had taken place before the 1793 reform. He had become a *dapön* after holding the position of assistant in the cabinet.

⁶² Travers 2009.

⁶³ *Bka' gung blon gyi rtoqs brjod*, folio 5: *de yang dang po'i rigs dang rus / cho dang 'brang sogs kyi 'byung khungs ni bstod mi dgos gser sku rang byon dang / shad mi dgos 'brug mo'i skra lo'i dpe ltar pha rus dkar po'i 'byung khungs sogs rgyas par 'god mi langgs na'ang / skabs 'dir rags [bsdusu] bsdus su brjod par byed na / .*

us, his abbreviated account (*rags bsdus*) is actually quite detailed (it occupies around twenty folios) and reveals that his ancestors in the 18th century included a military figure on both his maternal and paternal sides, which helps put Sichö Tseten's military career in perspective.

2.1. Zurkhang Sichö Tseten's Military and Spiritual Background According to his Autobiography

On the maternal side, he traces his family to his great grand-mother PhüntsoK Drölma (Phun tshogs sgröl ma).⁶⁴ She belonged to a noble *gerpa* (*sger pa*) house—with an estate in the Yarlung valley named Khesum (Khe gsum)—who were said to be related to the lineage of Tang-tong Gyelpo (Thang stong rgyal po, 1385?–1464?). Significantly for the present discussion, this PhüntsoK Drölma married someone named “E bus pa li/E bus pi li” in the text. He is described as holding the Sino-Manchu title of army general (Ch. *jiang jun*), and as having been sent to Tibet to fight against the Zunghars with the Mongol duke, General Tsewang Norbu (Tshe dbang nor bu). He is probably one-and-the-same as the “Aboo” who appears frequently in the *Miwang Tokjö* and is described by Petech as a Mongol chief of the Alashan Qoshot, and a great-grandson of Gushri Khan,⁶⁵ who was part of the provisional military government presided over by General Yansin in 1721.

We learn in Sichö Tseten's biography that this Mongol chief went on pilgrimage to the Yarlung valley and could not find a suitable place to stay. He therefore stayed on the estate of Khesum, where he met the entire noble family including the young PhüntsoK Drölma, whom he married. When she became pregnant, they were making preparations to send their child to Beijing if it was a boy, but the child turned out to be a girl whom they named Dorjé Gyelmo (Rdo rje rgyal mo), and she stayed on the estate.⁶⁶ According to the *Miwang Tokjö*,⁶⁷ Aboo then

⁶⁴ *Bka' gung blon gyi rtogs brjod*, folio 9bl6 to 10.

⁶⁵ Petech [1950] 1972: 74. Petech refers to him as “Efu Aboo” and explains that the Chinese texts call him “Efu Apao” while Tibetan sources call him “Ebus Beile”, Ebus being the transcription of the title Efu (imperial brother-in-law), that he had been bestowed in 1704. Thus the “pa li” or “pi li” in Tibetan sources would be the transcription of the title Beile 貝勒, prince of the third rank. It is worth noting that Petech changed his mind on him between the two versions of his book *China and Tibet in the early 18th century*, published in 1950 and 1972: after having described him as a Manchu army officer in the first 1950 edition (Petech 1950: 62), he turned to the Mongol identification of this personage in his 1972 edition; Petech [1950] 1972: 74.

⁶⁶ The fact that this daughter is described by Sichö Tseten as having famously a “Mongol beauty type” corroborates Petech revised opinion regarding Aboo's ethnicity.

⁶⁷ Quoted by Petech [1950] 1972: 92.

went back to China with Tsewang Norbu on imperial orders in 1723, where he rose rapidly, receiving the title *junwang* (prince of second rank) in 1724 (he was later demoted in 1729, and then reinstated in 1732). He died in 1739.⁶⁸

Another interesting detail relevant for understanding Sichö Tseten's future military career is his description of his maternal family's connection with the "great *dharma* protector" (*bstan bsrung chen po*). The above-mentioned daughter of the Mongol military officer, Dorjé Gyelmo, later married Lobzang Trinlé (Blo bzang 'phrin las), a former monk from Riwo Chöling (Ri bo chos gling) monastery who had come to manage the Khesum estate and gave up his monastic vows in order to marry her. Not only is he described in the autobiography as a "descendant of the reincarnation of the mother of Drakpa Gyeltsen (Grags pa rgyal mtshan), the lineage called Chinga marpo (Chi nga dmar po) from Chonggyé", but also he was connected to the family lineage of the Fifth Dalai Lama himself.⁶⁹ Referred to as *chöjé* (*chos rje*) Lobzang Trinlé, he became famous as a spirit-medium of the "great *dharma* protector".⁷⁰ He and Dorjé Gyelmo had a number of children, among whom was Sichö Tseten's own mother Sönam Peldu

⁶⁸ We find a further description of Aboo in another of Petech's works: "Aboo, called E-p'u (or E-bus) Beile Batur Jo-nañ in Tibetan texts, was the third son of Batur Erke Jinong Qoroli (d. 1709), a grandson of Gušri Khan, who after a long diplomatic struggle between Sañs-rgyas-rgya-mts'o and the K'ang-hsi emperor had left Köke-nör and settled in Alashan (1686). He was given in 1704 the rank of imperial brother-in-law, *hošo efi*, with rights of inheritance. In 1709 he succeeded his father as *beile*. He held a command on the Dsungar frontier and in 1720 came back to Köke-nör, from where he was ordered to Tibet with 600 men. He was recalled in 1723 and fought in the last stages of the campaign against Lobjang Danjin. As he was a personal enemy of general Nien Kêng-yao), the latter's disgrace contributed to his fortune. In 1724 he came to court and was promoted to *chiin-wang*, but in 1729 was degraded to *beile*, banished from Köke-nör, and confined in Alashan. He was given back the rank of *chiin-wang* in 1732 and died in 1739"; Petech 1966: 288–289.

⁶⁹ *Bka' gung blon gyi rtogs brjod*, folio 11n4: *sngon gzim khang gong gi sprul sku grags pa rgyal mtshan gyi yum gyi sku skyer 'bod pa 'phyongs rgyas chi nga dmar po ba'i rigs su bltams shing rgyal dbang lnga pa chen po'i sku bryud la gtogs pa blo bzang ('phris) 'phrin las* /.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* I have not been able to conclusively ascertain which protector-deity this refers to. It is mentioned elsewhere in the biography as "*zhal mngon sum du gzigs pa*" (*ibid.*: folio 11n6); "*zhal mi gzigs pa*" (*ibid.*: folio 28n5); and "*zhal gzigs pa*" (*ibid.*: folio 41n3). In his translation of the Fifth Dalai Lama's autobiography, Karmay understands "*bstan srung chen mo*" as always referring to Nechung (Gnas chung). In *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, Nebesky-Wojkowitz writes: "Only a few aristocratic families enjoy the privilege of consulting the state oracle in private matters at any time. Their prerogative is based on the circumstance that one of their ancestors had been a benefactor of the Nechung monastery. Thus e.g. the family of gZim shag bshad sgra, one of the ministers who negotiated the British Treaty of 1904, is permitted

Dzompa (Bsod nams dpal du 'dzom pa).

On his paternal side, he also had military antecedents in the form of his paternal uncle Zurkhang Kelzang Rapten (Skal bzang rab brtan). This is revealed in his description of his father's career, when he writes:

He was appointed to the position of assistant to the cabinet (*bka' shag mgron gnyer*) as an inherited position from his own father (*pha shul bu 'dzin du*), and after he had served for a long time, he was replaced by his younger brother Kelzang Rapten who [also] served in this position of assistant in the cabinet. Because he [Kelzang Rapten] had served in the gradual stages of government service with great altruism and without blame during the fighting (*sde gzar*)⁷¹ between Tibet and Nepal in the Earth Monkey year [1788], the mighty Pusing Lungtang (Phu sing Klung tang) [probably Fuqing] praised him and elevated him to the position of *dapön* on the battle field of Tö (Stod).⁷²

In the *Go rim deb ther rin chen phreng ba*—the list of government officials of the Wood Tiger [1794] year (*Shing stag bod mi drag dang las tshan phyi nang gyi rgya deb*) starting in 1794 and giving the name of the officials in each position and of the officials who then succeeded in this position—the exact year when Kelzang Rapten was appointed to the position of *dapön* is given as being 1793, thus slightly later, at the end of the second Tibetan-Nepal war. The entry regarding Kelzang Rapten reads:

Ü *dapön*: Zurkhangpa Kelzang Rapten aged 46, appointed *dapön* and bestowed the fourth rank in the 58th year of reign of Qianlong [1793].⁷³

2.2. Zurkhang Sichö Tseten's Military Career in the Immediate Aftermath of the Twenty-Nine-Article Ordinance

Later in Sichö Tseten's autobiography,⁷⁴ we hear of his own service to the Ganden Phodrang government, which he had entered into in

to consult the state oracle whenever necessary"; Nebesky-Wojkowitz [1956] 1998: 432.

⁷¹ This is the term always used to refer to the Gorkha-Tibet war in Sichö Tseten's biography.

⁷² *Bka' gung blon gyi rtogs brjod*, folio 12: *bka' shag mgron gnyer pha shul bu 'dzin du bsko bzhang stsal zhing yun ring song mthar dgongs pa zhus khröl gyi tshab tu / gcung bskal bzang rab brtan la bka' mgron mu 'thud du stsal zhing zhabs 'degs mdzad mud (mus) thog sa spre bod bal sde gzar skabs gzhung sa'i zhabs 'degs kyi rin pa lhag bsam rma med du gyur gshis / stod kyi dmag sa rang du phu sing krung thang chen pos mda' dpon gyi go sar gnas spar gzengs su bstod pa sogs /*.

⁷³ *Dbus mda' dpon zur khang pa bskal bzang rab brtan rang lo 46 lha skyong nga brgyad par mda' dpon gyi go sa dang rim pa bzhi pa'i tog stsal (Go rim deb ther rin chen phreng ba: 2–3).*

⁷⁴ *Bka' gung blon gyi rtogs brjod*, folio 34–36.

1786.⁷⁵ His military career took shape just five years after the *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance* was promulgated:

In the Earth Horse year [1798], because I was to take leave from Lhuntse (Lhun rtse) *rdzong* [where he was then a district magistrate or *rdzong dpon*], my beloved paternal uncle [Kelzang Rapten, the *dapön* mentioned above] and my mother, conferred and decided that I should request a position as assistant in the Cabinet (*bka' shag mgron gnyer*). [But] after the question was examined by the transcendent wisdom of the “great *dharma* protector”,⁷⁶ the prophecy arrived that I should [instead] enter the ranks of the military officers of the “Chinese-trained” (*rgya sbyong*) troops.⁷⁷ Therefore in the Earth Sheep year [1799], I requested that I might occupy the position of an acting captain (*brgya dpon tshab*), and this was granted.⁷⁸

He then describes how he climbed through the military ranks within a few years (see table 2) on account of his good behaviour and despite not being very skilled at either archery or horsemanship. He was promoted to full *gyapön* in 1800 “without having to exert pressure”, he underlines, having drawn attention to himself during the visit of two envoys of the Emperor. The following year (i.e. 1801), according to his own account, he was promoted to *rupön*. The exact date of that promotion—including the confirmation of the year—is to be found in the list of government officials of the Wood Tiger [1794] year. For the *Ü rupön* position, one reads:

Ü rupön: Khyamtöpa Sönam Wangdü; was replaced when he passed away by Jang *gyapön* Tashi Gyelpo; when the latter was promoted to

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*: folio 19n1-n2. The brief information on Sichö Tseten's career given by Petech was hypothetical and patchy (1973: 145). He gave no information on his father or his uncle Zurkhang Kelzang Rapten. This biography is therefore a welcome additional source to augment what was already known of the Zurkhang family earlier.

⁷⁶ The “great protector” referred to here is most probably the same as the one to whom his maternal uncle was an oracle (*chos rje*).

⁷⁷ Dung dkar has the Emperor Qianlong (1711–1799) create these regiments in 1782; see Dung dkar 2005 [2002]. This passage confirms that the regular troops in Tibet, or at least the regiment Sichö Tseten entered as an officer, were already known as “*rgya sbyong*” by the time of the described event, i.e. in 1799.

⁷⁸ *Bka' gung blon gyi rtogs brjod*, folio 35n3–n5: *de nas sa rta lo rdzong dgongs zhu mdzad pa'i phyir 'khor stun (bstun) / byams ldan khu bo mchog dang / skyes ma chen po bka' gros te / kho bor bka' shag mgron gnyer gyi go sa zhu ba gngang rtsis la / bstan bsrungs chen po nyid nas ye shes kyi gzigs pas dpyad te (de) rgya sbyongs dmag mi'i 'go byed gyi (kyi) gral tsam su (du) zhugs dgos pa'i bka' lung phebs don sa lug lo brgya dpon gyi tshab lta bur bsdad mthus zhus pa don smin byung zhing /*

dapön, Zurkhang Sichö Tseten was appointed in his place [as *rupön*] on the 14th of the 5th month of the Iron Bird year (1801).⁷⁹

At that point, according to his autobiography, after another prophecy by the “great protector”, his uncle Kelzang Rapten, who was still a general or *dapön* at this time, decided to retire from government service (after consulting, once again, the great protector) and managed to have him recruited as *dapön* in his place, in 1802.⁸⁰ The date and the manner in which the position was transmitted by his uncle are confirmed in the same list of government officials of the Wood Tiger [1794] year:

Ü *dapön*: Zurkhangpa Kelzang Rapten aged 46, appointed *dapön* and bestowed the fourth rank in the 58th year of reign of Qianlong [1793]. In the 2nd month of the 7th year of reign of Jiaqing [1802], with permission, his relative *rupön* Sichö Tseten was appointed [in his place].⁸¹

Thus, we can see that Sichö Tseten did actually ascend through all the military ranks up to general / *dapön*, shortly before becoming a cabinet minister in 1804 (see table 2).⁸²

Year	Position	English translation
1799	<i>brgya dpon kyi tshab</i>	acting captain
1800	<i>brgya dpon</i>	captain (full position)
1801	<i>ru dpon</i>	colonel
1802	<i>mda dpon</i>	general
1804	<i>bka' blon</i>	cabinet minister

Table 2. Zurkhang Sichö Tseten's five-year-long military career before becoming a cabinet minister.

⁷⁹ *dbus ru dpon 'khyams stod pa bsod nams dbang 'dus 'das tshab ljang brgya dpon bkris rgyal po mda' dpon du 'phar tshab zur khang sri bcod tshe brtan lcags bya zla 5 tshes 14 la bsko bzhag stsal /*; *Go rim deb ther rin chen phreng ba*: 7.

⁸⁰ *Bka' gung blon gyi rtogs brjod*, folio 36b1.

⁸¹ *dbus mda' dpon zur khang pa bskal bzang rab brtan rang lo 46 lha skyong nga brgyad par mda' dpon gyi go sa dang rim pa bzhi pa'i tog stsal / bca' chen khri bzhugs bdun pa'i zla 2 nang dgongs 'khrol tshab spun ru dpon sri bcod tshe brtan la bsko bzhag stsal /*; *Go rim deb ther rin chen phreng ba*: 2–3.

⁸² *Bka' gung blon gyi rtogs brjod*, folio 40b5; Petech 1973: 145.

Of course, one can also observe that he lost no time—he went through all the officer ranks within the space of five years—making one wonder whether the whole exercise was anything more than a bid to become eligible for the *kalön*-ship, since, as Petech has observed, the position of *dapön*, along with a few others, was considered as a stepping stone from which one could be elevated to the post of cabinet minister.⁸³ Whatever reasons Sichö Tseten had for embracing a military career, it seems that this model, set by his uncle and then by himself, would be followed by many in the Zurkhang family (and needless to say, other families, though we are here focusing only on this particular family) over the next two centuries.

This survey of military careers within the Zurkhang family in the long run will now enable us to address another aspect of the military reforms of 1793 and assess their application: the hereditary transmission of military positions.

3. The Zurkhang Family: An Emblematic Example of the Significant Social Changes at the Top of the Army Leadership at the Turn of the 19th Century

In my view, the case of the Zurkhang family illustrates a shift in the state of the Tibetan officer corps in the late 18th century. First of all, the very fact that a Zurkhang family member could become a *dapön* in the first place, might be a direct consequence of another measure that was taken in the context of the Manchu military reforms in Tibet, i.e. the end of the monopoly of very few aristocratic families over the *dapön* positions—which came as an addition to their above-mentioned increase in number.

3.1. The End of the Monopoly of the Four Families Over the Dapön Hereditary Positions after the Twenty-Nine-Article Ordinance

It seems that there was from 1751 onwards, i.e. before the *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance*, an already-existing tendency to introduce more meritocracy at the highest level of the Tibetan army and to get rid of the hereditary principle. Indeed, as Petech has observed, only four families exercised a monopoly on the first four *dapön* positions after 1728:

The four posts existing after 1728 (one in dBus, three in gTsang) were the apanage of four noble families: g.Yu thog (alias 'Bum thang) in

⁸³ This was first observed by Luciano Petech (1973: 14) and proved to be accurate after examination of my careers' database; see Travers 2011.

dBus, Lcang lo can, Pad tshal and Ram pa in gTsang. The office showed thus a definitely feudal character and may be compared with the *ministeriales* of post-Carolingian times in Europe. The second post of dBus *dapön* added in 1751 was not tied to a definite family (in spite of a certain prevalence of the Phu lung house). The rule was extended to the other four posts in 1792, when the rights of direct heredity (but not of exclusive tenure) of the aristocracy in the military administration were done away by the Chinese.⁸⁴

Petech's observations stop here, but if we look in more detail at the careers of Bumtang,⁸⁵ Changlochen (Lcang lo can),⁸⁶ Petsel (Pad tshal),⁸⁷ Samdrupling (Bsam grub gling)⁸⁸ and Orong (O rong)⁸⁹ family members, we can indeed observe a visible hereditary transmission of these positions of *dapön*. However, this transmission clearly stops at

⁸⁴ Petech 1973: 200. The hereditary transmission of military positions in this period is not surprising since it also seems to have been true for most (if not all) government positions. Taking the example of the Zurkhang family as described in Sichö Tseten's biography, we can observe this for instance in the transmission of the positions of assistant in the cabinet (*bka' shag mgron gnyer*): Sichö Tseten's father, then his uncle, then himself, then his son all became assistant in the cabinet through an explicitly hereditary transmission. We also know that this practice continued well into the early 20th century even though it was not officially allowed anymore, with many officials receiving the same government position which their father, uncle or brother had just occupied; see Travers 2009.

⁸⁵ For instance, the above mentioned Bumtangpa Ngödrub, who was *dapön* in 1714, transmitted his position of Ü *dapön* to his son Lobzang Dargyé in 1722. It is not clear what happened afterwards, but one again finds a Bumtang *dapön* in the late 18th century. After that there is then nothing further to be found about them; see Petech 1973: 127–132.

⁸⁶ For instance, the first Changlochen (Lcang lo can) *dapön*, who fought with Pholhané, transmitted his Tsang *dapön* position to his son; there is another one with the same name and title in the 1830s, and then again in the third quarter of the 19th century; see *ibid.*: 200–203.

⁸⁷ For instance, Petsel Tsering Namgyel (Pad tshal Tshe ring nram rgyal), who first held the position *dapön* after 1731 according to Chinese sources, was succeeded by his brother who was *dapön* in 1762, and by the latter's son in the 1760s. It seems that the succession was then discontinued as there are no further mentions of *dapön* afterwards; see *ibid.*: 205.

⁸⁸ One of two families that are mentioned in the *Miwang Tokjö* as military officers and included by Petech among the military families in his book *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet 1728–1959* (1973). They very soon completely disappeared: Samdrupling (Bsam grub gling) had a Tsang *dapön* in 1706, and another one in 1789 (Petech 1973: 208), and then again another one in 1808, but nothing later.

⁸⁹ The Orong family is mentioned in the *Miwang Tokjö* as having one military officer, and is classified by Petech among the families "connected with the territorial military organization" (Petech 1973). However, they very soon completely disappeared in the second half of the 18th century: they had one military commander in 1717, then the latter's son was also appointed *dapön* in 1721 (see the *nram thar* of the Seventh Dalai Lama, quoted by Petech), but it seems that this particular position disappeared in the family later on, see *ibid.*: 209.

the end of the 18th century, thus lasting less than a century. The odd one out here is the Rampa (Ram pa) family, whose military involvement continued well into the 19th century.⁹⁰ This last case shows that in practice the same families could, albeit in unusual cases, continue to maintain a dominant position in the military organisation even after 1793.

With the disappearance of the military leadership of the four families mentioned above as *dapön*, either from the end of the 18th century or during the 19th century, we observe a growing diversity of other aristocratic families being appointed in the position of *dapön* (see table 3 below). For the entire 18th century, according to our calculation and based on a survey (certainly not exhaustive) of various primary and secondary sources, twenty-four different individuals from twelve different aristocratic families were found occupying the position of *dapön*. It has to be kept in mind that the total concurrently available positions of *dapön* varied over this period between three at the beginning of the century to six at its end.

Century	Number of individuals found occupying <i>dapön</i> positions	Number of different noble families of origin	Number of available seats of <i>dapön</i>
18	24	12	3 to 6
19	36	20	6
20	96	74	6 to 17

Table 3. Number of *dapön* and their family of origin.

For the 19th century, thirty-six different individuals from twenty different families have been identified occupying the position of *dapön*. During this entire period six *dapön* positions would have been available concurrently.

For the first half of the 20th century, an inventory of ninety-six different individuals from seventy-four different families occupying the

⁹⁰ In the Rampa family, one finds nine (or eight if two are the same, as there remains one uncertainty) members serving in the army in the 17th and 18th centuries among which seven were *dapön*: Penden Wanggyel (Dpal ldan dbang rgyal), Tsang *dapön* in 1728, followed by his son Raptan (Rab brtan), active in 1748, and again by the latter's son Gönpö Dargyé (Mgon po dar rgyas) (see *ibid.*: 155), another one named Tsewang Raptan (Tshe dbang rab brtan) in 1792, and perhaps his son in 1820. In 1830, there is a *gyapön* (*brgya dpon*) in the family, and then again a *dapön* Lhawang Dorjé (Lha dbang rdo rje) in 1871. A last one is reported being active in the 1930s; see *ibid.*: 154–157.

position of *dapön* has been compiled by the present author. For this period the number of concurrently available positions varied between six (until 1913) and up to as many as seventeen in 1950. Only the Rampa family are represented in both the first and last periods. In this final phase, holders of the position came from all substrata of the aristocracy but with a visible overrepresentation of the higher strata families.

3.2. Zurkhang: A "Military Family"? The Continuation of a Certain Degree of Hereditary Transmission in the Conferral of Senior Military Positions

Thus, a significant change of the noble families involved in the highest Tibetan military position (*dapön*), occurred in the early 19th century with the arrival of completely new families, and the *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance* most probably—perhaps along with other factors—played a role in this evolution. These new families "specialised" in military careers, and their involvement in military affairs lasted until the end of the Ganden Phodrang's rule in Tibet in the 1950s.

Among them, apart from the Rampa family already discussed, we find four families in particular: the Zurkhang family, the Palha (Phalha) family and the Dokhar family, having each at least eight members documented as occupying army positions, as well as one newcomer in the first half of the 20th century, the Sampo (Bsam pho) family.⁹¹

The example of the Zurkhang family seems very clear, as this family boasted no fewer than nine *dapön*, mostly Ü *dapön*, from the late 18th to the early 20th century (see table 4 below). Table 4 shows that apart from the first two generals listed, whom we have already noted were uncle and nephew, and the last two who were brothers, the rest represents an uninterrupted transmission from father to son, or to son-in-law in the case of Wangchen Norbu (Dbang chen nor bu) who came as a *magpa* (*mag pa*, i.e. adopted bridegroom) to be the heir of the Zurkhang house.

The stark military prevalence of these four aristocratic families could only happen through the partial maintenance of the old system of hereditary transmission for the position of *dapön*, even if not in a systematic and official way as had been the case in the early 18th century.

It is all the more noticeable because, as I have shown elsewhere for the 20th century, military positions were held only by a minority of the lay officials in the course of their career: only one in six lay officials served

⁹¹ The Sampo and Dokhar/Rakhashar families have four *dapön* in the early 20th century, Zurkhang five and Palha two.

in the army in the course of his career.⁹² However, even in this context, only a few noble families tended to specialise in military positions.

The three aforementioned families who particularly specialised in the military and whose lineage lasted until the 20th century were part—in this late period of the Ganden Phodrang aristocracy—of a minority of higher-ranking aristocrat families, either *depön* or *midrak*.⁹³

Thus, it actually seems a plausible hypothesis that the turnover of the families chosen for recruiting the *dapön* initiated by the Manchu reforms in the 18th century did have, to a certain extent, an impact on the final hierarchical internal organisation of the aristocracy in the last stage of its existence in the 20th century.

Personal name	Starting date	End date
Bskal bzang rab brtan	1793 ⁹⁴	1802 ⁹⁵
Sri gcod tshe brtan	1802 ⁹⁶	1804 ⁹⁷
Tshe brtan rdo rje	1823 ⁹⁸	1829 ⁹⁹
Dbang chen nor bu (<i>mag pa</i> from the Lcang lo can family)	1872 ¹⁰⁰	c. 1889 ¹⁰¹
Bsod nams dbang chen	c. 1889 ¹⁰²	before 1893 ¹⁰³
Dbang chen tshe brtan	1917 ¹⁰⁴	1924 ¹⁰⁶

⁹² This is not surprising since only fourteen percent of all the possible/existing government positions were linked to the military; see Travers 2009 and 2011.

⁹³ See note 3 above for an explanation of the Ganden Phodrang aristocracy's sub-groups.

⁹⁴ *Go rim deb ther rin chen phreng ba* (2–3). He is not present in Petech 1973.

⁹⁵ *Bka' gung blon gyi rtogs brjod*, folio 36b1 and *Go rim deb ther rin chen phreng ba*: 2–3.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Bka' gung blon gyi rtogs brjod*, folio 40b5; Petech was not sure whether the Zurkhang General promoted to minister was Sichö Tseten or not; Petech 1973: 145. The biography allows us to confirm this hypothesis.

⁹⁸ Petech 1973: 145; *Go rim deb ther rin chen phreng ba*: 37 and 100.

⁹⁹ *Go rim deb ther rin chen phreng ba*: 37 and 153; Petech (1973: 146) has this promotion confirmed by the emperor in 1830 only.

¹⁰⁰ *Go rim deb ther rin chen phreng ba*: 492. Petech had found him in this position but did not have the year; Petech 1973: 149.

¹⁰¹ Petech 1973: 150.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ He is then appointed minister (*bka' blon*), but he had received the third rank already in 1890 (see Petech 1973: 150), and it is not clear whether he was still occupying the position of general (*mda' dpon*), which is usually associated with the fourth rank.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* and *Who's Who in Tibet* 1949: 119.

¹⁰⁶ Petech 1973: 150 and "List of lay officials in 1924" reproduced in Petech 1973: 240–249.

	again in 1928 ¹⁰⁵	1934 ¹⁰⁷ or 1936 ¹⁰⁸
Bsod nams dbang 'dus (<i>mag pa</i> in the Khesmad family)	c. 1925 again in 1938	1932 1942 ¹⁰⁹
Dbang chen dge legs	1938 ¹¹⁰	1939 ¹¹¹ or 1941 ¹¹²
Lha dbang stobs rgyas	1942 ¹¹³	1947 ¹¹⁴

Table 4. *Dapön* from the Zurkhang family in the 18th-20th centuries.

Conclusion: Outcomes of the 1793 Reforms in the Long Run

To conclude, the example of Sichö Tseten's military career as described in his biography, of the Zurkhang family in general, and the identification of the family origins of *dapöns* in the 19th and 20th century seems to demonstrate the actual implementation of the *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance*, at least in the years immediately following the reform. The *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance* certainly introduced—to some degree at least—a social change in the composition of the Tibetan army's officer corps in the 19th century. As we have seen, this change included the arrival of new aristocrat families among the highest commanders, and the obligation for aristocrats to ascend step by step through the military ranks, an obligation that could however, as we have seen, be observed rather perfunctorily.

It is quite probable that these regulations fell into disuse at some point—either progressively or suddenly—after the 1793 reform, but this is still hard to assess. Indeed, in later times, there are hardly any aristocrats to be found in the rank of *gyapön*: only four have been identified among *gyapön* during the 19th century (from the Palha, Rampa and Zurkhang families), and not a single one in the 20th century (when the available sources are more voluminous). The situation is even starker in the case of *dingpön*. So far in the course of this research not a single aristocrat has been identified in this rank. One can also observe

¹⁰⁵ Yuthok 1990: 41; Petech 1973: 151 and *Who's Who in Tibet* 1949: 119 do not have information on the exact year.

¹⁰⁷ *Who's Who in Tibet* 1949: 119.

¹⁰⁸ Petech 1973: 151.

¹⁰⁹ All dates for him are taken from Petech 1973: 94; *Who's Who in Tibet* 1949: 54 only confirms 1932 as his date of demotion.

¹¹⁰ Petech 1973: 152.

¹¹¹ *Who's Who in Tibet* 1949: 117.

¹¹² Petech 1973: 152.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ When he left Tibet as the English Interpreter with the Tibetan Trade Mission to India, China, the United Kingdom and the United States of America; *Who's Who in Tibet* 1949: 118.

that although *dapön* and *rupön* were included in the 1924 list of government officials (*gzhung zhabs*) published by Petech,¹¹⁵ there are no *gyapön* at all included in that list.

Now, what about the highest ranks reached by a commoner? For the periods before the 20th century, when an officer is mentioned without a family name in historical sources, it is not possible to definitively ascertain whether he was a commoner or not (as this occurs also for aristocrats). The text of the *Twenty-nine-article Ordinance* asserts that prior to 1793 it had been difficult for commoners to rise beyond the position of *dingpön*. By the early 20th century we find a good number of commoners in the *gyapön* and *rupön* positions, which indicates a real change. A “glass ceiling” seems nevertheless to have persisted, since even in the 20th century we do not find commoners in the position of *dapön*.

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¹¹⁵ It is an archive document that Heinrich Harrer brought back from Tibet, reproduced by Petech in a transcription; Petech 1973: 240–249.

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The Geluk Gesar: Guandi, the Chinese God of War, in Tibetan Buddhism from the 18th to 20th Centuries*

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1. Introduction

Lord Guan occupies a prominent place in traditional Han Chinese culture, and the historical evolution of his cult spans nearly two thousand years. This historical-figure-turned-deity is known under a number of names: the personal name Guan Yu (trad. 關羽; simp. 关羽); the courtesy name Guan Yunzhang (trad. 關雲長; simp. 关云长 “Guan Long Cloud”); and the honourific titles Guan Laoye (關老爺 “Old Guan” or 官老爺 “Old Official”);¹ Guan Gong (trad. 關公; simp. 关公 “Lord Guan”); and from the 17th century,

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¹ The term Guan Laoye exists in two Chinese orthographies, using different homophonous characters for *guan*. The first (*guan* 關) is the family name as found in the range of titles for Lord Guan above. The second (*guan* 官) is an honourific word meaning “official”, so that Guan Laoye in this second orthography simply means “respected official”, and is not a title exclusive to Lord Guan. When the Tibetan title of Lord Guan was coined by Changkya Rölpé Dorjé (Tib. Lcang skya Rol pa’i rdo rje, 1717–1786) as “Long Cloud King” (Tib. Sprin ring rgyal po), being a Tibetan translation of Guan Yunzhang (關雲長 “Guan Long-Cloud”), this involved a conflation of these two forms. The “Guan” in the title was taken, not as an untranslatable family name *guan* (關), but rather in the latter form (官) which was rendered as *rgyal po*, meaning “king” or more loosely “lord”.

Guandi (trad. 關帝; simp. 关帝 “Emperor Guan”). The cult of Lord Guan, and his adoption as an official deity of state, first under the late Ming and then under the Qing dynasties, are subjects addressed in a number of western-language articles and monographs.² But the peculiar fate of this deity in Tibetan Buddhist culture has tended to fall outside the remit of such studies, and as a result is less well-charted. The process by which this prominent Chinese martial deity (Ch. *wu sheng* 武聖)³ was accepted, albeit with adaptation, into the pantheon of Geluk (Tib. Dge lugs) Buddhist protectors from the mid-18th century, reflects the close political and military relationship between the Qing imperium and the ruling Geluk church⁴ in Inner Asia during this period. It also offers a window onto the kind of cultural diplomacy—or politics of symbols—which maintained this alliance and sustained the *pax manjurica*⁵ in Buddhist Inner Asia. The Geluk acceptance of Lord Guan as a deity in the Tibetan class of “war-gods” or “warrior deities” (*dgra lha* / *dgra bla*) is also interesting for the light it sheds on how the politics of war-magic—which had long played a significant role in both Tibetan and Chinese political history more broadly—⁶was adapted to the

² An early seminal article on the evolution of Lord Guan in Chinese culture is Duara 1988. This has been supplemented by the recent monograph of Barend ter Haar 2017. Ter Haar’s treatment is particularly informative on the early (pre-17th century) development of the cult. On later developments under the Qing, see for example Taylor 1997; Goossaert 2015. For a survey of the voluminous secondary scholarship on Lord Guan in Chinese and Japanese see ter Haar 2017: 8–11.

³ ter Haar has questioned the simple designation of Lord Guan as a “god of war”, arguing that the designation *wu sheng* was more about Lord Guan’s exorcistic function as a demon-vanquisher in popular religion (ter Haar 2017: 12–13). Lord Guan has also long been popular as god of wealth favoured by merchants and business-people. However, in the context of the present discussion, which relates to the period in which the cult of Lord Guan was spread in Inner Asia explicitly through the establishment of temples serving military garrisons, the characterisation as “god of war”, or at least “martial deity” seems merited. The Tibetan ritual texts for Lord Guan from this period also reflect this, by framing him in Tibetan language as the great “war-god (or great ‘warrior deity’) of China” (*maha tsina yul gyi dgra lha che*, and other formulations). On the Tibetan term *dgra lha* rendered here as “war-god” or “warrior deity” and its Mongolian cognate *dayisun tngri*, both of which literally translate as “enemy-god”, see note 134 below.

⁴ The word “church” is used advisedly here. For a defence of the use of this term with regard to the institutions of Geluk Buddhism in this period, and its preferability to the term “school”, see Oidtmann 2018: 9, 247 fn 17.

⁵ The term *pax manjurica* is used in Newby 2011, which presents a useful survey of recent contributions to Qing-era historiography.

⁶ On the politics of war magic in the establishment of the Ganden Phodrang state in the mid-17th century, see FitzHerbert 2018. For background on the politics of ritual warfare in Chinese tradition during the Yuan and Ming eras, see Meulenbeld 2015: 98–167. As Qing influence grew in Tibet from the 1720s, the imperial centre tried to assert control over the Tibetan culture of war magic, a culture which had been carefully cultivated with his own imprimatur by the Fifth Dalai Lama. In 1726 [or

context of the Qing's military protectorate in Tibet.

What little has been written about Lord Guan in a Tibetan or Inner Asian context, has focused on his apparent conflation during the Qing era with Gesar Gyelpo (Tib. *ge sar rgyal po*/Mo. *geser khaqan*),⁷ an Inner Asian martial culture-hero with a quite distinct folkloric background.⁸ This identification of Guandi with Gesar/Geser appears to have been pervasive at Qing garrison temples across Buddhist Inner Asia (encompassing both Tibetan and Mongolian regions) from the mid-18th century.⁹ After the demise of the Qing in the early 20th century, this superscription intensified during the period of Mongolian and Tibetan independence that followed, so that by the mid-20th century the original identity of this Chinese deity had been almost entirely forgotten

1723 according to some reckonings], amidst ongoing factionalism within the Tibetan-Mongolian-Geluk establishment concerning exorcistic practices, the Yongzheng Emperor tried to ban outright the performance of all Nyingma (Tib. Rnying ma) wrathful rituals and to severely curtail the Nyingma school in general (this followed soon on the heels of the Zunghars' violent onslaught on the Nyingma school in central Tibet 1717–1720, which had been supported by some powerful Geluk factions). The Yongzhen initiative to ensure the Nyingma remained in a subdued state was however thwarted by Pholhané (Pho lha nas Bsod nams stobs rgyas, 1689–1747), who in 1727 established himself as the secular ruler of Tibet and defender of the Ganden Phodrang. Pholhané had himself been educated at Mindroling (Tib. Smin sgrol gling) monastery, the most important centre of the Nyingmapa in central Tibet which had been founded with support from the Fifth Dalai Lama. On Yongzheng's decree as reported in Pholhané's biography, see Mdo mkhar ba Tshe ring dbang rgyal (1697–1763) 1981: 482. For an English translation see Petech [1950] 1972: 106.

⁷ Known in Tibetan as *gling rje ge sar rgyal po* ("King Gesar, Lord of Ling") and in Mongolian as *geser khaqan* ("King Geser") among other formulations. Henceforth referred to simply as Gesar/Geser.

⁸ That Guan Yu was a historical figure from northern China in the 2nd-3rd centuries CE is well-established. The question of the historicity of Gesar/Geser remains less settled. Based on mentions of Gesar and his companions in the Tibetan mytho-historical text known as the *Rlängs kyi po ti bse ru*, which probably underwent its final redaction in the 15th century, many Tibetan and Mongolian scholars concur that the historical kernel of the Gesar heroic legends lie in far northeastern Tibet and the inner Asian trade routes during the 11th century. The folklore and historicisation of Gesar/Geser is entirely distinct from that of Guan Yu. Several articles offer introductions to the Gesar epic cycle and its variants. See for example Stein 1981; Karmay [1992] 1998; Karmay [1993] 1998; Samuel [1992] 2005; FitzHerbert 2017.

⁹ Our earliest concrete evidence of Lord Guan being identified as Gesar/Geser at Inner Asian temples is M. Pallas' detailed account of his 1772 visit to the garrison temple at Kiatka in northern Mongolia. However, based on the comments in the *History of Buddhism in China (Rgya nag chos 'byung)*, which dates to the 1730s (discussed later in this article), it is clear that this association had already been widespread for some time in Inner Asia by the time Pallas made his observations; Pallas 1793: 163. See note 48 below.

at many shrines and temples across Inner Asia known locally as “Gesar Temples” (Tib. *ge sar lha khang*; Mo. *geser sum*).

Lying at the conjunction of popular culture with elite political, military and religious history, the Guandi-Gesar/Gesar conflation has understandably attracted the interest of historians. The most thorough treatment of the subject to date is still that of the Mongolian scholar Tseten Damdinsuren (writing in Russian),¹⁰ though it has also been discussed by a number of scholars writing in French,¹¹ German,¹² English¹³ and more recently in Chinese.¹⁴ Damdinsuren’s influential Marxist interpretation was that the merging of the religious cult of Lord Guan with that of Jamsring/Bektsé (Tib. *Lcam sring/Beg tse*), and the further association of this figure with the folkloric complex of the Gesar/Geser epos, was a deliberate strategy of conflation pursued by the feudal political and religious elites under the Qing. This general interpretation has been echoed in several later treatments by western scholars.¹⁵ However questions remain, not only regarding Damdinsuren’s

¹⁰ Damdinsuren 1957: 15–30.

¹¹ The main source for R.A. Stein’s brief comments and information on the subject was Damdinsuren (cited above); Stein 1959: 8, 33, 39, 112–114, 133. Another important French-language source on this issue is the 1958 article by the Mongolian scholar Bambyn Rintchen (Rintchen 1958). However, Rintchen’s work, though valuable for the material it presents, is premised in such a way as to perpetuate the confusion between Guandi and Geser rather than clarify it. By taking the identification of Guandi with Geser (Guessour) as its basic premise, and making no distinction between these two figures, Rintchen’s article itself is a clear example of the degree to which the Guandi/Geser identification had become an internalised feature of Mongolian Geluk tradition by the 20th century.

¹² Walther Heissig’s three-page treatment of the Guandi-Gesar/Gesar conflation has been the most influential to date for western scholarship, and has been echoed in several later works (see below); see Heissig (trans. Samuel) 1980: 98–101. For the original German (1970), see the bibliography.

¹³ The treatments of this subject in English-language scholarship tend to follow Heissig (above). For example, Rawski 1998: 259; Crossley 1999: 243–244, 284–285; Zhang 2016: 581–584. Crossley’s main sources are the works by Heissig and Rintchen (cited above). Zhang bases her discussion largely on Crossley and Heissig.

¹⁴ The groundbreaking study of this topic in Chinese is the 2016 monograph by Prof. Jamyang Phüntsook (Jiayang Pincuo 2016). This work looks in greater detail than ever before at the Tibetanisation of the *cultus* of Guandi as “Gesar”. The weakness of this otherwise exemplary work, is that it gives insufficient acknowledgement to Mongolian sources, and focuses only on Tibet. The present author would like to express his personal indebtedness to Prof. Jamyang Phüntsook for his help with sources while researching this article. He would also like to thank Yuewei Wang (EPHE, Paris) for her translations from his Chinese-language monograph.

¹⁵ Heissig (trans. Samuel) 1980; Rawski 1998; Crossley 1999.

sources,¹⁶ but also about the precise parameters of this apparent cultural-political strategy. Do the available sources really merit the assertion that the merging of Lord Guan and Gesar/Gesar was deliberately cultivated by the Manchu/Qing imperial centre, as suggested by Heissig and others?¹⁷ Or was it instead, as suggested by several Chinese scholars, a popular misconception based on the imagination of

¹⁶ Damdinsuren asserts for example that “the first initiator of the identification of Guandi with Jamsring (Lcam sring) was the Panchen Palden Yeshé [i.e. Panchen 03/06 Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes, 1738–1780]. In order to increase his authority, he also used various folk legends and Buddhist myths with great skill”. By way of example, Damdinsuren describes how the Panchen “used the legend of Shambhala to manoeuvre himself into the first rank among the Buddhist clergy [...] he also began to develop the theory of the unity of the Manchu god of war Guandi with his patron-deity Bektsé or Jamsring”. Damdinsuren also credits this Panchen with asserting the identification of Guandi with Dzongtsen (Tib. Rdzong btsan), the local deity of Yarlung Shel (Tib. Yar klung shel); Damdinsuren 1957: 18–19. However, no source citations are provided for these accreditations, which are queried later in this article.

¹⁷ Following Heissig, Crossley for example, emphasises that the policy of fusion between Lord Guan and Gesar/Gesar appears to have been more marked in the latter part of the Qing or the “post-Qianlong” era—during the reigns of the Jiaqing (r. 1796–1820) and Daoguang (r. 1821–1850) emperors in particular. Other scholars who have supported this general interpretation include the present author in an earlier article which uncritically echoed the view that the Qing made a “deliberate attempt to merge or assimilate the deified Tibetan-Mongolian epic figure of Gesar/Ge-ser [...] with the Chinese martial deity and Imperial protector Guan-di”; FitzHerbert 2015: 7. This may have been the case, but it is interesting to observe that the concrete textual evidence for this is surprisingly thin. Only two pieces of textual evidence are presented by Heissig to support the claim that this was an official policy of the Qing (and the same two pieces of evidence are referenced by later scholars like Crossley). The first is the observation by Stein (1959: 75) that the 1716 Mongolian-language xylograph edition of the Gesar epic sponsored by the court of Kangxi carried on its title page the “Chinese initials [Fr. sigle chinois] San-Kouo-tche (Histoire des Trois Royaumes)” thus referencing the literary foundation for the exploits of Guan Yu (*The Three Kingdoms* being the classic literary account of the exploits of Guan Yu, see note 26 and 27 below). This would therefore indicate that an identification between Gesar/Gesar and Lord Guan was already active at the imperial court as early as 1716. The second is the late 19th century transcription by Aleksei Pozdnevayev of a trilingual inscription (in Manchu, Chinese and Mongolian) at the “Chinese temple honoring Kuan-lao-yeh” at Sair usu, in central Mongolia on the way between Urga and Uliastai (Uliyasutai). The Mongolian text of this inscription evokes “the holy Geser khaan, belonging to the family of Kuan [...] (*Güwan oboṭab Boṭda Geser Qayan*)”; Pozdnevayev (trans. Shaw and Plank) 1971: 114–116. Heissig interprets this overt merging of the two figures as “a step entirely consonant with the policy of fusion pursued during the Chia-ch’ing [Jiaqing] and Ta’o-kuang [Daoguang] eras”; Heissig 1980: 100, citing Pozdnevayev 1896–8, *Mongoliya i Mongoly. Resul’taty poezdki v Mongoliyu, ispolnennoi v 1892–1893 gg.* St. Petersburg: 175–6. However, it is notable that the mention of Gesar in this dedication to Lord Guan is found only in the Mongolian language version of the inscription, and not in the Manchurian or Chinese versions, suggesting something rather less than a full-throated imperial endorsement, and perhaps something more like a tolerance

uneducated locals?¹⁸ How might these two views be reconciled? The conclusion of the present article is that although the association between Lord Guan and the ferocious tantric deity Jamsring/Bektsé and the association with the protector-deity Dzongtsen Shenpa (Tib. Rdzong btsan shan pa)—a local deity propitiated at various locales in central Tibet whose origins were said to be Chinese and to date back to the Tang dynasty—were demonstrably cultivated and promoted by Geluk tradition (as shown in this article), the further conflation between Lord Guan and Gesar/Geser remains a more complicated matter, and is not textually-attested in the same way. On this basis it is suggested here that the Gesar/Geser superscription was itself not a creation of the Geluk elite, but rather something inherited from popular culture and only then subsumed by an imperially-aligned political and cultural agenda. It is further suggested here that the popular culture in which the origins of this superscription were embedded, was not just that of uneducated locals, but rather of the multi-ethnic Qing imperial army, through whose translocal networks the notion spread throughout Buddhist Inner Asia. If this suggestion is correct, then the further question remains as to how this conflation was taken forward by the Tibeto-Mongol Geluk religio-political elite. Ultimately, were the

or a “sop” towards Mongol sensibilities regarding this deity. These two examples are the only concrete citations we have of officially-sponsored documents or inscriptions making a public equivalence between Gesar/Geser and Guandi. Alone, these two examples (one of which comes from the early and one from the late period of Qing rule) might be considered sufficient evidence on which to accept the thesis. But neither of these pieces of evidence are conclusive. Stein’s observation of the Chinese gloss on the cover page of the 1716 Geser edition seems only to be true of the version of the xylograph print which he consulted at the Bibliothèque de l’Institut, Paris. The title page of the exemplar held at the National Library of Mongolia in Ulaan Baatar, by contrast, carries no Chinese characters. So it is possible that this Chinese gloss may not have been part of the original 1716 production. This is a question which requires further paleographic enquiry. Also, the testimony of Pozdneyev, being so late in the 19th century, might only reflect the *fact* that the two figures (Gesar and Lord Guan) were by then so closely associated, rather than indicating anything about an official policy or strategy of state as the origin of such a conflation.

¹⁸ Jamyang Phüntsook (Jiayang Pincuo) presents a table with quotes from various Chinese scholars who have presented the Guandi-Gesar conflation as a mistake or misunderstanding (Ch. *wu*) of the common people. For his citations of Wang Yao 2008; Zhang Husheng and An Yuqin 2001; Feng Zhi 2004; Lin Jifu 2004; Chen Chongkai 1999; and Liu Haiyan 2002, see Pincuo 2016: 2–3. The problem with this thesis is that if the source of the association was a mix-up by uneducated local people, then why was the same confusion found in so many locales across the Qing’s Inner Asian empire? The regularity with which Guandi and Gesar/Geser were identified across the Tibetan and Mongol regions, itself indicates that a translocal network was at work. It remains moot whether this translocal network was Qing officialdom, the imperial army, or the Geluk church, or (perhaps most likely) all three working in informal concert.

strategies at work here official, top-down, imperial strategies of statecraft? Or were they subaltern strategies of appropriation, dissimulation, and obscurity? Or were both strategies in play at once among a Geluk elite navigating the role of middlemen between the Qing imperium and its Inner Asian subjects?

In order to help adjudicate such questions, the present article looks in some detail at the testimony provided on this topic by the available Tibetan-language sources. By surveying these sources, the article hopes to provide a more informed foundation on which to base discussion of this intriguing aspect of Qing-Tibetan-Inner Asian cultural history.

This survey of the history of Lord Guan in Tibet, and more broadly in Tibeto-Mongol Geluk Buddhism is presented through two related themes: a) the *institutional* history of shrines to Lord Guan established in Tibet¹⁹ from c. 1720–1912, predominantly to serve the presence of (mostly Han Chinese) Qing imperial troops; and b) the development over the same period of a substantial Tibetan-language *ritual* corpus devoted to this deity, authored by high-ranking Geluk lamas, all of whom occupied positions of considerable religio-political authority as brokers of the Geluk-Qing Inner Asian *pax manjurica*.

Briefly stated, the significant findings of this survey are that:

- i) The development of a Tibetan-language ritual corpus for the propitiation of Lord Guan as the Long Cloud King (Tib. Sprin ring rgyal po) closely mirrored the contemporaneous establishment of the Qing military presence in Tibet and the establishment of garrison temples to this deity across Buddhist Inner Asia in the wake of the Qing defeat of the Zunghars in the mid-18th century.
- ii) The primary cultic associations of this deity were with a) the wrathful protector and tantric deity Jamsring/Bektsé, and b) the central Tibetan local protector-deity Dzongtsen Shenpa.
- iii) The seminal figure in elaborating the Geluk ritual cult of the Long Cloud King, establishing its cultic associations, and asserting its authoritative practice lineages, was Tukwan Lobzang Chökyi Nyima (Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi

¹⁹ A limitation of the present study is its exclusive focus on Lord Guan temples established within the jurisdiction of the Ganden Phodrang (the focus of the TibArmy project) rather than the wider Tibetan cultural region, which would include garrison temples in parts of Amdo which were outside the formal control of the Ganden Phodrang. In fact many of the Geluk figures who authored the Tibetan-language ritual texts for Lord Guan (surveyed later in this article) were actually from the Tibeto-Mongolian borderlands of Amdo.

- ma, 1737–1802).
- iv) The central locus for this ritual cult was the Yonghegong monastery in Beijing.
 - v) The vast majority of Geluk figures who contributed to this cult were either Amdowas or ethnic Mongols, most of whom had connections to the politically-powerful Gomang College (Tib. *Sgo mang*) of Lhasa's Drepung (Tib. 'Bras spungs) monastery, and with the Qing imperial court at Beijing.
 - vi) While the cult of this protector (whose most visible popular practice was the drawing of lots) gained considerable popular traction in the Sino-Mongolian and Mongolian regions, especially during the 19th century, in Tibet itself the deity remained marginal, localised only at Chinese "garrison temples". And finally,
 - vii) In all the Tibetan-language sources, both concerning institutional history and ritual history, the identification of this deity (Long Cloud King / Lord Guan) with the Inner Asian epic hero Gesar / Geser was *not* made explicit, and the distinct legendary and folkloric background of Gesar / Geser was assiduously ignored.

This last finding came as a considerable surprise to the present author, since we know that the custom of referring to Lord Guan as Geser / Gesar at Qing garrison shrines in Inner Asia was widespread from the mid-to-late 18th century at the very latest,²⁰ and that this custom persisted into the 20th century in both Tibet and in Mongolia. So why is there no mention of Gesar / Geser in these Tibetan-language Geluk sources concerning Lord Guan / Long Cloud King? The layering of identities for deities is a common theme in Tibetan Buddhism (and in Indic religions more broadly), so why was this association with Gesar not made explicit in these voluminous writings? This absence is particularly surprising if the merging of these two figures was, as historians such as Damdinsuren, Heissig and others have suggested, an official policy or strategy of the Qing-Geluk political ascendancy. Any one of the authoritative lamas (or "Beijing *kütuktus*" in the coinage of Max Oidtmann)²¹ discussed below could have asserted (or "recognised") that Lord Guan and Gesar / Geser were, for example, of the same mind-stream (*thugs rgyud*), or that one was the incarnation of the other, or

²⁰ Pallas' description of the Kiatka garrison temple relates to the year 1772. See Pallas 1793: 163. It is very likely that the custom of calling Lord Guan "Geser / Gesar" started in the early or mid-18th century, if not before. See note 9 above.

²¹ Oidtmann 2018: 162.

that both were emanations (*sprul pa*) of the same enlightened being. However, none of them did so. Instead, in the entire Geluk corpus of the Long Cloud King, which includes several versions of the deity's mythic backstory or "history" (*lo rgyus*), all mentions of Gesar/Geser and his associated popular folklore are eschewed. So although the popular custom of identifying this deity as Gesar/Geser was certainly *tolerated* by the Geluk and imperial elites (they never sought to stamp it out nor saw fit to refute it), the textual record also quite clearly indicates that the identification of these two distinct objects of folklore was never formally embraced or celebrated.

How is one to understand this? It seems that what we are looking at here was less a policy of *fusion* on the part of the Geluk elite, and more a policy of dissimulation and of cultural *displacement*. In effect, a new form of "Gesar" was being forged by Geluk tradition for popular consumption. And this "Geluk Gesar", on the basis of the textual record, while piggy-backing on the popularity of the Inner Asian martial culture hero ("Epic Gesar"), in fact had nothing to do with him, but was quite simply Lord Guan. The informal nickname "Gesar/Geser" was thus tolerated as no more than a cipher which flattered popular sentiments, while the deity actually being formally propitiated at the Geluk-curated "Chinese temples" across Inner Asia through these Tibetan-language ritual texts was unequivocally Lord Guan, the "great war-god of China" (Tib. *ma ha tsi na'i dgra lha che*).

The present article argues that in order to understand the development of this historical phenomenon, one has to contextualise it within contemporaneous Inner Asian *military* history. For it is only in light of this often-missing strand of the historical record that this peculiar chapter in Tibetan cultural history starts to make clearer sense. Based on the findings of this article, the historical narrative might be reconstructed as follows:

A culture of militarism predisposed the Manchus towards an interest in the martial symbols and icons of their subjects. The early Qing thus took an active interest in both the Han Chinese Lord Guan and in the Mongolian Geser, and supported the publication of their respective associated literatures.²² It is likely that an informal labelling of Lord Guan as a kind of "Chinese Geser/Gesar" was incubated among the many Inner Asians (especially Mongols) involved with the Qing imperial army during this early period. When, from the early decades of the 18th century, Qing military dominance was being asserted across

²² With the translation of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* into Manchu in the 1640s, and the xylograph publication of a Mongolian-language version of the Geser epic in 1716.

Inner Asia, the main Lord Guan icon at garrison temples was identified by the elite Mongol soldiery of the imperial army as Geser Khan, and through the trans-local network of the Qing's multi-ethnic army, this superscription spread across the vast geographical area of Buddhist Inner Asia. It was only with the (relatively late) incorporation of Tibet within the Qing's sphere of military dominance and the establishment of the earliest shrines to Lord Guan in central Tibet during the time of the Kangxi Emperor, that any interest was taken in the figure of Lord Guan by the Geluk elite (there appear to be no Tibetan-language sources even mentioning this deity before 1736).²³ This indicates the very close relationship between military and religious history in this regard.

It is interesting to observe that it was also during the earliest phase of Qing military activity in central Tibet and the establishment of the first shrines to Lord Guan in those areas (i.e. from c. 1720–1750), that one also finds a tentative interest being taken by the Tibetan political elite in the court of the Pholha dynasty (ruled 1727–1750) in the figure of Ling Gesar and his associated epic traditions. This can be seen in the Gesar-related texts authored by the senior (Nyingma-leaning) Geluk incarnation Lelung Zhepé Dorjé (Sle lung 05 Bzhad pa'i rdo rje, 1697–1740), who had close connections to the court of Pholhané. These texts, it seems, represent an effort to harness the symbolism of Gesar to the rule of Pholhané (r. 1728–1747), who was also depicted by Lelung as an incarnation of the enlightened protector-deity Bektsé.²⁴ It seems likely, given the Gesar-Guandi association (as noted in the 1736 *History of Buddhism in China*), that these tentative religio-cultural-political developments under Tibet's last secular ruling family were related to Pholhané's Qing alliance, and hinged in turn on the association between Bektsé and Lord Guan. However, the violent demise of the Pholha dynasty with the murder of Pholhané's son and successor Gyurmé Namgyel (Tib. 'Gyur med rnam rgyal) by the Manchu *ambans* in 1750, brought such efforts at cultural construction to an abrupt end.

²³ The Fifth Dalai Lama (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, 1617–1682) did pen two short texts for propitiating the local deity known as Dzongtsen Shenpa (Rdzong btsan shan pa—a deity discussed later,) but in these, the association between this deity and Lord Guan is not mentioned. However, in one of the texts, the sites at which Dzongtsen is propitiated are listed, and do indeed include “the red Zang thang plain of China” (*rgya yul zang thang dmar po*). This appears to be an allusion to the Chinese “origins” of this deity. But if the Fifth Dalai Lama was aware that this deity corresponded to the Lord Guan of Chinese tradition, he did not state it as such; see *Lha chen yar lha sham po dang shel brag rdzong btsan gnyis la gsol mchod* in Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) 2009: vol. 12: 394.

²⁴ Lelung's recognition of Pholhané as an incarnation of Bektsé is mentioned both in his own writings and in the biography of Pholhané by Dokharwa Tsering Wanggyel; see Bailey 2016: 24.

Consequently, as power moved decisively towards the Qing and Gelukpa allies after 1751, the Gesar/Geser element in this matrix of cultic association was henceforth relegated to the status of an informality.

It was in the period after 1751 that Tibet was brought more formally under the wing of Qing military control; that the anti-Nyingma strand of Geluk tradition (associated with Gomang College in particular) became increasingly ascendant in Lhasa; and that Geluk Buddhism was further institutionalised at the Qing imperial centre (especially through Yonghegong). In the same period, we start to see the development of what we might call the "Geluk Gesar" as a new Tibetanised form of Lord Guan.

That the promotion of Lord Guan as a Geluk protector deity was at the same time accompanied by a marginalisation or disparagement of the epic of Gesar, was noted by R.A. Stein in his 1959 *magnum opus*, but not discussed further:

Il est curieux que les mêmes dignitaires lamaïques qui identifèrent Gesar et Kouan-ti et contribuèrent ainsi au développement de leurs cultes sous une forme sinisée, étaient par ailleurs hostiles à l'épopée.²⁵

We may now look in greater detail at this process. Who is Lord Guan, and how and by whom was he admitted by stages into the fold of Tibeto-Mongol Geluk Buddhism?

2. Lord Guan and the Qing Imperium

As a historical figure, Lord Guan was born around 162 CE in what is now modern Shanxi province in northern China during the twilight years of the Later Han dynasty, a time of warlordism and numerous rebellions. Along with Zhang Fei, he was among the earliest followers of Liu Bei, a pretender to the succession of the embattled Han throne. He swore undying loyalty to Liu Bei and fought many battles on his behalf. Although the heroic triumvirate of Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei were not historical victors, they lived on as the subject of historical

²⁵ Stein 1959: 115. As we will see, in fact the lamas who embraced Lord Guan as a Geluk protector did not formally associate him with Gesar, although a popular or informal association can be taken as a background context to their textual productions.

writing,²⁶ popular storytelling, folklore and literature.²⁷

According to the historical record, it was during an ill-fated campaign in 219 or 220 CE that Guan Yu was captured along with his son Guan Ping, and the pair were summarily executed by beheading on the bank of the Ju river (a tributary of the Yangtze), where Guan Yu's headless corpse was buried. Some forty-five years later (c. 265 CE) his entire family were also executed. In the decades and centuries that followed, the charismatic spirit of Guan Yu became the object of propitiatory rites. The contemporary scholar Barend ter Haar has suggested that the very absence of direct descendants of Guan Yu (and thus the absence of an ancestral cult in his honour), may have helped pave the way for the development of his popular cult.²⁸ Having died a bitter and violent death when his life force (Ch. *qi*) was still strong, it was said that Guan Yu lived on in the form of a powerful spirit which haunted the mountains around the place of his execution. The cult of this spirit-general gradually spread, and during the Tang dynasty (618–908) was already fairly widespread across northern China.²⁹

It is hard to ascertain with precision when he was formally adopted as a Daoist and Confucian deity, but his adoption as a protector deity in Chinese Buddhism is easier to chart, and is said to date to the 6th century CE. According to a seminal telling of the Buddhist conversion myth (as found in an 11th century inscription)³⁰ the restless spirit of Guan Yu was tamed and converted into a *dharma*-protector by the Buddhist master Zhuyi (智顓, 530–598),³¹ a seminal founding figure in the

²⁶ The earliest textual record concerning the life of Guan Yu is Chen Shou's *Records of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguozhi*) written in the late-3rd or early-4th century CE, only some sixty to a hundred years after Guan Yu's death. This is not to be confused with the much later *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi*).

²⁷ The popular folklore concerning this period was the subject of Yuan-era stories (*ping hua*) and there were also early dramas featuring Lord Guan. But his life only received its classic literary treatment over a thousand years after his death, with the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi*) attributed to the 14th century author Luo Guanzhong. This is considered one of the four great historical novels of classical Chinese literature. Centring on the heroics of the three oath-sworn "brothers" Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei, the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* continues to be a mainstay of East Asian popular culture even today, inspiring films and television series, as well as computer games and comic books. Yokoyama Mitsuteru's award-winning Japanese *manga* series, *Sangokushi*, provides an accessible entry into this elaborate historical epic.

²⁸ ter Haar 2017: 6.

²⁹ *Ibid.*: 28–29.

³⁰ The definitive account of Guan Yu's conversion into a Buddhist protector is found in an inscription by Zhang Shangying 張商英 (1043–1122) to commemorate the restoration of the Jade Spring temple in 1080–1081; ter Haar 2017: 30.

³¹ ter Haar argues that this Buddhist conversion narrative was likely constructed as a conflation of two originally separate narratives local to the area: one concerning

Tiantai Buddhist tradition.

By the 12th century, temples and shrines to Guan Gong ("Lord Guan") were widespread across China. Some scholars have assumed that this early spread took place largely on the back of his adoption as a Buddhist temple-protector, but ter Haar argues that it probably owed more to popular oral traditions and to his acceptance as a deity in Daoism³² in which he was deified as a demon-subduing spirit-general invoked for a variety of exorcistic and weather-making ritual purposes.³³ As such, a widespread and popular temple cult to Lord Guan long predated the first publication of the classic historical novel *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi*) composed in the late 14th century.³⁴

The worship of Lord Guan as a political cult expressive of loyalty to the imperial centre was an even later layer in his apotheosis. It was under the Ming that the cult of Guan Gong—and the saga of the *Three Kingdoms* more generally—began to be adopted as the object of concerted imperial patronage.³⁵ And it was also in this period that his identity as a martial deity (*wu sheng*), propitiated particularly by soldiers at garrison shrines, became more pronounced. In 1615,³⁶ under the Wanli Emperor, Lord Guan was formally promoted in the celestial chambers to the status of *di* (帝) or "emperor" (hence Guandi "Emperor Guan"), with a full title which reflected the belief in a numinous

Zhuyi's taming of a dragon-spirit in the establishment of the Jade Spring monastery, and the other concerning Guan Yu's afterlife as a restless spirit propitiated at the nearby site of his execution and burial. In this way, suggests ter Haar, the Buddhist monastery retrospectively appropriated the local cult of Guan Yu some time after the monastery's original establishment; *ibid.*: 32–34. In its broad outlines, this is the narrative followed by 18th-century Tibetan-language "histories" (*lo rgyus*) of the Long Cloud King, as shown later in the article.

³² *Ibid.*: 38–44.

³³ Chapter 3 of ter Haar's study (2017: 47–74) traces the career of Guan Yu as a demon-subduing spirit-general in Daoist tradition, based on ritual sources from the 11th century onwards. Such ritual texts are found for example in an early Ming compilation entitled the *Compendium of Rituals of the Way* (*daofa huiyuan* 道法會元), which ter Haar dates to *circa* 1400; *ibid.*: 52.

³⁴ Commonly attributed to Luo Guanzhong, though this remains a matter of debate. With regard to this classic text, ter Haar states that "the cult influenced the narrative traditions rather than the other way around"; *ibid.*: 76–77.

³⁵ As cited by ter Haar, Idema has argued that prior to the Ming dynasty, the saga of the post-Han transition (i.e. the *Three Kingdoms*) was far less popular than the alternative saga of the Qin-Han transition: "Idema suggests that the Ming court carried out a conscious policy to suppress the Qin-Han saga, because it was highly satirical about Liu Bang, the rather uncouth founding emperor of the Han. The founder of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang, was likewise of humble origins and extremely sensitive to criticisms about himself, however oblique. Instead of the narratives of the Qin-Han transition, the early Ming therefore successfully promoted the saga of the Three Kingdoms"; *ibid.*: 77–78.

³⁶ Duara 1998: 778.

power transcending Daoist, Confucian and Buddhist registers:

San jie fu mo da shen wei yuan zhen tian zun guan sheng di jun (三界伏魔大神威遠震天尊關聖帝君): “Subduer of Demons of the Three Realms, Great God whose Awe Spreads Far and Moves Heaven, Sage Emperor Guan”.³⁷

Under the Qing, the position of Guandi as an official deity of state was further strengthened. When the Manchus gained control over China in the mid 1640s, the remnants of the (largely Han) Ming soldiery were incorporated within the ranks of the Qing imperial army as the “Green Standard troops” (*lu ying bing* 綠營兵),³⁸ and the Manchu elite were quick to co-opt the martial symbolism of Guandi—and the devotion he enjoyed amongst the rank and file soldiery—to their rule. As early as 1647 the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* was translated into Manchu language and published “at least partly” according to Crossley “to more familiarize bannermen with the character of the ‘Guandi’ image they knew had been worshipped at Ming military garrisons”.³⁹ In addition, in 1652, the Shunzhi Emperor (r. 1644–1661) officially re-issued the deity with the highest-status title *di* or “Emperor”.

That the Manchu embrace of Guandi was inspired by the devotion he already inspired among the Han soldiery of the Green Standard troops, is confirmed by an anecdote in a diary entry of a Manchu soldier translated by Di Cosmo. After a successful operation against a rebel village by the Green Standard troops in 1680, the soldiers were suddenly gripped by a devotional fervour towards Lord Guan, who had apparently “descended” into a guardsman.⁴⁰ “From that moment”, reports the diarist, “the [Manchu] general carried with him an image of

³⁷ This full title is given by Zhang 2016: 582–583, citing Lu, Xiaoheng *Guan Yu, Guangong, and Guansheng: Seminar Papers on Guan Yu in Chinese History and Culture*. Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe: 95.

³⁸ In its final form, established in the 1640s, the core Qing army comprised three sets of eight “banners” each, divided along ethnic lines (Manchu, Mongol and Han). These were further supplemented by the predominantly Han and Hui “Green Standard troops” made up of Ming soldiers and officers who had surrendered during the conquest of China. In terms of troop numbers, the Green Standard troops actually outnumbered the bannermen from the mid-17th century. For further details on the structure of these various components of the imperial army, see Di Cosmo 2006: 19–25.

³⁹ Heissig (trans. Samuel) 1980: 99; Crossley gives the date of the first publication of the Manchu-language version (*Ilan gurun-i bithé* by Kicungge) as 1650; Crossley 1999: 244–245. The figure of Guandi would not have been entirely unknown to the Manchus even before their conquest of China, since his cult had already been promoted in Manchuria under the late Ming; Zhang 2016: 583.

⁴⁰ “We were resting for a couple of days [after a successful battle conducted by Green Standard troops] when the whole body of a *bayara* guard of the Bordered White

the god Guandi, and prostrated every day".⁴¹

Cementing his place as a protective deity of the state, the worship of Guandi was formally instituted as a mandatory official cult in every county and prefecture of China from 1725 at the latest, and perhaps earlier.⁴² This level of official patronage of the cult bolstered and augmented its already widespread popularity.⁴³ By 1765 a Korean diplomat travelling across northern China could observe that "the worship of Lord Guan exceeds even reverence for the Buddha[...] in every village they will first build a Guan temple".⁴⁴ And another would write in 1803–1804 that "from here to the imperial city, if there is a village there is definitely a temple for Emperor Guan".⁴⁵

It was also in the 18th century that Guandi temples started to appear across the Mongolian, Uighur and (what most concerns us here) the Tibetan regions of Inner Asia, as the Qing by stages established a military presence in these areas, typically accompanied by some level of Chinese commercial activity. According to a Mongolian chronicle cited by Heissig, by 1787 some sixty-five temples for Guandi had been

[Banner] changed, and [he] said that the Great Ancestor Guan had descended. General Manggitu came and asked the reason for [the people's] kneeling. From that moment the general carried with him an image of the god Guandi, and prostrated every day"; Di Cosmo 2007: 52. This translation suggests Lord Guan descended into the body of a guardsman. It is an interesting contrast to the more well-attested Inner Asian belief (especially prominent in Mongol customs) of war-deities descending into the regimental banners or standards (Mo. *siilde*) themselves.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Romeyn Taylor writes: "Despite the salience of the official cult of Guan Yu from the Wanli reign (1573–1620) of the Ming through the Qing, however, it has proven difficult to determine when his temples were first made mandatory at the county level. This cannot have been later than 1725 when liturgical rules for the rites were promulgated to all the prefectures and counties, and this is taken here as the beginning date for the official local cult"; Taylor 1997: 103. He adds in a note however that "the establishment of the county-level cult may have been as early as 1614"; *ibid.*: fn 23.

⁴³ In his article on official religion under the Ming and the Qing, Taylor makes an eight-fold categorisation of temples and shrines based on the formal and informal level of official support they enjoyed. Guandi temples fell into the top two (i.e. most official) rungs of this classification. Namely, fully-official temples and altars (i.e. those at which official government-sponsored services were mandated in every county and prefecture), and "quasi-official" lay temples to spirits who were also served by an official temple in the same county, but were not themselves used for official rites. Many Guandi temples, he says, fell into this latter category; *ibid.*: 96–97.

⁴⁴ ter Haar 2017: 97, citing Hong, *Damheon yeongi*, with text edited by G. Dudbridge, p. 8–9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

built with state subsidies in Gansu, Mongolia, Xinjiang and Tibet,⁴⁶ at which he was “worshipped as a protective deity of the state and military god of the Manchurian soldiers and functionaries”.⁴⁷

In both Mongolian and Tibetan regions, Guandi temples quickly came to be known as “Geser/Gesar temples”. Our earliest literary reference to this identification is the *History of Buddhism in China* (*Rgya nag chos 'byung*) authored around 1736 (discussed further in section 4 below). The earliest traveller-observation of the custom dates from 1772, when M. Pallas visited the garrison temple at Maimatchen of Kiakta in northern Mongolia.⁴⁸

3. Institutional History: Guandi Shrines and Temples in Central Tibet (ca. 1720–1800)

The establishment of shrines to Lord Guan in Tibet closely tracks Qing military involvement in the region. According to Chinese sources, the first shrines in central Tibet dated to the reign of Emperor Kangxi, when imperial troops briefly sojourned there in 1720–1721, after the rout of the occupying Zunghars.⁴⁹ The contemporary scholar Feng Zhi

⁴⁶ Heissig (trans. Samuel) 1980: 100, citing the entry for the year 1787 in *Erdini-yin erike*, a Mongolian chronicle by Tayiji Galden (1859) and edited by Nasanbaljir (1960). Damdinsuren, in his 1955 article, appeared to be working from the same source when he wrote “after the Manchus conquered Mongolia, East Turkestan and Tibet, there were numerous Manchu-Chinese garrisons in these countries, for which they erected temples to the god of war Guandi. In all of these countries conquered by the Manchus such temples were numerous. In *Gansu province alone*, located between Mongolia and Tibet, there were 65 government-sponsored idols dedicated to the god Guandi”; Damdinsuren 1955: 54 (translation from Russian by the present author, italics added). Damdinsuren gives no citation for this information, which is why Heissig’s version has been preferred.

⁴⁷ Heissig (trans. Samuel) 1980: 100.

⁴⁸ In describing this temple, Pallas writes: “The principal idol is seated in a niche in the middle between two columns interlaced with golden dragons and carries the name Guedsour or Guessour-Kan. The Chinese call him Lou-Jé [i.e. *lao ye*] the Manchus Gouan-Loé [i.e. *guan lao ye*]”. Pallas adds in a note: “It is the Mongols and Kalmouks who have given him the name Guessour-Kan; and although they don’t rank him among their divinities they regard him as a hero, born, or so they maintain, near to the source of *Choango*... These people possess a very detailed history of his heroic deeds. Here is the title of that work written in Mongol language: Arban Ssoughi Guessour Bogdo-Kan” [this being a reference to the title of the Mongolian-language version of the Geser epic xylographed under the imperial sponsorship of Kangxi in Beijing in 1716, see note 208]; Pallas (trans. M. Gauthier de la Peyronie) 1793: 163.

⁴⁹ Kangxi’s first expedition to confront the Zunghars in Tibet in 1718 was disastrous, with the Qing forces all but annihilated at Nagchuka (Ch. Heihe); Chen 2005: 46. See also the contribution of Hosung Shim in this volume. A second larger force of some 4,000 troops was then sent two years later (1720), which was successful and

for example suggests that three such shrines or temples were established at this time—one near Tashilhunpo at Shigatsé, another in Tsethang, and another at “Jiā lí” (嘉黎) just north of Lhasa.⁵⁰

It was only after the Tibetan civil war of 1727–1728 and during the rule in Tibet of Pholhané Sönam Topgyé, that a permanent (but fluctuating in size) Sino-Manchu imperial garrison was established at Lhasa.⁵¹ Pholhané welcomed the Qing alliance, but maintained a clear Tibetan military autonomy. In 1733, at his insistence, the number of Chinese imperial troops at Lhasa was formally reduced, and a purpose-built barracks was constructed for them on the Trapchi plain (Tib. Grwa bzhi thang) just north of Lhasa.⁵² These barracks (Ch. *zhu jun ji di*), designed to house 500 troops, were constructed with substantial material

oversaw the enthronement of the Seventh Dalai Lama. This imperial force was however quickly withdrawn. When the Qoshot-led “Lobzang Tenzin/Lobjang Danjin Rebellion” against Qing rule erupted in Amdo in 1723, there were no imperial troops remaining at Lhasa; Petech [1950] 1972: 95–96.

⁵⁰ Feng Zhi 2006: 39. While the first two of these may not have had an overt military connection, the third, he says, was established by the Green Standard troops. Feng Zhi suggests that this “Jiali” indicated the same location at which an imperial military garrison was later built in 1733 (i.e. Trapchi); *ibid.* citing *Lhasa Cultural Relics Record*: 121. Feng Zhi’s assertion appears to be based on the suggestion made in the *Wei zang tong zhi* (quoted later) which implies that there was a Guandi shrine already established north of Lhasa before the imperial barracks were built there in 1733.

⁵¹ A small force had been sent in 1727 in response to the murder of the Tibetan minister Khangchenné (Khang chen nas) and the ensuing Tibetan civil war. This force did not engage in any fighting since it arrived only after the civil war had already been won by Pholhané, but it gave imperial imprimatur to the peace and oversaw the trial and public execution of the perpetrators of Khangchenné’s murder. This brutal spectacle (Petech [1950] 1972: 148–149) took place at the foot of the Barmari hill, where the Guandi/Gesar temple would later be established in 1792/1793. After protracted negotiations between Jalangga (the Manchu commander) and Pholhané, it was agreed that 2,000 imperial troops would henceforth be stationed at Lhasa. In Pholhané’s biography, this agreement is presented as a concession to Pholhané’s tough negotiating stance (Mdo mkhar ba Tshe ring dbang rgyal 1981: 687–689). However as shown by Petech, Chinese documents indicate that these negotiations were something of a charade, since the decision to fix the imperial force at 2,000 had apparently already been taken by the Qing court several months earlier, based on considerations of the difficulties of supply; Petech [1950] 1972: 156, citing *Shih-tsung Shih-lu*, chap. 72, fol. 12a–b.

⁵² Reduced to maximum of 500 soldiers to be rotated every three years. The reason for this change was that the presence of the foreign soldiers in Lhasa was putting a strain on the town’s resources. Petech cites a letter of Fr. Gioacchino da S. Anania dated 1731, which states that the cost of basic staples in Lhasa had risen by fifty percent since the Chinese soldiers had taken up quarters in the town. Pholhané’s biography also says that the soldiers’ habit of killing and cooking all kinds of animals in the streets was ruining the character of the holy city; Mdo mkhar ba Tshe ring dbang rgyal 1981: 832; Petech [1950] 1972: 169; Feng Zhi 2006: 39.

and manpower assistance provided by the Tibetan government.⁵³ The *Wei zang tong zhi*, the important early 19th century source compiled by the *ambans'* office in Lhasa,⁵⁴ suggests that this area had already served as a billeting point for Chinese soldiers since the time of Kangxi, and that a Guandi temple had already been established there prior to the construction of the barracks, though this is not confirmed in Tibetan sources.⁵⁵ It is likely that the origin of the Tibetan toponym Trapchi (spelled variously in Tibetan as *gra bzhi* and *grwa bzhi*) lies in a borrowing from the Chinese *zhaji* (扎基), which may be translated literally, according to Murakami, as "the foundation of a garrison".⁵⁶ For almost two hundred years henceforth (until the expulsion of the remnant of the imperial garrison from Tibet in 1912), Trapchi would remain the main centre of Chinese military presence in Tibet. It would also be a primary *locus* for the worship of Lord Guan in Tibet, and for such "Chinese" practices as the drawing of "sacred lots" (Ch. *ling qian*), and annual military processions with the idol of Lord Guan.⁵⁷

It was also in this period that the first Tibetan-language treatment of the "history" (*lo rgyus*) of Lord Guan was composed. For despite the prominence of Lord Guan in Han Chinese folklore and popular religious culture over many centuries, there do not appear to have been any prior Tibetan-language treatments of this figure.⁵⁸ This earliest Tibetan-language account is found in the *History of Buddhism in China*

⁵³ Mdo mkhar ba Tshe ring dbang rgyal 1981: 832.

⁵⁴ On the debate over the precise authorship of the *Wei zang tong zhi*, see Liu Yuxuan 2013: 64–70.

⁵⁵ According to the *Wei zang tong zhi*: "during the Ming dynasty Tibet was called Wu Xizang, and during the reign of Emperor Shenzu Ren Huangdi [i.e. Kangxi], it became a territory of the Qing dynasty, and the army stayed at Zhashi city. The "emperor temple" (*di miao*) had already been constructed there and was very effective"; as cited by Jiayang Pincuo 2016: 15. Tibetan sources, notably Pholhané's biography, make no mention of a pre-existent Guandi shrine at the site; see Mdo mkhar ba Tshe ring dbang rgyal 1981: 832.

⁵⁶ Tibetan scholars have suggested that the origins of the term *grwa bzhi* lie in the original "four monks" (*grwa pa bzhi*) who inhabited a temple there. There does not however seem to be any documentary evidence for this. It seems more likely that the origins of the Tibetan name lie in a phonetic borrowing from this originally Chinese designation; Murakami 2013: 35.

⁵⁷ It is hard to say with certainty when the annual public procession of the Guandi statue seated on a sedan chair and carried through Lhasa began. But Jamyang Phüntso, citing the modern source *La sa li shi wen hua* (*Lhasa History and Culture*), suggests it was around this time; Pincuo 2016: 15.

⁵⁸ Even in the 18th and 19th centuries, the penetration of this figure into Tibetan literary tradition appears to have been very slight. There does not appear to have been any Tibetan-language translation of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* until it was published in a two-volume edition in 2013; Lu'o kon krung (trans. Nam mkha' seng ge) 2013. Only very recently has the saga become widely-known to Tibetan audiences through Chinese television serials dubbed into Tibetan. It seems the

(*Rgya nag chos 'byung*) by Gönpojab (Mgon po skyabs, c. 1690–1750)⁵⁹ probably completed in 1736.⁶⁰ The author of this *History* was himself a very good example of the trans-ethnic Inner Asian elite at the Qing court (or what Perdue has called the Qing's elite cohort of “trans-frontiersmen”)⁶¹ who led the adoption of Lord Guan as a Geluk protector. Gönpojab was a Chahar Mongol whose family had been granted ducal rank (Ch. *gong* 公) under Emperor Kangxi. In 1709 he himself married into the Manchu royal family, and boasting mastery of four languages (Mongolian, Tibetan, Manchu and Chinese), took employment at the imperial court as the head of the “Tibetan School” (Cf. Tanggute Xue 唐古特学 or Xifan Xue 西番学).⁶² Gönpojab's *History of Buddhism in China* would remain the seminal (and for many Tibetan readers, the only) Tibetan-language reference for the history of Chinese Buddhism right up until the 20th century, and would serve as the main template for later Tibetan-language “histories” of Lord Guan, as will be seen below.

Here the Chinese name Guan Laoye is transcribed in Tibetan as Ku'an lo'u and he is described as “China's great *dharma*-protector of religion and state” (*tsi na'i yul gyi bstan srid spyi'i chos skyong chen po*):

Regarding China's great *dharma*-protector of religion and state in general, he is called Guan Lao Ye (Ku'an lo'u ye), and was bound by oath by this Buddhist master [i.e. Zhuyi]. He was a prominent general of the Great Han at the time when its dominion was in decline. With only his own strength and skill [to rely on], he fell into the hands of the enemy. And like the example of the righteous Buddhist King Aśoka who died suddenly in a state of despair and was thus reborn as a sea monster, so in the same way, although in general Guan Lao Ye's own intentions and actions were not to blame, because he was in an intense state of hatred at the time of his execution, he was reborn as a local guardian water-spirit (*zhing skyong gi klu*) and lived in that state for four hundred years.

Then, when the great master (*slob dpon*, i.e. Zhuyi) came to the Lu Chuan mountain (*lus khyu'an ri*) to meditate in a thatched hut, he [the spirit of Guan Yu] transformed into huge and terrifying snake which

folklore of the *Three Kingdoms* penetrated Mongolian popular culture at an earlier period, but this has been outside the scope of the present research.

⁵⁹ Following the dates suggested by Zhang 2016.

⁶⁰ There is uncertainty about the exact date this text was completed. Wang-Toutain (2005: 82) dates it to 1735. Uspensky (2008: 61) and others date it to 1736, and others still to the 1740s. For further references see Zhang 2016: 571 fn 19.

⁶¹ Perdue 2005: 110.

⁶² He refers to himself in his own writings as “the *upāsaka* Gönpojab from the Land of Winds who speaks four languages” (*skad bzhi smra ba'i dge bsnyen rlung kham pa*); Zhang 2016: 571, citing Uspensky 2008: 59.

wrapped itself around his body and made various other fearful manifestations. But finding that these did not disturb the master even a tiny bit, [the spirit] disappeared again in a gust of wind. Then that same night he re-appeared, dressed in all his armour and weapons and accompanied by an army of spirit-soldiers of the Eight Classes.⁶³ Paying respects to the master, he tested him with questions. The master answered his questions, and having explained the *dharma* to him, conferred on him the lay vows of an *upāsaka*, and appointed him as a guardian of the *dharma*. Thus he became chief among the common *dharma*-protectors who protect the *dharma* and ensure the harmony of religion and state (*bstan srid thun mong ba'i chos srung gi gtso bo*), and he is much beloved for the great sharpness with which he distinguishes [fortunes].

There are oral traditions (*gtam rgyud*) which suggest that Dzongtsen Shenpa who followed [the Tang princess] Wenchen Kongjo (Wan cheng kung cu) to Tibet, and the one known as Gesar King of Armies (Ge sar dmag gi rgyal po), are both him (*'di nyid yin cing*), and that he is of the same mind-continuum (*thugs rgyud*) as *yakṣa* Bektsé.⁶⁴

This final paragraph is of particular interest here, since its assertion that Lord Guan was one and the same as the local deity Dzongtsen Shenpa⁶⁵ and was “of the same mind-continuum” as the enlightened protector Bektsé,⁶⁶ are both prominent tropes in the later development of the Geluk cult of Lord Guan, as we shall see. This is also the earliest textual attestation we have to the association between Lord Guan and Gesar, though it is worth noting here the association drawn is with Gesar King of Armies (*ge sar dmag gi rgyal po*) rather than with Ling Gesar (*gling rje ge sar rgyal po*) the hero of the epic tradition.⁶⁷ All three of these associations—with Dzongtsen Shenpa, with Bektsé, and with Gesar—would

⁶³ *sde brygyad kyi dmag dpung chen po*. The Eight Classes of Spirits (*lha srin sde brygyad*) is a common classification for the teeming spirit world of Tibetan folk-religion, though its enumeration varies and the numbers of spirit-classes found in Tibetan sources (both in folklore and ritual texts) far exceed eight. For an examination of the early origins of this classification see Karmay 2003.

⁶⁴ Mgon po skyabs [1983] 1998: 125–126. A somewhat more abbreviated translation of the same passage is found in Zhang 2016: 582. The final paragraph runs: *bod du wan cheng kung cu'i rjes su 'brangs pa'i rdzong btsan shan pa dang / ge sar dmag gi rgyal por grags pa yang 'di nyid yin cing / gnod sbyin beg tse dang thugs rgyud gcig pa'i gtam rgyud kyang snang no* /.

⁶⁵ For Tukwan's succinct explanation of this identification, see later in the article.

⁶⁶ This identification with Bektsé is further elaborated in Ilgugsan Hutuktu's “history”, also discussed later.

⁶⁷ Although “Gesar King of Armies” (*ge sar dmag gi rgyal po*) is occasionally an epithet one finds used of Ling Gesar (the hero of the epic tradition), in general these two figures with the name “Gesar” reference two distinct figures in Tibetan myth and legend. The former was the name (along with *'phrom / khrom ge sar*) given to one of the Kings of the Four Directions during the Tibetan imperial period (7th–9th centuries) and was generally associated with Turks or Mongols (Dru gu or Hor) to the

be re-iterated a decade or so later in Sumpa Kenpo's *Wish-Fulfilling Tree* (1748).⁶⁸ Gönpojap's assertion that these associations lay in "oral traditions" (*gtam rgyud*) also clearly implies that these were neither his own surmises nor based on the authoritative statements of earlier scholars, but rather indicates they were based on casual or informal oral traditions. One suggestion of this article is that these were oral traditions with origins in the translocal network of the Mongol soldiery in the Qing military.

Given the context of the nascent Qing protectorate in Tibet and the associations Lord Guan already carried in this period with both Gesar and Bektsé, it is probably not a coincidence that it is also in this period that we see an interest being taken in these figures by the court of Pholhané, as mentioned earlier. In the 1730s there was a discernable uptake in Tibetan cultural production—both literary⁶⁹ and religious⁷⁰—related to the figure of Gesar, while Pholhané himself was

north of Tibet. Ling Gesar on the other hand, the hero of the popular Inner Asian epic traditions, said to be based on a historical kernel in the north-eastern part of the Tibetan plateau during the 11th century. On the distinction between these two figures, see for example Dmu dge bsam gtan 2004: 3–12. As discussed later, it was certainly Ling Gesar who was superimposed in popular imagination onto the figure of Guandi in Inner Asia.

⁶⁸ Stein 1959: 112.

⁶⁹ Pholhané Sönam Topgyé is mentioned by name, for example, in the colophon of the classic Gesar epic text *The Struggle between Hor and Ling* (*Hor gling g.yul 'gyed*) produced at Dergé (Tib. Sde dge) during the period of his political ascendancy. This two-volume text remains the most seminal text of the eastern Tibetan literary corpus of the Gesar Epic. Its original author was Ngawang Tenzin Phüntsock (Ngag dbang btsan 'dzin phun tshogs, dates unknown) a minister of the Dergé kingdom (he is referred to as the *sde dge zhabs drung*) in the period contemporaneous with Pholhané. He composed his text on the basis of the oral recitations of "around twenty bards from *mdo*, *khams* and *gling*". This text was re-edited by a team of eminent eastern Tibetan scholars in the late 1950s–early 1960s; *Hor gling g.yul 'gyed* vol. 1 (*stod cha*): 2.

⁷⁰ In the same period, the Fifth Lelung Rinpoché, Lelung Zhepé Dorjé, who had close links to Pholhané's court, developed a short corpus of offering rituals to Gesar based on his own visionary experiences. Lelung's theogonic vision of Gesar is dated to the year 1727. The text recounting this visionary encounter, i.e. the *Dag snang ge sar gyi gtam rgyud le'u 'o* in *Sle lung rje drung Bzhad pa'i rdo rje* (1985: vol. 12, fol. 1–28) prefaces the theogony with the statement: "the many accounts (lit. 'hagiographies' or *rnam thar*) of the hero known as the Great Noble One (*skyes bu chen po*) Gesar Dorjé Tsegyal known throughout the Three Realms, are deep and hard to fathom, beyond our ability to comprehend. For to each ordinary disciple, the story will fall [differently] according to their own abilities and destinies. Thus [the story of Gesar] comes in many different forms, in Do-kham and U-tsang and so on, in all directions without distinction, and such tales continue to be told even today. And although these various *namthars* differ in style and content, they need not be considered contradictory, since this is the *namthar* of a 'thus-gone' *tathagata* [i.e. a 'passed-beyond' Buddha]". In the idiosyncratic theogony of Gesar which follows, he is born as the 15th son after the sexual union of a primordial goddess of

also recognised by Lelung Zhepé Dorjé (perhaps his most prominent Geluk ally) as an incarnation of Bektsé.⁷¹

The next stage in the formalisation of the Qing military protectorate in Tibet came after the dramatic events of the “murder at the *yamen*” in 1750.⁷² In the wake of these events there was an attempt by the Qing authorities to formalise political and military arrangements in Tibet⁷³ and—at least to some degree—to integrate the Tibetan army with the imperial military forces stationed there.⁷⁴ To this end a permanent Tibetan military garrison was constructed next to the Chinese’ garrison at Trapchi. A thousand Tibetan soldiers under two Tibetan generals or *dapön* (*mda’ dpon*) were henceforth to be garrisoned at Trapchi alongside the imperial troops, while a further two thousand were to be stationed at Shigatsé.⁷⁵

Although the precise details of the relationship between the Tibetan army garrisons and their imperial counterparts in this period (and

light with a worldly mountain deity named Ger mtsho. Ger mtsho, in various spellings, is well-known as the name of Gesar’s *gnyan* (mountain deity) spirit-father in many eastern Tibetan tellings of the epic. Lelung’s Gesar text thus refers directly to the already widespread living epic traditions concerning this figure.

⁷¹ Bailey 2016: 24.

⁷² After Pholhané’s death in 1747, his son and successor Gyurmé Namgyel (‘Gyur med dbang rgyal, d. 1750) was intent on diminishing what remained of Qing influence in Tibet and reducing its military presence there. Though he succeeded in having the imperial force reduced to 100 men, the political tension this created reached its apex in November 1750 when the two *ambans* invited the Tibetan ruler to their *yamen* in central Lhasa and murdered him. The *ambans’ coup d’état* however failed in its immediate aims, since in response to this murder a crowd of Tibetans—likely including members of Gyurmé Namgyel’s large Tibetan army (Shakabpa 2010: vol. 1, 469–470)—surrounded the *yamen*, burnt it down, and killed them both.

⁷³ For a treatment of the “Thirteen-article reform of 1751” and its content as far as the military is concerned, see Travers 2015: 251, 253, 255, 257, 258, 260.

⁷⁴ Initially it was decided that a force of 3,000 would be sent immediately, with a further 2,000 to follow soon afterwards. However, on news that peace had already been re-established, these numbers were heavily revised downwards. Eventually a force of just 200 men from Sichuan under the command of the Qing General Cereng entered Lhasa in March 1751, by which time the leaders of the mob responsible for killing the *ambans* had already been publicly executed under the supervision of another (less senior) Qing official, Bandi, who had arrived earlier from Xining; Petech [1950] 1972: 221–225.

⁷⁵ This seems to constitute a significant demilitarisation since the time of Gyurmé Namgyel. The Chinese documents used by Petech indicate that the strength of the Lhasa garrison was finally agreed upon at 1,500 men. This number appears to be the combined strength of the Tibetan soldiers (1,000) and the imperial soldiers (500), though some uncertainty remains on this question; Petech [1950] 1972: 231, 257. It is notable that by the time of the first Gorkha invasion (1788) the standing troops available at Lhasa and Shigatsé did not conform to this neat scheme. See the contribution of Ulrich Theobald in the present volume.

henceforth) remain somewhat elusive,⁷⁶ it may be surmised that from this time the Tibetan army had daily contact with their Sino-Manchu counterparts and began to be influenced significantly by their culture, including their formal religious observances such as the cult of political loyalty centred on the figure of Lord Guan. It is not surprising therefore that it was also in this post-1750 period that Lord Guan's admission as a deity in the Geluk pantheon proceeds apace (as we shall see in the next section).

During roughly the same period, there was a further institutionalisation and foregrounding of Lord Guan at Yonghegong, the iconic Geluk institution in the heart of the imperial capital. In 1744 Qianlong had his father Yongzheng's former palace converted into a Geluk monastery, known in Tibetan as Ganden Jinchak Ling (Dga' ldan byin chags gling). The establishment here of a large Lord Guan temple (Ch. *Guandimiao*) in around 1750 is likely what provided the direct context for the composition of the first Geluk Tibetan-language ritual for this deity, namely the *Supplication to Lord Guan* (Tib. *Kwan lo ye gsol mchod*) by the Third Changkya Hutuktu, Rölpe Dorjé (Lcang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje, 1717–1786). This prayer (examined in greater detail below) is the first textual attestation of the Tibetan name for Lord Guan as the "Long Cloud King" (Tib. Sprin ring rgyal po) being a Tibetan rendering of "Guan Yunzhang".

In 1760, some ten years after the garrison area at Trapchi was expanded to include the Tibetan troops, a small Geluk monastery⁷⁷ was also built within the military enclosure there with funds raised by the *ambans*. A bi-lingual Tibetan and Chinese inscription on a wooden board memorialised this foundation.⁷⁸ Although that inscription did not explicitly mention Lord Guan, it seems that the pre-existent Guandi chapel at the barracks was now placed under the control of this new temple, thus bringing this deity under Tibetan Geluk curatorship for the first time in Tibet itself. Established just a few years after Changkya Hutuktu's *Supplication* had been distributed across the Qing Empire, it is likely that the newly-Tibetanised cult of the Long Cloud

⁷⁶ Shakabpa (2010: vol. 1, 473) states that in addition to the 1,000-strong Tibetan Lhasa garrison, a 2,000-strong Tibetan garrison was also established henceforth at Shigatsé, also under two *dapön*. The number of imperial troops to be stationed alongside them however is unclear. An imperial document dated 1789 (Sgrol dkar *et al.* (eds.) 1995: doc. 46) refers to the renovation of the barracks at the "Green banner camp" near Tashilhunpo, which suggests the imperial army barracks there may have dated to this time (1751), if not before.

⁷⁷ Called Grwa bzhi Brtan bzhugs chos 'khor gling.

⁷⁸ The Tibetan text of this inscription is transcribed and translated in Richardson 1974: 25–27. His photographs of the wooden board are included in the "Tibet Album" photo archive of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford; Tibet Album ref: 2001_59_2_94_1-O and 2001_59_2_95_1-O-2.

King as a Geluk protector was observed there, alongside the Chinese divinatory custom of drawing lots in front of the deity. Certainly, in the 19th century, the Lord Guan chapel at Trapchi, referred to in documents as the “Trapchi Gesar Lhakhang”, appears to have been its main popular draw.⁷⁹

The next significant aggrandisement of the Lord Guan *cultus* in Tibet was again spurred by developments in the military field. The background and course of the Gorkha wars of 1788–1792 has been well-covered by other scholars.⁸⁰ In 1791, during their second punitive invasion, the Gorkhas penetrated Tibet as far as Shigatsé, where Tashilhunpo monastery was looted and the Lord Guan temple there was ransacked. This led to the largest military action ever undertaken by the Qing in Tibet.⁸¹ In the spring of 1792, Qing forces advanced to the Nepalese frontier,⁸² routed the Gorkhas decisively and pursued them as far as the Kathmandu valley. With Qing supply lines thus heavily extended, the surrender of the Gorkhas was accepted by the Manchu general and confidant of the Qianlong Emperor, Fuk’anggan

⁷⁹ There are many references to the “Trapchi Gesar temple” (*gra bzhi ge sar lha khang*) in the Kündeling archive. See for instance doc. 012 1–1/#/8/1/4, also known as doc. 71(K) (last accessed at www.dtab.uni-bonn.de on 03/06/2018). This accounting notebook, which I believe dates to the 19th century, mentions it six times. Richardson notes: “at some stage an image of Kuan-ti or Ge-sar and one of Lha-mo appear to have been installed in a side chapel of the [Trapchi] *dgon-pa* [...]. Perhaps by this time [the early 19th century] the Kuan-ti chapel had become the best-known feature there, just as more recently [...] it was generally described as Grwa-bzhi Lha-mo”; Richardson 1974: 25.

⁸⁰ See Oitmann 2018, and the contribution of Ulrich Theobald to the present volume. See also Richardson 1974: 27–36, who lists a number of secondary treatments of the conflict based on Chinese and Nepali sources. See also Shakabpa 2010: vol. 1, 507–546. Shakabpa’s main source is the detailed account of events given in the autobiography of Doring Pandita Tenzin Peljor, the Tibetan cabinet minister who was one of the main Tibetan protagonists in the events themselves; Bstan ’dzin dpal ’byor 2006.

⁸¹ An imperial force of some 17,000 troops led by the Manchu general Fuk’anggan (Ch. Fukang’an; a nephew of the *amban* Fu Qing killed in Lhasa in 1750) and a Sichuanese minister called Hui Ling. Though mostly composed of Green Standard troops, this force also included a crack contingent of around one thousand “Solun” troops composed mostly of ethnically Evenk and Daower soldiers, and also some veterans of the bitter Jinchuan (Tib. Rgyal rong) campaigns. This “Solun” contingent was led by the experienced Evenk general Hailingcha, and entered Tibet from the north. Thanks to Professor Zhaluo, Beijing, for emphasising the significance of these facts (personal communication). The various contingents of imperial troops converged on central Tibet in the mid-winter of 1791/2; Chen 2005: 49.

⁸² By the time the imperial forces arrived, the Gorkhas were already weakened by an epidemic and harrassments from the Tibetan army, and had withdrawn to the southern Himalayan border districts; Shakabpa 2010: vol. 1, 531.

(Ch. Fukang'an 福康安, 1753–1796). This was considered a great victory, and in Chinese historiography the Gorkha wars are counted among what Qianlong himself described as the “Ten Great Military Victories” (Ch. *shi quan wu gong* 十全武功) of his reign.⁸³

The Qing's imposing military success in 1792 had far-reaching consequences for Tibetan political and military history, as summarised in the so-called *Twenty-Nine Articles* of the Water-Ox Year (1793) nine of which relate to military matters.⁸⁴ Henceforth the size, structure, billeting, salary and promotion arrangements of Tibet's army were laid out explicitly by imperial order. Three thousand troops in total (i.e. an increase of 500)⁸⁵ were to be stationed across four garrisons, namely Lhasa (1,000), Shigatsé (1,000), Gyantsé (500) and Dingri (500),⁸⁶ with each garrison overseen by a resident imperial officer,⁸⁷ and military affairs in general placed under the joint supervision of the Tibetan council of ministers (*bka' shag*) and the *ambans*.⁸⁸ The *ambans* were also to undertake bi-annual inspections of the troops during the Chinese spring and autumn festivals.⁸⁹ This involved (in Lhasa at least) a public procession of the Lord Guan idol from the garrison temple. These extensive reforms marked the beginning of the high point of the Manchu

⁸³ Waley-Cohen 2006: 21 and *passim*. Qianlong himself formulated the scheme of the “Ten Great Military Victories” as his main legacy.

⁸⁴ Sgrol dkar *et al.* (eds.) 1995: Document 50. For more analysis on the content and significance of the 1793 reforms on the Tibetan military, as well as references to prior scholarship on the subject see Travers 2015; Theobald in the present volume; and Travers in the present volume. 1793 was also the year when Qianlong sought to bring the reincarnation process of senior Geluk lineages under imperial supervision through the institution of the Golden Urn, as asserted in Qianlong's edict known as the *Lama shuo* or *Discourse on Lamas*, which was inscribed in four languages (Chinese, Tibetan, Mongolian and Manchu) on a stele installed at the Yonghegong complex in Beijing. The quadrilingual inscription can still be seen there today. For an early translation of the text of the *Lama shuo* see Lessing 1942: 58–61. The background and implementation of the Golden Urn policy is also the subject of an illuminating recent monograph: Oidtmann 2018.

⁸⁵ For a comparison between the state of the Tibetan army as per the imperial reforms of 1751 and 1793, see Travers 2015; and in the present volume.

⁸⁶ Sgrol dkar *et al.* (eds.) 1995: Document 50. Article 4.

⁸⁷ In addition to the hierarchy of Tibetan officers who had practical command of the troops, Article 4 also stipulates that the garrisons should be supervised by resident imperial officers. An officer of the rank *youji* was to supervise the garrison at Lhasa, and officers of the rank *tusi*, the garrisons at Shigatsé, Gyantsé and Dingri; *ibid.*: Article 4.

⁸⁸ Henceforth all significant military arrangements, including the provision of weapons and promotions, were placed under this joint command: “Two muster rolls for the army shall be maintained, one for the Office of the Resident Ministers [*ambans*] in Tibet, and one for the Kashag”; *ibid.*: Article 4.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*: Article 13.

protectorate in Tibet, during which Tibet was more closely incorporated than ever before into China's imperial administration.⁹⁰

Not surprisingly 1792–1793 also marks a further institutionalisation of the place of Lord Guan within Tibetan Geluk Buddhism. Immediately after the military success construction began on a new, large and prominently-placed temple for Lord Guan in Lhasa. Meanwhile the Shigatsé Guandi temple, which had been looted by the Gorkhas, was refurbished. At some unknown later date further temples or shrines were also established at each of the garrisons at Dingri,⁹¹ and Gyantsé,⁹² as well as at Chamdo⁹³ and elsewhere.⁹⁴

The new temple for Lord Guan at Lhasa was built not at the military suburb of Trapchi, but on Barmari (Ch. Mo pan shan), the hillock at the foot of the Potala palace (see Fig. 1) close to the site where Qing officers had previously supervised the execution of Tibetan conspirators in 1728. This was the most prominent temple for Lord Guan ever built at Lhasa, and its construction was clearly intended to be symbolic. Since the time of Songtsen Gampo there had apparently been a small Manjuśrī (Tib. 'Jam dpal dbyangs) shrine on this hill,⁹⁵ making it particularly suitable as the locus of a temple symbolising the authority

⁹⁰ This period is described by Petech as the “semi-colonial era corresponding to the 19th century”; Petech 1959: 387.

⁹¹ The “Gesar temple” (as it was known in the early 20th century) at Dingri is treated in some detail by Jamyang Phüntsook (Jiayang Pincuo), who infers that it was established at the end of the 18th century to serve the newly-established military garrison there; Pincuo 2016: 29–32. In the early 20th century, even after the end of the Qing dynasty and the expulsion of the remnants of Chinese military presence, this temple was known locally both as the “Chinese temple” (*rgya lha khang*) and as the “Gesar temple” (*ge sar lha khang*). Personal discussion with Thubten Samphel, Director of the Tibetan Policy Institute, Dharamsala, who spent his early childhood in Dingri in the 1940s, Nov. 2017.

⁹² Anecdotal evidence gathered by Jamyang Phüntsook (Jiayang Pincuo) indicates there was a “Gesar *lha khang*” at Gyantsé in the early 20th century. Personal communication, April 2018. No further details about this have so far been forthcoming.

⁹³ Anecdotal evidence based on local interviews; Jiayang Pincuo 2016: 38.

⁹⁴ In addition, there was a temple at Tsethang (Tib. Rtsed thang), which according to the field research of Jamyang Phüntsook was established by Chinese trading families without a military connection; *ibid.*: 37. However this may not be entirely correct, if it refers to the same place observed by the Fathers Huc and Gabet in 1842. They noted the existence of a Guandi temple at Gyamda (near Tsethang), where there was also “a small detachment of Chinese troops”; Richardson 1974: 54. This may not have been the same temple. In Amdo, where Gesar's distinct identity was well-known and thus less likely to be used as a casual place-filler for Guandi, it seems that Guandi garrison temples at both Rebkong and Trika (Tib. Khri ka, Ch. Guide) were instead indigenised as temples to a local deity known as Triké Yulha (Khri ka'i yul lha); see Buffetrille 2002.

⁹⁵ Jiayang Pincuo 2016: 19.

of the “Manjuśri” Qing emperor.⁹⁶ We know about its establishment in considerable detail, since its construction is described in a number of Tibetan and Chinese sources.⁹⁷



Fig. 1. The “three hills” at Lhasa. To the left is Chakpori (Tib. *Phyag po ri*). Barmari (Tib. *Bar ma ri*) or the “middle hill” with the Guan/Gesar temple on top, is seen on the right (below part of the Potala in the foreground). This photograph was taken in 1904 by Claude White from the roof of the Potala Palace. British Library T00059–56.

At the foot of the same hill, Kündeling (Tib. *Kun bde gling*) monastery was established at the same time to curate the new temple⁹⁸ and to serve as the Lhasa seat for the newly-appointed Regent, the Eighth Tatsak Tulku Yeshé Tenpé Gönpö (Tib. *Rta tshag sprul sku Ye shes bstan pa'i mgon po*, 1760–1810), known in Tibetan sources as Jedrung Hutuktu (Tib. *Rje drung Hu thog thu*) or Kündeling Gyeltsab (Tib.

⁹⁶ The association of the three hills (Dmar po ri, Bar ma ri and Lcags po ri) with the Three Bodhisattva Lords (*rigs gsum mgon po*: Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī and Vajrapāni) reflected the favoured religio-political symbolism of the period concerning unity and complementarity of Tibetans, Manchus and Mongols within the Qing imperium.

⁹⁷ Namely, the *namthar* (*rnam thar*, religious biography) of the Eighth Tatsak, the serving Regent of the time (*Rgyal tshab rta tshag rnam thar*: fol. 182a–184a); *amban* Helin’s 1794 bi-lingual Kündeling inscription (translated in Richardson 1974: 61–63); and the *Wei zang tong zhi*, based on additional Chinese sources, some of which are no longer extant.

⁹⁸ The bi-lingual Kündeling inscription of 1794 suggests, as Richardson puts it, that “the new *lha-khang* [on Barmari] appears to have been the origin of the wealthy monastery of Kun-bde-gling”; Richardson 1974: 61. That Kündeling was built as a support for the Barmari temple (rather than *vice versa*) is also what is implied in the Eighth Tatsak’s *namthar*, quoted later.

Kun bde gling rgyal tshab), a figure with close connections to the imperial court (see Fig. 2).⁹⁹



Fig. 2. Thangka of Eighth Tatsak Tulku or Jedrung Hutuktu, the Regent of Tibet into whose care the Barmari temple was entrusted in 1794. Part of the Kündeling series of paintings depicting the successive Tatsak incarnations. Rubin Museum C2011.2.1.

⁹⁹ The Eighth Tatsak or Jedrung Huthuktu was appointed regent in the midst of the Gorkha conflict, then swiftly demoted and recalled to Beijing in the wake of the bungled negotiations with the Gorkhas (1790), only to be sent back to Tibet the following year after the untimely death of his experienced (and just-reinstated) predecessor (Ngag dbang tshul khriims of Co ne 1721–1791). The Eighth Tatsak then served as regent until his death in 1810; Petech 1959: 385–387.

Two inscriptions memorialised the foundation. The first was a stone inscription in Chinese dating from 1793 which is no longer extant, but is discussed by Richardson based on its citation in the *Wei zang tong zhi*. According to that source, victory in the Gorkha war had been due to the support of Guandi, whose temple at Tashilhunpo had been pillaged by the invaders in 1791.¹⁰⁰ In addition, it stated that in the wake of the victory, two new Guandi temples were established. One to the south of Tashilhunpo in Shigatsé founded by *amban* Helin, and the other on Barmari, founded immediately after the war by General Fuk'anggan.¹⁰¹ The second is the bi-lingual Tibetan and Chinese Kündeling inscription of 1794 authored by *amban* Helin and translated by Richardson. Attesting to the centrality of the military endowment in this temple's foundation, the Tibetan text of this inscription stated:

After [the routing of the Gorkhas], the generals, in fulfilment of their pledge to god (*lha la khas len mdzad nas*), made a thanks-offering to the precious deity (*lha dkon mchog la btang rag phul*).¹⁰² They made an offering-contribution of 5,000 *srang* of silver, and a temple was established on Barmari. After consultation, it was decided that Jedrung Hutuktu would henceforth be in charge of it. After one year's work the temple was completed. The many images installed there were very splendid. For ten thousand years, so long as the temple remains the peaceful dwelling of the Jedrung Hutuktu, may it be a means for preserving peace at the frontier. On the auspicious day in the ninth month of the Wood Tiger year, in the 59th year of the reign of Qianlong (Lha skyongs), reverently composed by the interior minister (*nang blon*) Helin.¹⁰³

These accounts are largely consonant with the description in Tatsak Jedrung's biography, though the emphasis in the latter source is somewhat different. There, the temple is presented not simply as a monument to the Sino-Manchu military victory dedicated to Lord Guan, but

¹⁰⁰ According to *Wei zang tong zhi*: "the Gorkha listened to Zhamarpa and invaded Tsang and because Zhamarpa had many soldiers and the official soldiers there [in Tsang] were very few, the official soldiers fled. When the emperor heard about this he felt very angry. He dispatched Fuk'anggan and Hailancha and a Sichuan minister named Huiling, and they led the Solun soldiers. At last they succeeded, not only because of the soldiers but also because of Guandi's blessing"; *Wei zang tong zhi*, 1982: roll 6, 279–280, as cited by Pincuo 2016: 21–22.

¹⁰¹ Richardson 1974: 53–54.

¹⁰² The god in question here seems to be Guandi. The implication is that the generals, having made pledges to Guandi on the eve of battle, were bound to give him thanks-offerings in the wake of the victory.

¹⁰³ After the translation of Richardson 1974: 63. Richardson provides a transcription of the Tibetan text (*ibid.*: 62), but does not make any attempt to decipher the Chinese titles at the end which accompany the name Ho-lin [Helin].

rather as a “Chinese-Tibetan temple” (*rgya bod lha khang*) established under the authority of both imperial and Tibetan government officials.

The description as a “Chinese-Tibetan” temple is perhaps a tacit indication of the Gesar superscription, but this is not made explicit in the source. Also, rather than Lord Guan being presented as the central devotional focus of the temple, it is instead described as a temple to the Rigsum Gönpö (*rigs gsum mgon po*)—the “Three Bodhisattva Lords” namely Avalokiteśvara, Manjuśri and Vajrapani, a primary symbolism of which in this period was the unity and complementarity of Tibetans, Chinese and Mongols respectively within the Qing imperium. Meanwhile Lord Guan is described in only a secondary position as the temple’s protector. And rather than crediting the financial endowment for the construction of the temple to the imperial army’s officers (as in the inscription cited above), here the emphasis is on the donations made by senior Tibetan religio-political hierarchs—the Dalai and Panchen Lamas and the Regent. It also gives some detail on the combination of Tibetan and Chinese officials who supervised the construction:

Then on a date discerned as auspicious, a formal royal feast was held to celebrate the military victory, attended most prominently by the Lord Protectors Father and Son [Dalai and Panchen Lamas] and the [Tatsak] Jedrung and the Senior Imperial Minister (*mi dbang krung thang chen po*, i.e. Fuk’anggan) and his officers, and other senior and junior Chinese officials (*rgya dpon*) sent by the Emperor, as well as Tibetan nobles (*bod kyi mi drag*). All the lamas and patrons made copious offerings to the Imperial Minister (*krung thang*) and so on to ensure his full satisfaction. And likewise the Chinese and Mongol soldiers (*rgya sog gi dmag mi*) were given a feast, and all were fully satisfied.

The great Senior Minister-General (Tib. *krung thang cang jun gung*)¹⁰⁴ Fuk’anggan sent by the Emperor, and the consummate courageous Senior General Hailingcha (*gung cang jun chen po he ling mtsho*), and furthermore the Interior Minister Sun (*nang blon sun krung thang*) and Hus tsong thu and so on, all the senior and junior Chinese officers, and all the Manchu (*man ju*), Solun (*so long*) and Mongol commanders, together with their soldiers—all those who had brought those above-mentioned plunderers [i.e. the Gorkhas] to heel—were praised extensively and given gifts.

Furthermore, led by the great *dharmaraja* Emperor together with the Father and Son Lamas [Dalai and Panchen] and the Lord Protector [Tatsak Jedrung], in order to benefit the faithful, promote the Buddhist teachings, bring benefit to beings, and spiritual wealth to the living, 7,000 *srang* of silver were donated to establish a new Chinese-Tibetan temple (*rgya bod lha khang*) together with a monastery (*dgon sde*) on the Bongwari, also known as Barmari, holy mountain of Manjuśri, which

¹⁰⁴ Tib. *cang jun*= Ch. *jiang jun* 将军 “general”.

was to be offered to the oversight of the [Tatsak] Jedrung Hutuktu [...] and in this way a new temple, along with a monastery, was established at this place [...].

[So to summarise:] In the 57th year of the reign of the great *dharmaraja* Divine Protector Emperor, when the All-seeing Victorious Lobzang Wangchuk Jamphel Gyatso [Eighth Dalai Lama] had been seated on the golden throne for 33 years, and in the second year since the Lord *dharmaraja* Yeshé Lobzang Tenpé Gönpö [Eighth Tatsak/Jedrung Hutuktu] had again taken up responsibility for the “two systems” [*lugs gnyis*, religion and politics] on behalf of the Victorious Lord [the Dalai Lama], in this year of the water-male-rat [1792] on the auspicious date of *rahu* [...] work was commenced. And those who actually undertook the construction work were: the Chinese Imperial Representative (*rgya'i sku tshab*) and Military Paymaster (*phogs dpon*) Li San Taye; the Secretary (*mgron gnyer*) of the Dalai Lama *depa* Ngakrampa Kelzang Namgyel; the Cabinet Secretary (*shod drung*) *depa* Nang Rakpa; the foreman (*las bya ba phyag nang*) Tshephel and so on, together with many skilled and trustworthy stonemasons and carpenters and large numbers of corvée labourers (*'ul mi*). Thus the work began.

And as for this construction, as stated in a verse by the Lord Regent himself:

At the very centre of Purgyel
Stand three earthly sites
Manifested by the Three Bodhisattva Lords.
At the holy place of Manjuśri,
[Let there be] A great temple,
Large enough for monks to gather,
Along with a temple to the Three Lords,
With the warrior-deity (*dgra lha*) of China, Kwan Yunchang
(*tsi na'i dgra lha kwan yun chang*)
As its protector.¹⁰⁵

The description here of Lord Guan as the “warrior deity of China” (*tsi na'i dgra lha*) reflects his designation in Tibetan ritual texts from the mid-18th century, as illustrated at greater length below. The Tatsak Regent himself would already have been well-familiar with the imperial cult of Lord Guan, since he had spent much of his youth as a protégé of the Qing court.¹⁰⁶ He would also have been aware of the Geluk

¹⁰⁵ *Rgyal tshab rta tshag rnam thar*: fol. 182b–183b. Jamyang Phüntsock cites the same passage from its published Chinese translation, Pincuo 2016: 20–21. Dungkar, in his encyclopaedia entry on the temple, gives the same basic information, clearly based on the same source.

¹⁰⁶ The Eighth Tatsak spent a decade (1771–1781)—from the ages of 11 to 21—as a student of Changkya Rölpé Dorjé in Beijing. When the Sixth Panchen Lobzang Palden Yeshé visited China in 1780, the young Tatsak was presented to him as a pro-

adoption of Lord Guan as a protector, since it was his own incarnation-predecessor, the Seventh Tatsak Lobzang Palden Gyeltsen (Rta tshag Blo bzang dpal ldan rgyal mtshan, 1708–1758) who had requested Chankya Rölpe Dorjé to write his famous *Supplication* several decades earlier (see below). It is notable however that in the biography of the Eighth Tatsak just quoted, no mention is made of the Tibetan name Long Cloud King (Sprin ring rgyal po), used for Lord Guan in Tibetan-language rituals.

It is also notable that in all of the sources cited above there is no mention of Gesar. As we shall see, this is also true of all the Tibetan-language ritual sources relating to Lord Guan. This might be taken as an indication that the superscription as Gesar only gained popular traction in Tibet somewhat later, during the 19th century.¹⁰⁷ However circumstantial evidence indicates that the custom of calling Lord Guan “Gesar” in Tibet was already commonplace by the time the Barmari temple was established. Prof. Jamyang Phüntsook (Jiayang Pincuo), for example, argues persuasively that the mention in just this period of a “Gesar shrine” (*ge sar lha khang*) on the third floor of the house of Doring Pandita Tenzin Peljor (Rdo ring Btsan ’dzin dpal ’byor, b. 1760),¹⁰⁸ likely “had the same meaning” as a shrine to Lord Guan. This is indicated by the fact that a few pages after the domestic shrine is mentioned in Doring Pandita’s autobiography, he also mentions a *thangka* of a “Han-style Gesar” (*rgya lugs ge sar*), which seems to refer to a Tibetanised painting of Lord Guan, possibly akin to those presented in Figs. 3 and 5 below.¹⁰⁹

No further textual sources on the establishment of Lord Guan temples at the other garrisons of Gyantsé and Dingri have so far come to the attention of the present author.

Thus concludes our survey of the “institutional” history of Lord

tégé of the court. According to Jamyang Phüntsook, when the Eighth Tatsak departed the imperial capital in 1781 he preformed a *bsang* fumigation offering to Guan Yu; Pincuo 2016: 49.

¹⁰⁷ In light of the uncertainty about when the Gesar-Guandi association became commonplace in Lhasa, it is worth noting that in 1811 Thomas Manning, the first and only Englishman to visit Lhasa in the 19th century, referred to “a large temple dedicated to the Chinese god of war at the Chinese military station near Lhasa”, with no mention of Gesar. Richardson surmises that Manning was here referring to Trapchi, rather than the Barmari temple; Richardson 1974: 25. And when Tsenpo Nomihan described the Barmari temple in his *Geography of the World* (*Dzam gling rgyas bshad*, c. 1830), he described it in terms fully consonant with the Tatsak Jedrung Hutuktu’s *namthar* cited earlier, namely as a temple on the holy hill (*bla ri*) of Manjuśri devoted to “the war-god of China, Guan Yunchang”, with no mention of Gesar; ‘Jam dpal chos kyi bstan ’dzin ’phrin las (Tsenpo Nomihan 1789–1839) 2013: 180.

¹⁰⁸ In Doring Pandita’s autobiography: Bstan ’dzin dpal ’byor 2006: *smad cha*: 1005.

¹⁰⁹ Jiayang Pincuo 2016: 23–24.

Guan shrines in central Tibet over the course of the 18th century, illustrating, not surprisingly, the very close connection between the establishment of these temples and the consolidation of the Qing military protectorate in Tibet. This survey could be usefully supplemented by a similar survey of Qing garrison temples in Amdo, but this has been beyond the remit of this paper.

It now remains to outline, based on the Tibetan-language ritual texts, the contemporaneous adoption of Lord Guan as a protector of "religion and state" (*chos dang srid*) within Geluk Buddhism. Like the establishment of the military protectorate in Tibet, this process of acculturation developed gradually during the latter half of the 18th century, and then became fully elaborated in the period after 1792. As we shall see, it was led throughout by Geluk lamas with close ties to the Qing imperial court. However, as this survey shows, the cult of this deity does not appear to have put down strong roots in Tibetan culture, but was more widely embraced and practiced in Mongolian Geluk tradition.

4. Ritual History: Lord Guan's Adoption as a Protector Deity in Geluk Tibetan Buddhism

Tibetan-language textual sources on Lord Guan (Tib. Kwan lo ye/Bkwan lo ye/Sprin ring rgyal po) from the 18th and 19th centuries fall into two categories, namely 1) background "histories" (*lo rgyus*) of the deity, and 2) ritual texts of offering and propitiation (*gsol mchod*, *bsang*, *gser skyems*, etc). The earliest "history" of the deity is found in the Gönpojap's *History of Buddhism in China* (*Rgya nag chos 'byung*) cited above; and the earliest ritual text is the famous *Supplication to Lord Guan* (*Kwan lo ye gsol mchod*) by Changkya Rölpe Dorjé (1717–1784). Both of these texts were written at the imperial court in Beijing. And as the following discussion illustrates, the seeds of many, if not all, the key features one finds in the later elaboration of this cult, can already be discerned in these two early sources.

For ease of reference, the full list of Tibetan-language texts devoted to Kwan lo ye/Sprin ring rgyal po used in this section are first presented in a putative chronological order. This list offers a snapshot of when and by whom the Tibetanised cult of Lord Guan was textually elaborated over time, though there are likely more texts not covered here. The individuals included in this list were all senior Geluk figures closely connected to the Qing imperium. That most of them were ethnic Mongols illustrates the importance of Mongol Geluk tradition to the development of this particular *cultus*. The relative length of the texts listed also illustrates how the ritual repertoire for this deity gradually expanded from its foundations in the relatively brief texts of the

mid-18th century, to the voluminous corpus of the *Long Cloud King Chökor* (*Sprin ring rgyal po'i chos skor*) in the late 19th century.

[history] Gönpojap (Mgon po skyabs, c. 1690–1750)

- *Rgya nag chos 'byung* (2 pages)¹¹⁰

[ritual] Third Chankya, Rölpe Dorjé (Lcang skya 03 Rol pa'i rdo rje, 1717–1786):

- *Kwan lo ye gsol mchod* (3 folios)¹¹¹

[ritual] Third/Sixth Panchen Lobzang Palden Yeshé (Panchen 03/06 Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes, 1738–1780):

- *Kwan lo ye gsol mchod* (2 folios)¹¹²

[ritual] Second Jamyang Zhepa, Köchok Jigmé Wangpo ('Jam dbyangs bzhad pa 02 Dkon mchog 'jigs med dbang po, 1728–1791):

- *Maha tsi na'i yul gyi dgra lha chen po sprin ring rgyal po'am kwan lo yer grags pa'i gsol mchod mdor bsdus* (5 folios)¹¹³

[history and ritual] Third Tukwan, Lobzang Chökyi Nyima (Thu'u bkwan 03 Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma, 1737–1802):

- *Khams gsum bdud 'dul rgyal chen bkwan yun chang gi lo rgyus dang gsol mchod bya tshul 'phrin las char rgyun bskul ba'i 'brug sgra* (14 folios)¹¹⁴

[history and ritual] Chahar Geshé Lobzang Tsultrim (Cha har dge bshes Blo bzang tshul khirms, 1740–1820):

- *Bstan bsrung rgyal po chen po bkwan lo ye'i gsol mchod 'dod don kun stsol* (19 folios)¹¹⁵
- *Dbang phyogs tsi na'i yul gyi dgra lha'i gtso bo rgyal chen bkwan*

¹¹⁰ Mgon po skyabs 1983: 125–126.

¹¹¹ Lcang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje 1995: vol. 5, fol. 469–471.

¹¹² Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes 1978: vol. 4, fol. 338–339.

¹¹³ Dkon mchog 'jigs med dbang po 1971: vol. 10, fol. 672–676.

¹¹⁴ Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma, 1971: vol. 5 (*ca*), fol. 781–794.

¹¹⁵ Cha har dge bshes Blo bzang tshul khirms 1973: vol. 6 (*ca*), fol. 217–235. The author would like to express his thanks to Tashi Tsering Josayma of the Amnye Machen Institute, Dharamsala, for bringing this source to my attention and making these texts available. The *gsung 'bum* is also available on TBRC/BDRC as a scan of block-prints held at Sku 'bum monastery, but these scans are largely unreadable (W23726: vol. 6/*ca*: fol. 217–235).

lo ye la gser skyems 'bul tshul 'dod rgu 'gugs pa'i lcags kyu (4 folios)¹¹⁶

- *Bkwan lo ye gsang* (1 folio)¹¹⁷

[ritual] Anon. Tibetan translation of the *Guandi Ling Qian*

- *Mthu stobs dbang phyug sprin rig* (sic.) *rgyal po'i rno mthong srid gsum gsal ba'i me long* (142 folios) (= *Guan di ling qian* trad. 關帝靈籤)¹¹⁸

[ritual] Anon./Various (the “*Yonghegong Corpus*”)

- *Bstan srung rgyal po chen po bkwan lo ye'i gsol mchod 'dod don kun stsol* (47 folios)¹¹⁹

[ritual] Khalkha Damtsik Dorjepal (Khal kha Dam tshig rdo rje'i dpal, 1781–1855)

- *Sprin ring rgyal po'i gsol mchod* (4 folios)¹²⁰

[ritual] Fourth/Seventh Panchen Lobzang Palden Tenpé Nyima Choklé Namgyel (Pan chen 04/07 Blo bzang dpal ldan bstan pa'i nyi ma phyogs las rnam rgyal, 1782–1853)

- *Chos skyong sprin ring rgyal po'i gtor cho ga bskang gso cha lag tsang pa paN chen thams cad mkhyen pas mdzad pa* (41 folios)¹²¹

[history and ritual] Ilgugsan Hutuktu Lobzang Samdrup (Il kog san Hu thog thu Blo bzang bsam grub, 1820–1882)

- *Dus gsum rgyal ba'i bstan bsrung srid gsum skye 'gro srog bdag khams gsum bdud 'dul sprin ring rgyal po'i bsnyen sgrub las gsum*

¹¹⁶ Cha har dge bshes Blo bzang tshul khriims 1973: vol. 6 (ca): 637–640.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*: 641.

¹¹⁸ This is a Tibetan translation (from Chinese) of the “*Guandi Sacred Lots*” divination text *Guan di ling qian* (trad. 關帝靈籤 simp. 关帝灵签), for use at the Guandi temple on Barmari at Lhasa, and perhaps elsewhere in Tibet. The full text is reproduced as an appendix in Pincuo 2016: 198–234, and analysed at length; *ibid.*: 83–145.

¹¹⁹ Xerox copy courtesy of Prof. Jamyang Phüntso (Jiayang Pincuo) of Southwest Minorities University, Chengdu, who himself obtained the text from monks at Yonghegong, Beijing.

¹²⁰ Dam tshig rdo rje 200?: vol. 10, fol. 284–287.

¹²¹ Included in the first volume of *Long Cloud King Chökor* (*Sprin ring rgyal po'i chos skor*) kept at the Mongolian National Library, Ulaan Baatar (NL 10745–017). The colophon states that this text was “written upon the request of Ilgugsan Hutuktu Lobzang Samdrup by the ‘yogi of Yamāntaka’, Shakya *gelong* Lobzang Palden Tenpé Nyima Choklé Namgyel Pelzangpo”. This text (discussed further below) does not however appear to be included in the Seventh Panchen’s *Collected Works* (W6205).

gyi rnam bzhag dam nyams srog 'phrog ha la nag po dug gi spu gri
 “The Poison Sword of Hala Nakpo: presentations of the approach, accomplishment and [ritual] activities with the Victorious Dharma Protector of the Three Times, Life-Lord of Beings of the Three Worlds, Khamsum Dündül Trinring Gyelpo, Slayer of Vow-Violators” (A compendium of 107 texts filling two volumes).¹²²

4.1. The Foundation Phase ca. 1735–1786

The earliest Tibetan-language ritual text for Lord Guan is the *Supplication to Lord Guan* (*Kwan lo ye gsol mchod*) by the Third Changkya Hutuktu Rölpé Dorjé, who was the single most important figure in the history of the Qing’s adoption of Geluk Tibetan Buddhism as a religion of state, especially during the reign of his close friend, patron and disciple, the Qianlong Emperor.¹²³

According to Tukwan Lobzang Chökyi Nyima’s biography of Chankya Rolpé Dorjé,¹²⁴ the latter’s devotion Lord Guan dated back to 1735 (before Tukwan was born), when while travelling through Sichuan *en route* to Tibet, he had an impressive dream of Lord Guan. As Tukwan narrates the story:

At the great mountain of Sichuan called Zhang-ling, a very large man, red in colour, appeared to the master [Changkya] in his dream and told him “the peak of this mountain is my abode, you are welcome there”. Then in one step he arrived [in the dream] at the peak of the mountain, and the lord [Changkya] also went with him. There he beheld a very grand dwelling, captivating to behold, with all kinds of marvels. And the red man was sitting in the middle, as many fine foods and various other lavish offerings were made. His son and wife¹²⁵ were also there, he said, and many supplicants were seeking audience. “This place and the entire land of China from here on down, is mine” he said. “From

¹²² Referred to henceforth by the short title *Long Cloud King Chökor* and listed as such in the bibliography. These two volumes of xylograph prints were consulted by the author at the National Library of Mongolia, Ulaan Baatur.

¹²³ After the suppression of the Lobzang Tenzin rebellion against Qing rule in Amdo in 1723, the six-year-old Changkya Hutuktu was taken from his home monastery of Gönlung (Dgon lung) which had taken part in the revolt, and was henceforth educated at the imperial court, where he shared classes with the Manchu royal princes. In this way Changkya and Qianlong became lifelong companions and friends. For more on their relationship, see Illich 2006b.

¹²⁴ Thu’u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma 1989.

¹²⁵ The iconographic inclusion of a wife or queen-figure is a noticeable innovation of the Tibeto-Mongol adaptation of Lord Guan as Long Cloud King. In Chinese traditions concerning Lord Guan, as shown by ter Haar, there is a notable absence of a wife figure; ter Haar 2017: 145–148.

Tibet also there are many who give me food and drink. In particular the aged great Lama of Tsang regularly gives me food and drink. From today I will be your protector. Although tomorrow you will have some trouble on the road, I will help you and it will be fine", he said.

The next day on the way, as they were passing through a forest, monkeys threw stones and one of the attendants named Tsultrim Dargyé was struck on the head. But apart from needing a small wound dressed, nothing else untoward happened.

As for that [red man]: in Chinese he is called Guan Yunchang, which when you translate it into Tibetan is *sprin ring rgyal po* ["Long Cloud King"]. Since he is of the same mind-continuum (*thugs rgyud*) as Bektsé, the one who gives him food and drink from Tsang is the Panchen Rinpoche who relies upon Bektsé-Jamsring. This is what he [Changkya] said.¹²⁶

Changkya's famous prayer to Lord Guan was not however authored until several years after this encounter. The more particular context for Changkya's authorship of the *Supplication*, as noted above, related to Yonghegong. When the Qianlong Emperor requested the Seventh Dalai Lama to send a highly-qualified Tibetan to serve as the abbot (*mkhan po*) of Yonghegong, the Seventh Dalai Lama chose his disciple the Seventh Tastak Tulku Lobzang Palden Tenpé Gyeltsen (Rta tshag 07 Blo bzang dpal ldan bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, 1708–1758). The Seventh Tatsak received the request to go to Beijing in 1747 (Fire-Rabbit year),¹²⁷ but delayed his departure from Tibet for some time while accumulating further teachings from the Dalai and Panchen Lamas. He appears to have arrived in Beijing in around 1749.¹²⁸ Soon afterwards, in around 1750—near contemporaneous with the dramatic events in Lhasa (the "murder at the *yamen*")—the "Demon-Subduing Temple" (Ch. *fumomiao* 伏魔廟) adjoining Yonghegong was expanded into a larger Guandi temple or *guandimiao* (關帝廟).¹²⁹ These events likely provide the immediate context for the Seventh Tatsak's request to Changkya to compose a prayer for Lord Guan, the product of which

¹²⁶ Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma 1989: 206.

¹²⁷ Smith 2001: 139.

¹²⁸ I have not been able to ascertain the precise date of Tatsak's arrival in Beijing; see Bstan pa bstan 'dzin 2003: vol. 1, 493; see also Smith 2001: 140–141.

¹²⁹ According to Greenwood, the *Guandimiao* at Yonghegong was built in 1750 as a separate building outside the northwest wall of the temple complex, accessible from main site through what was known as the Yamāntaka Tower. It was built as an expansion of the pre-existing "demon-quelling temple" (*fu mo miao* 伏魔廟). A record from 1763 records it as having seven buildings, with the Hall of Guandi (*guan di dian* 關帝殿), in the centre. It was destroyed in 1950s for road construction; Greenwood 2013: 115–117.

was Changkya's seminal *Supplication*.¹³⁰

Despite its brevity (comprising only three folios), Changkya's *Supplication* was highly influential because of the powerful state patronage it received. According to Heissig (and echoed by other scholars) it was translated into Mongolian and Manchu and widely distributed across the Geluk institutions of Qing Inner Asia.¹³¹ Since it is short, we can afford to include much of its text here. It starts with a general instruction to gather all the offering-items required to perform a *sang* (Tib. *bsang*, purifying smoke-offering), then:

Establishing oneself in the divine pride of one's tutelary deity—whether Guhyasamāja, Cakrasamvara, or Yamāntaka (*gsang bde 'jigs gsum*)—intone the *mantras* and perform the *mudras* [hand-gestures] of the Sky Treasury (*nam mkha' mdzod*) [namely] the Six Mantras and Six Mudras, and intone the Three Syllables [i.e. *om ah hum*], and in this way bless [these offerings into ambrosia] and [offer them with the prayer:] “O Great Warrior-Deity (*dgra lha*) of the Mighty Land of China, from the *sé* (Tib. *bse*) class [of armoured protectors], known as the Long Cloud King (*Sprin ring rgyal po*), who voluntarily undertook to protect the Buddhist teachings, O Great God along with entourage—come here and abide in stability.

Accept this feast of meat and blood and things to eat and drink blessed into an inexhaustible ocean of ambrosia.

Aid *yogis* in the attainments of the holy *dharma*, so that all conditions, favourable and unfavourable, may be overcome, so that the teachings may prosper, and the land may be at peace!

May we *yogis*, ritual masters, sponsors and benefactors alike, have peace and happiness in the three conditions—at home, abroad and on the road. Aid and support us all, in accordance with the *dharma*.¹³²

¹³⁰ The colophon to the *Supplication* runs as follows: “these verses of entreaty, entrusted to the protector of the teachings known as Kwanloye, warrior-deity (*dgra lha*) of the great land of China, were written by Chankya Rölpe Dorjé immediately upon receiving the solemn command given by the holy Lord Protector [Seventh] Tatsak Jedrung Tulku Rinpoché, so that there may be virtue and merit. *Mangalam*”. *tsi na'i yul gru chen po'i dgra lha kwan lo yer grags pa'i bstan bsrung la 'phrin bcol gyi tshogs bcad 'di yang / skyabs mgon dam pa rta tshag rje drung sprul pa'i sku rin po che'i bka' gnanng thod du bcings ste / lchang skya rol pa'i rdo rjes 'phral du bris pa dge legs su gyur cig / mangalam*; Lchang skya rol pa'i rdo rje 1995: vol. 5, fol. 471.

¹³¹ The present author has not personally seen an extant print of the prayer in three languages, but it is widely referred to in the scholarship; Heissig (trans. Samuel) 1980: 99; Rawski 1998: 259; Crossley 1999: 245.

¹³² *de la 'dir lha bsangs mdor bsdus gtong bar 'dod pas / sman sna / rin po che / 'bru sna / dar zab sogs dug rigs dang ma 'dres pa'i bsangs rdzas gtsang ma legs par 'du byas la / rang nyid gsang bde 'jigs gsum sogs lhag pa'i lha gang yang rung ba'i nga'i rgyal gyis / nam mkha' mdzod kyi sngags rgya dang / sngags drug phyag drug dang 'bru gsum brjod pas byin gyis brlab la / dbang phyogs tsi na'i yul gyi dgra lha che / thub bstan bsrung bar rang gis zhal bzhes pa / bse yi rigs las sprin ring rgyal po grags / lha chen 'khor bcas 'dir gshegs brtan par bzhugs / sha khrag bza' bca' btung ba rgya mtsho'i tshogs / zag med bdud rtsir*

Although this prayer is very short, it includes within it all the requisites for Lord Guan's incorporation into Tibetan Buddhism as a protector. In it we see:

- the first textual attestation of the Tibetan name Trinring Gyelpo or "Long Cloud King" (Sprin ring rgyal po), a Tibetan rendering of Guan Yunchang (trad. 關雲長 simp. 关云长)¹³³
- Lord Guan classified as a warrior deity (Tib. *dgra lha*; Mo. *dayisun tengri*) in the Tibetan Buddhist context.¹³⁴
- Lord Guan included in the spirit-entourage of those wrathful tantric tutelary deities (*yi dam*) associated in a Tibetan Buddhist context with repelling (*bzlog pa*) negative forces in general,¹³⁵ and practices of war-magic in particular.¹³⁶
- the Long Cloud King identified as being "from the *sé* class"

byin rlabs 'di bzhes la / rnal 'byor dam chos sgrub pa'i grogs mdzod cing / 'gal rken kun zhi mthun rkyen ma lus sgrubs / thub bstan rgyas zhing rgyal khams bde ba dang / rnal 'byor dpon slob rgyu sbyor yon bdag bcas / gzhi lam byes gsum kun tu bde zhing skyid / bsam don chos bzhin 'grub pa'i stong grogs mdzod /; Lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje 1995: vol. 5, fol. 469–471.

¹³³ See note 1 above.

¹³⁴ *Dgra lha* has no definitive English translation. Its semiotic range in Tibetan is reflected by a fluidity of spellings—*dgra lha*, *dgra bla*, *sgra bla*, *sgra lha*. Translated literally, *dgra lha* would be "enemy-god". The equivalent in Mongolian is *dayasun tengri* (also lit: "enemy-god"). In the more archaic Tibetan traditions (chiefly associated with Bon and Nyingma) and for example in the Gesar epic and associated propitiations, these battle-spirits are often associated with wild animals and are "called in" to different items of weaponry and armour to give support to the combatant in times of conflict. It seems that from the 17th century, and from the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama in particular (to whom a famous *dgra bla/lha stod pa* or "praise for the warrior-deities" is attributed), one sees a discernible development in their interpretation. From this time on, the main Buddhist presentation of the mythic place of these spirits relates them to the weaponry of the gods (*lha/deva*) in the ongoing primordial cosmic conflict between the gods (*lha*) and titans (*lha ma yin*), usually framed in an Indic context (i.e. as *deva* and *asura*). As such, the *dgra lha* becomes an open-ended Tibetan category which can include any protector deity perceived as being on the godly "side of light" (*dkar phyogs*) in its eternal conflict with the demonic forces of the "dark side" (*nag phyogs*). Many prominent warrior-deities in Tibetan culture, including for example Pehar, are praised as "king of *dgra lha*" (*dgra lha'i rgyal po*). Lord Guan, like Gesar, likewise comes to be depicted as a "chief of the *dgra lha*". For an excellent treatment of this category of deity-spirits, and a translation of the influential praise-text attributed to the Fifth Dalai Lama or the *Northern Treasures* master Rig 'dzin rgod ldem can, see Berounsky 2009.

¹³⁵ It is perhaps worth noting here that in 1746 Changkya had personally initiated Emperor Qianlong into the tantric practices of Cakramsamvara (Tib. Bde mchog 'khor lo).

¹³⁶ On Tibetan Buddhist war-magic see *inter alia*, FitzHerbert 2018. The Fifth Dalai Lama brought the wide-ranging Tibetan traditions of Buddhist war-magic more firmly within tantric Buddhist frameworks. He was particularly inclined towards rites with Yamāntaka/Gshin rje gshed.

(*bse yi rigs las*) of armoured protectors.¹³⁷

In addition to Changkya's *Supplication*, two other texts from the late 18th century by very senior figures in the Geluk establishment are worth noting as laying the foundations for the later development of Geluk cult of Lord Guan.



Fig. 3. An early (probably 18th century) thangka of Lord Guan as a Geluk protector. HAR 88567.

¹³⁷ *bse khrab can*, “with *bse* armour” is an epithet one encounters for a number of local protectors in Tibetan Buddhism. *Bse khrab* likely means “rhinoceros-leather armour”, while *bse* or *se* is also the name of one of the Tibetan proto-tribes and an early class of spirits. On these latter designations see Stein’s work on the “proto-tribes”; Stein 1961.

The first is the identically-titled *Supplication to Lord Guan* (*Kwan lo ye gsol mchod*) by the Third/Sixth Panchen Lama Lobzang Palden Yeshé (1738–1780) authored in the last year of his life in 1780. As will be shown below, it was largely under the influence of Tukwan Lobzang Chökyi Nyima that the successive incarnations of the Panchen Lamas would after the Sixth Panchen's death be upheld up as the senior-most authoritative legitimators of the innovative cult of Lord Guan in Geluk Buddhism, and the Panchen Lamas would continue to occupy this status throughout the 19th-century. This was important because in the Mongolian-Qing imperial Geluk buddhism of the period, Tibetan origins conferred religious legitimacy in a similar manner to the way Indian origins conferred legitimacy within Tibetan Buddhism. As such, the post-1792 Geluk tradition was emphatic in according the Sixth Panchen (as the seniormost Tibetan lama during the minority of the Eighth Dalai Lama) a seminal role in the development of the cult of the Long Cloud King, and this is also regularly echoed in the secondary scholarship.¹³⁸

However, the research undertaken for this article indicates no conclusive textual evidence that the Panchen Lobzang Palden Yeshé took anything more than a passing interest in this deity. The only text devoted to this deity in his *Collected Works* is the short *Supplication* below. Another two texts from the collection of Lord Guan texts referred to below as the *Yonghegong Corpus* (texts 1 and 2 of that collection, the first of which does not directly refer to the Long Cloud King by name), may also be attributable to him. However since there remains uncertainty on this point, those texts are treated separately below as part of

¹³⁸ R.A. Stein (1959: 39) noted a text attributed to the Third/Sixth Panchen called the *Bstan srung rgyal po chen po bkwan lo ye'i gsol mchod 'dod don kun sgrol* (?) (the question mark is Stein's). A text with exactly this name (except the *sgrol* being written *stsol*) was obtained from the monks at Yonghegong by Jamyang Phüntsook (Jiyang Pincuo) who gave the present author a copy. However this text, discussed later and referred to here as the *Yonghegong Corpus*, is not by the Third/Sixth Panchen, but in fact consists of six texts, the third of which is the Sixth Panchen's short *Kwanloye Supplication*. The collection itself dates to some time after 1853, since the fifth text is dated to that year (as discussed further below). Based on Stein's observation however, it seems clear that this was the text that he found attributed to the Third/Sixth Panchen as the authoritative or legitimating "face" of Kwanloye liturgies in Geluk Buddhism. Secondary scholars have echoed this: Fan Zhang for example states that the Third/Sixth Panchen "dedicated various prayers to *rgya yul gyi gzhis bdag*, the Chinese deity Guandi"; Zhang 2016: 584. However, the section of his *Gsung 'bum* cited in support of this assertion in fact seems to be a collection of generic supplications to "various deities of the desire realm" (*'dod lha sna tshogs gsol 'debs kyi skor rnams*), in which there does not appear to be any mention of Kwanloye or Long Cloud King. To date, the only text the present author which can be reliably attributed to the Third/Sixth Panchen, is this cursory *Supplication* (*gsol mchod*).

the later-compiled *Yonghegong Corpus*. With regard to the supposed devotion of the Sixth Panchen to Lord Guan, it is worth noting here that in his exchange of letters with Sumpa Khenpo Yeshé Paljor (Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor, 1704–1788)—an exchange which took place in 1779—on the subject of Gesar, no mention at all is made of Lord Guan by either of these learned masters, indicating a clear awareness on their parts of the completely distinct folkloric and legendary identity of Gesar from the Chinese martial deity Lord Guan.¹³⁹

The Sixth Panchen's *Supplication*, composed upon request during his fateful visit to the imperial capital in 1780 (he contracted smallpox soon after his arrival and died there), covers only four lines of a single folio. It gives little elaboration on the deity, apart from a significant association with Manjuśri (as a protector of the Manchu emperors), which is echoed in later texts, and refers to the deity explicitly as being non-Tibetan, as the "local deity / territorial divinity of China" (*rgya yul gyi gzhis bdag*). Since the Panchen's *Supplication* is short and was embraced as a seminal prayer in later liturgies of the Long Cloud King, we can include its text in full:

Om swa sti // Gathering together all the loving wisdom of the buddhas residing in the purelands of the ten directions, may the great truth of Lord Manjuśri, proclaimed in one voice by all the buddhas, make this place beautiful. May these vessels, filled with various essences [foods] and limitless oceans of drink, be blessed [into ambrosia] by the truth of the buddhas, and become naturally inexhaustible!

O sky-god (*gnam lha*) residing in your be-jewelled dwelling, with Chinese silks wafting, and heaps of wondrous phenomena, dressed in armour and wielding the sharp spear of a mighty lord (*btsan po*), we beseech you to approach quickly and abide. May these offerings of fine foods and good things to drink please you, so come, eat and drink! May your banner be spread over this land, and may all my renunciations be spontaneously achieved!

[Colophon] This ritual offering to the local deity of China (*rgya yul gyi gzhis bdag*) Kwanloye, was composed by the esteemed *tāntrika* of Yamāntaka, the noble *gelong* Lobzang Palden Yeshé upon the request that he should do so by Zhabdrung Rabjampa Ngawang Gyatso [unidentified].¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ For a full translation of this exchange, see FitzHerbert 2015.

¹⁴⁰ *Om Swa Sti* // *phyogs bcu'i zhing na bzhugs pa'i rgyal ba dang // rgyal ba kun gyi mkhyen brtse gcig bsdus pa // rgyal ba'i lab gcig rje btsun 'jam dbyangs kyi // bden pa chen pos [339] sa 'di mdzes gyur cig / sna tshogs bcud kyis gtams pa'i snod rnams dang btung ba'i rgya mtsho dpag tu med pa rnams // sangs rgyas rnams kyi bden pas byin brlabs te // zad pa med pa'i rang bzhin du gyur cig / rin chen khang pa'i nang du gnam gyi lha // rgya yi dar gos lhab lhub chos kyis spung // btsan po'i go gyon rno ba'i mdung thogs pa // rings pa'i tshul gyis 'dir byon spro bar bzhugs // bza' dang bca' ba btung ba'i tshogs 'di dag / 'bul gyis dgyes shing zo zhid btung bar mdzod // yul phyogs 'di nyid dar zhing rgyas pa*

The other important text from pre-Gorkha War period is by the Second Jamyang Zhepa, Könchok Jigmé Wangpo ('Jam dbyangs bzhad pa Dkon mchog 'jigs med dbang po, 1728–1791). This short text, *A Brief Supplication for the Great War-God of China known as Long Cloud King or Kwanloye*¹⁴¹ was composed at an as yet unknown date upon the request of two (as yet unidentified) figures.¹⁴² This text is particularly notable because it is the first Tibetan-language text (known to this author) which in addition to his form seated upon a throne, depicts the hero-deity in mounted form, carrying a sword and noose. The language in which he is depicted here has a discernably more “folky” quality than the more polished or courtly ritual texts by Changkya (above) and Tukwan (below), and in it one can see more clearly how Lord Guan was associated in the popular imagination of Tibetans and Mongolians with Gesar/Geser, the oral epic concerning whom is replete with similar depictions of mounted warriors. The red-complexioned deity is here invited riding a “raging red [chestnut] horse with flash on its forehead”, brandishing a sword and noose in his hands and clothed in armour and a military helmet.¹⁴³ He is praised as “king of *dgra lha*, powerful in magic” and is depicted attacking enemies “like a lion pouncing on its prey”.¹⁴⁴ However, here again, no explicit mention is made of Gesar/Geser, and the deity is depicted “leading a vast Chinese army”, a clear reference to this deity’s Chinese origins.

Also notable in the Jamyang Zhepa text, is its entreaty section which explicitly dedicates the *Supplication* to political ends. The deity is propitiated for “the dominion of the sky-appointed [Qing] Emperor” and “all those engaged in the union of religion and politics (*chos srid zung 'brel*)”.¹⁴⁵

dang // bdag gi 'dor ba ma lus lhun gyis sgrub // zhes pa 'di ni rgya yul gyi gzhis bdag kwan lo ye'i gsol mchod 'di lta bu zhiig dgos zhes zhabs drung rab 'byams pa ngag dbang rgya mtshos bskul ba ltar [ç] gshin rje'i gshed kyi rnal 'byor pa [ç] shakya'i dge slong blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes kyis sbyar ba'o //; Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes 1978: vol. 4, fol. 338–339.

¹⁴¹ *Maha tsi na'i yul gyi dgra lha chen po sprin ring rgyal po'am kwan lo yer grags pa'i gsol mchod mdor bsdus*, in Dkon mchog 'jigs med dbang po, 1971: vol. 10, fol. 672–676.

¹⁴² Namely Rabjampa Tashi Khyenrab and Shi-yang Emchi Lobzang Mönlam: *maha tsi na'i yul gyi dgra lha chen po sprin ring rgyal po'am kwan lo yer grags pa'i gsol mchod mdor bsdus ni rab 'byams pa bkra shis mkhyen rab dang shi yang emchi blo bzang smon lam gnyis kyis bskul dor //*; *ibid.*: fol. 676.

¹⁴³ *res 'ga' pa tsan rta dmar po khros pa'i steng // sku mdog dmar gsal khros shing brjid ba'i tshul // g.yas pa ral gri g.yon pa zhags pa bsname // khrab rmog dar dang rin chen rgyan gyis mdzes //*; *ibid.*: fol. 673.

¹⁴⁴ *mthu ldan dgra lha'i rgyal po khyod la bstod // tsi na'i dmag dpung 'bum gyi sna drangs te // dgra sde'i g.yul ngo seng ges ri dwags bzhin //*; *ibid.*: fol. 674.

¹⁴⁵ *gnam bskos gong ma'i chab srid mnga' thang rnams // rdzogs ldan dus ltar 'bar ba'i 'phrin las mdzod // khyad par khyod la gus ldan bdag cag gi / 'gal rkyen kun rin legs tshogs ma*

By way of conclusion to this section on the “foundational phase” for Geluk Cult of Lord Guan in the 18th century, it is worth observing that in all of these “foundational” ritual texts—by the Third Changkya Rolpé Dorjé, the Sixth Panchen Lobzang Yeshé Peljor, and the Second Jamyang Zhepa Könchok Jigmé Wangpo—no association is made between Lord Guan and the wrathful protector Bektsé-Jamsring, nor is the deity identified with Dzongtsen Shenpa, or with Gesar. Indeed all of these associations are notable by their absence. As we shall see below, these were associations that were cultivated in particular by Changkya’s disciple and the main guardian of his legacy, namely Tukwan Lobzang Chökyi Nyima, who was to succeed his master as the main representative of Geluk Buddhism at the Qing imperial court in the final decade of the 18th century.

4.2. *The Development Phase: ca. 1786–1802*

The most important figure in the further development of a cult of Lord Guan in Tibeto-Mongol Geluk Buddhism in the late 18th century was undoubtedly the Third Tukwan, Lobzang Chökyi Nyima (Thu’u bkwan 03 Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma, 1737–1802). It is hard to say when Tukwan wrote his Lord Guan texts, but it seems likely it was after the death of his root guru Changkya Rolpé Dorjé in 1786. Given the expansion of the *cultus* of Lord Guan in Tibet after 1792 (as detailed in the previous section, it seems likely it was also in this period that Tukwan’s attention was turned to this topic.

As Changkya Rolpé Dorjé’s disciple and biographer, it was Tukwan who bolstered his former master’s spiritual connection with this deity; who further elaborated the ritual cult by authoring an authoritative “history” (*lo rgyus*) of the deity and an expanded ritual repertoire for his propitiation; who expanded the deity’s name to include the epithet Khamsum Dündül (Khamsum gsum bdud ’dul, “Subduer of Demons of the Three Realms”) being the translation of the Chinese *San jie fu mo* (三界伏魔); who cemented the associations with Jamsring-Bektsé and Dzongtsen Shenpa; and who further stamped this burgeoning imperial cult with the authority of the Panchen Lama incarnation line. It was also Tukwan who cemented the dismissive attitude towards the folklore of Ling Gesar which was to be a hallmark of the Geluk cult of the Long Cloud King as an alternative “Geluk Gesar”. In later 19th century developments of the cult of the Long Cloud King (especially in Mongolia in the hands of the Ilgugsan *hutuktu* as discussed below), it was the writings of Tukwan above all that were to be the seminal

*lus spel // chos srid zung ’brel gang brtsam bgyi ba kun // dpag bsam shing ltar ’grub pa’i
’phrin las mdzod //; ibid.: fol. 675.*

sources.

Tukwan's *Dragon's Roar (Thunder) which Summons a Long Rain of Enlightened Action*¹⁴⁶ is a 14-folio text which includes both a history of the deity and instructions on how to make various kinds of offering to him. Tukwan's *History* follows closely, but is more elaborated, than that of Gönpojap:

At some time in the past, in the great land of Maha-Tsina [China] a Han-gur king called Shya-na Bh'i [Emperor Xian, 181–234 CE] had a brave and courageous minister of noble lineage called Yu'u, who on account of his great power (*mthu stobs*) eliminated enemies of different lands in military campaigns, and innumerable kings and their principalities came under his dominion. On account of his awesome skill in battle, even the most arrogant of opponents were brought onto his side. He was like a *khyung* [large bird] among little birds, there was not a man in all directions, who did not bow upon merely hearing his name. And whether protecting the vulnerable or vanquishing the haughty, it is said he was always honest and could never be flustered by anything, peaceful or wrathful. Like Chögyel Nyannamé [Emperor Aśoka], he was a *cakravartin* protecting the realm in accordance with the *dharma*. Then suddenly, as in the saying that if one dies in a state of despondency one will take rebirth as a sea monster (*nya mid chen po*), at the end of his life, during a war with others, dying in a state of anger, he was transformed into a very powerful spirit of the *lu* (*klu*) species, and haunted the vicinity of the great mountain in the Sichuan region called Yu'i chan-zhan or nowadays known as Zhang-ling. And because [this spirit] was very rough and violent, it was difficult for others to even traverse that mountain.

Then, after about 400 years, the Great Master called T'i-ce t'a-shi [=Zhizhe Dashi 智者大师 a.k.a. Zhuyi] who was a monk holding the paternal [lit. "father-son"] lineage of the philosophical view of lord Nāgārjuna (Tib. *klu sgrub*), came to that place to practice. Not dissuaded by the warnings of the local people, he meditated there. So he [the spirit] manifested as a massive snake which coiled itself three times about the mountain, and calling forth a myriad army of gods (*lha*) and serpentine spirits (*klu*), made the mountain start to crumble, and the sun and moon clash like a pair of cymbals; and a rain of weapons

¹⁴⁶ *Dragon's Roar*, full title: *History of the Great King Guan Yunchang, Subduer of Demons of the Three Realms, and How to Make Offerings to Him, called the Dragon's Roar / Thunder which Summons a Long Rain of Enlightened Action*; Kham's *gsun bdud 'dul rgyal chen bkwan yun chang gi lo rgyus dang gsol mchod bya tshul 'phrin las char rgyun bskul ba'i 'brug sgra* in Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma 1971: vol. 5 (*ca*), fol. 781–794. The second part of the text, the *gser skyems*, is also found in a *dpe cha* obtained in Lhasa by Jamyang Phüntsook, and included as an appendix to his monograph (Jiyang Pincuo 2016: 187–188). However, the last three pages are missing there. He correctly identified the author of this text as Thu'u bkwan; Jiyang Pincuo 2016: 48, 55 fn 1.

to fall, and a lightning blizzard to rage.

But despite all this, despite displaying various repulsive forms and so on, he was unable to disturb the master's *samādhi*. And so he appeared to him in his real form, as a great general together with a spirit army, and prostrating before the master, praised him highly and asked for forgiveness. "Formerly I was a great general, and because I died in anger, I was transformed into a snake. But because I was honest in deeds, I have gained these great magical powers and powers of transformation" he said, and suchlike. Then the master gave him many teachings on the law of cause and effect, after which he announced, "now I will be a protector of the Buddhist teachings. Wherever there are images of the Buddha, if you place my image in the doorway or whatever kind of gate-houses there are on left and right, I will protect that holy place and its monastic community". Thus he made his oath, and ever since he has been a protector of the Buddhist teachings.

Such is [the history of] this Great King, who is of the same mind-continuum (*thugs rgyud*) as Bektsé- Jamsring.¹⁴⁷

Tukwan then elaborates on this association with Bektsé-Jamsring (see Fig. 4), explaining:

In the old texts from former times, it is said that the origin of Bektsé was as a *damsi* [Tib. *dam sri* a form of harmful spirit] of the land of China. And the colour of Bektsé's body is red and he wields a sword with a scorpion-shaped handle, as according to the ancient records.¹⁴⁸

He then reprises the story from his biography of Changkya to show that, as revealed to Changkya in his dream, the propitiation of Bektsé-Jamsring was also a way of propitiating Lord Guan, since the two deities are one and the same. Tukwan clarifies this point, saying that the reference in Changkya's dream to "the one who gives me food and drink in Tsang", refers to the "successive incarnations of the All-knowing Panchen, since they rely on Bektsé".¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ *Dragon's Roar*: Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma, 1971: vol. 5 (*ca*), fol. 782–784.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*: 784. Nebesky-Wojkowitz relates a legend connecting the cult of Bektsé to the Third Dalai Lama, Sönam Gyatso, which he says suggests that "*Beg tse* was originally a pre-Buddhist deity of the Mongols, who began to be venerated by the Tibetans after *bSod nams rgya mtsho* had turned the defeated enemy of Buddhism into a protector of the Buddhist creed"; Nebesky-Wojkowitz [1956] 1998: 88.

¹⁴⁹ *gtsang phyogs kyi bza' btung ster mkhan pan chen thams cad mkhyen pa sku na rim gyis beg tse bsten par mdzad 'dug pas de la zer ba yin 'dug /; ibid.*: 785.



Fig. 4. A 19th century Mongolian Geluk thangka of the enlightened protector Bektsé/Jamsring, surrounded by "29 butchers" (shan pa). Rubin Museum of Art, C2006.66.368/ HAR 805.

Tukwan then explains the identification of Lord Guan with Dzongtsen Shenpa. With an exemplary clarity of exposition, he notes that "others also recognise this great king as one-and-the-same as the one known as Zhanglön Dorjé Dündül (Tib. Zhang blon rdo rje bdud 'dul)"¹⁵⁰ and explains this identification thus:

When Songtsen Gampo [Tibetan emperor of the early 7th century CE] married the Chinese Princess Wenchan Kongjo, the custom in Tibet of referring to China as Zhang (zhang "uncle") began, and since he [Lord

¹⁵⁰ *gzhan yang rgyal chen 'di nyid zhang blon rdo rje bdud 'dul dang ngo bo gcig par yang grags te /; ibid.: 785.*

Guan] had been a king's great minister, he became known as Zhanglön (*zhang blon* "uncle-minister"). And since kings in former times gave this god the honourific Chinese title *Zan kye-e pho-o mo-o t'a di* [i.e. = *San jie fu mo da di* 三界伏魔大帝 meaning "subduer of the three realms"], he became known as Khamsum Dündül (*Khams gsum bdud 'dul* or "subduer of the three realms"). In this way the title Dündül (*bdud 'dul*) was added to Zhanglön. And when the Chinese princess went to Tibet, she brought this protector with her, and at his various abodes (*gnas*) such as Lhasa Drib, Yarlung Shelkidrakphuk, Cheki Lhalung Tsenkhar, Kongyul Buchu Lhakhang, Puri Phukmoche, Tsechन्द्रak and so on, he is now known as Dzongtsen Shenpa, the "Mighty Butcher" (Rdzong btsan shan pa). Many great masters have been heard to speak of this.¹⁵¹

Tukwan then quotes from the Fifth Dalai Lama's *Offering to Dzongtsen*¹⁵² to affirm the point, and asserts that this deity has long been recognised in Tibet as a "warrior deity" (*dgra lha*).

In this way Tukwan asserts the identity of Dzongtsen Shenpa, a deity already worshipped as a protector-deity at various places in central Tibet and most prominently at Drib (Grib) just south of Lhasa,¹⁵³ with Lord Guan. It is surely no coincidence that in 1790 the worship of this deity at Drib was expanded and institutionalised under the authority of the Eighth Dalai Lama (1758–1804).¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ *de'i rgyu mtshan ni / chos rgyal srong btsan sgam pos rgyal bza' wan chang kung jo khab tu bzhes bas / rgya la bod phyi rabs pa rnams kyis zhang por 'bod pa byung zhing / de'i rgyal po zhig gi blon chen zhig yin tshul gong du smos zin ltar yin pas / zhang blon zer ba dang 'grigs shing / lha 'di nyid la sngon gyi rgyal po chen po rnams kyis gzengs bstod kyi mtshan phul brgya skad du Zan kye-e pho-o mo-o t'a di khams gsum bdud 'dul rgyal po chen po zhes zer ba yin pas zhang blon gyi mtshan zur bdud 'dul zhes pa dang 'grigs pa 'dug / yang rgya bza' bod du byon dus srung ma 'di nyid rjes su 'brang nas bod du byon nas lha sa'i grib kyi rdzong ri / yar klung shel gyi brag phug 'phes [sic. 'phyos] kyi lha lung btsan mkhar / kong yul bu chu lha khang / spu ri phug mo che / rtse chen brag sogs la gnas bcas pa da lta rdzongs btsan bshan par grags pa de yin pa 'dug ces skyes bu dams pa mang po zhig gis gsungs pa thos shing /; *ibid.* 785–786.*

¹⁵² See note 23 above.

¹⁵³ According to Sørensen and Hazod, Dzongtsen of Drib (Grib rdzong btsan) was the local deity (*yul lha*) of the Gar (Mgar) clan who settled in this area south of Lhasa at some time before the 12th century; Sørensen and Hazod 2007: 425 fn 32.

¹⁵⁴ According to Sørensen and Hazod, in 1790 the Eighth Dalai Lama institutionalised Drib Dzongtsen as a protective deity housed in his own temple there; *ibid.*: 573. They also note "[...] Grib represents only one of several places associated with the story of the deity's arrival in central Tibet. The other seats include Yar-lung Shel gyi brag-phug (i.e. the Shel-brag-ri), 'Phyes kyi lHa-lung btsan-mkhar (perhaps referring to Phyos in lower 'Phyong-po), Kong-po Bu-chu lha-khang, sPug-ri Phug-mo-che-lung (in eastern Ya-lung) and rTse-chen-brag (i.e. rTse-chen in Myang-stod?) [...] In Bu-ch[ung] [...] rDzong-btsan is one of the temple *srung ma*, and entrusted with guard of the temple treasure [...]. In this western part of central Kong-po (i.e. the right side of the lower Nyang-chu, where Bu-chu is located), two

Tukwan's rituals for the Long Cloud King also elaborated on the foundations laid in Changkya's *Supplication*. His rituals are also the first in which the deity is accompanied by a "queen, son and minister"—an innovation not found in Chinese ritual traditions for Lord Guan, whose Chinese *cultus* as noted earlier, is notably devoid of female or wife-figures. The presence of the "queen, son and minister" would become the standard iconography of the Tibetanised form of Lord Guan as Khamsum Dündül Trinring Gyelpo, the "Long-Cloud King, Subduer of Three Realms" (see fig. 5 below). The *Dragon's Roar* has further sections on:

- how to offer *torma* (*mchod gtor 'bul tshul*), fol. 787–789.
- how to make smoke-offering (*bsang mchod*), fol. 789.
- how to praise and entreat him to enlightened action (*bstod cing 'phrin las bcol ba*), fol. 789–92.

And in a separate ritual text:

- how to make offering of "golden libation" (*gser skyems gtong ba*), fol. 792–794.

In this ritual section of *Dragon's Roar*, the deity is visualised thus:

In front of you, on a precious golden throne stacked with silk brocade cushions in various designs, is seated the protector of the entire land of mighty China, Khamsum Dündül Trinring Gyelpo. He has a red body, impressive build, and a wrathful smile, with flowing whiskers and a long beard. He bears a haughty expression and his two hands rest on his thighs. His body is clothed in the finest golden armour surmounted by a cape of various kinds of silks, tied at the waist by a golden belt studded with jewels. He wears a silk hat called a flying crown (*'phur lding cod pan*), and sits with his two feet in playful posture. Thus he abides, attended by his queen, son and minister, as an intimidating great general along with his army, as a variety of emanations dance around him, filling earth and sky.¹⁵⁵

further places associated with rDzong-btsan are to be found: according to the locals, he resides on a mountain in Upper rDzong-btsan, a small valley to the north of Bu-chu (in the lower part of this valley a modern cemetery is located, where rich Chinese people from Ba-yi (the capital of the sNying-khri Prefecture) used to be buried, a possible reference to rDzong-btsan in his manifestation of Guan Yu). Further to the east, in Jo-mo *rdzong* (opposite Ba-yi), the Jo-mo *yul lha* called A-pho gDong-btsan is identified by the locals as Grib rDzong-btsan"; *ibid.*: 574 fn 7.

¹⁵⁵ *rang gi mdun du rin chen gser gyi khri // sna tshogs dar zab 'bol gdan brtsegs ba'i steng // dbang phyogs tsi na'i yul gru kun skyong ba // khams gsum bdud 'dul sprin ring rgyal po ni // sku mdog dmar po khro 'dzum brjid bag can // 'bar ba'i sma ra smin ma ring pos brjid // 'gyings pa'i nyams kyis phyag gnyis brla la brten // rin chen gser khrab 'bar ba sku la gsol // sna tshogs dar zab 'jol ber brtsegs pa la // nor bus spras pa'i gser gyi ske rags bcings // 'phur lding cod pan gyis mdzes dar thod gsol // zhabs gnyis rol ba'i stabs kyis dgyes bzhin bzhuvs // btsun mo sras dang bka' yi blon po dang // 'jigs rung dnag dpon chen po dpung dang bcas // rdzu 'phrul gar gyi rol pa sna tshogs kyis // gnam sa bar snang*

As will be illustrated in the pages that follow, Tukwan's development of the cult of Lord Guan in the *Dragon's Roar* served as the bedrock upon which this *cultus* would grow during the 19th century. The exact date of this important text remains elusive. In the biography of Tukwan by Gungthang Könchok Tenpé Drönmé (Gung thang 03 Dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me, 1762–1823) it says that:

In the Fire Pig year [1767], while on pilgrimage at Wutai Shan, the master [Tukwan] had a sudden vision of a "red[-complexioned] man riding a red [i.e. chestnut] horse carrying red military banner" who appeared in front of him and then disappeared like a flash of lightning. Believing this to be a visitation of Trining Gyelpo (Long Cloud King), he immediately composed an offering ritual (*gsol mchod kyi cho ga*) to him.¹⁵⁶

This however does not seem to refer to the rituals contained in the *Dragon's Roar*, since as we have seen, the deity is not depicted there in mounted form, but it does suggest that Tukwan had himself penned a ritual for this deity in this earlier period, though the ritual itself remains unidentified. The *Dragon's Roar* text itself contains two colophons indicating that it was composed by stages, with the golden libation (*gser skyems*) section written separately upon the request of a high-ranking Khalkha Mongol lama-administrator called Chöjé Yeshé Drakpa Zangpo, whose elaborate title includes Mongolian, Manchu, Chinese and Tibetan elements, but about whom further information has to date remained elusive.¹⁵⁷

'gengs bzhin bzhugs par gyur //; Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma, 1971: vol. 5 (ca), fol. 787.

¹⁵⁶ Dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me 2003: vol. 6, 180.

¹⁵⁷ The first colophon, for the main history and ritual text, runs as follows: "These days, with most people abandoning worship of the Wisdom Protectors of the teachings, and preferring to take refuge in harmful spirits rather than in the [Three] Precious Jewels headed by the Lama—in such a time, the propagation of a text like this could face great criticism. Nevertheless, because of the urging of a few interested persons, and for a few other reasons also, the one called *Jingziu Chanzhi* by decree of the celestially-appointed great Manjuśri Emperor, [namely] Tukwan Hutuktu, praised as a spiritual master of purity, learning, and meditative stability, the itinerant monk called Lobzang Chöki Nyima, composed this at the solitary retreat of Dechen Rabgye Ling. May it be virtuous and good!": *deng dus phal mo che zhid gis bstan srung ye shes pa rnams bsten pa dor nas / mi ma yin gdug pa can re la bla ma dkon mchog las lhag pa'i skyabs gnas su 'dzin dus 'dir 'di 'dra'i yi ge spel ba dgag bya che na'ang / don gnyer ba 'ga' zhid gis bskul ba dang / gzhan yang rgyu mtshan 'ga' zhid la brten nas / [c]gnam bskos 'jam dbyangs gong ma chen po'i bka'i lung gis jing zi'u chan zhi thu'u bkwan hu thog thu zhes rnam dag brlab ldan bsam gtan gyi slob dpon du bsnags pa sa mthar 'khyams pa'i btsun gzugs [c] blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma'i ming can gyis dben pa'i dga' tshal bde chen rab rgyas gling du sbyar ba dge legs su gyur cig /; Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma 1971: vol. 5 (ca), fol. 792. The second "golden libation" (*gser**

A further significant contribution to the tradition, possibly penned during the late 18th century, was also made by Chahar Geshé Lobzang Tsultrim (Cha har dge bshes Blo bzang tshul khirms, 1740–1820), who authored three texts.¹⁵⁸ The cult of Lord Guan put down popular roots in parts of the Mongolian world to much greater extent than it ever did in the ethnically Tibetan regions, and this was particularly true of the southern Chahar region, a Sino-Mongol borderland which had been brought under Manchu rule early in the 17th century. There, a cult of Lord Guan was already a well-established part of popular culture by the late 18th century. Indeed there is even evidence that a cult of Lord Guan existed in this region as early as the 16th century.¹⁵⁹ A survey of village temples in southern Chahar conducted by W. Grootaers in 1948 found no less than forty Lord Guan temples in just one district. At these, the deity was depicted in various forms, including seated on a throne, and on horseback.¹⁶⁰

Chahar Geshé's Lord Guan texts include a history (*lo rgyus*) of the deity which draws heavily on Tukwan's *Dragon's Roar*.¹⁶¹ In his ritual texts, he alludes to a diversity of forms in which the deity may be worshipped. For example, in the 19-folio *Supplication to the Dharma-Protector Great King Kwanloye which Grants All Wishes*,¹⁶² the main image of the deity is presented as a seated form with hands resting on his thighs (following almost *verbatim* Tukwan's presentation quoted above), but he also adds:

skyems) colophon indicates it was written upon the request of a high-ranking Khalkha Mongol lama-administrator: "this was composed by the ragged monk Dharma Badzra [i.e. Tukwan] upon the request of the mighty Khalkha Junang Peizi'i T'a Lama Khyenpé Chenden Kachu Uljisthu Darhan Chöje Yeshé Drakpa Zangpo. And the scribe was Ngawang Phüntsook: *zhes pa 'di yang stobs dang ldan pa hal ha ju nang pe'i zi'i t'a bla ma mkhyen pa'i spyan ldan dka' bcu ul jis thu dar han chos rje ye shes grags pa bzang pos bskul ba la brten nas ku sa li [c] dharma badzra kyis sbyar ba'i yi ge pa ni ngag dbang phun tshogs so //; ibid.:* fol. 794. This colophon is also discussed in Jia-yang Pincuo 2016: 55, working from a version of Tukwan's text he obtained from Kündeling monastery in Lhasa, but no identification of this figure is made there either.

¹⁵⁸ Cha har dge bshes Blo bzang tshul khirms 1973: vol. 6 (*ca*), fol. 217–235, 637–641.

¹⁵⁹ Grootaers 1951: 63. For an interesting image of an amulet (probably Mongolian) depicting Kwanloye at the centre of a variety of other miniatures depicting the 'go *ba'i lha lnga* protective deities, see Czaja 2008: 410.

¹⁶⁰ Grootaers 1951: 63.

¹⁶¹ *Bstan srung rgyal po chen po bkwan lo ye'i gsol mchod 'dod don kun stsol*; Cha har dge bshes Blo bzang tshul khirms 1973: vol. 6 (*ca*), fol. 217–235. As stated in the colophon, his "history" is heavily indebted to the treatment by Tukwan, but "with a little further elaboration".

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

This is the appearance according to the custom of China as a great king seated on a throne. But other forms are also possible, such as riding a red [chestnut] horse; bearing the long chopper; wearing a helmet and golden armour; and in military form bearing a long spear.¹⁶³



Fig. 5. A Tibetanised Lord Guan/Long Cloud King thangka showing at top, from left to right, the Third/Sixth Panchen Lama Lobzang Palden Yeshe, the Third Changkya Rölpe Dorjé, and the Eighth Dalai Lama. China. Qianlong Period, ca. 18th century. Mineral pigments and gold on cotton. 57 x 40.6 cm. Pritzker Collection, Chicago. HAR 88591.

¹⁶³ 'di ni rgya yul gyi bkod pa bying gi lugs ltar rgyal chen khri la bzhugs pa'i rnam ba can yin la / rnam ba gcig tu rta dmar zhon cing / ral gri yu ring bsnam pa / dbu la rmog zhu dang sku la gser khrab gsol ba / dmag la chas pa'i rnam pa can byas kyang chog la / midung ring bsnam par byas ba'ang 'dug /; *ibid.*: 225.

It is notable that this “long chopper” (*ral gri yu ring*) seems to be the only mention in the Tibetan-language texts, of Lord Guan’s distinctive weapon in Chinese iconography, namely the long-handled “green dragon crescent moon knife” (Ch. *qing long yan yue dao* 青龍偃月刀). In *thangkas* of “Tibetanised” Lord Guan, the deity is never (in this author’s experience) depicted with such a weapon. It is also notable that in Chahar Geshé’s second text, in deference to the association made by the Sixth Panchen, Trinring Gyelpo is referred to as “attendant of Manjuśri” (*‘jam dpal bka’ sdod sprin ring rgyal po*).¹⁶⁴

Again, like Tukwan, the Chahar Geshé texts make no mention at all of Geser/Gesar, and the main associations of the deity are, as in Tukwan’s texts, with Bektsé and Dzongtsen Shenpa.¹⁶⁵

4.3. *The Mature Phase: ca. 1802–1880*

In the post-Tukwan period, the Geluk cult of Trinring Gyelpo is marked not so much by innovation, as by elaboration and expansion. The main institutional *locus* for the ritual cult remained Yonghegong in the imperial capital¹⁶⁶ along with Qing administrative and military centres across the Mongolian and Tibetan regions.

Most significant for the practical conduct of this cult—and certainly for its public expression in Tibet itself—was the translation into Tibetan of the Chinese divination text the *Guandi Sacred Lots* (*Guan di ling qian* trad. 關帝靈籤; simp. 关帝灵签). The 142-folio Tibetan version of this text (which carries no colophon) is entitled *The Mighty Long Cloud King’s Clear Mirror for Divining the Three Planes of Existence*.¹⁶⁷ It was used for publicly-available divination (Tib. *mo*) through the drawing of “sacred lots” (Ch. *ling qian* or *chou qian* = Tib. *khro chen*) at the Barmari “Gesar” temple.¹⁶⁸ As Jamyang Phüntsoḳ’s research on this subject makes clear, this was not the only Chinese lots divination text

¹⁶⁴ *Dbang phyogs tsi na’i yul gyi dgra lha’i gtso bo rgyal chen bkwan lo ye la gser skyems ‘bul tshul ‘dod rgu ‘gugs pa’i lcags kyu*; Cha har dge bshes Blo bzang tshul khriḡs 1973: vol. 6 (*ca*), fol. 638.

¹⁶⁵ Chahar Geshé’s “history” (*lo rgyus*) of the deity closely follows Tukwan’s *Dragon’s Roar*; *ibid.*: fol. 218–222.

¹⁶⁶ Yonghegong was f course not the only Geluk establishment in Beijing. As stated by Rawski, “the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong emperors renovated or built a total of thirty-two Tibetan Buddhist temples within Peking”; Rawski 1998: 252. However Yonghegong was certainly the largest and most prestigious, and with its Guandimiao, was certainly the most significant for the Geluk cult of Lord Guan.

¹⁶⁷ *Mthu stobs dbang phyug sprin rig* (sic.) *rgyal po’i rno mthong srid gsum gsal ba’i me long*.

¹⁶⁸ This text was obtained by Prof. Jamyang Phüntsoḳ (Jiayang Pincuo) from the Kündeling archives in Lhasa. Analysis of this text, and its adaptation of Chinese frames of reference into a Tibetan Buddhist cultural context, constitutes a large part of his 2016 monograph. The full (Tibetan) text is also reproduced as an appendix there;

translated into Tibetan, but it was certainly the longest. It seems likely that this text (or some variation of it) was also used at the garrison temples at Trapchi, Shigatsé, and Dingri.

During the mature phase of the Geluk cult of Trinring Gyelpo which spans the 19th century, Tibetan-language texts authored for this deity, with the important exception of the text attributed to the Fourth/Seventh Panchen (discussed further below), seem to have enjoyed greater popular traction in Mongolian Geluk tradition, than they ever did in Tibet itself. Given the volume of the textual material available from this period, all that can be offered here are some cursory observations.

An important collection of ritual texts performed as propitiation for the deity at Yonghegong is a compendium entitled *Supplication to the Dharma-Protector Great King Kwanloye who Grants All Wishes* (*Bstan srung rgyal po chen po bkwan lo ye'i gsol mchod 'dod don kun stsol*) referred to here as the *Yonghegong Corpus*, which is still in use there today.¹⁶⁹ This *Corpus* is in fact a compilation of six separate texts, only one of which carries a colophon (text 5) which dates it to the year 1853 (see below). The third text is also identifiable as the Sixth Panchen's short *Supplication* (treated above). It seems there was a custom at Yonghegong of attributing this entire liturgy (or at least the first four texts of it) to the Sixth Panchen, as reflected in R.A. Stein's citation of a text with the same name he identified in Beijing.¹⁷⁰

The first text (fol. 1–5) in this *Corpus* is a tantric *sadhana* for Vajrabhairava/Yamāntaka (Rdo rje 'jigs byed) in which the ritualist is instructed to establish himself in the divine pride of this ferocious enlightened deity through a series of visualisations.

The second (fol. 5–12) is an invitation, along with offerings of purifying smoke (*bsang*) and sculpted effigies (*gtor ma*) to Trinring Gyelpo,

Jiayang Pincuo 2016: 198–234. For the comparison of the Tibetan and Chinese versions see *ibid.*: 83–145.

¹⁶⁹ The 47-folio text referred to here as the *Yonghegong Corpus* was obtained by Prof. Jamyang Phüntsook (Jiayang Pincuo) from monks at Yonghegong in Beijing, who told him that the text was still in use today. Jamyang Phüntsook kindly gave the present author a xerox copy of this text (which does not appear to be published elsewhere) in Chengdu in March 2018. The title of the text in this version (*Bstan srung rgyal po chen po bkwan lo ye'i gsol mchod 'dod don kun stsol*) is identical to one of Chahar Geshé's texts cited above. It is also identical to the title of a 16-folio text noted by R.A. Stein in Beijing which he attributed to the Sixth Panchen Lobzang Palden Yeshe; Stein 1959: 39. It is possible that the text Stein reported was in fact texts 1–4 of the *Yonghegong Corpus*, which together would be the same length (16 folios), and includes the Sixth Panchen's short *Supplication* (text 3), thus explaining the attribution.

¹⁷⁰ See note 138 above.

also bearing the title Khamsum Dündül. The text then includes offering rituals which strongly resemble (sometimes *verbatim*) those of Tukwan's *Dragon's Roar*. For example, the visualisation of the deity is identical with that found in *Dragon's Roar* translated above.¹⁷¹

The third text (fol. 12.2–13.2) is the Sixth Panchen's short *Supplication to Kwanloye* (*Kwan lo ye'i gsol mchod*) also translated above.

The fourth text, which again is without colophon, is dedicated to the "Great War-god (*dgra lha*) of Mighty China" (*dbang phyogs tsi na'i yul gyi dgra lha che*). It is especially notable for the way in which the deity is beseeched as an explicitly Geluk protector of church and state, and specifically as the protector of Yonghegong. Here the deity is called upon to:

Protect day and night without distraction the teachings of Lobzang Drakpa [Tsongkhapa] and all the communities of monks who are the bearers of his teachings, and especially the Yung monastery Ganden Jinchak Ling [i.e. Yonghegong], and the political dominion of the Great Qing.

Destroy the power, strategies and charisma of those barbarians who hold false views and are contemptuous of the honour of the Three Jewels! Expel them, irrespective of the year and month! And may the work of religion and state be successful, in accordance with the commands of the Manjuśri Emperor, so that all hindrances and difficulties are dealt with through pacifying enlightened action in the *dharmadhātu*. Thus with strong faith and devotion are we reliant upon you, O war-god (*dgra lha*) worshipped since long ago [...] expel [harm] and protect this land!¹⁷²

The fifth text (fol. 16–20) is a feast-offering (Skt. *ganacakra*, Tib. *tshogs*) to the Great King, Subduer of Demons of Three Realms. He is also invoked as the "great *dharm*-protector of Mighty China" (*dbang phyogs tsi na'i yul gyi bstan srung mchog*), accompanied by consort (*yum mchog*) and an "attendant army of butchers" (*bka' nyan bshan pa'i dmag*). Elab-

¹⁷¹ Tukwan's description of the deity, as translated above in section 4.2, is found *verbatim* in the *Yonghegong Corpus* folios 6.6–8.1.

¹⁷² Rgyal ba blo bzang grags pa'i bstan pa dang // de 'dzin skyes bu dge 'dun sde rnams kun // yang dgos yung dgon dga' ldan byin chags gling // chen po ching gi chab srid mnga' thang la // nyin [15] mtshan dus kun bya ra ma g.yel zhig // dkon mchog gsum gyi dbu 'phang smod byed pa'i // lha log [sic. kla klog] mu stegs sde tshogs thams cad kyi // mthu stobs dpa' rtsal kha rje'i dbang thang chom // lo zlar ma bzahag gnas nas bskrad par mdzod // yang dgos jan dbyangs gong ma'i bka' bzhin du // chos dang srid kyi bya ba bsgrubs pa la // bar du gcod pa'i nye bar 'tshes ba kun // chos kyi dbyings su zhi ba'i 'phrin las mdzod // de ltar mos gus gdung shugs drag po yis // ring nas bsten cing mchod pa'i dgra lha khyed // [16] [...] bskrad nas yul 'di'i srung skyobs tshul bzhin mdzod; *Yonghegong Corpus*: fol. 14–16.

orate offerings of food, drink, incense, butterlamps and so on are prepared and blessed into ambrosia with *mantras* and *mudras*, and the deity and his entourage are called upon to protect the Buddhist teachings in general and the teachings of the Second Buddha (Tsongkhapa) in particular. Protection is also requested against thieves and bandits and wild animals, and against disease, famine and warfare, so that “holders of the teachings may spread across the earth, and its patrons may prosper”. This is the only text in the *Corpus* which carries a colophon, and reveals its provenance as coming from Yongegong itself in 1853, authored by the “Tongkhor Hutuktu” (Stong ’khor hu tog thu), a senior Lama from the Blue Lake (Kokonor/Tsöngon/Qinghai) region of Amdo:

composed on the fifteenth day of the third month of the Water Ox Year (1853) by the noble Tongkhor Hutuktu named Thupten, out of great respect for the temple of the Great Demon-subduing King at Yung-gön Ganden Jinchak Ling.¹⁷³

The sixth and final text in the *Corpus* is an elaborate tantric offering of 27 folios with several sections. This text has some striking convergences in phraseology with the Chahar Geshé texts cited above, which could thus be considered among its sources. For example, as in Chahar Geshé’s work, the deity is addressd in Sanskritised form as *Yun chung r’a dza sa ba ri wa r’a*.¹⁷⁴ Also, as in the Chahar Geshé texts, we see Padmasmabhva evoked along with Tsongkhapa,¹⁷⁵ and again we have the deity addressed in the formulation “Manjuśri’s Attendant Trinring Gyelpo” (*’jam dpal bka’ sdod sprin ring rgyal po*).¹⁷⁶ Two other interesting features of this text (especially with regard to potential cross-over with the parallel ritual cult of Ling Gesar being developed in eastern Tibet

¹⁷³ *ces pa ’di ni chu glang lo zla ba gsum pa’i tshes bco lnga la/ btsun ming ’dzin pa stong ’khor hu tog thu’i thub bstan ming ’dzin can gyis yung dgon dga’ ldan byin chags gling gi bdud ’dul rgyal chen gyi lha khang nas gus ba chen pos sbyar ba’o / / ; ibid. fol. 20. This appears to refer to the throneholder of Tongkhor called Thubten Jigme Gyatso (Stong ’khor Thub bstan ’jigs med rgya mtsho, 1820–1882). If this identification is correct, the text must date to 1853, not to the prior (more famous) Water-Ox year of 1793. The seat of the Tongkhor incarnation lineage was Tongkhor Ganden Chökhör Ling, established in the Kokonor region during the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama. The monastery primarily served the Mongol tribes that had settled that area. <https://treasuryoflives.org>. Last accessed on 16/01/2019.*

¹⁷⁴ For example, *Yonghegong Corpus*: fol. 42; compare with Cha har dge bshes Blo bzang tshul khriims 1973: vol. 6 (*ca*), fol. 225.

¹⁷⁵ *Yonghegong Corpus*: fol. 35; compare with Cha har dge bshes Blo bzang tshul khriims 1973: vol. 6 (*ca*), fol. 638.

¹⁷⁶ *Yonghegong Corpus*: fol. 36; compare with Cha har dge bshes Blo bzang tshul khriims 1973: vol. 6 (*ca*), fol. 638.

from the mid-19th century),¹⁷⁷ are its emphasis on territorial divinities (*yul lha/gzhi bdag*), and the unusual description of Lord Guan/Trinring Gyelpo as a “speech emanation of Padmasambhava in his form as a tutelary divinity” (*yi dam padma'i gsung sprul Kwan yun chung*).¹⁷⁸ This identification is not found in any other texts consulted, possibly suggesting a relatively late provenance, when the separately-evolved *cultus* of Gesar and his association with Padmasambhava in eastern Tibetan Buddhism may have begun to influence the Tibetan and Mongolian presentations of Lord Guan. However the text also has an intriguing final verse which might also suggest an earlier (late 18th century) provenance. This final verse appears to dedicate the rituals to “all those at Tashi Gomang” (the full name of Drepung’s Gomang college), and to “Sönam Dargyé”,¹⁷⁹ which could refer to the father of the Eighth Dalai Lama, and a senior relative of both the Fourth Jetsundamba and the Seventh Panchen Lama (whose Trinring Gyelpo text is treated briefly below). Sönam Dargyé was the Tibetan aristocrat-patriarch at the centre of the highly nepotistic convergence of senior Geluk incarnations within one family in the late 18th century.¹⁸⁰ Redressing the “capture” of all the major Geluk incarnation lineages within this one family (the Lhalu family) was a major motive for Qianlong’s introduction of the Golden Urn and his 1792 *Lama shuo* or *Discourse on Lamas*.¹⁸¹ The further dedication to Yönten Gyatso here could also possibly indicate one of the main teachers of the Seventh Panchen (1782–1853).¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ There is no direct convergence between the rituals of the two deities (Trinring Gyelpo and Ling Gesar) but both were being developed over roughly the same period. The main commonalities are at the level of general iconography and classification: both Ling Gesar and the Long Cloud King were praised as *dgra lha* and depicted in both seated “kingly” and mounted “warrior” forms (as discussed further below). The framing here of Trinring Gyelpo as a “speech emanation of Padmasambhava” presents a rare moment of greater convergence. Padmasambhava occupies a central role in the ritual identity of Ling Gesar especially since the 19th century; see FitzHerbert 2017. For more in-depth treatment of Tibetan Gesar rituals from the 19th century, see Forgues 2011.

¹⁷⁸ *yi dam padma'i gsung sprul Kwan yun chung*; *Yonghegong Corpus*: fol. 36.

¹⁷⁹ *bkra shis sgo mang ji snyed yod pa kun // phun sum tshogs pa chu bo'i rgyun bzhin du // skye 'gro yongs la rtag tu bkra shis shog // bsod nams dar rgyas ri rgyal lhun po bzhin // snyan grags chen pos nam mkha' bzhin du khyab // tshe ring nad med gzhan don lhun gyis grub // yon tan rgya mtsho mchog gi bkra shis shog*; *Yonghegong Corpus*: fol. 46.

¹⁸⁰ Oidtmann 2018: 72. An interesting entry on Sönam Dargyé on the *Treasury of Lives* website was unfortunately unreferenced at the time of writing. The aristocratic Doring family were also closely connected to this family through marriage; Li Ruhong 2002: 168.

¹⁸¹ Lessing 1942: 58–61. For extensive discussion and contextualisation of the Golden Urn and the *Lama shuo* (*Discourse on Lamas*) see Oidtmann 2018.

¹⁸² The “great *mantrika*” Yönten Gyatso is named as the main tutor (*yongs 'dzin*) of the Fourth/Seventh Panchen Lama in the modern publication *Bod gangs can gyi grub*

Moving on from the *Yonghegong Corpus*, another notable Long Cloud King text from the first half of the 19th century is a short *torma*-offering authored by Khalkha Damtsik Dorjepal (Khal kha Dam tshig rdo rje'i dpal, 1781–1855). This text itself is cursory—three folios from Damtsik Dorjepal's *Collected Works* of some twenty-one volumes—so it should not be given undue weight,¹⁸³ but its significance lies in the elevated politico-religious status of its author. Damtsik Dorjepal, of Khalkha Mongol background, was a very senior figure in the Geluk church of the early 19th century. He served, at various points in his career, as tutor (*yongs 'dzin*) to both the Seventh Panchen Lama (discussed further below) and the Fifth Jetsun Dampa, who were the seniormost lamas of Tibet and Mongolia respectively. In this short *torma*-offering, the deity is addressed as the “Great Nöjin Long Cloud King” (*snod byin chen po sprin ring rgyal po*) and is visualised in wrathful tantric form “in the middle of an ocean of human and horse blood”. The text also includes an interesting allusion to the reach of the cult of Lord Guan during this period, a reach envisaged as co-terminus with the Qing Empire itself at the height of its expansion in the post-Gorkha War period (fancifully including India):

From all your abodes [shrines/temples] in India (*rgya gar*), China (*rgya nag*), Mongolia (*hor*), Xinjiang (*li yul*), Tibet (*gangs can*) and so on, Long Cloud King (Trinring Gyelpo) and entourage, please approach!¹⁸⁴

It is significant to note that in the “mature” phase of the cult of Trinring Gyelpo in the 19th century, the only text by a *Tibetan* (as opposed to Mongol) religious figure, is the atonement text (*bskang gso*) attributed to the Seventh Panchen Lobzang Palden Tenpé Nyima Choklé Namgyel (1782–1853). This was the Panchen Lama who had taken part (albeit as a child) in the consecration of the Guandi temple on Barmari in 1792 (section 3 above). After the death of the 8th Dalai Lama in 1804, this Panchen was to be the seniormost Tibetan Geluk lama for most of the first half of the 19th century, the period during which the Ganden Phodrang state was more firmly than ever before under the authority of the Qing imperium. The Seventh Panchen oversaw the recognition

mtha' ris med kyi mkhas dbang brgya dang brgyad cu lhag gi gsung 'bum so so'i dkar chag phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pa shes bya'i gter mdzod (W19837): vol. 2 (*bar cha*), 545.

¹⁸³ *Sprin ring rgyal po'i gsol mchod*; Dam tshig rdo rje 200?: vol. 10, fol. 284–287. The colophon reads: *Ces rgyal ba'i bstan bsrung chen po mthu stobs nus pa'i mnga' bdag sprin ring rgyal po la mchod gtor phul te 'phrin las bcol ba'i tshigs su bcad pa mdor bsdus 'di ni / bstan* [.damaged.] *dpal mgon mtshungs med ll kog san mchog sprul rin po che'i zhal snga nas kyi bzhed dgongs bzhin / ban rgan bhu su ku pa / [ç] dam tshig rdo rje sbyar ba'i yi ge pa ni dge slong blo bzang tshe ring ngo //*; fol. 287.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*: 285.

and enthronement of no less than three successive Dalai Lamas.¹⁸⁵

The 41-folio Long Cloud King *Ritual Service* (*bskang gso*) attributed to him is not included in his own *Collected Works*, but is found within the Trinring Gyelpo *Chökor* compiled by the Mongolian Lama Ilgugan Lobzang Samdrup (see below) some time after his death. According to its colophon there, this text had in fact been requested from the Seventh Panchen by Ilgugan himself.¹⁸⁶ As an elaborate ritual service text attributed to such a senior Tibetan figure, this text appears to have enjoyed a seminal status for Ilgugan Lobzang Samdrup himself.

This work is also particularly notable because of the fact that each xylographed folio of the text (as found in Ilgugan's *Chökor*) carries the marginal title *Ritual Service to Geser* (*Ge ser bskang gso*). This marginal title, carved into every folio block, constitutes the *only* explicit textual affirmation found by this author in the entire body of ritual texts devoted to the Long Cloud King, of the fact that this deity was habitually and pervasively known in Mongolian Geluk tradition by the name Geser.¹⁸⁷ However the text itself makes no mention of Gesar/Geser, indicating that this was a short-hand "nickname" for this text to "Geluk Gesar", rather than a formal assertion.

In the text, the deity is again summoned through self-identification with the wrathful *yidam* Vajrabhairava/Yamāntaka (Rdo rje 'jigs byed). It then includes sections on confession (*bshags pa*), *torma*-offering (*gtor 'bul*) and golden libation-offering (*gser skyems*). Here the identification of Trinring Gyelpo with Dzongtsen Shenpa is particularly emphasised, and we find Dzongtshen Shenpa's places of worship in

¹⁸⁵ Namely the Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Dalai Lamas, none of whom survived into maturity. The Seventh Panchen Lama, who was related by birth to his *guru* the Eighth Dalai Lama, presided over the Geluk church during the post-1792 period in which the Qing imperium sought to bring Tibetan politics in general and the Geluk church in particular more firmly under imperial dominion. At the emperor's request, this Panchen also briefly served as Regent of the Ganden Phodrang government in 1844–1845.

¹⁸⁶ *Chos skyong sprin ring rgyal po'i gtor cho ga bskang gso cha lag tsang pa paN chen thams cad mkhyen pas mdzad pa*. Mongolian National Library: NL 10745–017 (41 folios). Included in the *Trinring Gyelpo Chökor*. The colophon states that the text was "written upon the request of Ilgugan Lobzang Samdrup by the 'yogi of Yamāntaka', Shakya gelong Lobzang Palden Tenpé Nyima Choklé Namgyel Pelzangpo" (*zhes pa 'di yang l la ke san ho thog thu blo bzang bsam grub pas bskul ngor / 'jam dpal gshin rje gshed kyi rnal 'byor pa [ç] shakya'i dge slong blo bzang dpal ldan bstan pa'i nyi ma phyogs las rnam rgyal dpal bzang pos sbyar ba'o //*; *ibid.*: fol. 26a. The text does not however appear to be included in the Seventh Panchen's *Collected Works* (*Gsung 'bum* W6205).

¹⁸⁷ The marginal title "*ge ser bskang gso*" is engraved on every page. However, as with other Trinring Gyelpo texts, there is no mention in the body of the text itself of Geser/Gesar or any of his associated mythology. The text itself makes clear that the object of propitiation is unambiguously the Long Cloud King/Lord Guan.

central Tibet listed exhaustively. It is from these abodes—at Yarlung Shelgidrakphuk; the Lhatsenkhar of Chö, the Dzongri of Kyishö Drib; Puri Phukmoché; and Tsechendrak, in addition to “his many adamantine abodes in the great land of China”—that the Long Cloud King and entourage are summoned.¹⁸⁸

It is unclear at what institutions in Tibet itself this *Ritual Service* was actually performed. But we do know that the Seventh Panchen’s parallel text of propitiation for Drib Dzongtsen is still in use at Drib today, and that that text also includes a history of Lord Guan’s Buddhist conversion.¹⁸⁹ It is perhaps notable that in a Tibetan popular-culture context, the name Shenpa (*shan pa*, “butcher”) also lent the *cultus* of Dzongtsen Shenpa/Drib Dzongtsen a certain “Gesaric” tint, since the “Shenpa” are a prominent clan in the Gesar epic, and Shenpa Merutsé (Shan pa rme ru tse) is one of the Gesar epic’s most prominent heroes.¹⁹⁰ However there is no evidence (so far encountered) that Dzongtsen Shenpa was ever explicitly identified as Gesar at his places of worship in central Tibet.

Notwithstanding this important text attributed to the Seventh Panchen, it is possible to discern from around the mid-19th century, an increasing divergence between the reception of the Long Cloud King as a Geluk protector-deity in Mongolia and in Tibet. From around the 1850s, textual production by Tibetan lamas concerning this figure seems to have ceased altogether, likely reflecting a weakening of Qing control there, while in the same period Long Cloud King texts continued to become more numerous in Mongolia. In particular, from the mid-19th century, Tibetan-language rituals devoted to this deity are universally associated with a single individual, namely the western Mongolian Geluk incarnation Ilgusan Hutuktu Lobzang Samdrup (Il kog san Hu thog thu Blo bzang bsam grub, 1820–1882), who was also instrumental it seems in commissioning the aforementioned Panchen

¹⁸⁸ *yar lung shel gyi brag phug / 'phyos kyi lha btsan mkhar / skyid shod grib kyi rdzong ri / kong po bu chu lha khang / spu ri phug mo che/ rtse chen brag / khyad par ma ha tsi na'i yul gru chen po sogs gar bzhugs rdo rje'i pho brang so so nas rgyal ba'i bstan srung chen po khams gsum bñid 'dul sprin ring rgyal po 'khor dang bcas pa skad cig gis gnas 'dir spyan drangs; NL 10745–017: fol. 5a.*

¹⁸⁹ *Dus gsum rgyal ba'i bstan bsrung srid gsum skye 'gro'i srog bdag mthu stobs yongs kyi bdag po kog ma grib btsan rdo rje mchog rgod rtsal gyi gtor chog cha tshang 'phrin las rnam bzhi'i rin chen 'dren pa'i shing rta* (17 folios). Included as an appendix in Jiayang Pincuo 2016: 189–193. This text is likewise not found in the Seventh Panchen’s *Collected Works*.

¹⁹⁰ In the Gesar epic (as for example in the *Hor gling g.yul 'gyed* authored c. 1730s), Shenpa Merutse (Shan/bshan pa rme ru tse) is the formidable minister of the Hor King, responsible for killing Gesar’s brother Gyatsa (Rgya tsha zhal dkar). He then comes over to the side of Ling and becomes one of the most prominent of Gesar’s “thirty warriors” (*dpa' rtul sum cu*).

Lama *Ritual Service*, which he took as a template for his further elaborations.

It was through the inspiration of this Ilgugan Lobzang Samdrup—who himself had strong links to the Qing imperial administration at Uliastai in western Mongolia—¹⁹¹ that the Long Cloud King became the focus of a voluminous tantric ritual cycle or *chökor* (*chos skor*), along with masked dance (*'cham*). All of the texts treated below were either authored by this Ilgugan Hutuktu or requested by him from his teachers, who included some of the most prestigious figures of 19th century Geluk tradition. Ilgugan Lobzang Samdrup's own prolific production of diverse rituals for the Long Cloud King, as revealed in this *chökor*, constitutes a significant and historic contribution of Mongolian Buddhism to the Geluk tradition,¹⁹² which has recently been republished in Ulaan Baatur and distributed to Geluk monasteries across Mongolia by the contemporary Amgalan Lama of Ganden Tekchenling.¹⁹³

It seems that during Ilgugan's own life, the popular identification

¹⁹¹ A temple to Trinring Gyelpo located at the very centre of the Qing fort at Uliastai, was, according to Pozdnev's 1892 testimony, known by the Mongols as the "temple of Geser"; Pozdnev (trans. Shaw and Plank) 1971: 160. On the Ilgugan incarnation lineage and its powerful status in the Uliastai region during the 19th century, as well as an account of the monastery and "Geser" temple built at Ideriin goul, see *ibid.*: 248–255. Also, a scan of a 75-folio Tibetan-language biography of this Ilgugan Hutuktu, *Hu thog thu rje btsun blo bzang bsam grub dpal bzang po'i rnam thar nor bu'i 'phreng ba*, henceforth the *Jewel Rosary*, was kindly given to the author by Amgalan Lama at Ganden Tekchenling Monastery, Ulaan Baatar, in August 2018. A Mongolian translation of this biography is also included as a preface to his one-volume *dpe cha* edition of the *Trinring Gyelpo Chökor*. This biography indicates that the great "amban Pei-si of Uliastai" (western Mongolia) was an instrumental figure in the recognition of this *tulku*; *Jewel Rosary*: fol. 15b. According to the biography, the young Ilgugan Hutuktu's devotion to Lord Guan began when he was seven. He wrote his first text on the deity (a "history" based on that of Tukwan) at the age of eleven; *Jewel Rosary*: fol. 19a.

¹⁹² *Dus gsum rgyal ba'i bstan bsrung srid gsum skye 'gro srog bdag khams gsum bdud 'dul sprin ring rgyal po'i bsnyen sgrub las gsum gyi rnam bzhas dam nyams srog 'phrog ha la nag po dug gi spu gri*. "The Poison Sword of Hala Nakpo: presentations of the approach, accomplishment and [ritual] activities for the Victorious Dharma Protector of the Three Times, Life-Lord of Beings of the Three Worlds Khamsun Dündül Trinring Gyelpo, Slayer of Vow-Violators". Henceforth, and listed in the bibliography as *Trinring Gyelpo Chökor*. 107 texts compiled into two volumes, held at Mongolian National Library, Ulaan Baatar. The existence of Ilgugan's *chökor* was noted by both RA Stein (Stein 1959: 33) and Lokesh Chandra (Chandra 1963: 44–46) though neither of them were able to consult it directly. It was however consulted by the Mongolian scholar Tseten Damdinsuren, who used it to illustrate the difference in identities between Guandi and Geser; Damdinsuren 1957: 15–30. On Ilgugan Lobzang Samdrup's wider contribution to Mongolian Geluk tradition, see Chandra 1963: 44–46.

¹⁹³ For details of this modern *dpe cha* republication, see the bibliography entry under *Trinring Gyelpo Chökor*. The author would like to thank Amgalan Lama for giving him a personal copy of this publication during a visit to Ulaan Baatar in August 2018.

of the Long Cloud King/Trinring Gyelpo with Geser was widely accepted in Mongolia, and that this was not only tolerated but even encouraged by Lobzang Samdrup himself, who appears to have been known and remembered as the “Geser Lama”. However, in keeping with the silence of the Geluk textual tradition on the parallel Tibetan and Mongolian epic folklore concerning the figure of Gesar/Geser, Ilgugan’s writings on Trinring Gyelpo likewise shun all mentions or allusions to this figure, and instead formally ground the identity of the deity being propitiated firmly on Lord Guan (and in particular on Tukwan’s treatment of him).¹⁹⁴ This Geluk disdain for the epic and

¹⁹⁴ Ilgugan, in all his voluminous writings on the Long Cloud King/Trinring Gyelpo, never explicitly alluded to Geser in his texts or addressed the subject of Geser as a folkloric figure alternative to Lord Guan. However this issue is addressed in two texts ancillary to *chökor*, both presumably written sometime after his death (in 1880) by his disciples. These are a) the *Table of Contents* (full title: *Dus gsum rgyal ba'i bstan srung srid gsum skye 'gro'i srog bdag chen po sprul gzhi beg tse lcam sring dang de'i rnam 'gyur khams gsum bñud 'dul sprin ring rgyal po'i chos skor gyi dkar chag gsal byed sgron me* NL 10746–049 (45 folios); and b) his biography, the *Jewel Rosary* (full title: *Hu thog thu rje btsun blo bzang bsam grub dpal bzang po'i rnam thar nor bu'i 'phreng ba zhes bya ba bzhugs so*). Both of these texts give paraphrased citations from Tukwan’s biography of Chankya Rölpé Dorjé as the authoritative basis on which the epic folklore of Geser/Gesar was rejected as a basis for this deity. The *Contents* states: “as for those three or four volumes of Gesar tales or history that are widespread these days in Amdo, they are, like the all-knowing Changkya said, and as is stated in his biography, just the false inventions of talented poets. So they are not included here” (*Yang a mdo phyogs su dar ba'i ge ser gyi sgrung ngam lo rgyus po ti gsum bzhi yod pa de ni snyan dngag [sic] mkhan zhig gis blo bzor byas pa'i brdzus [sic.] ma yin par lcam skya thams cad mkhyen pa'i zhal nas gsungs tshul de'i rnam thar du byung bas 'dir ma bkod*); *Contents*: fol. 10b. Much the same point is made in the biography: “The three or four volumes of songs and tales of Gesar which are spread in the Amdo region these days are just the creations of a skilled poet. In the biography (*Beautiful Ornament of the Teachings*) of the all-knowing Changkya Rölpé Dorjé, it is stated that he said ‘the stories told of Geser these days are false, I have a reliable one which I can tell.’ As such even the period in which Geser lived is not settled” (*Deng sang a mdo phyogs nas dar pa'i ge ser sgrung glu'i dpe pod gsum bzhi tsam yod pa 'di ni snyan dngags [sic] mkhan zhig gis rtog bzor byas pa yin te / lcam skya thams cad mkhyen pa rol pa'i rdo rje'i rnam thar thub bstan mdzes rgyan las / deng sang gi ge ser kyi sgrung gtam 'di brdzun ma yin / kho bo la yid ches khungs ldan zhig bshad rgyu yod gsungs zhes byung ba bzhin dang / ge ser ces pa de byung ba'i dus yang mi 'grigs pas so*); *Jewel Rosary*: fol. 19b. For comparison, the actual quotation from Tukwan’s biography of Changkya is as follows: “He [Changkya] was heard to say that ‘the many Gesar tales told these days are mostly just false made-up stories. I have an authoritative version not mixed with falsehoods which I can tell’”: *Ge sar sgrung 'di la deng sang mang po zhig shod gi 'dug pa phal che bar tog btags kyid rdzun gtam kho nar 'dug / nged la rdzun gtam ma 'dres ba'i khungs ma zhig bshad rgyu yod de zhes gsungs pa thos so / Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyid nyi ma* 1989: 689. It is not clear what this “authoritative” version refers to. One possibility is that it refers to the classic Mongolian literary version of the Geser epic *Arban jü-iin efen Geser qagan-u toguji* xylographed in Beijing in 1716, perhaps under the oversight of Changkya’s incarna-

folkloric traditions concerning the “Epic Geser/Gesar” in both Mongolia and in Tibet, is justified in Ilgugsan’s biography by deferring to Changkya Rölpé Dorjé. This disdain appears to have been shared by other senior Geluk luminaries of the time. For example Sumpa Khenpo’s apparent disdain for the figure of Geser/Gesar has been observed by Damdinsuren.¹⁹⁵ However such a disdain is not entirely borne out by Sumpa’s comments on the subject of Gesar in his letters to the Sixth Panchen Lobzang Palden Yeshé, which are well-researched and also indicate a clear awareness of the distinct folkloric identity of Ling Gesar as entirely distinct from Lord Guan.¹⁹⁶

Ilgugsan’s rituals for Trinring Gyelpo, as a kind of “Geluk Geser” enjoyed considerable patronage and dissemination in Mongolia. Ilgugsan’s masked dances (*cham*) centring on the deity for example, were instituted by the Fifth Jetsun Dampa at the Tashi Samtenling tantric college (Bkra shis bsam gtan gling grwa tshang) at Maimatchen (Chinese commercial district) just east of Khuree (modern Ulaan Baatar) at some time after 1841.¹⁹⁷ Two statues of the deity were housed at

tion-predecessor. But this is not how the authors of the *Contents* and the *Jewel Rosary* seem to interpret it. Rather, the implication in those sources is that the “reliable” or “authoritative” version of Geser/Gesar refers simply to the legends of Guan Yu and his conversion into Buddhist *dharma*-protector. Damdinsuren also notes that in his biography of Changkya Rölpé Dorjé, Tukwan reports him expressing disdain for the current vogue of writing religious biographies (*rnam thar*) “in the style of Gesar legends”, telling of “victories over enemies and the protection of blood-relatives”. Such tales, he says, are “useless bragging [lit. ‘raven’s songs’]”; Damdinsuren 1955: 59, citing Tukwan’s *rnam thar* of Chankya Rölpé Dorjé, vol. 2 fol. 229.

¹⁹⁵ Damdinsuren cites the longer version of Sumpa Khenpo Yeshé Peljor’s autobiography, in which he says that the tales of Gesar “spread across China, Mongolia and Tibet” are “interlaced with the false traditions of heretics” (*mu stegs rig byed pa’i gtam bryud lta bu’i rdzun phreng bsgribs nas*); Damdinsuren 1955: 59; Damdinsuren 1957: 169 (citing Sumpa’s autobiography, the *Sgra ’dzin bcud len* fol. 6). Damdinsuren might be over-stating the case, since in his letters to the Sixth Panchen Lama on the subject of Gesar, Sumpa Khenpo is not roundly dismissive of the Gesar tradition, and indeed is quite knowledgeable about it. Sumpa is however dismissive in those letters about claims to Gesar’s divinity. He says “In China, Tibet and Mongolia (*hor*), the stories of Gesar are told in poetic fictionalised ways, but he seems to have been an ordinary person, as it is hard to rely on the many competing accounts saying that he is this or that emanation, so it is rather hard to make a considered judgement about whether he was an ordinary person or an incarnation”; FitzHerbert 2015, citing Sum-pa’s *Gsung ’bum*, vol. *nya*, fol. 197.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.* Sumpa’s extensive comments on the identity of Ling Gesar and local legends about him gleaned first-hand from “elders in Dergé”, make no mention of Lord Guan/Trinring Gyelpo, or of the association between the two figures.

¹⁹⁷ “at the age of 22, in the Iron Ox year (1841), he staged the new dance (*gar ’cham*) which he had composed for the Dharma protectors Bektsé and Long Cloud King for the great Fifth Jetsun Dampa, [26a] and [the Jetsun Dampa] said that his new *’cham* for these protectors was excellent [...] and he had it instituted at the *grwa*

this temple which were locally known as images of “Geser Khan” in his peaceful and wrathful forms.¹⁹⁸ And this tantric college itself, famed for these dances,¹⁹⁹ came to be known colloquially as the Geser Dratsang (Mo. *geser dačang*; Tib. *ge ser grwa tshang*).²⁰⁰ This gives a clear indication that in Mongolian Geluk tradition, “Geser” simply meant the Trinring Gyelpo/Long Cloud King, and Trinring Gyelpo in turn, as the texts unequivocally show, was Lord Guan, and had nothing to do with Ling Gesar/Geser or the “Epic Geser”.

Before returning this discussion to how this *cultus* was to evolve somewhat separately in Tibet from the latter half of the 19th century, a brief summary is first given of how these Ilgugan rituals for Trinring Gyelpo were elaborated and expanded for Mongolian Geluk tradition.

While the vast majority of the 107 texts in the two volumes of the *Trinring Gyelpo Chökor* were authored by Ilgugan Lobzang Samdrup himself, the corpus also includes a number of associated texts. These include a number of tantric texts for Jamsring-Bektsé,²⁰¹ as well as Trinring Gyelpo texts requested from Ilgugan’s teachers, a few of which

tshang”: *dgung lo nyer gnyis dus su / lcags mo glang lor [ç] mi dbang chen po ratra shar nas rje btsun dam pa lnga ba chen por chos skyong beg tshé dang sprin ring rgyal po gnyis kyi gar ‘cham gsar du sgrigs nas ‘dzugs chog pa’i snyan zhu phul bar/ [26a] bka’ las / chos skyong ‘di gnyis kyi ‘cham gsar bsgrigs pa shin tu legs / [...][26b] gsar rtsom byas te gar ‘cham legs par bsgrigs nas grwa tshang tshugs par mzdad do //; in Jewel Rosary: fol. 25b–26b.*

¹⁹⁸ Rintchen 1958: 8.

¹⁹⁹ This “theatre” is for example mentioned by Pozdneyev, based on his observations in 1892; Pozdneyev (trans. Shaw and Plank) 1971: 87. This temple is now under the care of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) in Mongolia and has been re-purposed as a Buddhist convent named Drolma Ling (*sgrol ma gling*). All that remains today of its Qing dynasty heritage are two tall pillars inscribed with the Chinese characters 大发慈悲救万苦 (*da fa ci bei jiu wan ku*; “May great compassion save all suffering beings”).

²⁰⁰ Rintchen 1958: 8. Bambyn Rintchen’s 1958 article “En marge du culte de Guesser khan en Mongolie” is an article about the Long Cloud King/Lord Guan as the Geluk Geser. Throughout this article, no distinction is made between Geser and Lord Guan. The avowed aim of Rintchen’s article was to challenge the assertions of N. Poppe and especially T. Damdinsuren, who had asserted that the figure of Geser was frowned upon by Geluk tradition, which he denies vehemently by pointing to the flourishing Geluk cult of Geser. Rintchen seems to have completely missed, or willfully misunderstood, the cogent arguments of Damdinsuren (1957: 15–30) that Geser and Guandi are distinct folkloric and cultic figures.

²⁰¹ Such as *The Liberating Butcher Tantra of Wrathful Mantras of the Red Lord of Life/Srog bdag dmar po’i drag sngags bshan pa sgrol byed kyi rgyud* (NL 10745–001) attributed to a lineage through Marpa; and the *Tantra of Firing the Red Blood-Arrow/Dmar mo khrag gi mda’ ‘phen ma’i rgyud* (NL 10745–002), also attributed to a lineage through Marpa. However, Nebesky-Wojkowitz says the association between this tantra and Marpa was probably a later construction; Nebesky-Wojkowitz [1956] 1998: 88–89.

have been outlined above (namely those by Khalkha Damstik Dorjé, the Seventh Panchen, and the Fifth Jetsün Dampa, all of whom were among his own teachers).

As for the voluminous texts authored by Ilgugsan himself, the *Chökor* contains no less than five “histories” (*lo rgyus*) of Trinring Gyelpo,²⁰² none of which, in keeping with tradition, make any mention of or allusion to Geser/Gesar at all, and instead closely follow (and elaborate upon) the treatment of Lord Guan by Tukwan. Ilgugsan’s mature “history” is his 21-folio *Authentic History of the Protector of the Teachings Victor of the Three Times, Life-Lord in the Three Planes of Existence, Khamsum Dündül Trinring Gyelpo*²⁰³ (henceforth *Authentic History*). Here, drawing on a range of authoritative textual sources,²⁰⁴ Ilgugsan creatively re-elaborates the mythic backstory, and for the first time brings into a single narrative the myths of Yamshud Marpo (Yam shud dmar po)-Jamsring-Bektsé; Guan Yu; and Dzongtsen Shenpa.

First, he relates an origin-myth for Yamshud Marpo-Jamsring-Bektsé based on the account of Lelung Zhepé Dorjé, in which an apostate younger brother of the Buddha Sakyamuni goes through a series of horrific rebirths, including as Yamshud Marpo, a “speech emanation of Yamāntaka” born from a *sé* (*bse*) egg as the offspring of Wangchuk Chenpo (Śiva) and Ekajati, who by mating with his sister, creates a *damsi* (*dam sri*, harmful spirit) which haunts the land of China (as previously alluded to in Tukwan’s *Dragon’s Roar*). Ilgugsan then identifies this *damsi* with the story of Guan Yu’s afterlife as a spirit haunting the Zhang-ling mountain in Sichuan, and his subsequent

²⁰² 1. *Dbang phyugs maha tsi na’i dgra lha chen po khams gsum bdud ’dul sprin ring rgyal po’i la mchod gtor ’bul tshul ’phrin las char rgyun bskul pa’i ’brug sgra* / *The Dragon’s Roar (Thunder) which Summons a Continuous Rain of Enlightened Action* (NL 10745–007). This is the only “history” contained in the one-volume Amgalan Lama edition of the *chökor* (text 16). The history section of this text (fols. 1b–8a) follows that of Tukwan’s very closely which it also echoes in its title; 2. *Khams gsum bdud ’dul sprin ring rgyal po’i yid ches pa’i ’byung khungs gsal bshad blo gsar dga’ bskyed* (NL10745–023) by D’a ri dra Snang mdzad rdo rje (11 folios); 3. *Dus gsum rgyal ba’i bstan srung srid gsum skye ’gro’i srog bdag khams gsum bdud ’dul sprin ring rgyal po’i khungs thub kyi lo rgyus* / the “Authentic History” (NL10745–024) discussed here as Ilgugsan’s “masterwork” on the deity’s history (21 folios); 4. *Khams gsum bdud ’dul sprin ring rgyal po’i lo rgyus kyi sur rgyan* / (NL10745–025) “additional notes” on the deity’s history (14 folios); and 5. *Sprin ring rgyal po’i rgyus kyi skabs su nye bar mkho ba ’ga’ zhiig* (NL10745–026) which adds “a few important points” relating to the history (25 folios).

²⁰³ The “Authentic History”: *Dus gsum rgyal ba’i btsan bsrung srid gsum skye ’gro’i srog bdag khams gsum bdud ’dul sprin ring rgyal po’i khungs thub kyi lo rgyus* (NL 10745–024).

²⁰⁴ Namely “*dpe chas* by successive incarnations of the Panchen Lama; the Great Fifth Dalai Lama’s *Rnams kyi ganggs sgras*; Lelung Zhepé Dorjé’s *Dam can rgya mtsho*; Lord Ngawang Jampa’s *Bka’ bsgyur gyi dkar chag*; Tukwan’s *Bkwan lo ye’i gsol mchod*; the *Rgya nag chos ’byung*, and so on”; *Authentic History*: fol. 2b.

conversion into a *dharma*-protector, who is then brought to Tibet in the time of Songtsen Gampo by the Chinese princess Wenchang Kongjo. The mythic backstory is considerably more complex than this however, and other issues are also raised such as the assertion by the “all-knowing Panchen” that he was a “mind-manifestation of Hayagrīva” as well as a “speech-manifestation of Yamāntaka”.²⁰⁵

To give some idea of the breadth and scope of Ilgugsan’s *Trinring Gyelpo Chökor*, the following is a summary of the types of rituals it includes, based on the contents (*dkar chag*) of the one-volume (i.e. shortened) collection published recently at Gandentekchenling.²⁰⁶ This shorter collection of the *Chökor* (which excludes for example the texts on masked dances), includes rituals centring on the Long Cloud King for a wide variety of worldly goals, ranging from summoning good fortune to violent rituals of repelling:

- praise (*mngon rtogs, bstod pa*);
- smoke-offering (*bsang mchod*);
- *torma* offering (*gtor 'bul*);
- fire-offering (*sbyin sreg*);
- libation-offering (*gser skyems*);
- ritual service (*bskang ba*);
- confession (*bshags*);
- how to set up “supports”, such as military banners (*ru mtshon*) (*rten 'dzugs pa*);
- protection (*bsrung*);
- repelling (*bzlog pa*);
- rallying protector deities and expelling harm through sense objects (*mdos*);
- summoning good-fortune (*g.yang 'bod/phyra g.yang 'gugs*);
- guru-yoga (*bla ma'i rnal 'byor*);
- spreading auspiciousness and good signs (*bkra shis dge mtshan 'phel ba*);
- preparing butter lamps (*mar me*);
- divination with dice (*sho mo*);
- deploying the ritual dagger (*phur bu*);
- feast offering (*tshogs mchod*);
- deploying *mantras*;
- protecting travellers (*bka' bsgo*);
- preparing holy water (*snying chu bsres pa*).

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*: fol. 5a–6b.

²⁰⁶ See bibliography under *Long Cloud King Chökor*.

Ilgusan's *Chökor* illustrates the degree to which the cult of Trining Gyelpo as the "Geluk Geser" became an integral part of Mongolian Geluk tradition.

No more will be said here of this elaborate ritual corpus though it certainly merits further attention. For the purpose of this article, it is significant to observe from a historian's point of view, that Ilgusan's elaboration of a Mongolian Geluk cult for Lord Guan as a kind of "Geluk Geser" mirrors very closely the near-contemporaneous efflorescence in Chinese "spirit-writing" on Lord Guan in China proper.²⁰⁷ By contrast, one sees no parallel development of this cult of Trining Gyelpo in Tibet. What one does see however, is the development, especially from the last decades of the 19th century and particularly under the inspiration of the Nyingmapa luminary Ju Mipham ('Ju mi pham Rnam rgyal rgya mtsho, 1846–1912) in eastern Tibet, of a burgeoning ritual corpus devoted to Ling Gesar, likewise presented as a "king of the war gods" (*dgra bla'i rgyal po*), but here modelled not on Lord Guan, but rather on the "Epic Gesar" celebrated in popular oral and literary tradition and folklore, but assiduously ignored by Geluk tradition as illustrated above. It is to this that we shall now turn.

5. The Ling Gesar Superscription: A Divergence between Mongolia and Tibet?

The above discussion has illustrated that in Mongolian Geluk Buddhism from the mid-19th century, the name "Geser" was being used primarily and prominently to signify the Geluk apotheosis of Lord Guan. The quite separate mythology and legends of Geser/Gesar, as expressed through largely secular folk epic traditions in both Tibet (especially eastern Tibet) and Mongolia, and reflected in a large number of epic texts from the 18th and 19th centuries,²⁰⁸ were assiduously ignored. In the Tibetan regions however, one discerns a rather different

²⁰⁷ Goossaert 2015.

²⁰⁸ As noted earlier, the classic Mongolian-language literary version of the Geser epic, *Arban jü-iin efen Geser qagan-u togiji*, had been xylographed in Beijing in 1716 under the sponsorship of the Kangxi Emperor. As suggested by the researches of Heissig, this classic version served as a bedrock for ongoing Mongolian oral traditions thereafter. In Tibetan, among the earliest Gesar epic texts are the *Stag gzig nor 'gyed* attributed to Dzogtrül Padma Rigzin (Rdzogs sprul Padma rig 'dzin, 1625–1697); and the classic *Hor gling g.yul 'gyed* authored by the Dergé *zhabdrung* Ngawang Tenzin Phüntsook (Sde dge zhabs drung Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin phun tshogs) during the reign of Pholhané (i.e. between 1728 and 1747). These Tibetan works represent a mature and explicitly Buddhist Gesar folkloric tradition which displays no influence from the Lord Guan mythology or its associated cult.

trajectory. There, rather than the Long Cloud King (as a form of Lord Guan) subsuming Geser, we see instead the folkloric figure of Gesar (“Epic Gesar”) coming to subsume and overgrow the identity of Lord Guan.

In Tibet, although the Chinese divinatory custom of “drawing lots” in front of the idol based on Lord Guan divinatory manuals translated from Chinese into Tibetan, did continue to be the main popular practice at the various “Chinese” garrison temples in Lhasa (especially at Barmari and Trapchi), Shigatsé and elsewhere right up to the mid 20th century,²⁰⁹ beyond this, the ritual cult of Trinring Gyelpo does not appear to have achieved any significant traction in Tibetan culture. And from around the 1850s the “Chinese” identity of this deity appears to have fallen further into obscurity. The Seventh Panchen’s *Ritual Service* for this deity was not included in his *Collected Works*, and after his death (1853) no further senior Tibetan lamas championed the cause. This again mirrored developments in the military field. As the Qing’s centralised grip on its military institutions in Tibet gradually weakened over this period, one discerns an increasing (albeit incomplete and never formally enshrined) subsuming of the Lord Guan idols worshipped at the Qing garrison temples under the identity of the Tibetan “Epic Gesar” who was undergoing his own parallel apotheosis in the same period, in the hands of non-Geluk masters, mostly from Kham.²¹⁰ One is tempted to link this speculatively to the increasing dominance of the Tibetan army—which one might assume included significant numbers of Khampa soldiers—over the (neglected) imperial soldiers stationed at the various garrison outposts in Tibet.

There is also evidence from the mid-19th century that the informal superscription of Lord Guan as “Gesar” at the garrison-temples themselves became ever-more coloured by explicit evocations of the folkloric legacies of *Ling Gesar* (or the “Epic Gesar”), despite the fact that such associations, as we have seen above, were carefully eschewed by those Geluk dignitaries who authored ritual texts for the deity.

The clearest evidence of this is the detailed illustration of the interior of the Barmari temple made in 1856/1857 by “a monk from Lassa”, which constitutes part of the *Wise Collection* at the British Library recently studied extensively by Diana Lange.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ As discussed at length in the monograph of Prof. Jamyang Phüntsook (Jiyang Pincuo); Pincuo 2016.

²¹⁰ On the parallel apotheosis of Ling Gesar as a Buddhist deity during the late 19th century, see FitzHerbert 2017; for a fuller treatment see Forgues 2011.

²¹¹ See Diana Lange’s contribution to the present volume and Lange forthcoming. These illustrations were made by a Tibetan monk, who appears to have been of a Nyingmapa persuasion, who had travelled alone from Lhasa to northern India where he was requested to make them by the British District Commissioner of

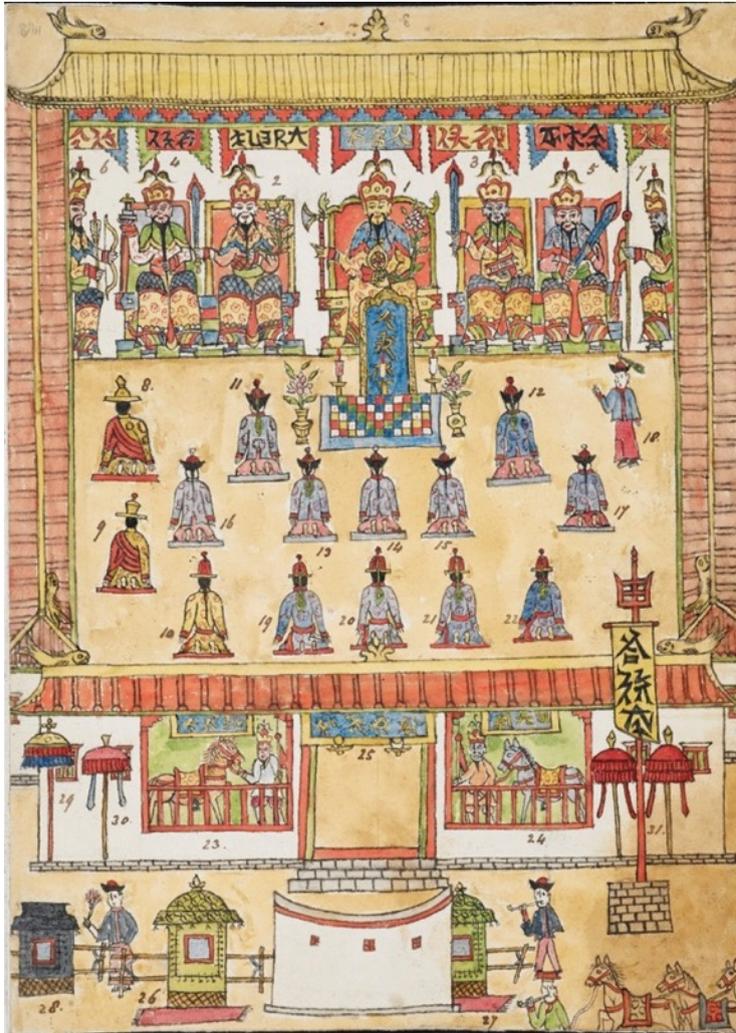


Fig. 6. The interior of the Barmari temple at Lhasa as depicted in the c. 1856 illustration accompanying the "Wise Map". British Library Add. Or. 3027. © British Library Board.

Indicating the political importance of this temple as a *locus* for diplomatic ceremonies at which high-ranking members of the Ganden Phodrang government expressed loyalty to the Qing imperium, the illustration (see Fig. 6) depicts the two *ambans* along with other Manchu

Kullu, Edmund Hay. The notes accompanying these images were made by Hay himself on the basis of oral information supplied by the artist.

and Han Chinese military and civilian officials²¹² paying obeisance there together with the top-ranking officials of the Tibetan government.²¹³ The iconography of the temple in the illustration is clearly Chinese, and there are several plaques inscribed with Chinese characters.²¹⁴ However, what is of particular interest for the present discussion, are the detailed notes which accompanied this illustration, in which the main idol is identified as Gesar (“Gésirr Gyalpo”),²¹⁵ and the subsidiary statues are also identified with specific figures drawn from the eastern Tibetan epic tradition of Ling Gesar. For example the statue left of the central idol (no. 2) is identified as “Gyachashilkur” (i.e. Rgya tsha zhal dkar, Gesar’s half-brother in the epic tradition); the one on the right (no. 3) as “Akū Thōtūm” (i.e. A khu khro thung, Gesar’s mischievous uncle); no. 4 as “Kālun Durma Chungta” (i.e. Bka’ blon ’dan ma spyang khra Gesar’s loyal minister); and nos. 5, 6 and 7 as other

²¹² The notes accompanying the illustration identify nos. 11 and 12 as the two “Chinese Ambans” (*ambans*); no. 14 as the “Phōkpun” (*phog dpon*) or military paymaster; nos. 13 and 15 as military officers with the Chinese titles “Tāloyé” (*dā lao ye?*) and Sōngyé respectively; and nos. 16 and 17 as “Chākōché” and “Pichinché” respectively. On the meaning of these terms see Diana Lange’s contribution to the present volume; British Library Add. Or. 3027, note 7.

²¹³ No. 8 is identified as the “Gyelpo Rating” (*rgyal po rwa sgreng*) or Reting Regent; no. 9 as the “Chikyub Kenbo” (*spyi khyab mkhan po*) a very senior-ranking monk official in the Tibetan government; no. 10 as the “Gyalyub” (*rgyal yab*) or Dalai Lama’s father; and nos. 19–22 as the “four Lassa kālūn” (*bka’ blon*) or cabinet ministers of the Ganden Phodrang. The notes further state that “on the first day of every month they go to worship at this temple”; *ibid*.

²¹⁴ The “Chinese” characters are however indecipherable since the monk who made the drawings did not know Chinese. The notes accompanying the drawing state that the blue plaque in front of the main altar was “in two languages, Chinese and Tibetan” and that it carried “the name of Chinese emperor in whose reign the temple was erected” (i.e. Qianlong). The Tibetan words, it says, read “Namgilāh Juméyung Kōngma Dākpō Chenpō”, i.e. *gnam gyi lha ’jam dpal dbyangs gong ma bdag po chen po* or “God of Heaven, Great Lord Manjusri Emperor”; British Library Add. Or. 3027, note 7.

²¹⁵ The central statue is also identified as “Zhāng”, which might be interpreted in a number of ways. In Tibetan *zhang* means “maternal uncle” and was a familial epithet sometimes used of the emperors of China since the Tang dynasty. It could thus refer to Lord Guan as the “uncle” emperor. Another possibility is that it is shorthand for “Guan Yunzhang”, Guan Yu’s courtesy name which was rendered into Tibetan by Changkya Rinpoché as Trinring Gyelpo (Sprin ring rgyal po) or “Long Cloud King”. Another possibility is that by the 1850s there was a confusion or conflation between Guandi and the other prominent Chinese deity Wenchang/Wenzhang (文昌), often characterised as the god of literature. Guandi in his Confucian embodiment was also considered an idol of education and in his peaceful form was often depicted reading from a scroll (Pallas describes this form at the Miamatchen garrison temple in Kiatka for example). The identities of Guandi and Wenchang could thus easily be confused, especially by Tibetans unfamiliar with Chinese iconography. One finds this uncertainty also with regard to Chinese temples in Amdo; see Buffetrille 2002.

prominent figures from Gesar's *comitatus* of "thirty warriors" namely "Chūikyong Pélnā" (Chos skyong ber nag), Singtākādum (Seng stag a dom), and Nyatsa Aten (Nya tsha a brtan).²¹⁶ The significance of this, is that here we have "Gesar" being more than just a superficial nickname or cipher for Lord Guan. Instead, we have an explicit and datable textual attestation of a wider superscription of the folkloric identity of Ling Gesar (or "Epic Gesar") onto the figure of Lord Guan.

Other evidence from central Tibet in the second half of the 19th century affirms this wider superscription also at the garrison temple at Shigatsé. This can be seen in the observations of the (British-employed) Indian *pundit* Sarat Chandra Das who visited Shigatsé in 1879. In Das' relatively detailed account of the garrison area, he describes the "Qesar Lha-khang" there, and although his description of the temple—its layout and iconography—clearly indicates that he was observing a Lord Guan temple in Chinese style, he makes no mention at all of Lord Guan or Trinring Gyelpo.

Instead, Das' identification of this place (based on local informants),²¹⁷ was as a pre-historic ruined Gesar fortress ("Qesar Jong")²¹⁸ with a "Qesar Lha-khang" in the middle. And based on information gleaned from the "old Ani" (nun) looking after the place, he identified aspects of the temple's iconography with the Tibetan folklore concern-

²¹⁶ Excerpts from Tibetan Gesar epic texts describing each one of these heroes can be found in Gcod pa don grub and Bsod los (eds.) 1996. On Rgya tsha zhal dkar: 7–9; A khu Khro thung: 12–17; Chos skyong ber nag: 33–35; Ldan ma spyang khra (or byang khra, both spellings are used): 25–29; Nya tsha a brtan: 32–33.

²¹⁷ Das was a Tibetan-speaker with no knowledge of Chinese. In the absence of the "Captain and Lieutenant of the Militia" who he said "had lately gone to Lassa on business", Das was reliant on the information of his Tibetan companions; Das 1881: 39, 42–43. The author is grateful to Diana Lange for bringing this source to his attention.

²¹⁸ The identification of half-forgotten ruins in the landscape with Gesar's legendary campaigns is a phenomenon one finds across the Tibetan plateau from Ladakh to Kokonor. Indeed, local legends relating ruins and other landmarks to Gesar's heroic adventures and magical feats, provide a significant source of inspiration for the ever-fluid Gesar epic's *raconteurs* in all of the regions in which his epic is told. Das also noted the "vulgar belief that it was built by the Tartar general of the Emperor Kanghi [sic, Kangxi]", and observed "several Chinese houses and the Captain's quarters" nearby. He also observed "a large isolated fireplace with a central chimney" in the main courtyard where "a few Chinamen were preparing pastries". "In the front room" (i.e. doorway chapels) he describes "statues of the two favourite horses of the king, fully equipped for war, and each held by two grooms". The main idols were a set of five seated figures, with the central icon by far the largest, which were set against the northern wall. The main idol is described as a "gigantic statue [...] in a sitting posture with a terrifying countenance"; Das 1881: 43. All of these features are consonant with the general layout of Lord Guan temples of the time.

ing the epic of Ling Gesar. For example, “in the two wings of the building were placed statues of the captive kings of Hor-Jung and other countries” (Hor and Jang being two of the prominent campaigns in the Tibetan Gesar epic).²¹⁹ It is worth noting that this apparent indigenisation of the Lord Guan temple also appears to have been mirrored by a certain indigenisation of the imperial troops themselves stationed there, many of whom, he said, had taken local wives.²²⁰

Admittedly, such local identifications of the iconography of Lord Guan and his associates with “Epic Gesar” figures at the Chinese temples at Lhasa and Shigatsé was not unique to Tibet, and we do find a similar phenomenon in the Mongolian regions even as early as the 1770s, as attested to by the diary of Pallas, and that of Pozdeyev in the late 19th century.²²¹ However the difference seems to be that in Tibet, there was no parallel acceptance of Trinring Gyelpo/Lord Guan as the object of his own elaborated ritual cult.

Possibly relevant to this increasing obscuration of Lord Guan’s identity at Qing garrison temples in central Tibet, we also see, from the late 19th century, the development in eastern Tibet of a growing corpus of Buddhist rituals centred on the figure of Ling Gesar. The eastern Tibetan apotheosis of “Epic Gesar” or Ling Gesar as a protective deity in the class of “warrior deities” (*dgra lha*) appears have grown out of popular tradition, and the earliest formal ritual texts for this deity seem to date from the 17th century.²²² But as shown in the studies of Gregory Forgues, it was from the late 19th century, and especially in the Kham region, that this deity was hugely elaborated and elevated as the formal object of Buddhist ritual.²²³

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*: 43

²²⁰ “We did not see any Chinese women here. On account of the great distance of this country from China, the wives of the Chinese soldiers and officers do not accompany them, in consequence of which they keep Tibetan concubines [...] the Tibetan concubines of the Chinese soldiers prepare pastry and biscuits for sale in the bazar”; *ibid.*

²²¹ In addition to his account of Lord Guan/“Geser” temples at Sair usu, Uliastai, Kalgan Mai-mai’cheng, Hsia-p’u and Urga, Podzneyev, in his 1892 diary, also described in some detail the five main icons in the Chinese “Geser” (i.e. Lord Guan) temple at the “Mai-mai-che’eng” (Chinese commercial centre) of Kobdo, the main temple of which he describes as “one of the best in Mongolia”; Pozdneyev (trans. Shaw and Plank) 1971: 213.

²²² See FitzHerbert 2016.

²²³ A two-volume compendium of Tibetan ritual texts devoted to Ling Gesar, the majority of which have their origins in 19th century Kham, was published in *dpe cha* format in India in 1971: Don brgyud nyi ma (ed.) 1971. The authors of the texts of this collection include many of the most celebrated lamas associated with the 19th century *rimé* (*ris med*, non-sectarian) revival: the fifth Khamtrül Drupgyü Nyima (Kham sprul lnga pa Sgrub brgyud nyi ma, 1781–1847); Do Khyentsé Yeshé Dorjé (Rdo mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje, 1800–1859); Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thayé



Fig. 7. Rubin Museum of Art, F1996.20.1 (HAR 473).

In this ritual cult of Ling Gesar, which appears to have developed independently of any Chinese garrison temples, we do not see any evidence of direct borrowing from the Geluk cult of the Long Cloud King. Associations with Bektsé and Dzongtsen Shenpa for example are entirely absent. Instead, the religious or cultic associations of this epic-

(‘Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha’ yas, 1813–1899); Nyakla Pema Dündül (Nyag bla Padma bdud ’dul, 1816–1872); Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo (‘Jam dbyang mkhyen brtse dbang po, 1820–1892); and Chogyur Lingpa (Mchog gyur gling pa, 1829–1870). But by far the most prominent author in this collection is Ju Mipham, who authored no fewer than forty-five Gesar ritual texts. These texts spanned Mipham’s long and prolific career. The earliest was composed when he was only thirteen years old (1859) and the latest when he was around sixty. For more on these rituals see Forgues 2011.

derived Ling Gesar were mostly Nyingmapa, orientated towards Dzogchen, and the figure of Padmasambhava in particular.

Nevertheless, there is a discernable overlap in both the iconography and in the ritual *function* of these two alternative forms (Trinring Gyelpo and Lingjé Gesar Gyelpo). Indeed, a 19th century *thangka* held at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York (see Fig. 7) illustrates how hard it can be to distinguish iconographically between Gesar and Trinring Gyelpo in mounted form, since both were heroic martial figures adopted from folklore, and both were considered warrior deities (Tib. *dgra lha*; Mon. *dayisun tengri*). In the absence of lama figures or deities at the top of this image (which would identify it as Geluk or not), it is impossible to say with certainty whether it depicts Gesar, or Trinring Gyelpo, or both. On the Himalayan Art Resources database (himalayanart.org), the image is accordingly listed simply as a “Dralha” or “warrior deity” (*dgra lha*).

It is also interesting to observe that in Ju Mipham’s rituals for Gesar, the hero-deity is also invoked in a courtly seated iconographic form as Gesar Dorjé Tsegyel (Ge sar rdo rje tshe rgyal, see Fig. 8)²²⁴ which is unusual for a “warrior deity” (*dgra lha*), and is reminiscent of the pacific “kingly” depictions of Lord Guan as Trinring Gyelpo/Long Cloud King (as seen in Fig. 5 for example). It can be observed that in their range and function, Mipham’s Gesar rituals and Ilgugsan’s Trinring Gyelpo rituals could be seen as parallel *corpora* with broadly similar themes, goals and techniques.²²⁵

As Qing overlordship in Tibet faded in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the “Gesar-isation” of Tibet’s imperial garrison temples became even more marked, reaching its apex during the period of Tibet’s independence (1913–1951). A similar trajectory is also observable in Mongolia, so that by the mid 20th century the original Chinese identity of the deity worshipped at these temples seems to have all but forgotten in both regions, though the custom of drawing lots at the formerly “Chinese” temples did continue.

²²⁴ The title Gesar Dorjé Tsegyel, “Gesar the Adamantine Lord of Life”, was first used in the early 18th century rituals of Lelung Zhepé Dorjé mentioned earlier. On the iconography of the two forms of Gesar, mounted and seated, see Watt 2012.

²²⁵ Both centring on analogous kingly-figures-turned-warrior-deities (*dgra lha*). On the Mipham Gesar corpus, see Forgues 2011. His Gesar rituals are less focused on “repelling” (*bzlog pa*) than Ilgugsan’s, and more oriented towards personal flourishing, but are broadly similar in range.



Fig. 8. *Gesar Dorjé Tsegyel in seated "kingly" iconography. HAR 60615.*

Observers in this period described the Barmari temple, for example, simply as a temple to Gesar, and its other statues (which had perhaps been altered or reduced after the departure of the last Chinese soldiers in 1912) were also routinely identified with Gesaric figures. When Charles Bell photographed the interior of the Barmari temple in 1921, he captioned his image of the main idol (Fig. 9) "an image of King Kesar, the hero of early Tibetan mythology" and two ancillary statues as "Ke-sar's brother and minister". By their appearance, it seems these statues actually depict Lord Guan's son Guan Ping and his companion Zhang Fei, respectively (Fig. 10).



Fig. 9. Charles Bell's 1921 photograph of the central idol "King Ke-sar" at the Barmari temple in Lhasa. Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford: "Tibet Album" 1998.285.254.1.



Fig. 10. Charles Bell's 1921 photograph of "Ke-sar's brother and minister" at the Barmari temple. Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford: "Tibet Album" 1998.285.255.

Also of interest is that during the early 20th century, we find Ling Gesar (as opposed to Trinning Gyelpo) and his associated epic folklore becoming an object of interest to members of the Geluk political elite for the first time since the 18th century. This is reflected in the fact that the Reting Regent (Rwa sgreng) employed a personal Gesar bard.²²⁶ It is likely that it was also during this period that the association in the Geluk pantheon between Gesar and Vaiśravaṇa (Tib. Rnam thos sras), the Guardian King of the North, who, like both Lord Guan and Gesar is considered a “wealth god” (*nor lha*), was cultivated.

This is suggested because the association with Vaiśravaṇa is something which appears to be grounded in neither the Gesar folkloric traditions, nor in the Trinning Gyelpo ritual tradition examined above. Indeed associations with Vaiśravaṇa seem notably absent from the textual corpus of Ilgugsan Hutuktu). Instead, the association between Gesar and Vaiśravaṇa appears to have been a relatively late layer of accretion, based on a shared association between “Gesar King of Armies” (*ge sar dmag gi rgyal po*)²²⁷ and Vaiśravaṇa as kings of “the northern direction”, as well as generic shared associations between Guandi, Gesar and Vaiśravaṇa as wealth deities (*nor lha*).²²⁸

However, despite this discernable shift away from Guandi and towards Gesar at the former imperial garrison temples and shrines in Tibet, it is important to note that there is no evidence of (predominantly Nyingma) Gesar rituals, as distinct from (Geluk) Trinning Gyelpo rituals, ever being performed at the Geluk-curated former garrison temples at Barmari, Trapchi, Shigatsé, Dingri, Gyantsé and elsewhere.

²²⁶ Namely Champasangta (Tib. Byams pa gsang bdag), who would later be the main Tibetan informant for R. de Nebesky-Wojkowitz's *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* (1956) and R.A. Stein's *Recherches sur l'épopée et le barde au Tibet* (1959), two seminal works of mid-20th century western Tibetology.

²²⁷ As mentioned earlier, Tibetan scholars generally distinguish between “Gesar King of Armies” (*ge sar dmag gi rgyal po*) and “Ling Gesar” as two distinct legendary or mythical figures. The former is a generic title used of the Turko-Mongol king of the “northern direction” in early schemes of the Four Directions (*phyogs bzhi*) relating to the Tibetan imperial period (7th-9th centuries), where he also known by variations on the “Trom Gesar” (*'phrom/khrom ge sar*); see Stein 1959: 256–261. In Geluk tradition, going back even to Gönpojab's *History of Buddhism in China* (1736), the association with Lord Guan was actually related to this Gesar “king of armies”, and not “Ling Gesar”. However, the association with the latter was the main popular superscription, as we have seen. Of course, a certain fluidity in these matters of folklore and popular perception must be admitted, though a clear distinction between these two “Gesars” is maintained by Tibetan scholars.

²²⁸ Crossley has suggested that a merging between Guandi-Gesar and Vaiśravaṇa was also part of the Qing project of cultural synthesis. This may be so, but no sources are provided to support the suggestion, and this has not been corroborated by the Geluk ritual *corpora* examined here; Crossley 1999: 284.

6. Conclusion

What does the above material suggest about the questions we started with? Was the identification of Lord Guan as Gesar/Geser part of a deliberate imperial policy of syncretism or fusion? Or was it rather a subaltern phenomenon of appropriation on the part of the uneducated laity? Or was it something else? The additional materials presented here to elucidate this issue suggest that to answer these questions requires considerable nuance.

Part of that nuance involves an appreciation for different phases in the story, and for the different geographical regions of Buddhist Inner Asia and their relations with the Qing imperium. During the early Qing, both Lord Guan and Gesar/Geser were distinct figures of interest to the Qing court, and both were supported through literary patronage. Even in the late 18th century there is evidence that the figure of "Epic Gesar/Geser" (as distinct from Lord Guan) enjoyed some patronage Qing court.²²⁹ However, the materials presented here establish quite clearly that the figure of "Epic Gesar" was anathema to those Geluk hierarchs who led the formal adoption of the Long Cloud King (Lord Guan) as a protector of church and state propitiated at Yonghegong and other Geluk institutions from around 1750. Informally however, a popular identification of Lord Guan as Geser/Geser persisted across Qing Inner Asia. While this identification was never formally endorsed through text, the Geluk establishment clearly tolerated it and even cultivated it, presumably because it engendered a sense of familiarity and ownership among Mongols and Tibetans over a deity whose cultural resonance was otherwise completely Han Chinese. This superscription, which likely had its origins among the Mongol soldiery of the Qing army, and no formal documents have yet surfaced to indicate that it was a deliberate imperial strategy. As such, it can be considered part of the legacy of the military history of Qing Inner Asia, and contribution of its military culture to the wider cultural history of the Qing Empire.

This article hopes to have shown that the formal Geluk adoption of Lord Guan as a protector deity called Khamsum Dündül Trinring Gyelpo was a response to two parallel historical institutionalizations, both of which started in the mid 18th century: a) that of the Qing military presence in Mongolia and especially in Tibet (the authoritative "home" of Tibetan Buddhism); and b) that of the Geluk church as a

²²⁹ Sumpa Khenpo, in his 1779 letter to the Third/Sixth Panchen on the subject of Gesar (which makes no mention of Lord Guan) states that "various stories are told about him [Gesar] these days, and are even performed as dances (*zlos-gar*) before the great [Qing] Manjusri Emperor (*'jam dbyangs gong ma chen mo*)"; FitzHerbert 2015: 33.

religion of state at the Qing imperial centre.

As Qing power waned during the second half of the 19th century, and even more so in the 20th century when both Mongolia and Tibet asserted independence from China in the wake of the Qing dynasty's demise, what had previously been an informal identification of Lord Guan as Gesar/Geser became an ever-more substantive cultural phenomenon, so that gradually the original identity of this Chinese deity came completely obscured by this indigenising superscription.

However in Mongolia and in Tibet this indigenisation appears to have diverged to some degree. In Mongolia, where the "Geluk Geser" had gained considerable popular traction and formal institutionalisation (as with Ilgusan's "Geser" religious dances adopted at Khuree), the figure of "Geser" was widely understood as referring precisely to this Geluk protector (i.e. Trinring Gyelpo).²³⁰ However in Tibet, where the apotheosised form of "Epic Gesar" developed independently largely within Nyingma tradition, the figure of "Epic Gesar" increasingly came to subsume the figure of the Geluk protector, although this "Epic Gesar" never formally acknowledged or adopted by the Geluk curators of the formerly "Chinese" garrison temples.

During the period of Tibetan independence, there are some indications that (at least parts of) the Geluk religio-political establishment in the 1930s and 1940s were tentatively moving towards an interest in adopting "Epic Gesar" as a protective divinity, through his association with the *pukka* Buddhist guardian king Vaiśravaṇa. However, because of the lack of any pre-existent Geluk tradition concerning this "Epic Gesar", who had been dismissed by Geluk masters for so long (such as Changkya, Tukwan, Sumpa), such an embrace of the "Epic Gesar" or Ling Gesar as a national defender-deity was never formalised, and a full-blown "indigenous" Gesar identity was never formally embraced. Instead these former garrison temples, known locally as "Gesar temples" (*ge sar lha khang*) or "Chinese temples" (*rgya mi lha khang*), persisted in a kind of post-colonial limbo until their destruction at the hands of Maoist fervour in the 1960s.

This article has shown that Trinring Gyelpo was unambiguously a form of the imperial deity Guandi. It should be acknowledged in conclusion however that Trinring Gyelpo, the "Long Cloud King", does

²³⁰ A very clear expression of this perspective is found in Rintchen 1958. It also explains George Roerich's observation in his 1942 fieldwork-based article that "in Amdo among followers of the dGe-lugs-pa sect one often hears the unexpected statement that Tsong-kha-pa himself, the Tibetan Reformer, had been once the chaplain (*a-mchod*) of King Kesar of Ling". Roerich 1942: 286. The fate of Guandi temples in Amdo and the criss-crossing associations with Gesar and other local deities there, could be the subject of another article.

represent a “Tibetanised” form of this quintessentially Han Chinese deity. With the hindsight of Tibet’s current status as a colonised annexe to modern China, and in light of contemporary disputes concerning Tibet’s historical status, the historic role and political legacy of the senior Geluk figures who were most closely involved in this adoption may be viewed from different angles, as discussed for example by Illich and Fan Zhang. On one level, these figures, such as Changkya Rölpé Dorjé and Tukwan Lobzang Chökyi Nyima, were clearly serving Qing imperial interests and using their religious authority to facilitate the acceptance of the Qing’s (Chinese) military presence in Buddhist Inner Asia. But on another level, their successful indigenisation of this Chinese cultural form and symbol of authority, was also an act of appropriation which subverted and diluted what might have been a powerful colonial symbol. These Geluk figures in effect reduced Guandi from the status of the highest-ranking deity of state and a symbol of Chinese military dominance, to the status of a relatively marginal protector-deity.²³¹

Moreover, although the Geluk textual record surveyed here illustrates the scholastic rigour with which the identity of Trinring Gyelpo, as a form of Lord Guan, was kept distinct from the folkloric figure of Ling Gesar or “Epic Geser”, at the same time there can be no doubt that both in Tibet and in Mongolia, the Geluk establishment and indeed the Qing imperial authorities (pluralistic as both of these things were) tacitly allowed and even encouraged the blending and merging of these two figures in popular perception. In this way, the figure of Lord Guan was effectively indigenised in Buddhist Inner Asia, thus softening the perception of—and perhaps even the reality of—the Sino-Manchu imperial project as one of imperial imposition. So while the Geluk adoption of Lord Guan may be seen as a politically-motivated project serving the interests of the Qing imperium, the associated merging of identities between Lord Guan and Geser/Gesar was a more complex and nuanced affair. For its part, the Qing empire emerges from this story as a relatively light-handed and tolerant imperial project, which especially in the post-Qianlong era, perhaps due to the weakening of central imperial control over the frontier region of Tibet, became ever more tolerant of fusion and syncretism within its imperial domains, while trying to limit and reduce outside influence through an enforced isolation.

²³¹ See the discussions of this and related issues in Illich 2006 and Zhang 2016.

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A Visual Representation of the Qing Political and Military Presence in Mid-19th Century Tibet*

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Introduction

The presence of Qing representatives (both civilian and military) in Tibet during the 19th century is a surprisingly under-researched topic that first caught my attention during research on the British Library's Wise Collection. In 1857 the British official William Edmund Hay (1805–1879) engaged a Tibetan lama in Kullu in modern day Himachal Pradesh in northwest India to produce a series of maps and drawings that would later be known as the Wise Collection in the British Library. These constitute not only the most comprehensive set of visual depictions of mid-19th century Tibet, but also the largest panoramic map of Tibet of its time.¹ The contents of these maps and drawings touch on many themes. The panoramic map was made in a pictorial style, showing topographical and infrastructural characteristics as well as information on flora and fauna. Numerous buildings are shown, some of them represented in a very detailed way with specific architectural characteristics, others as simple stereotypes.

The production and the subject of this map relate to the period of the Ganden Phodrang (or the Dalai Lamas' rule in Tibet) during which Tibet had already been brought under the wing of the Qing Empire. This Qing protectorate in Tibet had been progressively established during the 18th century, beginning with the shift of power from the Mongols (first Qoshot and then Zunghar)² to the Manchus in 1720. In

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¹ For my research on the entire *Wise Collection* see my forthcoming monograph *An Atlas of the Himalayas by a 19th Century Tibetan Lama. A Journey of Discovery*.

² On this episode, see Shim's contribution to this volume.

the decades that followed, the Qing made a number of important interventions in Tibetan affairs, reforming the government, stationing an imperial garrison in Lhasa, and appointing *ambans*—Qing imperial residents, meaning “officials” in Manchu—to “live in Lhasa and keep an eye on the Tibetan government”.³ After a protracted period of political conflict and military dispute with Nepal in the late 18th century, the Qing Emperor Qianlong (r. 1735–1796) had reorganised the Tibetan government again in 1793 through a written document usually called the *Twenty-nine Articles*.⁴ Among other things, these reforms elevated the *ambans* to equal political authority with the Dalai Lama for major administrative issues and appointments. Moreover, Qing military garrisons, staffed with imperial troops, were established at various places within the territory of the Ganden Phodrang and in particular near the Nepalese border.⁵ After 1793 securing the external borders of the empire became a particularly important issue for the Qing. The time when the map was drawn, immediately followed the short incumbency of the Eleventh (1838–1855) Dalai Lama in Tibet, who died before taking political office.⁶ During his life, the “Dogra War” with the Sikhs (1841–1842) had challenged the Ganden Phodrang’s military power over the Tibetan Plateau, and in the same period, the Opium Wars (1839–1842; 1856–1860) and the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864) in China had diminished Qing influence in Tibet. The last years of the Eleventh Dalai Lama’s reign also witnessed another Nepalese invasion of Tibet, with the armies of Nepal eventually being driven out in the Nepalese-Tibetan War of 1855–1856.⁷ The Twelfth Dalai Lama was born in 1856, one year before the creation of the Wise Collection’s maps and drawings,⁸ and when Ngawang Yeshe (Rwa sgreng Ngag dbang ye shes) from Reting Monastery, was serving as regent.⁹ Assuming that the lama who produced the maps and drawings of the Wise Collection came from central Tibet,¹⁰ then he grew up during the the strong assertion of Qing imperial control that characterised the first half of the 19th century in Tibet, followed by the gradual weakening of imperial control in the middle decades of that century. In particular he lived at a time when Tibet had been charged by the Qing government to defend its borders itself, especially against Europeans. This sheds

³ Van Schaik 2011: 143. See also Goldstein 1997: 16.

⁴ On this reform, see Theobald and Travers’s contributions to this volume.

⁵ Goldstein 1997: 19. See also Jagou 2011: 201.

⁶ Like his two previous incarnations, he died at a young age. Cf. *ibid.*: 192. See also Petech 1959: 374–376.

⁷ Goldstein 1997: 21.

⁸ Jagou 2011: 191–192.

⁹ He served until 1862, cf. Jagou 2011: 202 and Petech 1959: 388–393.

¹⁰ See Lange forthcoming: Chapter 4.

some interesting light on the fact that this Tibetan lama agreed to produce a map including military information for a British official.

Amongst the Wise Collection maps we find several depictions of what appear to be Qing representatives' residences like *yamen*,¹¹ military headquarters or post stations. These can be easily identified: Sino-Manchu soldiers and *ambans* are seen next to some of them and their architectural style differs from the others.¹² Unfortunately, no captions are provided for these generic Chinese-looking buildings, thus leaving us in the dark as to what the map maker intended to show by them. While the garrisons' barracks are easy to identify, the generic or stereotypical illustrations of these "Chinese-looking buildings" are more difficult to read. They could be post stations; they could be military posts; or they could be circuit houses. Alone, their architectural style and their little yellow banners with (unreadable) pseudo Chinese characters, indicate some level of officialdom or connection to the Qing Imperium. It is for this reason that I have decided to designate them—more or less neutrally—as "Qing posts".

The visual and precise geographical localisation of these "Qing posts" over the Tibetan territory in the mid-19th century provided by the Wise Collection could be an introduction to further studies on the Qing presence on Tibetan territory, and on the Qing-Tibetan political and military relations at that time. In addition, the content and style of the extant English explanatory notes to these maps and drawings written by Hay, give a more explicit insight into the way the British considered the Qing-Tibetan relations in 1857.¹³ For the purposes of this paper, I will try to identify the "Qing posts" depicted on the Wise Collection maps and give further information, where possible, about their specific functions. As corroborating materials, I have chosen to concentrate on travel accounts written between the end of the 18th century and the end of the 19th, in order to provide an overview of the Qing presence in the Tibetan territory and a better understanding of the wider historical context of the maps. Locating the testimony of the Wise Collection materials within this wider timeframe also reflects the fact that although I consulted a wide range of written and visual sources, I have not so far found relevant corroborating materials from the specific period of the mid-19th century.

At first, I focused on the travel accounts and maps based on the tours by three Indian *pundits* whose explorations were not only the

¹¹ *Yamen*: the headquarters or office of the head of an agency (Hucker 1985: 575, entry 7862).

¹² It is known that the troops posted in Tibet were composed of both Manchu bannermen and Han Chinese soldiers (see Petech 1950: 257). Kolmaš (1994)' work has shown that the *ambans* were mostly Manchu officials.

¹³ Hay additional notes are specified between single brackets within the paper.

closest in time to the creation of the Wise Collection maps, but who also for the most part travelled along the same routes shown on these maps, namely Sarat Chandra Das, Nain Singh and Hari Ram. In particular the three published narratives by Sarat Chandra Das (covering almost 500 pages altogether), based on journeys he undertook to Tibet between 1879 and 1882 as a spy on behalf of the British Government, represent the most valuable corroborating source in this context.¹⁴ Das not only provided a detailed account of his travel routes but also gave comprehensive descriptions of countless aspects of Tibetan culture, religion and history, including numerous descriptions of Qing garrisons and troops, and the so-called “circuit houses”¹⁵ of the *ambans*. Furthermore, he provided extensive appendices on the government of Tibet, including its military resources and structure and on the foreign relations of Tibet.¹⁶ In contrast to those of Sarat Chandra Das, the travel accounts of Nain Singh and Hari Ram (based on their journeys in the 1860s and 1870s) were not published by the authors themselves, but only some time later by T.G. Montgomerie and H. Trotter.¹⁷

I also consulted primary sources that are first-hand accounts by foreign travellers and diplomats, like those of the Russian explorer Gombojab Tsybikov (1919), the Japanese monk and traveller Ekai Kawaguchi (1909) and the British diplomat Hugh Richardson (1974). While the reports by the three Indian *pundits* are more closely contemporary to the Wise Collection maps, these other accounts date from around seventy years before, to around seventy years after the maps' date. These narratives thus inform us on situations that may have differed considerably from that represented on the maps and therefore need to be treated with caution.

Then, I completed this comparison between the Wise Collection (mid-19th century) and the travel accounts (second half of the 19th century) with a careful reading of a late 19th century work written by W.W. Rockhill's *Tibet. A Geographical, Ethnographical, and Historical Sketch, derived from Chinese Sources*.¹⁸ The advantage of this almost 300-page description of Tibet, which addresses various topics, is that it is a compilation of information contained in various Chinese sources, which thus adds an additional perspective on the topic scrutinised

¹⁴ See Das 1881, 1885 and 1887.

¹⁵ “Circuit house” was the term used for the guesthouses used by government employees in British India. A “circuit” was a district administered or formally administered by travelling judges.

¹⁶ See appendix in Das 1885: 20–23 and appendix in Das 1881: 1–2.

¹⁷ All the records were published in the *General Reports of the Survey of India* in the 1860s and 1870s and were later compiled in 1915 in the *Records of the Survey of India*, Volume III, part I: *Explorations in Tibet and Neighbouring Regions, 1865–1879*.

¹⁸ Rockhill 1891.

here and a preliminary overview of the Chinese documentation available that I have not yet consulted, albeit regarding a much earlier period, mostly the end of the 18th century. As Rockhill states:

the presence in Tibet of many Chinese scholars, sent there by their Government to hold official positions, who thrown in daily contact with the educated and ruling classes of Tibet, have made records, since published, of what they have seen and heard while residing in the country, opens to us a vast and trustworthy source of information.¹⁹

The primary basis for Rockhill's publication was the *Weizang tuzhi* (衛藏圖識), "A Topographical Description of central Tibet", published in 1792 by Ma Shaoyun (馬少雲) and Sheng Meixi (盛梅溪). The text of the *Weizang tuzhi* itself was compiled using extracts from other Chinese works.²⁰ Among these was the *Xizhao tulue* (西招圖略), "A Description of Tibet Accompanied by Maps" published in 1798 by Song Yun (松筠, 1752–1835),²¹ a former *amban* in Tibet. Song Yun's book includes detailed maps in Manchu, based on inspection tours he undertook in the late 18th century. They were also reproduced in Chinese in the *Xizang tu kao*, "Atlas of Tibet", another 19th century work by the Qing official Huang Peiqiao (黃沛翹).²² It is from this latter edition that I have reproduced some of the maps in this paper.

I am well aware that these maps reflect the state of Qing presence in Tibet in a period more than half a century prior to the production of the *Wise Collection* map. Nevertheless, these Manchu maps prepared in Chinese (originally in Manchu language) are still of comparative value. They also represent an important source in their own right, as they constitute the only detailed visual Manchu representation of the Qing political and military presence in Tibet that I have been able to find.²³

¹⁹ *Ibid.*: 1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*: 3–4.

²¹ For detailed information on Song Yun, see Dabringhaus 1994 and 2014, Kolmaš 1992: 553 and 1994: 36.

²² Huang Peiqiao 1894. Huang Peiqiao joined the military as a young man and was an official in Sichuan for many years. He studied military and border affairs and began to collect classical literature and records on Tibet to compile this work. It took him from August 1885 until May 1886 to complete the atlas. The work encompasses many aspects of the history, geography, politics, economy, culture, folk customs, and languages of Tibet (last accessed on 01/08/2019 at <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/19485/>).

²³ I found another 18th/19th century Chinese map of Tibet in the collection of the French Sinologist Arnold Vissière (1858–1930) in Musée Guimet/Paris (Reference 58303). The map was hand-drawn and coloured, but at the current state of research

These sources reflect various “editorial” perspectives that need to be taken into account: A British-Tibetan point of view for the main source, the Wise Collection maps; a British-Indian perspective for the *pundits*; Sino-US for the *ambans*’ writings as reported in Rockhill, and a Manchu perspective reflected in the maps of Song Yun. Taken together, these diverse sources have enabled me to identify the exact location by name of most of the “Qing posts” depicted on the maps. Nevertheless, there are still many gaps to be filled before we can fully identify a complete list of such “Qing posts” in mid-19th century Tibet and their official functions. This paper has only focused on the identification of the “Qing posts” shown on the Wise Collection maps and thus only represents a preliminary step into this direction.

The maps: general information and overview

The Wise Collection consists of six large picture maps and twenty-eight accompanying drawings showing monastic rituals and different kinds of ceremonies.²⁴ The six picture maps cover the areas of Lhasa and the traditional Tibetan provinces of Ü (Dbus), Tsang (Gtsang) and Ngari (Mnga’ ris), as well as the Indus Valley in Ladakh (La dwags) and the Zangskar (Zangs dkar) Valley. Placed side by side, these maps present a continuous panorama of more than ten metres. Places on the maps are consecutively numbered from Lhasa westwards and southwards. There are more than 900 numbered annotations on the maps and drawings, with correspondingly numbered explanatory notes written on separate sheets of paper. However, the full keys only now exist for the picture maps of Ladakh and Zangskar and for most of the accompanying drawings. The picture map of central Tibet or Ü is mainly labelled with captions in Tibetan, while on the map of western Tibet, English captions dominate. The maps of Lhasa and Tsang are accompanied by neither captions nor explanatory texts.

The maps were made in a pictorial style and the scale is not uniform. The maps also have different orientations—some are oriented to the south, some to the north, and still others to the east. Buildings on the maps usually face the viewer, ignoring actual geographic orientation.

no statement about the exact date of the map can be made. This map is considerably less detailed than the maps compiled by Song Yun. It does not show specific buildings or routes, but rivers, lakes, mountains and place names. Other maps of Tibet made in early and mid-18th century in the so-called “Qing cartography tradition” represent extracts of atlases and were drawn in an even smaller scale than the map in Musée Guimet and show even less details, for instance the “Kangxi map” in the British Library (Maps K.Top.116.15a, 15b).

²⁴ For a general overview of the *Wise Collection*, see Lange 2016a.

Also, instead of showing the whole building, often only significant architectural characteristics are highlighted. In contrast to the maps of Tibet created by westerners²⁵ and by Chinese mapmakers, the illustrated maps of the Wise Collection are not concerned with topographical accuracy but provide a much wider range of visual information.

The maps of Ü and Tsang are dominated by illustrations of Tibetan monasteries; Tibetan administrative centres or *dzongs* (*rdzong*);²⁶ and the aforementioned “Qing posts” and garrisons. These three together constituted the “main seats of power” in 19th century Tibet. Manchu garrison headquarters and parade grounds for soldiers are shown at Lhasa, Gyantsé (Rgyal rtse), Shigatsé (Gzhis ka rtse) and Dingri (Ding ri).



Illustrations of (from left) a Lhasa kalön; an amban; and a Potala tse drung.
Extract of Add. Or. 3033 © British Library Board.

Among the Wise Collection’s accompanying drawings, one is a depiction of various “officials” that symbolises the “main seats of power” at the time.²⁷ The illustrations here provide an important key for some of the other maps and drawings in the collection, because it includes most of the people depicted in the maps and drawings on a smaller scale, such as three types of official who played, among others, key

²⁵ Actually, neither Sarat Chandra Das nor Nain Singh produced maps of their routes. The maps published in their papers and in Das’ narratives were made by British cartographers based on the information collected by the *pundits*.

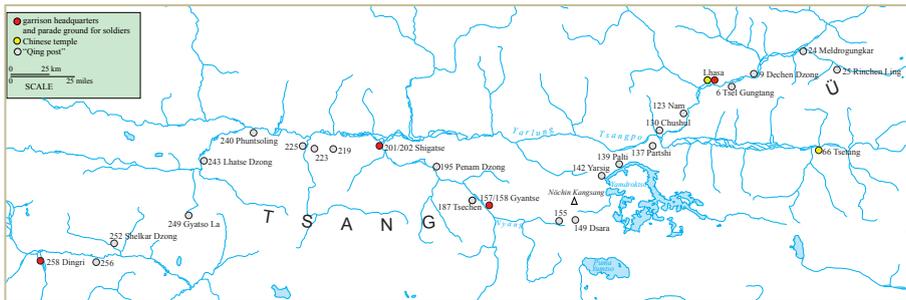
²⁶ Under the Ganden Phodrang government, Tibet was divided into districts—often centred on fortified complexes which served as the administrative centre of a district and headquarters of a district magistrate or revenue officer or *dzongpön* (*rdzong dpon*).

²⁷ British Library catalogue entry for shelfmark Add. Or. 3033.

roles in the mid-19th century Tibetan Government: namely the Council Ministers, here called “Kalön of Lhasa” with the Tibetan caption “*Lha sa'i bka' blon*”; the *amban*, here called “Ámbá from Gyänāk or China” and the additional explanation “rGyanak ‘blackplain’ the Tibetan name for China”, followed by the Tibetan caption “*Rgya nag am pa*”; and the monk officials here called “Potala Situng of Lhasa” with the Tibetan caption “*Po ta la'i rtse drung*”.²⁸

In contrast, the maps of western Tibet or Ngari highlight the sparse population and show fewer monasteries and more market places, trading centres and *tazam* (*rta zam*) stations (Tibetan governmental postal stations).²⁹ They don't show any buildings indicating the presence of Qing representatives or soldiers.

There are twenty-one “Qing posts” shown on the maps of Ü and Tsang: four along the so-called “post road to China” (caption on the map itself made by Hay) along the Kyichu Valley east of Lhasa; seven between Lhasa and Gyantsé; two between Gyantsé and Shigatsé; and eight between Shigatsé and Dingri. All of them are located at strategic places: close to monasteries and forts as well as at border crossing points. The posts are easy to identify because their illustrations differ from the other buildings on the maps. All of them are shown in a stereotyped way: a small building in Chinese architectural style with a courtyard, surrounded by a wall with an entrance gate and equipped with a yellow banner.



Map of Ü Tsang showing the “Qing posts”, garrisons and Chinese temple shown on the Wise Collection maps. The numbers refer to the numbering on the Wise Collection maps.

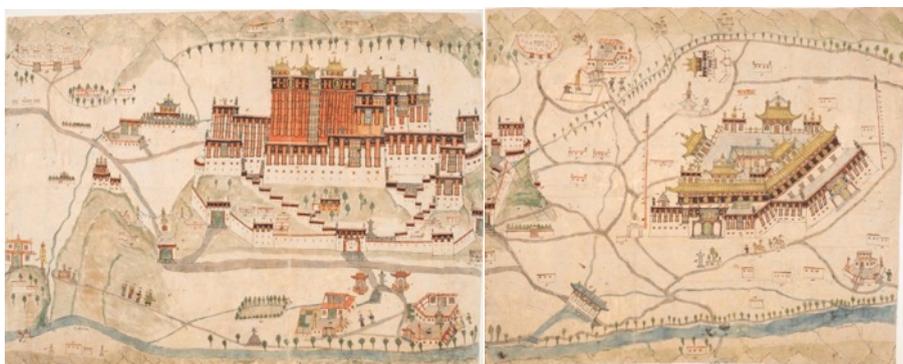
©Diana Lange and Karl Ryavec.

²⁸ Kawaguchi stated about these officials: “The priests of higher rank who attend to the affairs of the State bear the title of ‘Tse Dung’ [...]” (Kawaguchi 1909: 429).

²⁹ For a detailed account of the maps of Ngari, see Lange 2018.

Lhasa: the visible presence of the Qing

The map of Lhasa is the most detailed and largest city map in the Wise Collection. It is clearly dominated by illustrations of the town's two most significant buildings—the Potala (Po ta la) Palace and the Jokhang (Jo khang) temple or Lhasa Tsuglakhang (Lha sa gtsug lag khang).³⁰ As Tibet's capital, Lhasa was also the general headquarters for representatives of the Qing in Tibet, the *ambans*, and thus the map includes detailed depictions of the *yamen* of the *ambans*, as well as of the Trapchi (*grwa bzhi*) military camp and parade ground; the “Chinese Temple” or Gesar Lhakhang (Ge sar lha khang) on the summit of the Barmari (Bar ma ri) hill;³¹ and another building in “Chinese style” (probably one of the mosques of the Chinese Muslims).



The map of Lhasa showing the yamen of the ambans (below the Potala); the Trapchi/Drazhi military camp (upper part between Potala and Jokhang); Gesar Lhakhang (lower left corner); and another building in “Chinese style” (lower right corner). Add. Or. 3013 f1 and f2 ©British Library Board.

Two *yamen*, or *amban*'s headquarters, are shown in great detail on the Lhasa map: two buildings in Chinese-style architecture with walled courtyards, vegetable gardens, entrance gates, and adorned with different banners. Several people are depicted next to these illustrations, whose style of clothing and attributes suggest clearly that they represent *ambans* and Tibetan government officials. The illustrations and their location on the map, closely correspond to the depiction found in Laurence Austine Waddell's 1904 map of Lhasa, which has in the same

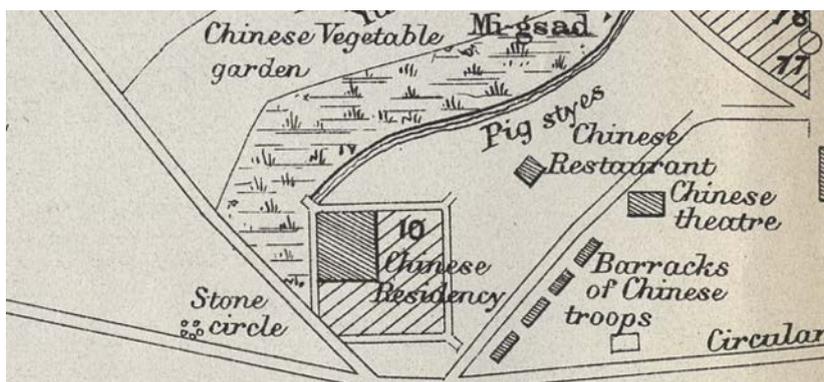
³⁰ For a detailed description of the Lhasa map see Lange 2016b.

³¹ For more on the history of this temple, see the contribution of S.G. FitzHerbert in the present volume.

area a “Chinese vegetable garden”, a “Chinese residency of the Ambans”, pig sties, a Chinese restaurant and theatre, and several “barracks of Chinese troops”.³²



The yamen south of the Potala. Extract of Add. Or. 3013 f1 © British Library Board.



The yamen south of the Potala as shown on Waddell's map.



Trapchi/ Drazhi. Extract of Add. Or. 3013 f2 © British Library Board.

³² Waddell 1906: 327. See also Sandberg's map where a “Gya yamen or Amban's palace” are shown (Sandberg 1906). Pundit A.K.'s shows an “Amban's house” in the same area (Das 1902: 149).

While the *amban's* official residence was the *yamen*, the residence of the Qing troops was Trapchi/Drazhi to the north of Lhasa. It is shown on the Lhasa map with a large building and a courtyard surrounded by a wall and a nearby exercise ground along with a little shrine.

There exist numerous descriptions of this area,³³ which is also shown on other maps of Lhasa made by westerners in early 20th century. Waddell for example includes “Dabchi” with separate Chinese and Tibetan Parades.³⁴ In an earlier map made by Pundit A.K., based on his survey in 1878/79, “Dabchi” is also shown with two separate “Chinese and Tibetan Parade Grounds”.³⁵ Ekai Kawaguchi provided the following description:

The manoeuvres are held in the vicinity of a little village called Dabchi, which lies about two miles north of Lhasa on the road leading to Sera monastery. In the village there is a shrine of Kwanti [Guandi] (a Chinese war-God) whom the Tibetans call Gesergi Gyalpo (saffron king),³⁶ and who is much revered as a God driving away evil spirits, though the Chinese settlers from the greater proportion of his actual worshippers.³⁷

The little shrine shown on the parade ground could represent that “shrine of Kwanti”. Richardson also mentioned a “Ge-sar chapel” at Drazhi, on level ground.³⁸ Kawaguchi furthermore stated that:

north of the shrine there is a high mound about one furlong square, with an arsenal standing in the centre. Thence spreads a vast plain five miles to the north, half a mile to the west and five miles to the east. This is the scene of the great parade.³⁹

On the map, two soldiers are depicted at Drazhi, wearing different uniforms and guns—probably symbolising a Qing and a Tibetan soldier respectively.

³³ For instance, Richardson 1974: 23 and Tsybikov 2017 [1919]: 2010.

³⁴ Waddell 1906: 327. On Sandberg’s map we find a mention of “Thabche Barracks and Chinese Parade Ground” (Sandberg 1906).

³⁵ The map was published in Das 1902: 149. For further information on this map see Andreyev 2014.

³⁶ Refers to the legendary king Gesar, see next section. For more on the identification of Guandi with King Gesar in this period, and the Guandi shrines in Lhasa and elsewhere in Tibet, see the article by S.G. FitzHerbert in the present volume.

³⁷ Kawaguchi 1909: 550. For further description of the place see Petech 1950: 68 and Tsybikov 2017 [1919]: 209–10.

³⁸ Richardson 1974: 54. For further information on Guandi and Gesar, see the next section, and also the contribution of S.G. FitzHerbert in this volume.

³⁹ Kawaguchi 1909: 551.

The Chinese Temple or Gesar Lhakhang in Lhasa

Among the Wise Collection's accompanying drawings there is also a very detailed illustration and description of the Gesar Lhakhang or "Chinese temple". It was built in "Chinese style" in 1792 on behalf of the Qianlong Emperor (乾隆, r. 1735–1796). The temple was intended to commemorate the Gorkha War victory (1792) and dedicated to the Chinese god of war—Guandi (關帝)—who, it seems, was identified with the legendary King Gesar for political reasons.⁴⁰



The "Chinese Temple" or Gesar Lhakhang as a) detailed additional drawing and b) extract from the Lhasa map. Add. Or. 3013 f1 and 3027 ©British Library Board.

A long explanatory text is provided for the detailed illustration:

This is a drawing of the Chinese temple at Lassa [Lhasa], and it is interesting as tending to show the powerful control which that nation exercises over the Tibetans at Lassa, who are of a different religion: still here is the Raja of Lassa [refers to the Dalai Lama or his regent] and a deputy of the Gyalwa Rinpochi [Rgyal ba rin po che, "Royal Precious One", one of the titles of the Dalai Lama] ordered and forced to kneel and prostrate themselves before the Chinese idols and fire in the shape

⁴⁰ This question is discussed further in S.G. FitzHerbert's article in the present volume.

of lighted candles. This alone proves how odious the Chinese government must be to the Tibetans, and how glad they would be of an opportunity to get rid of their oppressions. The name of the temple is Zhāngyāngmūn. Zhang is the name of the principle Deota,⁴¹ and yāngmūn [yamen?] is the Chinese name for a temple: it is called in Tibetan Gésirr Lāhkung [Gesar Lhakhang]. The place where this temple is erected beneath a hill is called in Tibetan Pāmāri [Barmari]. There are eight Chinese temples in Lassa of which this is the principal and largest.⁴²

The upper part of the drawing shows illustrations of seven statues. The central figure among these statues is “Zhāng” who is Guandi, the Chinese “god of war and of loyalty”,⁴³ derived from the Guan Yu (關羽, 160–219), a Chinese general who played an important role in the establishment of the Three Kingdoms (220–280). His courtesy name was Yun zhang (雲長), thus “Zhāng” was maybe derived from this term. Later Guan Yu was deified.⁴⁴ During the Qing Dynasty Guandi was integrated into the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon.⁴⁵ The spread of the Guandi cult was planned and supported politically and this led to the construction of numerous Guandi temples in Tibet such as the “Chinese Temple” on the Lhasa map. At the same time Guandi was increasingly equated with Gesar, the legendary king who played a significant

⁴¹ “deota” is the anglicised phonetic rendering of the Hindi term devatā (“deity”).

⁴² Explanatory text for drawing Add. Or. 3027, Wise Collection, British Library.

⁴³ See Belsky 2005: 131.

⁴⁴ The meaning of “Zhang” as a name used here for the main deity, remains open to various explanations. As discussed in George FitzHerbert’s contribution to the present volume, the term *yun zhang*, one of the common Chinese names of Lord Guan, means “long cloud” and Sprin ring rgyal po (lit. “long-cloud king”) was the main Tibetan name used for Guandi in the Tibetan-language rituals texts devoted to this deity. Other possibilities suggested are that *zhang*, meaning “uncle” in Tibetan, was also a Tibetan designation used of Guandi (as seen for example in Tibetan-language “history” of Lord Guan by the Third Thukwan translated and discussed in his article). A further possibility suggested is that the Lhasa Lord Guan idol may have in some way been merged/combined/confused by Tibetans with Wenchang/Wenzhang (文昌), so that “zhang” may have become a general Tibetan designation for “Chinese god” (email correspondence with George FitzHerbert, August 2018). I remain unconvinced by this last idea since Guandi and Wenchang represent two distinct gods. Richard Belsky has stated that “undoubtedly, the spirits most commonly worshipped within Beijing scholar-officials *hui guan* [会馆, provincial or county guild halls] were Wenchang and Guandi. [...] Wenchang [the “god of literature”] was popularly considered to be the patron spirit of examination candidates”; Belsky 2005: 130.

⁴⁵ This is the main theme of George FitzHerbert’s contribution to the present volume.

role in Tibetan and Mongolian mythology, so that Guandi and Gesar were gradually fused.⁴⁶

Fourteen people are shown prostrating in front of the statues, who according to their appearance (clothes, hairstyle and hats) are clearly identifiable as seven Tibetans and seven Qing officials. The only person standing is the translator. The Tibetans dressed in yellow clothes represent three of the most powerful personalities of the Tibetan Government: the Regent described as “Gyelpo Rating⁴⁷ or Raja of Lassa”; the Grand Abbot described as “Chikyub kenbo,⁴⁸ the Aide de Camp⁴⁹ of the Gyalwa Rinpochi”; and the father of the (still minor) Dalai Lama described as “Gyalyub,⁵⁰ the Father of Gyalwa Rinpochi⁵¹ (yub means Father)”.



*The group of people prostrating in front of the statues.
Extract of Add. Or. 3027, © British Library Board.*

Since the Wise Collection’s maps and drawings were made in 1857 or 1858 “Gyalpo Rating” (Rgyal po Rwa sgreng) must refer to Regent Reting Ngawang Yeshe (Rwa sgreng rin po che Ngag dbang ye shes, 1816–1863), who served as Regent between 1845 and 1862.⁵² As for the

⁴⁶ For more on this, including extensive references to prior scholarship on the subject, see the contribution of George FitzHerbert to the present volume. See also Czaja 2008: 191–192.

⁴⁷ Gyelpo Reting (Rgyal po Rwa sgreng), labelled as No. 8.

⁴⁸ *Spyi khyab mkhan po* or “chief abbot”. Rendered by Das as Chingkhyap Khenpo (*spyi khyab mkhan po*), labelled as No. 9.

⁴⁹ Personal assistant or secretary to a person of high rank.

⁵⁰ *Rgyal yab*, labelled as No. 10.

⁵¹ Refers to the Dalai Lama. Petech (1950: 67) states: “There were two other personages, who were not members of the council, but very often took part in the deliberations of the council, and gradually became a kind of unofficial members. One was, quite naturally, the father of the Dalai-Lama”.

⁵² See Jagou 2011: 192 and 202; Petech 1959: 374–376 and 388–393.

“Chikyub kenbo” (Spyi khyab mkhan po), Das stated that this Prime Minister figure was one of the “seven great personages” in Tibet.⁵³

In addition, four Tibetan council ministers or *kalön* (*bka' blon*) are shown in one line (Nos. 19–22) and described as “the four Lassa viziers or Kālūn, who are obliged on this occasion to wear their clothes of the Chinese colour blue. The Lassa functionaries merely go through the forms without a particle of feeling on the occasion”.

On the Manchu side, we can see: “the two Chinese Ambassadors” (No. 11 and 12), along with the “Tāloyé (rank of Major) [No. 13]. Phōkpun [*pok-pön, phog dpon*] (military paymaster) [No. 14]. Sōngyé (rank of Captain) [No. 15]”. The term “Tāloyé” derives from Chinese *da lao ye* 大老爺, described by scholars as a “former official term of address for magistrates”,⁵⁴ as a “Chinese title of a lay official”;⁵⁵ as a “Chinese officer”,⁵⁶ and as “*taloye* (captain) of the Chinese militia”.⁵⁷ On the other figures, Hay’s notes to the Wise Collection illustration elaborate thus: “Chākōché” (No. 16) and “Pichinché” (No. 17)—“rank as our Tashildars⁵⁸ over Chinese only”. “Pichinché” probably derives from *bichéchi* (*sbi cha'i chi*), the transcription of the Mongolian “bicäci”—denoting a Manchu clerk in public office. “Chākōché” probably derives from *jar-gochi* (Mo. *jaryuci*, Tib. *sbyar go chi*) meaning “judge” (see below).⁵⁹

The style of the Qing official clothes differs and provides information about their different ranks. Only the hats of two *ambans*, the *dalaoye* and the translator are decorated with a peacock feather. The buttons on top of their hats also show different colours; only the *ambans* are shown with red (coral) buttons, which represented the highest rank. The hats of the others are decorated with white and blue buttons. According to Perceval Landon, the use of hat buttons in China was carefully regulated and the different colors were used by different

⁵³ Das 1885, appendix: 3. Tsybikov called them “jishap-khenpo of the Dalai Lama, the four highest lama officials who are known as the court scribes” (Tsybikov 2017 [1919]: 72). Petech provided the following description: “The government of Tibet was basically divided into a secular and an ecclesiastical branch. [...] there were 175 ecclesiastical officials (*rtse-drung*) and the highest among them was the Chief Abbot (*spyi-k'yab mk'an-po*; the Chinese called him simply *mk'an-po*); the office was created at the time of the Gorkha wars of 1788–1792. He was the head of the ecclesiastical establishment and acted as a link between the Dalai-Lama, to whom he had always direct access, and the *yig-ts'an(g)*” (Petech 1973: 7–8).

⁵⁴ Matthew 1975: 848. See also Hucker (1985: 468, entry 5983): lit. “great old gentleman”, “Your honour”—polite reference to, or form of a direct address for, a Prefect, a Departmental Magistrate, or a District Magistrate.

⁵⁵ Tsybikov 2017 [1919]: 267.

⁵⁶ Das 1885: 67.

⁵⁷ Das 1887: 10.

⁵⁸ A revenue officer in India.

⁵⁹ See Petech 1950: 75.

ranks (red, pink, transparent and opaque blue, crystal, white, gold).⁶⁰ The hats of the representatives of the Tibetan government are decorated with red buttons, except for the Regent's hat. Only the hats of the *kalön* are decorated with peacock feathers (as also shown on the detailed illustration of the *kalön* on the drawing introduced further above).

In summary, the drawing of the Chinese temple in Lhasa and the explanatory notes provide a spectrum of information about Qing-Tibetan relations in this period: about the official worship of Guandi and about the highest-ranking imperial officers in Tibet, and their relations with their Tibetan counterparts. The depiction of leading personalities from the Tibetan government kneeling and prostrating in front of Chinese gods together with representatives of the Qing Dynasty speaks volumes. Statements from the explanatory notes like "this alone proves how odious the Chinese government must be to the Tibetans, and how glad they would be of an opportunity to get rid of their oppressions"—notes made by Hay—probably reflect the Lama's opinion. I would not exclude the possibility that it also represents the draftsman's negative attitude to the political circumstances in mid-19th century Tibet. The drawing of the "Chinese temple" is one of the drawings that represents insider knowledge of a small group of people involved in administrative and governmental matters in these days. I doubt that many Tibetans were allowed or had the chance to witness such a ceremony. Therefore, one may assume that the lama who made this drawing had been in personal contact with such circles or even have been a part of them.

On the map showing the area east of Lhasa there is a building labelled *Lhasa jargochi gyami pön* (*lha sa bya go che rgya mi dpon*). According to Luciano Petech, writing about the early 18th century, "jargochi" is the transcription of the Mongolian *jaryuci*, meaning "judge".⁶¹ He states that during the early 18th century (i.e. a much earlier period) "they hardly can have functioned as such in Lhasa, because there was no independent Chinese judiciary in Tibet during this period [refers to the early 18th century]" and that they were quite often sent out on mission to Tashilhunpo and elsewhere, when the *amban* preferred to remain in Lhasa.⁶² The Tibetan term *gyami pön* can be translated as "Chinese leader" or "Chinese official". At present I have not been able to ascertain with certainty what functions the *jargochi gyami pön* performed in mid-19th century Lhasa. The fact that his residence is shown on the map in detail and in similar size to the surrounding temples and

⁶⁰ Landon 1905: 215.

⁶¹ Petech 1950: 75; spelling according to Petech: 'sbyar go chi' or 'jar go chi'.

⁶² *Ibid.*: 237.

monasteries indicates that his role was significant. Sarat Chandra Das also mentioned in his “list of the important places of Lhasa” a place called “Cha ko-chhe”⁶³—probably referring the same building.



*The house of the Lhasa jargochi gyami pön.
Extract of Add. Or. 3017 f1, © British Library Board.*

Qing posts in the Kyichu (Skyid chu) Valley east of Lhasa and in Tsetang (Rtse thang)

The map of central Tibet or Ü does not exclusively cover the area of central Tibet but also the bordering areas in the south. It starts from east of Lhasa showing the Kyichu Valley and neighbouring regions until Medrogongkar (Mal gro gung dkar), and a route leading southward from Ganden (Dga' ldan) Monastery via Samye (Bsam yas) Monastery to the Yarlung Tsangpo River (Yar klungs gtsang po), and from there via Tsetang to the Yarlung (Yar klungs) and Chongye ('Phyongs rgyas) Valleys and further to Mon Tawang (Mon rta dbang) which today falls within Arunachal Pradesh in India. “Qing posts” are only shown in the Kyichu Valley east of Lhasa. All of them are located on a route—marked in white and labelled as “road to China”—so probably they served as resthouses for imperial officials/soldiers or Chinese traders on the march.

⁶³ Das 1885: 162.



The "Qing" residences in the Kyichu Valley east of Lhasa: located next to Tsel Gungtang (No. 6, Tshal gung thang), Dechen Dzong (No. 9, Bde chen), Meldro Gongkar (No. 24) and Rinchen Ling (No. 25, Ren chen gling), from left to right. Extract of Add. Or. 3017 f1 and f2 © British Library Board.

In Tsetang we find a "Chinese temple" (No. 66 on the map and labelled "gya lha khang" in the notes), shown in a similar style as the residences, but with the typical roof decoration of temples and monasteries. This likely represents another Guandi/Gesar temple.⁶⁴ On the other hand, it could also represent a mosque of Chinese Muslims. There exist several historical reports about Muslims and a mosque in Tsetang.⁶⁵



The "Gya Lhakhang" in Tsetang. Extract of Add. Or. 3017 f4 © British Library Board.

⁶⁴ The presence of such a temple at Tsethang is also briefly discussed in George Fitz-Herbert's contribution to the present volume.

⁶⁵ See for instance Gaborieau 1973: 24, Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark 1952: 234–235, Radhu 1997: 154.

Qing residences between Lhasa and Gyantsé

There are two further “Qing posts” shown on the route between Lhasa and Chushul (Chu shul). One is depicted with trees and nearby houses (No. 123), probably corresponding to the village of “Nam” mentioned in Das’ narrative as including a “Gya-khang or the Ampa’s circuit house, the nearest stage to Lhasa”.⁶⁶ The other (No. 130) is shown at Chushul itself, at the foot of a mountain with ruins on top. Chushul was an important stop on the way to Lhasa coming from south and thus it is to be expected that it would contain a circuit house.



Two “Qing posts” on the Kyichu River between Lhasa and Chushul.
Extract of Add. Or. 3016 f3 ©British Library Board.

For traders and pilgrims coming from the south and travelling to Lhasa (or vice versa) the Chakzam (Lcag zam) ferry was the most important ferry station for crossing the Yarlung Tsangpo. Thus it is not surprising to find another “Qing post” nearby (No. 137). This was also observed by Das who stated:

At the north-western corner of the village and about 300 yards above the river Tsang-po, and about half a mile from the upper part of Partshi village, is situated the *Gya-khang*, or circuit house of the Ampa.⁶⁷

Following the route southwards to Gyantsé two further “Qing posts” are shown south of the Kampa La on the shore of the Yamdrokto: one in Palti (Dpal di, No. 139) and the other in Yarsig (Yar gzig, No. 142).

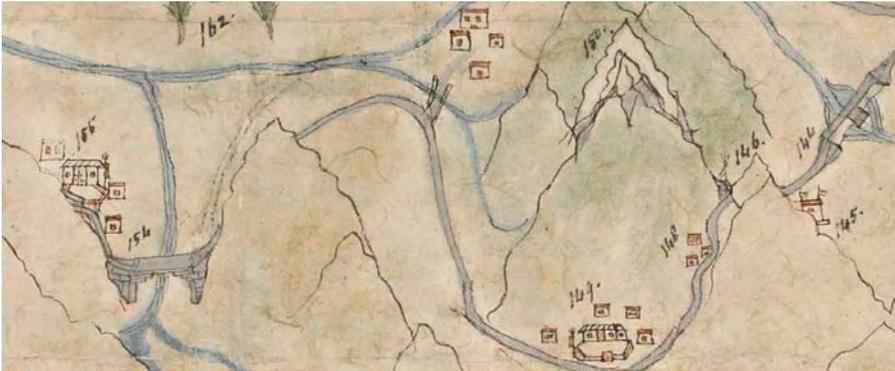
⁶⁶ Das 1885: 131–132.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*: 127. Gya khang: “Chinese house”.



*The three residences between Chakzam ferry and on the shore of the Yamdroktsu.
Extract of Add. Or. 3016 f3 © British Library Board.*

There are two more “Qing posts” shown between the Yamdroktsu Lake and Gyantsé. One (No. 149) is located on the foot of the mountain pass Kharo La (No. 146) below the Nöchin Kangsang (Gnod sbyins gang bzang, No. 150). This post was also mentioned by Das who again (as in Chushul) described it as a “Gya-Khang, or the Ampa’s circuit house, which is situated on the flat of Dsara”.⁶⁸ The other post (No. 155) is shown next to a river and a bridge. It probably represents a border crossing point in that area.



*The two residences between Yamdroktsu and Gyantsé.
Extract of Add. Or. 3016 f3. © British Library Board.*

⁶⁸ Das 1885: 106. Tsybikov also mentioned a “Chinese way station” at this location (Tsybikov 2017 [1919]: 230).

The “high road between Lhasa and Gyantse”⁶⁹ leads of course to Gyantsé which is shown in great detail, dominated by an illustration of Pelkhor Chödé Monastery (Dpal 'khor chos sde, No. 177), Gyantsé Dzong (No. 156), a garrison (No. 157) and the nearby parade ground (No. 158). Tsybikov stated that the quarters of the garrison soldiers who gathered here for reviews at various intervals, were situated at the southern foot of the rock⁷⁰—as displayed on the map. Nain Singh, who conducted his route survey between Nepal and Lhasa in 1865/1866, mentioned that “a force, consisting of 50 Chinese and 200 Bhotia soldiers, is quartered here”.⁷¹ Rockhill stated that “at Gyantsé is a captain with a garrison of Chinese and Tibetan troops. The two posts of Tingri and Gyantsé are under the orders of the Assistant Amban resident at Shigatsé”.⁷²



*The garrison and parade ground at Gyantsé and the Tsechen Monastery.
Extract of Add. Or. 3016 f3 © British Library Board.*

On Song Yun’s map the place name Gyantsé was enclosed by a rectangle and inscribed with the term *xun* (汛, “military post” or “inspection post” which functioned as a checkpoint):⁷³ 江孜汛.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*: 103.

⁷⁰ Tsybikov 2017 [1919]: 226.

⁷¹ *Records of the Survey of India* 1915, vol. VIII, part I: 18.

⁷² Rockhill 1891: 318.

⁷³ Song Yun 1848, part II (maps): 16. See also Huang Peiqiao 1894: 59.



Gyantse on Song Yun's map (map oriented to the south, from Huang Peiqiao 1894: 59), Tashilhunpo is shown on lower edge of the map.

Tsechen (Rtse chen) Monastery⁷⁴—a former important political and religious centre—is shown in the west of Gyantsé located on a mountain slope (No. 186), close to another “Qing post” (No. 187).



*Tsechen Monastery and the nearby “Qing post” in detail.
Extract of Add. Or. 3016 f3 ©British Library Board.*

The garrison at Shigatsé

Similar to the depiction of Lhasa, the depiction of Shigatsé is dominated by an illustration of the town's most significant building—

⁷⁴ For further information on Tsechen Monastery and its historical significance, see Dramdul 2008.

Tashilhunpo (Bkra shis lhun po) Monastery. As capital of Tsang province and seat of the Panchen Lama, Shigatsé was an important strategic place and also had a garrison. The old fort or Shigatsé Dzong is shown on the map to the east of Tashilhunpo. Below the fort is the Chinese *yamen* (No. 201) and the parade ground (No. 202) described by Das as:

about half a mile square, called *jah-hu-tang*, or in Chinese *ta-thag* [...]. To it is attached a walled enclosure, in the centre of which is a large house used by the Ampa for target shooting with arrows and bullets.⁷⁵



Shigatsé town and surroundings. Extract of Add. Or. 3016 f2 © British Library Board.



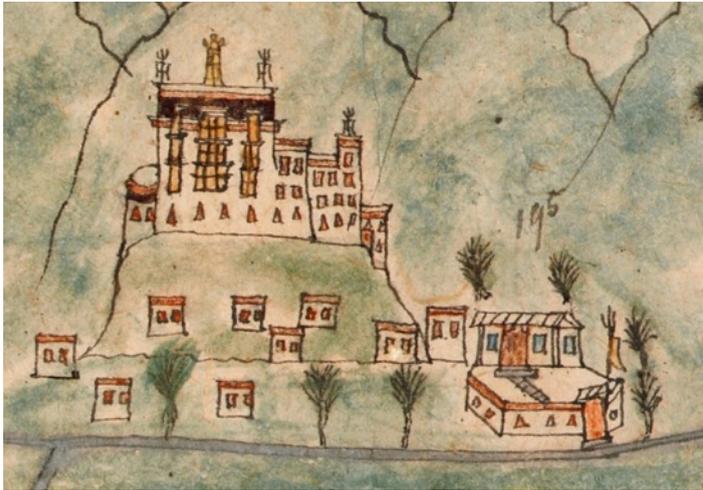
Garrison, exercising ground and yamen in Shigatsé.
Extract of Add. Or. 3016 f2 © British Library Board.

⁷⁵ Das 1885: 58.

Between the *yamen* and the *dzong*, a *mani* wall is depicted, probably the building described by Das as:

a long *mendang* or *stupa* of inscribed stones, [...] To the north, bordering the road, is an open space where a daily market is held (...); and close to it is the police-station and the quarters of a Chinese jamadar [Officer in the army of India].⁷⁶

The large building on top of the hill east of Shigatsé (No. 195) probably represents Penam Dzong (Pa snam rdzong), described by Das as the “fort of Panam, situated on a hillock”.⁷⁷ The “Qing post” depicted on the foot of the hill is probably another circuit house. Rockhill mentioned two military posts to the east and southeast of Tashilhunpo: “Ninety *li* to the E. of Trashil’unpo is the military post of Polang [Bailang (白朗) on Song Yun’s map].⁷⁸ Going thence S.E., one enters the mountains, and passing the military post of Tui-chu’iung [Duiqiong (堆瓊) on Song Yun’s map]⁷⁹”.⁸⁰



*Penam Dzong and the nearby “Qing post” in detail.
Extract of Add. Or. 3016 f2 ©British Library Board.*

⁷⁶ Das 1881: 39–40. Tsybikov also visited Shigatsé and provided a similar description, see Tsybikov 2017 [1919]: 218.

⁷⁷ Das 1885: 62.

⁷⁸ Song Yun 1848: 16 and 18.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*: 16.

⁸⁰ Rockhill 1891: 17–18.



Penam Dzong (Chinese: Bailang) between Gyantsé and Tashilhunpo on Song Yun's map (map oriented to the south, from Huang Peiqiao 1894: 60 and 61).

The map depicts three travel routes leading from Shigatsé westwards towards Lhatse (Lha rtse). The main route goes from Shigatsé directly through the mountains to Phüntsoling (Phun tshogs gling) Monastery, passing several monasteries and “Qing posts” (Nos. 219, 223 and 225) as well as settlements, a mountain pass, and a bridge. Although none of them have been identified with certainty, they probably correspond to the places described by Rockhill as “Tibetan military stations of Ch’alung, and Ch’üdo, Chiang gong and Ami gong, at which last three are barriers”.⁸¹



Three Qing posts depicted west of Shigatsé. Extract of Add. Or. 3016 f2 © British Library Board.

On Song Yun's map these are shown as Chalong (察隴), Chuduo (曲多), Jianggong (江鞏) and Anigong (阿尼鞏).⁸² What Rockhill described as “barriers” look like walls on Song Yun's maps.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*: 17.

⁸² Song Yun 1848: 15–16 and Huang Peiqiao 1894: 58–59. I have not been able to identify the Tibetan names for these places so far.



Chalong, Chuduo, Jianggong, and Anigong on Song Yun's map (map oriented to the south, from Huang Peiqiao 1894: 58 and 59), Tashilhunpo and Lhatse are shown on the edge of the map.

On the Wise Collection map, Lhatse Dzong is shown on a massive rock. This place was described by Das as “the chief place of trade in Upper Tsang”.⁸³ The nearby monastery Lhatse Chödé (Lha rtse chos de), the Lhatse ferry station, and a Qing post are also shown in detail (No. 243).



*Phüntsoling and Lhatse Dzong and the nearby Qing posts.
Extract of Add. Or. 3016 f1 © British Library Board.*

Kawaguchi described this as “a caravanserai erected by the Chinese. [...] It serves the double purpose of accommodating the Chinese itinerant traders and the native soldiers on march”.⁸⁴ This description

⁸³ Das 1887: 6.

⁸⁴ Kawaguchi 1909: 238f.

gives us actually maybe the best way to characterise these “Qing posts” and understand their multifaceted function.

Das also mentioned an “Ampa’s inspection house” in Lhatse.⁸⁵ The building hidden behind the mountains next to the iron chain bridge spanning the Yarlung Tsangpo River probably represents the Ganden Phüntsoling (Dga’ Idan phun tshogs gling) Monastery next to which is located another Qing post (No. 240).

A further “Qing post” (No. 252) is depicted surrounded by houses below Shelkar Dzong (Zhal dkar rdzong) probably representing Shelkhar *shöl*. Rockhill mentioned that “N. of Tingri two stages one comes to the military post of Shék’ar”.⁸⁶ From Lhatse the road to Shelkhar (Zhal dkar) goes past another Qing post—probably another circuit house (No. 249). Next to the building we find a little Tibetan caption: *brgya tsho la* (Gyatso La, the name of a mountain pass) which is the only caption written directly on the map of Tsang. This Gyatso La was an important pass in the border area between Tibet and Nepal, and was also mentioned in Rockhill’s publication: “Two stages N. of Shék’ar one comes to the great Kia-ts’o mountain, on which is the military post of Lolo t’ang (or station)”.⁸⁷ On Song Yun’s map it is referred to as the Jiacuo (甲鏗) mountain.



*Shelkar Dzong, with Qing posts depicted below the dzong, and close to the Gyatso La.
Extract of Add. Or. 3016 f1 ©British Library Board.*

⁸⁵ Das 1887: 6.

⁸⁶ Rockhill 1891: 16.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*



*Lhatse and the Gyatso La (Jiacuo 甲錯) on Song Yun's map
(map oriented to the south, from Huang Peiqiao 1894: 55).*

From Shelkhar the road continues to Dingri—an important trading post and commercial centre, with the military headquarters or “Dingri Chidakhang” (*Ding ri spyi mda' khang*). There is one further—unidentified—Qing post shown on the route between Shelkhar and Dingri (No. 256). Because of Dingri’s strategic importance there exist numerous descriptions of the place. The garrison is also mentioned in the *Dzamling Gyeshé* (*Dzam gling rgyas bshad*): “There are such things there as the meditation-cave (*sgrub-phug*) and the remains of Pha-dam-pa; and a Chinese Guard (*so-pa*) is stationed there nowadays, so I have heard”.⁸⁸ On Song Yun’s map, similar to Gyantsé, the place name Dingri is framed by a rectangle and affixed with the term *xun* (汛 “military post”), thus reading “Dingri *xun*” (定日汛).⁸⁹ Dingri and Gyantsé are the only place names on Song Yun’s maps of Ü and Tsang that are marked as “military posts” (checkpoints) in this way, indicating their particularly important role—located close to the Nepalese border—in Qing military and defence strategy in Tibet.

⁸⁸ Wylie 1962: 66.

⁸⁹ Song Yun 1848, part II (maps): 1 and 8. See also Huang Peiqiao 1894: 51 and 54.



*Representation of Dingri on Song Yun's maps
(map oriented to the south, from Huang Peiqiao 1894: 51 and 54).*

According to the description in Rockhill's publication, Dingri was an important reference point among the other frontier posts in the border area:

To the S.W. (of Lh'asa) there are very important frontier posts of Saka, Kilung, Nielam, Rung-tsa, Kata, Tingé, Kamba dzong, and Pakri dzong, [...] N. of Nielam is the post of Tingri, under the command of a captain, with a garrison of Chinese and Tibetan troops.⁹⁰

Dingri is the only frontier post shown on the maps in the Wise Collection.



The garrison and exercise ground at Dingri. Extract of Add. Or. 3016 f1 © British Library Board.

⁹⁰ Rockhill 1891: 15.

Hari Ram, a pundit who visited the place in 1885, described it as follows:

The town of Ting-ri consists of about 250 houses, [...] On the hill, which rises immediately from the north of the town to a height of about 300 feet, stands the stone-built fort which is occupied by the *daipon* and 40 Chinese military officers who are in command of about 500 Tibetan soldiers. [...] There are said to be only three *daipons* in all under the Lhāsa government: of these, one resides in Lhāsa, another in the Namchho district, and the third at Ting-ri.⁹¹

Nain Singh further stated that:

north and quite close to the Ting-ri town stands the Ting-ri Khar (fort) on a low isolated hill. A high Chinese officer called a *Daipon* who is the chief military and civil officer, resides in the fort, he has a small garrison of Bhotia soldiers with but one gun.⁹²

The descriptions of the garrison's location on a hill also corresponds with its depiction on the Wise Collection map.

A "line of defence": Tibet as a frontier region of the Qing Empire in mid-19th century

In general, the areas shown on the Wise Collection maps represent the region along two main axes: the west-east corridor between Ladakh and Lhasa; and the north-south corridor leading southwards to Bhutan and northwards towards China. These were not unusual routes but rather the primary routes used by traders, caravans, pilgrims, postmen and governmental couriers for centuries. A close examination of the collection raises a set of questions: what do the Wise Collection maps and drawings tell us about the presence of Qing representatives in mid-19th century Tibet? How were these representations—drawn by a Tibetan lama—influenced in terms of content by the British official William Edmund Hay who commissioned them? Why was such information considered important by Hay?

If we take a closer look at the illustrations of what I have here been calling "Qing posts" and garrisons on these maps, we realise that they are distributed along a continuous line. For those who travelled along these routes, it must therefore have been difficult (or near impossible)

⁹¹ Royal Survey of India 1915, vol. VIII, part II: 388.

⁹² Royal Survey of India 1915, vol. VIII, part I: 118.

to avoid them, suggestive of a role as custom stations. The garrisons also represent a line, especially those in the border areas, thus suggestive of a line of defence. The maps thus present Tibet as a protective buffer on the south-western border of the Qing state.

As yet I have not been able to find a complete list of all the “Qing posts”—or whatever they were officially called in Chinese or Tibetan—depicted on these routes. Das stated that:

for the preservation of the sacerdotal hierarchy, or more properly for the security of the Chinese supremacy in Tibet, there is maintained a composite militia of Chinese, Mongols, and Tibetans, to the number of 10,000, while companies are stationed along the frontier. There are 24 such stations towards the Himalayas. [...] It appears to me that the frontier guards form part of the central militia.⁹³

Nevertheless, it is unclear here if he is talking about military posts/checkpoints, circuit houses, or garrisons/barracks. I can imagine that the military posts/checkpoints and the garrisons were places with numerous functions. I doubt that the circuit houses also functioned as garrisons or military posts. Probably these three places were connected to each other and their different functions were well coordinated.

The details represented in the Wise Collection maps provide us with a range of information about mid-19th century Tibet. They are particularly revealing, as has been shown, about the official Qing presence in this period. The maps also contain information about the main routes, border crossing points and border places as well as information about distances, transportation means, markets and postal stations. But the maps do not just give such geo-strategic details, they also illuminate issues of spheres of influence: who had the power in Tibet? Which places were important? It seems likely that it was in answer to questions such as these that the mapmaker included the features he did on his maps—showing the three main seats of power in 19th century Tibet, namely the monasteries, the *dzongs*, and the “Qing posts” and garrisons. Throughout the entire route between Lhasa and western Tibet, the maps provide important information referring to power and control. This kind of information was not available for a large group of people, but represents the insider knowledge of a smaller group who were involved in administrative and governmental matters. Thus, the lama who made these maps must have been in contact with such circles or even have been a part of them.

⁹³ Das 1881, appendix, 1.

Although most of these illustrations do not show soldiers or *ambans*, they give us an idea about the presence and influence of representatives of the Qing in central Tibet in the mid-19th century. They give illustration to Rockhill's comment (at the end of the 19th century) that:

The supremacy of China is more complete even than in the last century, especially in all that concerns Tibet's foreign relations, and the pressure of foreign powers to have the country opened to their subjects is causing a rapid extension of Chinese power over the remoter sections of it, as the people feel themselves unable to cope with such delicate and, to them, dangerous subjects and must needs call in Chinese assistance.⁹⁴

Sarat Chandra Das shared his own observations about Sino-Tibetan relations in late 19th century as follows:

The Emperor of China, while apparently recognizing the independence of the Tashi⁹⁵ and the Dalai Lamas, has really undermined their political influence over the country. They have no command over the Chinese militia, maintained at their expense under pretence of guarding their safety. In reality the two Ampas are commanders of the militia, and arrogate to themselves the supreme political authority of the country. All offices of trust, [...] are given to two officers, who are invested with equal powers. The appointment of two Ampas to watch the political interests of the country is probably based on the principle that two in office are a sort of spies upon each other. This has, as in China, become a custom in Tibet. The Ampas are the terror of the Tibetans, who abhor them from the depth of their hearts.⁹⁶

This "imperial defence system" is recognisable on the Wise Collection maps, though not completely. The scenery in the Gesar Lhakhang and the accompanying explanatory notes provide a short insight into mid-19th century Qing-Tibetan relations. In any case the maps present a new and rare source of information on the political and military presence of Qing in Tibet in the mid-19th century, from a particular perspective: they were drawn from memory by a Tibetan traveller on a British order.

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⁹⁴ Rockhill 1891: 20.

⁹⁵ Refers to the Panchen Lama.

⁹⁶ Das 1881, appendix, p. 1.

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Zhang Yintang's Military Reforms in 1906–1907 and their Aftermath

—The Introduction of Militarism in Tibet—*

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Introduction

In modern Tibetan history, it is well known that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's military reforms in the late 1910s were modelled after influential powers such as Britain, Russia, and Japan, to bolster the Tibetan army amid military tensions with the Republic of China.¹ Modern Tibet, one of the largest Buddhist countries during the early 20th century, was not completely isolated from the global military trend to establish a “modern army” or “national army”, which started during the 18th century in the western world.² It has not been fully recognised, however, that prior to the Dalai Lama's modernisation project in the 1910s, Zhang Yintang (張蔭棠, 1860–1935),³ a Chinese official newly-appointed to Lhasa as an imperial high commissioner, had earlier attempted to implement military reforms in Tibet in the wake of Britain's invasion of Lhasa in 1904. This paper will discuss this military reform project in Tibet in the context of larger militarisation reforms in East Asia and Inner Asia from the late 19th to the beginning of 20th century.

Some previous studies have already examined how Zhang planned and implemented his military reforms in Lhasa, and have clarified that the reforms were aimed not only at enhancing the Qing's military pres-

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¹ Shakabpa 1967: 258–259.

² Vagts 1959.

³ Opinion is divided on Zhang Yintang's years of birth and death. Here, I would like to follow the recent study by Ma Zhongwen; Ma 2019.

ence in Tibet, but also at strengthening the Tibetan forces through military training, education, and conscription.⁴ However, these studies did not fully pay attention to the fact that these new policies were largely influenced by the Qing's military reforms inside China proper during the same period, emulating German- and Japanese-style military models. In particular, the rising militarism of Japan had grabbed the full attention of Qing officials, Chinese reformers, revolutionaries, and students in the aftermath of the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895). This not only led to the movement to establish a modern army in China, but also spurred the promotion of a militarisation of Chinese society at large through conscription, education, and political campaigns.⁵ As I will argue in this paper, if the use of militarisation as a tool for building a modern nation-state can be referred to as “militarised modernity”,⁶ Zhang Yintang's military reforms in Tibet can be considered as the Qing's attempt to incorporate Tibet into a part of its “nation”. Since countries such as Japan, China, and Korea were simultaneously pursuing modernisation in this period, and were intimately bound up with one another through the process of militarisation, one cannot discuss the modernisation attempts in Tibet without this context.⁷ In other words, the Qing's military reforms in Lhasa have to be examined by focusing on the history of the introduction of militarism in modern East and Inner Asia more broadly, and not merely within the framework of military history in Tibet.⁸

This paper will also illuminate the impact Zhang Yintang's reforms had on the Tibetan army after his short stay in Lhasa from 1906 to 1907. In addition to the Qing archival sources utilised by previous research, this article also makes use of valuable Chinese, English, Japanese and Tibetan materials which have not previously been fully examined.⁹

⁴ Xiraonima 1999; Zhao 2004; Hidaka 2006; Ho 2008.

⁵ Hatano 1973: 172–177; Fung 1980; Chen 1984; Schillinger 2016.

⁶ Moon 2005.

⁷ My paper is particularly inspired by Takashima 2015a who discusses the historical relations between society and the military in East Asia.

⁸ The term “militarism” in this article can be defined as follows: militarism “covers every system of thinking and valuing and every complex of feelings which rank military institutions and ways above the ways of civilian life, carrying military mentality and modes of acting and decision into the civilian sphere” (Vagts 1959: 17). It particularly applies to Germany and Japan before 1945 as Vagts has argued (*ibid.*). The late Qing military reforms, which were deeply influenced by the German and Japanese military systems, can therefore be explained by means of this concept.

⁹ Some Tibetan documents on this topic housed in Archives of the Tibet Autonomous Region in Lhasa have been published as *Ching rgyal rabs skabs kyi bod kyi lo rgyus yig tshags bdams bsgrigs* (hereafter, *lo rgyus yig tshags*). This paper also uses documents written in Tibetan housed in the Chuandian Bianwu Dachen Yamen

Based on these materials, the article tries to reveal how Zhang's successors followed or disregarded his policies, and how the Ganden Phodrang (Dga' ldan pho brang) government reacted to them.

1. The Emerging Militarism in the Late Qing Period

1.1. The Introduction of Militarism in Modern East Asia

The Chinese proverb "Good iron is not used to make nails, and good men are not used to make soldiers" (*haotie bu dading, haoren bu dangbing* 好鐵不打釘, 好人不當兵) is often used to describe the low opinion of soldiers and military service in traditional Chinese society. The principle of civilian rule had long roots in Chinese culture through the system of appointing bureaucrats based on the Imperial Examination System developed since the Song Dynasty. This gave a decisive social superiority to "literati" (*shi* 士), and the high-ranking civil officers who had passed Imperial Examinations bringing them wealth and fame. In other words, "civil" (*wen* 文) virtues became a dominant sign of masculinity for Chinese men, and "military" (*wu* 武) virtues tended to be undervalued. People who were born in underprivileged families often perceived that becoming a soldier was an attractive way to improve their life, but it was rarely attractive to the more privileged sections of society. In the public image and official ideology, a military career was no more acclaimed than other occupations such as governmental official, farmer, artisan, and merchant.¹⁰

The Manchus, who established the Qing Dynasty and conquered China with their overwhelming military power during the early 17th century, took pride in their military heritage until the late Qing period.¹¹ However, studying for the Imperial Examinations was still the most important way in which non-members of the Eight-Banners, which included the vast majority of Han Chinese, could pursue wealth and power within the Qing imperial order.

In the mid-19th century, the Qing confronted many challenges from both within and without China, and these internal enemies and foreign

Dang'an (hereafter, Chuandian Bianwu) of the Sichuan Provincial Archives in Chengdu.

¹⁰ Eastman 1988: 203–204.

¹¹ Since the Qing emperors such as Yongzheng and Qianlong were so afraid of the deterioration of the Manchus' martial spirit and their prowess in martial arts in times of peace during the 18th century, they emphasised the importance of mounted archery as a traditional custom of the Manchus in addition to studying the Manchu language; see Rawski 1998: 45–48; Rhoads 2001: 57–58.

threats inspired some prominent Han Chinese officials, such as Li Hongzhang (李鴻章, 1823–1901), to shift towards the promotion of strengthening military power through the introduction of modern military facilities adopted from western countries.¹² Western-style military schools such as the Tianjin Military Preparatory School (Tianjin Wubei Xuetang 天津武備學堂), established in 1885, were set up to train military officers.¹³ In the wake of Prussia's victory in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, the German military system in particular became a strong focus of attention for Qing officials. The Qing government invited retired military veterans from Germany to be military instructors and dispatched young Qing military officers to Germany.¹⁴ This military strengthening policy challenged the supremacy of "civil culture", and the vast majority of Han Chinese high-ranking officials did not support it.¹⁵

During and after its defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, the Qing government finally accepted the necessity of establishing a modern army at the suggestion of Constantin von Hanneken (1854–1925), a German military adviser who had worked for Li Hongzhang. These newly-established military forces were put under the command of Yuan Shikai (袁世凱, 1859–1916), a military officer and former Imperial Resident in Korea. The army emulated the Western military system, particularly the German one in all its aspects, such as training, discipline, and equipment.¹⁶ However, around the turn of the 20th century, the Japanese army rapidly replaced Germany as a direct role model for Chinese military reforms, and the ethos of Japanese militarism began to permeate Han Chinese intellectual and student circles.¹⁷

After the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and the following radical reforms by the new government there, Japan had vigorously promoted modernisation to build a western-style nation-state. In doing so, the Meiji government had to dismantle the *bushi* (武士) hereditary and ruling military class, and in its place build a modern army under the control of the central government.¹⁸ The education system employed by military academies first adopted the French style but later changed to the German system under the instruction of Klemens Wilhelm Jacob Meckel (1842–1905), a German military officer who came to Japan in

¹² Kennedy 1978.

¹³ Banno 1973: 306–308.

¹⁴ Eberspächer 2008: 62; Schillinger 2016: 11–12.

¹⁵ Takashima 2015b: 121.

¹⁶ Ch'ên 1972: 31–36.

¹⁷ However Chinese intellectuals also continued to venerate German military culture until the First World War; see Schillinger 2016: 11–12.

¹⁸ Tobe 1998: 85–86.

1885.¹⁹ The Conscription Ordinance issued in 1873 required all men aged twenty to enter into a lottery, whereby those selected had to serve in the standing army (*jōbigun* 常備軍) for three years, and thereafter had to remain on call as members of the reserve army (*kōbigun* 後備軍).²⁰

While introducing this conscription system, the government also tried to promote a moral and disciplinary code, which was to be internalised by all members of the Japanese military. In contrast to the Han Chinese elite culture during the Qing period, in Japan “military arts” (*bu* 武) had already constituted an important value among the *bushi* or samurai class during the Tokugawa period. They expected to be brave, and to maintain an ethical loyalty to their liege lords. Even though the new government broke up the *bushi* class, the policy makers and political ideologues in the Meiji period attempted to shape the military spirit of the national army based on the ethos of bravery and loyalty long upheld by the old *bushi* code. They recast Bushidō (武士道) or the “Way of the Warriors”—the moral code of the samurai—as the code for the modern Japanese army, in which their loyalty was pledged directly to the Emperor. After the universal conscription system was introduced, “Bushidō” was widely discussed and advocated as a national standard for morality for all men during the late Meiji period.²¹

The Meiji government also introduced military training to school education. In 1872, a modern education system based on the principle of universal education was established through the Education System Order. Since the Conscription Ordinance was enacted in the following year, the introduction of military training to school education has been widely discussed.²² In the late 1880s, Mori Arinori (森有礼, 1847–1889), who became a Minister of Education in 1885, proposed the introduction of military drills (*heishiki taisō* 兵式体操, lit. “military-style physical training”), as a part of school education. In his 1887 proposition, he strongly asserted that military drills would bring discipline and order in school, and cultivate “loyalty and patriotism” (*chūkun aikoku* 忠君愛

¹⁹ The questions of how and from whence the Meiji government searched for a military model which Japan could emulate is treated in Yamada 1996: 146–235 and Tobe 1998: 92–95.

²⁰ The 1873 Ordinance included many exemption clauses, and the government gradually phased it out. A renewed Conscription Ordinance in 1889 finally established the principle of universal conscription by abolishing all the exemption clauses; see Kato 1996.

²¹ Yoshizawa 2014.

²² Okuno 2013: 256–263.

国) as well as a “martial spirit” (*shōbu* 尚武) among students.²³ Thus, through the introduction of military drills and militaristic values, Mori tried to reform school organisation based on military models.

Although military drills in schools had at first been introduced by the Education Ministry, after the victories in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, the Japanese army itself started paying greater attention to the subject of the militarisation of school education, due to the increasing demands it faced for the mobilisation of ever-larger numbers of soldiers. Thus, the Meiji government further promoted military education in schools under a slogan of “Fukoku Kyōhei” (富国強兵, “Fortifying the Country; Strengthening the Military”), and a militaristic culture and atmosphere rapidly emerged, forming the patriotic national consciousness that characterised the late Meiji period. Chinese intellectuals and students staying in Japan encountered this militarism, its ethos and its practices, and attempted to promote a parallel kind of militarism in China as I will argue in the next section.

1.2. Late Qing Militarism and Meiji Japan

By the turn of the century, Japan was a country that not only posed a threat to the Qing, but also one that offered a model for the modernisation of China. For the last dozen years of the Qing dynasty, which Douglas Reynolds has called the “golden decade” for the history of Sino-Japanese relations,²⁴ thousands of Chinese students had been making their way to Japan to learn about the western knowledge and systems which Meiji Japan had adopted. This movement was further escalated by the intellectual and institutional transformation which the Qing government implemented as “new policies” (*xinzheng* 新政) from 1901, in which education and military reforms occupied important positions.

The extensive and profound Japanese influence on military modernisation in China first appeared in the area of military education. Zhang Zhitong (張之洞, 1837–1909), the Viceroy of Huguang, invited a number of Japanese instructors to the Hubei Military Preparatory School (Hubei Wubei Xuetang 湖北武備學堂) at Zhang’s base of Wu-chang around 1903, which effectively shifted the model for his Hubei

²³ Mori [1887] 1990. With regard to Mori Arinori’s ideas for military drills in school education, see Okuno 2013: 270–309.

²⁴ Reynolds 1993: 5–14.

New Army from a German model to a Japanese one;²⁵ and Yuan Shikai's Beiyang Army soon followed suit.²⁶ Enrolment in Japanese military academies also opened the door for many young people from China to receive education in Japan.²⁷ Furthermore, the abolition of the Imperial Examination System in 1905 by the Qing court further facilitated and incentivised overseas study in Japan, where military education occupied an important role. In effect, becoming a soldier was no longer considered a disgraceful career for young people. Rather, it came to be regarded as an honourable profession, helping China pursue the goal of strengthening itself on the global stage, where it was seen as a victim of external powers—a notion of national strengthening grounded in the ideas of social Darwinism.

Graduates from Japanese military schools were recruited as military officers who could immediately be available for active duty. In 1904, due to rising sense of national crisis following the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War in Manchuria, the Qing started to organise "New Armies" (*xinjun* 新軍) into a national army under the control of the central government. Yuan Shikai's army was reorganised into six divisions to defend the capital, and many people who were educated in the military academies in Japan returned to serve as its military officers.²⁸

The militaristic culture in Japan resonated with these Chinese students, who embraced the spirit of patriotism. In 1902, Cai E (蔡鏗, 1882–1916), who was a Chinese student at the Seijo School in Japan, published an article entitled "An Essay on Military-Citizenry" ("Junguomin pian" 軍國民篇)²⁹ in *Xinmin congbao* 新民叢報, a journal edited by Liang Qichao (梁啟超, 1873–1929), who was Cai's mentor. Liang had taken exile in Japan after the Hundred Day's Reform in the Qing court in 1898. Cai's essay asserted that China should implement the principle of a "military-citizenry" (*junguomin*), meaning that all citizens should be potential soldiers, as in ancient Sparta and the militarised societies of the contemporary western powers and Japan. "Civil

²⁵ *Ibid.*: 155–157.

²⁶ Ch'en 1972: 62; Fung 1980: 83; Reynolds 1993: 157–158. Ralph Powell points out that as compared to occidental military officers, the employment of Japanese advisors was advantageous due to their acceptance of smaller salaries, their willingness to study Chinese, and their easier adjustment to Chinese society. Also, the transition from a German to a Japanese system was not a fundamental change, since Japan had itself modelled its army on that of Germany; see Powell 1955: 162.

²⁷ Rikugun Seijō School (陸軍成城学校) and Shinbu School (振武学校) are well known and the latter was especially established for Chinese students in 1903; see Fung 1980: 71–72.

²⁸ Kishi 1996.

²⁹ Cai 1902.

culture" (*wen*), which had been the predominant social value for Chinese men until that point, was dismissed as "weak culture" (*wenruo* 文弱); while "martial spirit" (*shangwu* 尚武) was extolled as the requirement for China to survive in the competitive struggle among the nations of the world.

This idea of "military-citizenry" was strongly inspired by a Japanese book, *Bubikyōiku* (武備教育 or *Education for Military Preparation*), published by the nationalistic publisher Min'yūsha (民友社) in 1895. The first chapter of this book, entitled *Gunkokumin* (軍國民), proclaimed on its first page that "military service should be compulsory for all citizens" (*gunmu wa kokumin no fusai nari* 軍務は国民の負債なり).³⁰ *Bubikyōiku* was a rallying call for the expansion of military education, including military drills, in school education to transform all of Japan's schools into preparatory schools for military conscription.³¹

In the following years, this idea of "military-citizenry" was widely discussed in China across factional lines. Chinese reformers, revolutionaries,³² and even policy makers within the Qing government, discussed this idea in relation to what the Chinese military and educational system should and could be. Indeed, Qing officials began to seriously consider the introduction of a universal conscription system as a part of their reform project, in conjunction with the formation of a new army. Such conscripted troops, it was suggested, could be divided into three classes: the regulars (*changbeijun* 常備軍) conscripted for three years; first reserves (*xubeijun* 續備軍) for three years after conscription; and second reserves (*houbeijun* 後備軍) for four years after that. This system aimed at creating a large pool of trained reserve soldiers upon whom the government could call in times of need.

In practice, however, it was impossible for the Qing government to implement universal conscription due to lack of census information for all male citizens. Nevertheless, the "Approved School Regulation" ("Zouding Xuetaang Zhangcheng" 奏定學堂章程), which Zhang Zhidong had proposed based on the Japanese education system, did introduce military drills (Ch. *bingcao* 兵操), including weapons training and drilling with real guns for all the male students in public primary schools of the senior grade. Private schools were however exempted. The Qing court also eventually issued the "Principle of Education"

³⁰ Min'yūsha 1895: 3.

³¹ Selected chapters of the book were also translated into Chinese and circulated among Chinese students and intellectuals in Japan right after Cai's article was published; see Tsuchiya 2008: 70.

³² *Ibid.*

(“Jiaoyu Zongzhi” 教育宗旨) in 1906, which explicitly emphasised the importance of the idea of a “military-citizenry”, and stated that military drills would be expected to play an important role in bridging school education and the military in China.³³

Thus, prior to Zhang Yintang's military reforms in Lhasa, Qing officials had already begun their militarisation efforts, largely inspired by Meiji Japan, by introducing these militaristic ideas into education, and through military reforms in China at the beginning of the 20th century. Inner Asian frontier regions under the rule of the Qing were thus not an exception in this regard.

In the Outer Mongolian monastic capital of Ikh Khuree (modern Ulaan Baatar), Tang Zaili (唐在禮, 1882–1964), a graduate from the Japanese military academy, tried to establish a “new army”, to be controlled by the *amban* around 1910; but this caused a strong backlash from Mongol princes because they perceived that this might undermine their political power and authority.³⁴

In Inner Mongolia, in line with the Qing's reform projects, Güngsangnorbu (1871–1930), a Mongolian noble of the Kharchin Mongol Right Banner adjacent to Manchuria, invited Japanese military officers to establish a military school with approval from the Qing government in 1903, on the eve of the Russo-Japanese War. This was also a part of intelligence activities by the Japanese army in Inner Mongolia and Manchuria against the Russian threat.³⁵ However Japanese policy makers did not fully develop a concrete strategy for Tibet during this period, as compared to Manchuria and Mongolia.³⁶ Nevertheless, Chinese military reforms in Tibet need to be re-examined in the context of this increasing militarisation throughout East and Inner Asia in this period, a militarisation whose primary inspiration was Meiji Japan.

2. Zhang Yintang's Military Reforms in Lhasa

2.1. Proposal for Military Reinforcement in Tibet

Zhang Yintang, born in Xinhui (Xinhui 新會) prefecture in Guangdong province, was a qualified graduate who had passed the provincial

³³ *Ibid.*: 71–72.

³⁴ Nakami 2008: 316; Tachibana 2011: 36.

³⁵ Aruohan 2016.

³⁶ Kobayashi 2019.

exam in 1882.³⁷ For more than ten years he worked for the newly-established government office of the Imperial Navy (Haijun Yamen 海軍衙門) and in this capacity was sent to San Francisco as a third rank assistant consul in 1896 under the recommendation of Wu Tingfang (伍廷芳, 1842–1922) who himself had been appointed as a minister in the Chinese legation to the United States and was also from Guangdong province. The following year Zhang was appointed consul general in San Francisco and was then dispatched to Spain as an assistant minister in 1898. During the late 19th century, Qing diplomats who had Cantonese origin were often dispatched to the Americas and Spain since the Qing had to deal with growing problems related to the many Chinese workers in those countries, who were often of Cantonese origin, and faced considerable persecution in the U.S. and in Spanish colonies such as Cuba and the Philippines. Many of these workers were migrants from Guangdong.³⁸ Zhang's career path as a diplomat was similar to that of other Cantonese diplomats such as Wu Tingfang and Zhang Yinhan (張蔭桓, 1835–1900), who is often regarded as “the brother” of Zhang Yintang in the previous studies.³⁹

With this diplomatic background, Zhang Yintang had been committed to state affairs for a long time and had a rich diplomatic experience. In 1898 Zhang Yintang resigned as the acting minister to Spain immediately after the coup at the Qing court over the “Hundred Day's Reform”.⁴⁰ However, five years later, his name would appear once again in the annals of Qing diplomacy when he played an important role in the negotiations with British India amid the rising tensions over Tibetan affairs.

In the late 19th century, the international situation surrounding the Sino-Tibetan relationship started to change dramatically. Himalayan

³⁷ Zhang Yintang's career as a bureaucrat is described in the *Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan cang Qingdai guanyuan lilii dang'an quanbian* edited by Qin Guojing (1997) [hereafter, *Qingdai guanyuan*] vol. 8, 51–52, 291–292.

³⁸ For a chronological table of diplomats and staff at Chinese diplomatic establishments during the late 19th century, see Okamoto *et al.* 2014: Appendix 2. The importance of Guangdong officials for oversea diplomats in this period is also referred in the same book (*ibid.*: 154–155).

³⁹ However, Ma Zhongwen asserts that there is no clear evidence to support the claim that Zhang Yinhan and Zhang Yintang are “the brothers”; Ma 2019: 111. Zhang Yinhan concurrently served as a minister in Spain, United States, and Peru from 1886 to 1889. With regard to Zhang Yinhan's personal history, see Ho 1941; Wang Lianying 2011.

⁴⁰ It is often said that this is most likely because of the downfall of his “brother” Zhang Yinhan who was suspected of supporting Kang Youwei 康有為, who was also from Guangdong and the leader of the reform movement. However, Ma Zhongwen dismisses this argument and argues that Zhang was not involved in the Kang Youwei issue; Ma 2019: 114–115.

kingdoms such as Nepal and Sikkim were coming increasingly under the influence of British India, which had a rivalry with Russia over hegemony in central Eurasia, and this made the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (r. 1895–1933) perceive Britain as a primary threat to Tibet. Since the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was trying to reach out to Russia to protect Tibet from Britain through Agvan Dorzhiev (1854–1938), who was a Buryat monk from the Russian empire, British India also launched an active policy to engage with Tibet. Until the end of the 19th century, British India consistently attempted to contact Tibet through the Qing, but the Ganden Phodrang government did not obey the Qing officials.⁴¹ On January 8, 1903, Lord Curzon, who became Viceroy in India from 1898, asserted that the Chinese “suzerainty” of Tibet was merely “a constitutional fiction” and that the British Government had to dispatch an armed mission to Lhasa in order to establish a direct relationship with Tibet.⁴² As a result of this, an armed expedition led by F.E. Younghusband was sent to Tibet in the summer of 1903.

This Younghusband expedition to Lhasa was a watershed moment which forced the Qing court shift their attention towards Tibet. The Dalai Lama fled to Mongolia in 1904 before the British army reached Lhasa, and in his absence, the Ganden Phodrang government signed the Lhasa Convention on September 24th of the same year in the presence of *amban* Youtai (有泰, 1844–1910), a Mongol Bannerman. However, the Qing court considered this bilateral agreement between Tibet and Britain as tantamount to an admission that the Qing had given up their “sovereignty” over Tibet and tried to renegotiate the treaty. As one of the important agendas of the “New Policies”, the Qing started attempting to assert diplomatic rights over the entirety of Tibet under the newly established Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Waiwubu (外務部) in this period. The Waiwubu dispatched Tang Shaoyi (唐紹儀, 1862–1938) to Calcutta, India in the end of 1904 to renegotiate the Lhasa Convention with Britain, and Zhang Yintang was sent as his assistant.⁴³ Tang Shaoyi strongly asserted that Chinese authority over Tibet was not “suzerainty”, but “sovereignty”, whereas British India attempted to include the word “suzerainty” in the draft of treaty.⁴⁴ Tang, who was stationed in Seoul from 1895 to 1899 after the Sino-Japanese War and witnessed the “independence” of Korea, was afraid that Tibet

⁴¹ Lamb, 1986: Chapter 9.

⁴² FO17: 1745, Curzon *et al.* to Lord George F. Hamilton, January 8, 1903: 7–8.

⁴³ Tang Shaoyi, who studied at Columbia University, was also of Guangdong origin and he requested that the Qing court send Zhang Yintang as his assistant to India; see *Qingdai guanyuan*, vol. 8: 51–52. He would later be promoted in the diplomatic field in the government by Tang's recommendation.

⁴⁴ Lamb 1966; Cheney 2017; Okamoto 2017: 365–374.

would go the same way if he compromised on this question of political status. Zhang supported Tang Shaoyi in the negotiations and shared the same concern about the threat it posed to Qing authority over Tibet.

Zhang began to actively make suggestions on the Qing's Tibet policies after he was put in charge of these difficult negotiations with the British on behalf of Tang Shaoyi in September of 1905 when Tang left for Beijing due to health reasons.⁴⁵ In December of 1905, learning that the British had invited the Ninth Panchen Lama Lobzang Tupten Chökyi Nyima (Blo bzang thub bstan chos kyi nyi ma, 1883–1937) to India, Zhang was afraid that the British would use him to exert their influence over Tibet and promote the separation of Tibet from the Qing, just as Japanese interference in Korea had resulted in its independence. Zhang Yintang thus argued that the Qing must establish strong control in Tibet through the re-enforcement of its military power there, by sending a “high-ranking officer who is well-versed in military matters and 20,000 elite troops” to Tibet.⁴⁶

At the same time, it is notable that Zhang also proposed increasing the number of Tibetan troops from its current level of 3,000 soldiers.⁴⁷ David Dahpon Ho has argued that Zhang's policy constituted a “striking shift” from the original proposal to expand the presence of Chinese troops, to instead fortifying native Tibetan troops, which he explains as a result of the warm welcome Zhang received from Tibetan people when he reached Tibet in October 1906.⁴⁸ However, even before he was ordered to go to Tibet, Zhang had already suggested this measure.⁴⁹ He understood that stationing a large Chinese army in Tibet would require an enormous financial burden for the Qing just as they had encountered similar problems after military campaigns in Tibet during the eighteenth century. Therefore, Zhang asserted that the Qing should gradually reduce the Chinese army from 20,000 to 5,000 while reinforcing the Tibetan army.

However, the financial problem inherent in the Qing military policies in Tibet was not the only reason for Zhang's plan to increase the number of Tibetan soldiers. The proposition also constituted a part of his grand design for a wider reform project in Tibet, and as I discuss

⁴⁵ *Da Qing Dezong Jing (Guangxu) Huangdi Shilu*, Juan 548, Guangxu 光緒 31/8/18.

⁴⁶ Zhang to Waiwubu, Guangxu 31/12/13 in *Qingdai zangshi zoudu* [hereafter, *Zoudu*] edited by Wu Fengpei (1994), 1304; Zhang to Waiwubu, Guangxu 32/1/23, *Zoudu*, 1305–1306.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Ho argues that “Zhang became convinced that a military solution was not after all the best course of action” and he eventually “reversed his calls for Chinese troops”; see Ho 2008: 217.

⁴⁹ Zhang to Waiwubu, Guangxu 32/1/23, *Zoudu*, 1305–1306.

below, it was formulated based on his observations about British colonial rule in India, the potential enemy for Tibet.

2.2. Zhang Yintang's Reform Projects and the British Raj

The Qing court did not immediately approve Zhang's proposal on military reinforcement in Tibet at this stage, but it did recognise Zhang Yintang as the right person to handle Tibetan affairs. In the spring of 1906, when the Anglo-Chinese negotiations reached the final stage, the Qing court appointed him Chaban xizang shijian dachen (查辦西藏事件大臣) or High Commissioner to Tibet.⁵⁰ His main task in this new role was opening and managing the customs and trade marts in Yatung, Gyantsé, and Gartok based on the Anglo-Chinese treaty. Furthermore, the Qing court charged him with conducting "all the arrangements which should be made" in Tibet.⁵¹ He moved to Tibet in 1906 after his assistants, dispatched from Beijing, such as He Zaoxiang (何藻翔), had joined him in India,⁵² and he reached Lhasa in October of that year, having examined the marts for India-Tibet border trade on his way.

He proposed his entire plan for reform projects to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in February 1907, and later submitted further detailed plans to the emperor.⁵³ The plan of his new policies incorporated the system of British rule in India, which most likely he had observed during his long stay in Calcutta for the diplomatic negotiations. He proposed reforming the relationship between the Qing government and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the Ninth Panchen Lama according to the British model of control over princely states in India. Just as "princes rule the Indian people; but the governor-general of India asserts control over them (i.e. the princes)",⁵⁴ he suggested that the Qing should abolish the role of the *ambans* in Tibet, who had, in his view, already lost their authority over the past one hundred years, and establish in their place a new administrative position called "Xizang Xingbu Dachen" (西藏行部大臣) as a "governor of Tibet" in imitation of the governor-general of India. He stated that "the Dalai Lama, the

⁵⁰ *Da Qing Dezong Jing (Guangxu) Huangdi Shilu, juan 555*, Guangxu 32/4/6; Waiwubu Dang'an, 02-16-002-01-027, Waiwubu's memorial, Guangxu 32/4/21.

⁵¹ Zhang to Waiwubu, Guangxu 32/4/22, *Zoudu*, 1308.

⁵² He 1910: 10. He Zaoxiang was *Zhushi* 主事 (master of affairs) at Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was also from Guangdong province; see Zhang to Waiwubu, Guangxu 32/Leap 4/10, *Zoudu*, 1308.

⁵³ Zhang to Waiwubu, Guangxu 33/1/13, *Zoudu*, 1328; Zhang's memorial, Guangxu 33/11, *Zoudu*, 1395-1402.

⁵⁴ Zhang's memorial, Guangxu 33/11, *Zoudu*, 1397.

Panchen Lama, and the Jasak (i.e. aristocrats who received titles from the emperor)" were equivalent to "Indian princes" (*yindu turwang* 印度土王), and that they should be under the supervision of the governor of Tibet, so that the Qing would be able to practically fulfil its role as the "sovereign state" (*zhuguo* 主國) in Tibet.⁵⁵

His military reforms were also evidently inspired by the military system of British India, which "recruits Indian soldiers to military service; [and] commands and trains them with British officers". He was particularly impressed that Britain had managed to mobilise Indian troops for all their military campaigns and that they never revolted against their military commands. This he said, could also be applied to a Tibetan military system.⁵⁶ He suggested building-up the existing Tibetan army and putting them under the command of centrally-dispatched Chinese military officers who had graduated from military academies in China.

Another aspect of the military system of Indian colonial forces which attracted his attention was the presence of the Gurkhas hired by the British. He Zaoxiang, Zhang's Cantonese assistant, had already learned before he arrived in India, that many "Gurkha" troops joined the Younghusband expedition of 1903 and played a key role in British mountain warfare. This, in spite of the fact, as he noted, that the Gorkha Kingdom had become a "vassal state" of the Qing after the Tibet-Gorkha War at the end of the 18th century, after which the Gorkha Dynasty had paid tribute to the Qing. He Zaoxiang therefore proposed that the Qing should make Tibet build "an offensive and defensive alliance" with this strong neighbouring country, which had already introduced a western-style military system, in order to utilise their military power to defend Tibet in case of emergency.⁵⁷ He Zaoxiang's suggestion seemed to convince Zhang Yintang, who also probably witnessed the Gorkha troops holding an important place in the Indian Army, and he proposed the above plan to the Foreign Ministry.⁵⁸ In February 1907, Zhang issued a statement to encourage the Ganden Phodrang government to dispatch "Kalön and Dapön to inspect [Gorkhas soldiers in Nepal] and adopt their military system to train a new [Tibetan] army and reform the entire political system [of Tibet]".⁵⁹ Additionally, strengthening ties with Himalayan kingdoms

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*: 1398.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*: 1399.

⁵⁷ He 1910: 4.

⁵⁸ Zhang to Waiwubu, Guangxu 33/12, *Zoudu*, 1325.

⁵⁹ He 1910: 4–5.

such as Gorkha and Bhutan as “Chinese dependencies” was also proposed as an important component of Zhang Yintang's new policies⁶⁰ and caused the British concern about their relations with them.⁶¹

As discussed above, British colonial rule and their colonial army in India thus provided a model for Zhang Yintang's proposals for strengthening Qing rule over Tibet, and for reforming the Tibetan army. However, he was also pursuing a further agenda—the expansion of the Tibetan army—beyond the introduction of the military system of British India. In his view, Tibet had the tradition of “drafting militia according to the size of farmland”, and, he said, this could be used as the basis for the establishment of a “universal conscription system” (*juguo jiebing zhi zhi* 拳國皆兵之制) akin to those of western countries.⁶² To achieve this ultimate goal, Zhang Yintang would start to reform the military, religious institutions, and the education system in Tibet.

2.3. Recruiting and Training the Tibetan Army

In early 1907, Zhang Yintang proposed the establishment of “Nine Bureaus” (*jiujiu* 九局) in Tibet to cover Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, Finance, Diplomacy, Police, Tea and Salt, Education, Mining, and the Military. In his proposal to establish a Military Bureau (*dulianju* 督練局),⁶³ he claimed that, in addition to the current Tibetan army, the Qing must create a standing army (*changbeijun*) and planned to train 5,000 soldiers every year for the next several years until they had a force 40,000 strong. Furthermore, direct participation in this standing army would be followed by periods served in the first class reserves (*xubeijun*) and then the second reserves (*houbeijun*). This idea was closely aligned with the Qing military reforms to establish “New Armies” in all the provinces of China. Zhang also proposed the recruitment of graduates from the Military Academy in Baodingfu (保定府) to help with training in Tibet, and to send some Tibetan recruits there to learn about military affairs. He added that the new Tibetan troops should be trained in “foreign drills” (*yangcao* 洋操), and that advanced equipment such as Gatling guns and mountain canons needed to be prepared.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Zhang to the Ganden Phodrang government, Guangxu 34/2, *Zoudu*, 1333–1341.

⁶¹ Bell 1927: 92–93.

⁶² Zhang's memorial, Guangxu 33/11, *Zoudu*, 1399.

⁶³ The Military Bureau was translated into Tibetan as “*dmag phogs las khungs*” (lit. “office of military pay”), see Lianyu to Kalön, Guangxu 33/12/19, *lo rgyus yig tshags*, vol. 8, 2242, Catalogue number: Guangxu 343.

⁶⁴ Zhang to Waiwubu, Guangxu 33/3/2, *Zoudu*, 1342–1353.

Furthermore, he proclaimed that any healthy male between the ages of eighteen and thirty, whether Tibetan or Han, monk or layman, should be obliged to serve as a soldier in the new army.⁶⁵ In other words, Zhang's goal was the establishment of mandatory military service for all adult male residents in Tibet. A recently-published Tibetan document from the Archives of Tibet Autonomous Region in Lhasa, reveals that this part of the proposal was later translated into Tibetan and sent to the Ganden Phodrang government.⁶⁶ It would have been truly difficult for Zhang Yintang to implement compulsory military service in Tibet when the information about farmlands and residents in Tibet had not hitherto been collected in an integrated manner by the Qing officials.⁶⁷

Interestingly enough, according to reports from Kazi Bhairab Bahadur, the representative of the Nepal Kingdom in Lhasa in early 1907, the drill-master for the Tibetan army was a mixed Cantonese-Tibetan from Darjeeling, whom Zhang Yintang had brought with him.⁶⁸ In the first phase, Zhang recruited approximately 100 soldiers who were trained and drilled "using the English words of command", and "each of these soldiers [was] paid at the rate of twenty Chinese dollars per month and [was] armed with a Martini-Henri pattern rifle" which were widely-circulated in the British Empire during the end of the 19th century.⁶⁹ British India's influence cannot be ignored in Zhang's military training in these first stages, before the officers who received military education in China arrived in Lhasa. Bhairab Bahadur further wrote:

They are drilled daily from 8 in the morning till 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I saw these soldiers the other day marching through the city. They marched in regular order and had long coats (Tibetan) and Docha (Tibetan shoes) on. They appeared to understand well the "Right and

⁶⁵ Ho 2008: 219.

⁶⁶ Zhang to the Ganden Phodrang government, *lo rgyus yig tshags*, vol. 3, 719, Catalogue number: Guangxu 156.

⁶⁷ Perhaps he had already noticed this problem and thus had ordered the high-ranking Tibetan officials to re-conduct a survey based on the *Iron-Tiger Year Land Decree* of 1830, in order to obtain accurate information about revenue from estates as well as the numbers of households on each which could contribute soldiery; Zhang to the Ganden Phodrang government, *lo rgyus yig tshags*, vol. 3, 749–750, Catalogue number: Xuantong 宣統 26.

⁶⁸ IOR/L/PS/7/210, 31st, January 1907, Kazi Bhairab Bahadur's letter to Chandra Shamsheer Jang. But his letter to Chandra Shamsheer Jang on 18th January 1907 in the same file says that the drill master was from Sikkim.

⁶⁹ IOR/L/PS/7/210, 18th January 1907, Kazi Bhairab Bahadur's letter to Chandra Shamsheer Jang. Frederick O'Connor, the British trade agent in Gyantsé, reported that 300 soldiers were recruited; see FO535/9, No. 109, Enclosure 2, Diary kept by Captain Frederick O'Connor for the week ending 26th January 1907.

Left turns". The object of their having been brought to march through the city was perhaps to show them to the people with a view to strike awe on them, or it may be that the Amba [Zhang Yintang] wanted to impress upon the people the mode in which the soldiers were being trained. I hear that an order has already been issued to construct a barrack and a parade ground at Gyantse.⁷⁰

This shows that military parades could be seen by the people in Lhasa, and that Zhang was actively trying to expand the military training to Gyantsé, where a newly-established trade mart with British India was located. His intention was probably to show off the progress of his reforms in Tibet to the British agents there.

Zhang Yintang's educational and religious policies were also deeply connected with his military policies. In his view, Tibetan Buddhism was detrimental to the progress and scientific enlightenment of Tibetan society, and could thus be an obstacle to national security. He recognised that "because of Buddhism, Tibet not only does not know strategy, but also never moves to prepare [for an emergency]".⁷¹ For him, Tibetan Buddhism should be transformed as a religion so as to be able to contribute to increasing wealth and military power, as shown in the following statement issued to the Ganden Phodrang government in 1906:

There are many monks who are ignorant of the very elements of religion. They shave their heads and adopt the priestly vestments. Yet they do not walk in the way of perfected purification, but depend on their own worldly selves. The people of Japan are Buddhists. They practise religion and meditate at the time of the rats [from about 10 P.M. to midnight], but all work, whether as soldiers, as handicraftsmen or as traders. They also marry. It is thus that their country has become powerful. Now those monks who practise celibacy and other austerities are true monks. The others can marry, trade, train as soldiers and work at various crafts. In this way the country will increase in power and you will be able to protect it and to contend against hostile countries.⁷²

It cannot be ignored that Japanese Buddhism in the late 19th century provided an important role model for Zhang Yintang in his envisaged reform of Tibetan Buddhism. On the one hand, his view reflected the rising tide of Chinese intellectuals' severe critiques of Buddhist monks

⁷⁰ IOR/L/PS/7/210, 18th January 1907, Kazi Bhairab Bahadur's letter to Chandra Shamsheer Jang.

⁷¹ Zhang Yintang's "dialogues" with the Tibetan people, *Zoudu*, 1337–1341.

⁷² English translation of the Chinese statement issued by Zhang Yintang in IOR/L/PS/7/210, 26th December 1906, Attached document "IV" on the letter from Kazi Bhairab Bahadur to Chandra Shamsheer Jang.

and Taoists as burdening the country with “tens of millions of useless people of leisure, eating without doing anything” for the enhancement of national power.⁷³ And on the other hand, it reflected the appeal of modern Japanese Buddhism for many Chinese intellectuals, including both reformists and revolutionaries, admired for its ability to accommodate the supreme value of “protecting the nation” (Jap. *gokoku* 護國).⁷⁴ Japanese Buddhist monks, who had had special status under the Tokugawa regime until the mid-19th century, were officially allowed to marry after the Meiji era and began to live as ordinary citizens who were also required to do compulsory military service. Some Chinese intellectuals thought that Chinese Buddhism should be reformed in the same manner; and Zhang’s instructions reflected his view that the same was also applicable to Tibetan Buddhism.

Zhang offered a further plan to reform Tibetan Buddhism so as to benefit the Qing’s modernisation project. In his proposal to create an Education Bureau (Xuewuju 學務局), he asserted that all monasteries would have to establish their own “schools” at which certain numbers of Tibetan monks between the ages of twelve and twenty would receive a modern education including Chinese, English, mathematics, and military drills (*bingshi ticao* 兵式體操).⁷⁵ In the Chinese provinces, following the abolition of the state examination system in 1905, the Qing government had similarly encouraged the building of schools within temple properties as way of saving considerable expense for their education reform.⁷⁶ Zhang’s proposal also planned to utilise monastic properties for educational reform and to transform Tibetan Buddhist monasteries into centres for the inculcation of secular manners and citizenship values, as well as practical training including military drills, to large numbers of monks.

The adoption of militarism envisaged by Zhang’s reforms was not limited to the educational and religious fields alone. It also extended to an attempt to reform Tibetan customs and manners. Zhang Yintang, in his instructions to Tibetan people, set out in a pamphlet called “Improving Tibetan Customs” (“Banfa zangsu gailiang” 頒法藏俗改良), stated that all men above eighteen years old must learn how to use

⁷³ Murata 1992: 209–210.

⁷⁴ Ge 2006: 47–55.

⁷⁵ Zhang to Waiwubu, Guangxu 33/3/2, *Zoudu*, 1342–1353.

⁷⁶ The movement called “converting temple properties to establish schools” (*miao-chan xingxue* 廟產興學) was first advocated during the Hundred Days of Reform in 1898, and was later officially revived by the Qing authorities when they tried to establish a modern educational system at the beginning of the 20th century; see Murata 1992.

guns and must study martial arts to prepare against foreign intrusions.⁷⁷ Furthermore, Zhang additionally issued a further instruction called "Notes on Training Habits" ("Banfa xunsu qianyan" 頒法訓俗淺言), which emphasised the ethical value of Confucian ideas, as shown in the passage below:

MARTIAL SPIRIT (Shangwu 尚武):

[...] [In today's world] it is said that there is only strong and weak, but no right or wrong. I regret that I am compelled to agree. If we cannot achieve self-strengthening (*ziquang* 自強), we will be prey. If we have the ambition to be a hero with courage and have the spirit to die for our country, and if we internalise "iron and blood" (*tiexue* 鐵血) as our principle and recognise ourselves as "military-citizenry" (*junguomin*) [...] [then] even strong [foreign] enemies will not dare to insult us. [...] "Train troop every day; everyone discuss military affairs" (*riri lianbing renren jiangwu* 日日練兵、人人講武). This is a vital eight-word maxim. All the "citizens" (*guomin* 國民) who are above twenty but cannot ride a horse, handle a gun, become a soldier, or fight, are good-for-nothing.⁷⁸

If we look at the above terminology such as "iron and blood" and "military-citizenry", we can find his political message, which was strongly inspired by German- and Japanese militarism, which Qing officials had internalised during this period. Zhang Yintang translated these instructions into Tibetan to propagate them to the Tibetan people. By introducing this type of militarism as an important component of the national standard for morality, Zhang was attempting to transform the Tibetan people into "citizens" with "martial spirit" who could fight and die for the Qing China.

How did the Ganden Phodrang government react to Zhang's military reforms? According to some Chinese and English materials, Zhang Yintang was to some degree a popular figure among the Tibetan people, as David Dahpon Ho pointed out.⁷⁹ It was also noted by Charles Bell, who in his book composed around 1920 after he resigned as the Political Officer in Sikkim, wrote "as his schemes did not bear much fruit and he interfered with old established customs, his popularity to some extent declined. But many Tibetans still cherish a friendly regard for the 'Overseas Amban', as he is called, since he came by sea to Calcutta instead of by the overland route through Eastern

⁷⁷ "Banfa zangsu gailiang" in *Zoudu*, 1356.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*: 1355. I partly refer here to the translation of Ho in his article (Ho 2008: 220).

⁷⁹ Ho 2008: 218.

Tibet".⁸⁰

However, Bhairab Bahadur's report further shows that it was the military reforms in particular, among Zhang's wider range of policies, that brought controversy and led to a disagreement between him and the Ganden Phodrang government. In contrast to his proposal to the Qing court, which suggested the recruitment and training of 5,000 soldiers every year, Zhang took an even stronger line with the Ganden Phodrang government and ordered them to raise 40,000 soldiers immediately. The Ganden Tri Rinpoche (referred to as "Thirring Pochhe Lama" in Bhairab Bahadur's report), who presided over the government on behalf of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, told Bhairab Bahadur about the government's reactions to Zhang's order as follows:

The Kazies (i.e. the Tibetan ministers) replied saying that the proposal made by the Amba was an excellent one but in their opinion it seemed difficult to make the necessary provision for their feeding at once, moreover arms necessary for their equipment would not be fully forthcoming, and so it would be better, they said to begin with 10,000 men and gradually increase it to 40,000. They took a long time in making this representation. The Tang Tarin Amba got angry at this and told the assembled people that he was an officer sent by His Majesty the Emperor of China to make the necessary arrangements after proper enquiries for bettering the condition of Tibet [...]. As the Kazis and others stuck to their proposal of 10,000 troops only being maintained the said Amba became furious.⁸¹

The Ganden Phodrang government thought that Zhang's military reform plan would place a significant burden on Tibet and thus attempted to get Zhang to reconsider his radical policy. Due to Zhang's uncompromising attitude, the Ganden Phodrang government diplomatically stopped telling him "flatly that we were not able to carry out the project fully" to keep 4,000 thousand troops "as desired by the Amba" and instead sought to show him the total expenditure such a policy would entail.⁸² The failure or success of Zhang's military reforms depended on the cooperation of the Ganden Phodrang government, but the government was unenthusiastic. Zhang's goal of establishing a large Tibetan standing army was a mammoth ambitious task from the beginning; and in the end he was not able to fully launch his policies during his short tenure in Tibet, and as a result they never materialised by the end of the Qing Dynasty.

⁸⁰ Bell 1927: 89.

⁸¹ IOR/L/PS/7/201, 18th, February 1907, the conversation as reported in Kazi Bhairab Bahadur's letter to Chandra Shamsher Jang.

⁸² *Ibid.*

A Tibetan document I have collected from the Sichuan Provincial Archives in Chengdu offers a clue as to how the Ganden Phodrang government perceived Zhang Yintang's proposed military reforms. It was written by the Nyarong Chikyap (Nyag rong spyi khyab, the governor-general of Nyarong), who was stationed in Nyarong, eastern Tibet, a part of territory under the direct control of the Ganden Phodrang government since 1865.⁸³ Since he was being expelled from Nyarong by Zhao Erfeng (趙爾豐), he sent the following message to Zhao, which reads in part as follows, in January 1909:

Now, all the lands, people, and communities belonging to the Tibetan territory should be returned [to us]. [Otherwise,] the people would be seriously disappointed and depressed [...]. Since [Tibet] is a small country having people and lands which are different from other countries, it would be grateful if [you] could give us a great support just like Lonchen Zhang (*krang blon chen*) did.⁸⁴

Nyarong Chikyap, who confronted the oppressive policy of Zhao Erfeng, thus pointed to Zhang Yintang as a kind of ideal Qing official and an authoritative figure in his letter to Zhao. The letter does not however mention anything about Zhang's military reforms in this period. Zhao Erfeng was obviously irritated by this type of positive attitude of Tibetans towards Zhang. In May 1909, he found that a Tibetan battalion on the west side of the Driчу River was trying to prevent Zhao's unit from advancing. He reported to the Qing court that "more than 1,000 Tibetan troops have been conducting military training there. [...] They asserted that they were just following instructions which the High Commissioner Zhang had given".⁸⁵ This highlights the possibility that Zhang's policies to produce a stronger Tibetan army for the sake of supporting Qing dominance was, after he left Tibet in May of 1907, ironically used as a justification for the Ganden Phodrang government to mobilise its army in resistance to the Qing's subsequent military campaigns in eastern Tibet.

⁸³ Yudru Tsomu 2015: Chapter 7.

⁸⁴ The Tibetan letter from Nyarong Chikyap to Zhao Erfeng on January 1909, *Chuan-dian Bianwu Dachen Yamen Dang'an*. English translation by the present author.

⁸⁵ Zhao to Grand Council, Xuantonq 1/4/13, *Qingmo chuandian bianwu dang'an shiliao*, 335–336.

3. Military Reforms in Tibet after Zhang Yintang's Reforms

3.1. Lianyu and his Military Policies

What impact did Zhang Yintang's attempted reforms have on the Tibetan army? Soon after offering his reform proposal, Zhang left Tibet in May of 1907, and was transferred to Beijing to negotiate with British India on India-Tibet trade regulations. Therefore, he merely stayed in Lhasa for approximately ten months, and did not fully enact his military reforms during his short term stay in Lhasa. The reason he left early is complicated: he was stuck in internal political struggles among high-ranking officials, including in Beijing and Lhasa, leading to his transfer.⁸⁶ However, this section will pay more attention to his colleague, Lianyu (聯豫), an *amban* who had been stationed in Lhasa since 1906 even before Zhang Yintang arrived there. Lian was a rival to Zhang's authority, as has been analysed by David Dahpon Ho, and his implementation of Zhang's policies omitted significant parts of them.

Lianyu had prior diplomatic experience in Europe where he worked for Xue Fucheng (薛福成), a famous diplomat of the late Qing period.⁸⁷ Like Zhang Yintang, Lianyu, who was also a moderniser and a reformer, paid great attention to strengthening Qing control over Tibet with military forces in the aftermath of the Younghusband expedition.⁸⁸ After Zhang's departure from Lhasa, in 1907, he began to issue the *Tibetan Vernacular News* (*Xizang Baihuabao* 西藏白話報) in both Tibetan and Chinese languages, extolling "Patriotism and Martial Spirit; Promotion of Enlightenment" (*aiguo shangwu kaitong minzhi* 愛國尚武、開通民智) of the Tibetans, as the main principle for propagating Qing modernisation policies among the Tibetan people.⁸⁹ As such, late Qing militarism was embedded in Lianyu's policies, too.

However, Lianyu did not actively try to recruit troops from Tibetan society beyond the existing numbers, in contrast to Zhang Yintang's proposals for an extensive conscription system which would include monks. Instead, he planned to reorganise the Qing army stationed in Tibet and increase their number to 6,000 troops to be stationed at locations of strategic importance. However, knowing that most Chinese soldiers would not want to come all the way to Tibet, and that "if we use the Tibetan people to make up the numbers [of the new army],

⁸⁶ Ho 2008: 227–232.

⁸⁷ Okamoto *et al.* 2014: Appendix-2, 47–48.

⁸⁸ Ho 2008: 226; Lianyu's memorial, Guangxu 32/12/28, *Zoudu*, 1475–1480.

⁸⁹ Lianyu's memorial, *Zoudu*, 1489–1890.

they would probably not be fully trustworthy",⁹⁰ Lianyu thought that Tibetan troops should be limited to performing only a complementary supportive role for the Qing army, and instead focused on strengthening forces which would not be under the control of the Ganden Phodrang government. To this end, he first recruited soldiers from the Mongols of Dam (Tib. 'Dam sog; Ch. Damu Menggu 達木蒙古) who had a nomadic life at the lakeside of Namtso Lake, and the Gyade people (Rgya sde) of "the Thirty-nine Hor tribes" 霍爾三十九族 (Ch. Huo'er Sanshijiuzu, Tib. Hor sde so dgu), who lived along the southern Qinghai border. The Dam Mongols were descendants of Oirad Mongols commanded by Gushri Khan (1582–1654) in his expedition to Tibet in the mid-17th century.⁹¹ Later, the Qing introduced the Banner System to them and put them under the direct control of *ambans* in Lhasa in the mid-18th century.⁹² Lianyu suggested that the new army should consist of sixty percent Han Chinese and forty percent Dam Mongols as well as Gyade Horpas.⁹³ Around the summer of 1909 he created one unit (*ying* 營, 500 troops for each unit) made up of Dam Mongols, and then tried to expand this with recruits from the Gyade people.⁹⁴

Thus, Lianyu focused more on expanding the army with the forces he could directly recruit and command without going through the Ganden Phodrang government to enforce the *amban's* military strength. It can be also imagined that Lianyu assumed that the introduction of military conscription to Tibetan society, as Zhang Yintang had proposed, could serve as a means not to strengthen the military power of the Qing but rather as something which could potentially turn Tibetan society against Qing rule. In a memorial, he had complained bitterly about the disobedience of Tibetan officials against his orders⁹⁵ and expressed concern that radical reforms, such as incorporating Tibet as a new "province" of China proper, could cause additional conflict with the Tibetans. Therefore, he proposed: "with regards to dispatching Qing officials and deploying the army, if such decisions were made on the grounds of defence against Russia and Britain, then [the Qing] will gradually gain control [in Tibet]".⁹⁶ In other

⁹⁰ Lianyu's memorial, Guangxu 32/12/28, *Zoudu*, 1475–1480.

⁹¹ Petech 1950: 8.

⁹² Ayinna 2012: 13–16.

⁹³ Lianyu's memorial, Guangxu 32/12/28, *Zoudu*, 1475–1480.

⁹⁴ Lianyu's memorial, Xuanton 1/3/14, *Zoudu*, 1515–1520; Lianyu's memorial, Xuanton 1/9/14, *Zoudu*, 1525–1528; Lianyu's memorial, Xuanton 3/2/22, *Zoudu*, 1540–1541; Lianyu's memorial, Xuanton 3/3/12, *Zoudu*, 1543–1544. With regard to the history of the Thirty-Nine Hor Tribes, see Karmay 2005.

⁹⁵ Lianyu's memorial, *Zoudu*, 1475–1480.

⁹⁶ Lianyu's memorial, Guangxu 33/11/3, *Zoudu*, 1496–1498.

words, the most important purpose of his military policies was to reinforce the basis of the *amban's* authority over the Ganden Phodrang government.

Lianyu's wariness with regard to the Tibetan military was further aroused when tensions emerged between him and the Ganden Phodrang government in 1909. He encountered strong opposition from the government to his plan to request the Sichuan provincial government to dispatch an army from Chengdu to Lhasa and to put those troops under his own control. The dispatch of the army was justified by the need to protect the trade marts on the India-Tibet border established according to the trade agreement with Britain in 1908. However, the Ganden Phodrang government was extremely alarmed by the idea that Zhao Erfeng, who had been conducting military campaigns and radical reforms in eastern Tibet since 1905, might arrive in Lhasa with a Chinese army.⁹⁷ In addition, Lianyu found that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was returning to Lhasa via Kokonor in late 1909 after his long absence since 1904, and this had encouraged the Ganden Phodrang government to become more recalcitrant. Under the direction of the Dalai Lama himself who was at that time on his way to Lhasa, the Ganden Phodrang government ordered the former Kalön Shatra Paljor Dorjé (Bshad sgra Dpal 'byor rdo rje, 1860–1919) to rejoin the administration, ignoring Lianyu's opposition.⁹⁸ With the Dalai Lama and his entourage once again holding the initiative of the government, it would have been very difficult for Lianyu to make the Ganden Phodrang follow his orders. In his memorial to the court in October 1909, he expressed a severe criticism of Zhang Yintang's military reforms, saying that:

since he entered Tibet, Zhang Yintang ordered the Tibetans to subsidise the expense and train the Tibetan army; and [in doing so] he thoughtlessly relinquished [China's] sovereignty. It has further emboldened the Tibetan in their will to independence (*zili* 自立).⁹⁹

In February 1910, three months after the Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa, the Sichuan army did indeed reach Lhasa, despite the protests of the Ganden Phodrang government, and this made the Dalai Lama and his entourage (including Shatra Paljor Dorjé) flee once again, this time to India. The Dalai Lama then actively contacted foreign countries such as Britain, Russia, the United States and Japan to enlist their support

⁹⁷ Ho 2008: 234.

⁹⁸ Lianyu's memorial, Xuantong 1/9/14, *Zoudu*, 1525–1528. Shatra, a former Kalön as well as a favourite of the Dalai Lama, was removed from the office in 1904; see Youtai's memorial, Guangxu 30/8/20, 1197–1198.

⁹⁹ Lianyu's memorial, Xuantong 1/9/14, *Zoudu*, 1525–1528.

for Tibet's "independence".¹⁰⁰ Lianyu, amid rising anti-Qing sentiment among Tibetan people, issued new regulations to the Ganden Phodrang government not to privately possess and produce weapons such as cannons (*me gyogs*) and guns (*me mda'*), and not to build an arms factory (*me mda'i bzo khang*) without permission.¹⁰¹

Thus, after Zhang Yintang left Lhasa, his successor Lianyu virtually halted implementation of the military conscription system, and Zhang's other policies, such as expanding Tibetan forces and introducing military training into the education system, were also discontinued.

3.2. *The Extinction of the Chinese-Style Military Drill in Tibet After the Collapse of the Qing Empire*

The establishment of a military school was almost the only military policy of Zhang Yintang which Lianyu did actively implement and develop. The idea of founding a military school first briefly appeared in Zhang's proposition for the establishment of the "Nine Bureaus". He proposed that a new military school be established under the Military Bureau and planned to call graduates from the Beiyang Military Academy in Baodingfu as its instructors.¹⁰² After Zhang left Lhasa, Lianyu also thought that training officers was important and he established the school in Lhasa in the summer of 1908, named the Intensive Military School (Wubei Sucheng Xuetang 武備速成學堂).¹⁰³ Xie Guoliang (謝國樑, 1872-?), who was from Hunan Province and a graduate from the Zhejiang Military Academy (Zhejiang Wubei Xuetang 浙江武備學堂), was appointed as its first head teacher. He had himself received a Japanese-style military education in the academy.¹⁰⁴ Later he was also appointed to command the newly established unit, mentioned above, of Dam Mongols in 1909.¹⁰⁵ The new academy planned to enrol students from Tibetan, Dam Mongols, Gyade, and even Gorkhas.¹⁰⁶ The school lasted for approximately three years, until the clash between Tibetan and Qing armies after the outbreak of the 1911 Revolution. It

¹⁰⁰ Kobayashi 2019: 55–63.

¹⁰¹ Lianyu's order to the Ganden Phodrang government, *lo rgyus yig tshags*, vol. 3, 732, Catalogue Number: Xuantongchao 10.

¹⁰² Zhang to Waiwubu, Guangxu 33/3/2, *Zoudu*, 1342–1353.

¹⁰³ Lianyu's memorial, Xuantong 1/3/14, *Zoudu*, 1515–1520.

¹⁰⁴ Yajima 1983: 129.

¹⁰⁵ Zhonghua Minguo Waijiaobu Dang'an, 03–28–017–02–007, Xie Guoliang's petition including his "Tiaochen Zangshi (條陳藏事)" May 15th, 1920. Xie was dispatched by the Nanjing Government to Lhasa in 1930 as their special envoy to build a relationship with the Ganden Phodrang government; see Zhu 2016: 145–146.

¹⁰⁶ Lianyu's memorial, Xuantong 1/3/14, *Zoudu*, 1515–1520.

is difficult to ascertain with any clarity its organisation, actual numbers, the composition of its students, or how many students eventually graduated from it. Afterwards, following the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1912, almost all Chinese troops were expelled from Tibet to China via India at the end of that year; and thereafter the presence of Chinese military power almost completely disappeared in Lhasa. Nevertheless, the newly established Republic of China did not relinquish the ambition of re-incorporating Tibet into its sphere of control and in the summer of 1912 the Sichuan Provincial government dispatched military forces to eastern Tibet, which spurred the Ganden Phodrang government to dispatch its own reinforcements against the Chinese advance.

Even though thereafter China was recognised as a security threat for the Ganden Phodrang government, it seems that the history of Chinese military training for Tibetan army was not totally disowned by them. This can be seen in the fact that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, who returned to Lhasa in January 1913, asked Xie Guoliang, who remained in Lhasa, to train the Tibetan military. It can be imagined that if the Thirteenth Dalai Lama wanted to make the most of the existing Tibetan army who had received some training from the Chinese military officers, then Xie Guoliang, a former military commander and director of the Intensive Military School, could be a useful figure. According to Xie's records, although he was offered a salary, land and housing, he refused this offer and instead left Tibet via India in the same year.¹⁰⁷

The extinction of Chinese-style military training in Tibet may in hindsight seem inevitable, along with the emergence in Tibet of new training systems such as the Russian, British, and Japanese models which quickly replaced it.¹⁰⁸ However, how this transition took place during this short period needs further scrutiny. Aoki Bunkyō (青木文教), a Japanese monk from Nishi-Honganji Temple (西本願寺) who stayed in Lhasa for three years from 1913, described the process as follows:

After breaking away from Chinese control, the Tibetans destroyed the [Chinese] barracks and built new barracks in and around Lhasa. They are doing a comparative study of the military-drills of each country. Three barracks including small and large, for the regular troops are in Lhasa. The barracks for guardsmen is located near to the summer palace. Each of them also have branch barracks in Gyantsé and Shigatsé. Each garrison conducts different drills: a Russian-style drill is con-

¹⁰⁷ Zhonghua Minguo Waijiaobu Dang'an, 03-28-017-02-007, Xie Guoliang's petition including his "Tiaochen Zangshi" May 15th, 1920.

¹⁰⁸ Shakabpa 1967: 258-259.

ducted by a Mongol officer in Mongolian, a Chinese-style drill is conducted by Chinese instructors in Chinese, and a British Indian-style drill is conducted by the Tibetan instructors in English.¹⁰⁹

Thus, the Ganden Phodrang government rapidly replaced the former Qing military barracks with new ones built by themselves, and began to try out several foreign drills simultaneously.

Among them, it seems that the Russian-style military drill, which was provided by the Buryat-Mongol instructor, quickly increased its importance in Tibet around 1914.¹¹⁰ While the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had sojourned in Mongolia, China, and Kokonor from 1905 to 1909, he was under the escort of Buryat-Mongol guards, dispatched by Tsarist Russia, and some of them had been giving military training to his Tibetan attendants in Xining since as early as 1909.¹¹¹ In other words, the new-style military drills for the Tibetan army adopted after the expulsion of the Chinese garrisons in 1912, owed more to the legacy of these Buryat guards than they did to Zhang Yintang's ambitious programme of military training initiated at Lhasa in the same period.

According to information from British India's agent in 1914, "there were 500 cavalry and about 5,000 foot infantry all trained by a Mongol Russian in Russian model and their uniforms are in Cossacks style".¹¹² This number is perhaps overestimated, but it does appear that Russian-style drills were dominant over the prior Chinese-style drills at this point.

Why did the Dalai Lama and the Ganden Phodrang government still try to introduce Japanese military drills to Tibet in this period, when a Russian-style drill had already become influential there? Aoki's unpublished account reveals a clue:

The new type of military training is a blend of Chinese style (the Japanese-style drill around 1895) and Russian-style. At present, a Mongolian instructor is providing the Russian style mainly; and Tibetan and Chinese (naturalised Tibetan) instructors are teaching the Chinese style. So the general training has become a blend of the two. In its inexperience, it is at about the same level as primary students in my country, and cannot match the company-level military drill for junior high school.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Aoki 1920: 312.

¹¹⁰ Eric Teichman, who was a British diplomat and visited the Tibetan military camp in Chamdo in 1918, met a Buryat-Mongol instructor recommended by Agvan Dorjiev; see IOR/L/PS/11/714, Teichman to John Jordan, 28th May, 1918; Teichman 1922: 152.

¹¹¹ Wada 2019: 89.

¹¹² IOR/L/PS/11/79, Achung Sring to J.T. Rankins, Darjeeling, 14th May, 1914.

¹¹³ Aoki 2006: 366–367.

His observation betrays the condescension of a person from a country now ranked as one of the “major powers”, which had defeated Russia. Nevertheless, as a Japanese male citizen who had probably himself undertaken or at least witnessed military drilling as part of school education in Japan, Aoki's testimony has the value of coming from someone well-qualified to assess the quality of military drills.

Aoki's observation also indicates that there were some Tibetan military officers who could teach the Chinese-style military drill, aside from the Chinese defectors, and these were possibly individuals trained at the Chinese military academy in Lhasa before the collapse of the Qing. It would have been neither realistic nor wise for the Dalai Lama to invite new military instructors from China, and for this reason he seriously considered the introduction of a Japanese military drill to Tibet. According to Aoki, because the Dalai Lama realised “the Chinese-style military drill for the current Tibetan army derives from the Japanese military system”, he asked Aoki if he could invite Japanese instructors.¹¹⁴ It is not surprising that the Dalai Lama, who had visited China and met many Japanese dignitaries including military figures in Wutaishan and Beijing in 1908, might have been aware of the close relationship between the Qing and Meiji military systems.¹¹⁵ In his view, Japanese military training seemed an attractive option to introduce as an advanced military drill for the Tibetan army which would represent a smooth transition from the Chinese military drills, brought by the Qing. A further possibility is that the Dalai Lama considered the introduction of Japanese military training a realistic option since he was aware that both Britain and Russia had agreed not to send military representatives to Tibet in the Anglo-Russian Convention in 1907, which mutually recognised Chinese suzerainty over Tibet.¹¹⁶

Aoki answered the Dalai Lama that it was difficult for him personally to persuade the Japanese government to send military officers, but he ordered all the texts on military teaching methods from Japan such as *Drill Regulations of Infantry (Hohei Sōten 歩兵操典)*, and translated them into Tibetan.¹¹⁷ At the same time, as is well-known, a Japanese traveller, Yajima Yasujirō (矢島保治郎), who was a former military officer of the Japanese Army who had been resident in Lhasa since the summer of 1912, was nominated as an instructor for the Tibetan army in 1914. He was a graduate of the Toyama Military School and had fought in the Russo-Japanese War as a sergeant in the infantry. He

¹¹⁴ Aoki 1920: 132.

¹¹⁵ Kobayashi 2019: 47–51; Tada 1965: 48.

¹¹⁶ With regard to Anglo-Russian Convention and the Tibet-Japan relations after the collapse of the Qing, see *ibid.*: 51–56.

¹¹⁷ Aoki 1920: 132–133.

gave a Tibetan regiment military training and later supervised training for the Dalai Lama's personal guards, illustrating the confidence the Dalai Lama had in him. This training was conducted in Japanese language, and it included drills used for companies as well as battalion classes of the Japanese army.¹¹⁸

In the summer of 1916, the Ganden Phodrang government held a military parade which included all styles—Russian, British, Japanese and “the system of the combined Chinese and Mongol army”—which took place over four days and was presided over by the Dalai Lama himself.¹¹⁹ Shakabpa states that the outcome of this was that the government decided that “the Tibetan army would be modelled along British lines thereafter”.¹²⁰ Yet, Japanese records show that Japanese-style military training in fact continued in Tibet even after this parade, although it gradually diminished since it was dependent on Yajima's service alone.¹²¹ Later, Yajima had no choice but to stop his duty as well, and left Lhasa in October 1918, as directed by the Ganden Phodrang government, due to suspicion about him from British India whose presence in Tibet was increasing.¹²²

The precise manner in which Japanese-style military drills disappeared from the Tibetan scene, and how the Tibetan military training was henceforth integrated with the British style are beyond the scope of this article, which hopes to have shown how Japanese military models, which had rapidly flourished in East and Inner Asia during the torrid period around the turn of the 20th century, reached Tibet, but eventually left only small footprints in Tibet's military history.¹²³

Conclusion

This paper has examined Zhang Yintang's military reforms in Tibet after the 1904 British invasion to Lhasa, by focusing on the history of the introduction of militarism in modern East and Inner Asia.

¹¹⁸ Yajima 1984: 81–82. On Yajima, see also Yasuko Komoto's article in this volume.

¹¹⁹ Shakabpa 1967: 259. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama's biography says that military drills (*dmag rtsed*) were held in Russian, Japanese, and British tactics, for three days; see D13N-kha: 164b.

¹²⁰ Shakabpa 1967: 259.

¹²¹ Hidaka 2008: 151–153.

¹²² *Ibid.*: 153–155.

¹²³ Teichman, when he visited the Tibetan army in August of 1918, reported “the greatly increased efficiency of the Tibetan troops under Japanese training, a tactful terminological inexactitude, seeing that squads of Tibetan soldiers spend half the day ‘sloping’, ‘presenting’, and ‘ordering’ arms [...]”; see IOR/L/P&S/714, Teichman to Jordan, on 21st August, 1918.

After its defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War (1895) and the ensuing foreign military intrusions during the Boxer War in 1900, the Qing initiated military reforms emulating Japanese-style military models. Chinese intellectuals also promoted the introduction of a militaristic education system inside China based on the notion of a "military-citizenry" which was inspired by the rising militarism in Japanese. Zhang Yintang's attempted military reforms in Lhasa were in line with this broader movement, while his policies were also unique in proposing a system for Tibet modelled on the British colonial army in India.

Zhang attempted to expand the recruitment of Tibetan soldiers, upgrade their equipment, and provide them advanced military training to enable them to cope with the threat of foreign intrusions. He was also planning to introduce the so-called "military-citizenry" education model to Tibet in order to inculcate a new national morality which included "martial spirit" and to promote greater patriotism towards Qing China. The ultimate goal of his reforms was the introduction of a universal conscription system in Tibet.

His plan to establish a conscription system never materialised. The Ganden Phodrang government did not support his radical military reforms due to the significant burden they would place on the government. His successor, Lianyu, also did not fully follow Zhang's policies because of his concerns that such an extensive policy of conscription and military training would create threat against the Qing amid the rising tension between Tibet and China. The potential of his policies to produce a stronger Tibetan army for the sake of supporting Qing dominance was later used, ironically, as a justification for the Ganden Phodrang government to mobilise its own army in resistance to the Qing's subsequent military campaigns in eastern Tibet.

The Chinese military reforms were, for the most part, conducted during the period when the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and Tsarong Dasang Dadul (Tsha rong zla bzang dgra 'dul, 1888–1959), who would later become the highest commander of the Tibetan army, were absent from Lhasa after the British invasion (1904). It is doubtful that these short-lived reforms had a significant impact on the later Tibetan military reforms after 1913, when the Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa. However, it seems fair to surmise that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was influenced to some extent by what he had seen during his sojourn in China. In this period the Qing were rapidly trying to establish a modern army in all Chinese provinces, stimulated by the crisis of foreign invasions, and this may have impressed on the Dalai Lama the need for something similar in Tibet. As such, the military reform projects in Tibet under the Thirteenth Dalai Lama would benefit from further research in the context of East and Inner Asia's "militarised modernity", and not only in the context of Tibetan-British relations during this period.

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Japanese Visitors to Tibet in the Early 20th Century and their Impact on Tibetan Military Affairs—with a Focus on Yasujirō Yajima*

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Little information has been so far been made available in western language literature on Tibet concerning the Japanese military instructor Yasujirō Yajima (1882–1963, see Photograph 1) who stayed in Tibet between 1912 and 1918. He is known for having been among the instructors entrusted by the government of Tibet with the training of the Tibetan army in the context of modernisation reforms undertaken by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama after 1913. Two eyewitness accounts of him by Tibetans have come down to us, the first by the historian Shakabpa (1907–1989):

Under the auspices of Japan’s ambassador in Beijing, Gonsuke Hayashe, a retired Japanese military officer named Yasujiro Yajima arrived in Lhasa by way of Kham in 1913. He trained a regiment of the Tibetan army according to Japanese military customs. During his six-year stay in Lhasa, he tied his hair (in the Tibetan manner) and attended all of the ceremonies, just like the Tibetan government officials. He also constructed the camp of the Dalai Lama’s bodyguard in the Japanese style.¹

The second account is by the Tibetan army General Tsarong Dasang Dadul (Tsha rong zla bzang dgra ’dul, 1888–1959), as recounted in the biography by his son:

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¹ Shakabpa 2010: vol. 2, 766. He was even qualified by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama as his “personal guard” in addition to being a military instructor in one Thirteenth Dalai Lama’s letter quoted by Shakabpa 2010: vol. 2, 820.

Around this time [1916], the Tibetan Government approached a Japanese ex-officer, Yasujiro Yajima, who happened to be in Lhasa, and asked him to train the newly recruited men in modern methods of warfare. Yajima agreed to do this and also helped to design the barracks at Norbu Lingka in the Japanese style, and he was given the responsibility of training a group of men in Japanese military methods. Another section was trained in the Russian system by Tenpai Gyaltzen, a Mongolian soldier, and a third in the British system of musketry. After his military instruction was no longer needed, Yajima stayed on for another five years before returning to Japan. His job was then to train the troops in physical drills and to give them swimming lessons. I was told by my father that Yajima was a peculiar man; he wished to be like the Tibetan officers and wanted to wear a headdress like theirs, with red ribbons in the knot. He was told that this red ribbon was an entitlement for the Tibetan officers only and therefore asked Father whether there would be an objection to his putting in a yellow ribbon instead of the red, and my father said this would be acceptable. Thereafter, he kept his hair long and began to tie it in a knot with a yellow ribbon.²

Other secondary English-language literature has also focused on Yajima.³ However, none of these sources were able to make use of Yajima's own personal archive, nor to put Yajima's experience in Tibet sufficiently in context with his prior experience as a military officer in Japan.

Thus, in continuation with the present author's previous work on Japanese travellers to Tibet in the same period,⁴ this paper is an attempt to shed additional light on the achievements of Yajima in Tibet based on Japanese language materials, i.e. by using Japanese military archival sources, Japanese language secondary literature, along with Yajima's own personal writings, documents and photographs that remain in the possession of his family.

² Tsarong 2000: 49.

³ Hyer 1972, 1982 and Yamaguchi 1987 are among the earliest general treatments of Japanese travellers to Tibet such as Yajima Yasujirō. Both of these authors had personal relationships with Tōkan Tada, who was himself one of the early travellers. Through Tada, Paul Hyer gained access to various material sources and information on these figures (Komoto 2013: 121). Yamaguchi Zuihō was Tada's student at the University of Tokyo and went on to become one of his closest research colleagues. Hyer and Yamaguchi made the most of the materials and information gained from Tada in their pioneering studies in this field. Another pioneering author was Kanai Akira who conducted research on Yajima's career in articles such as "Yajima Yasujirō no sokuseki [The life of Yajima Yasujirō]" in *My Diary in Tibet* (Kanai 1983: 95–138) and "Yajima Yasujirō ryaku nenpu [A Brief Chronological Record of Yajima Yasujirō's Career]" (*ibid.*). His research partly, but precisely, used the materials in possession of the Yajima family. Further work was done by Berry 1990 and Qin 2005 based on these previous researches and published materials.

⁴ See the final bibliography for selected references.



Photograph 1. Yajima in Lhasa (date unknown, but most likely taken in Lhasa in 1917; source: Ms. Nakako Yajima private archives).

By reconstructing Yajima's experience as accurately as possible, and in particular by gathering whatever information is available in those Japanese sources on his design of the Tibetan military barracks in Lhasa, this study will contribute to a better understanding of one particular aspect of Tibet's military history in the early 20th century.

As only a small amount of records related to his stay in Tibet have been passed down, and in order to understand more precisely the extent of his military expertise and possible influence on the Tibetan army, this paper will also include a study of Yajima's prior experience and training in the Japanese army (1902–1907).

1. "Visitors to Tibet" (*nyūzōsha*) and Yasujirō Yajima

When looking at the period from the end of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century, the relationship between Japan and Tibet, from the Japanese side,⁵ can be considered to have been determined by two factors.⁶ One is the study of Tibetan Buddhism and the introduction of related Buddhist scriptures to Japan, and the other relates to the military and political interests of Japan towards Tibet, within the dynamic of the former's continental expansion. In the early 20th century, Tibet-related topics were not widely popular among the Japanese. Nevertheless, during the period, ten individuals in particular are known for their success in establishing direct contact with Tibet. These individuals were known by the Sino-Japanese expression "*nyūzōsha*" (入蔵者), which literally means "a person who enters Tibet".

Among these *nyūzōsha*, five were monks, namely Yutaka Nōmi 能海寛 (1868–?) who was one of the first Japanese to reach Patang in Tibet; Ekai Kawaguchi 河口慧海 (1866–1945), the first author to travel to Tibet in 1900–1902, and again in 1913–1915;⁷ Enga Teramoto 寺本婉雅 (1872–1940),⁸ who reached Patang with Nōmi, and was the first to organise a conversation at Wutai Shan between the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and Son'yu Ōtani, sent by his brother Kōzui Ōtani 大谷光瑞, abbot of Nishi Honganji temple 西本願寺 of the Jōdo Shinshū, the largest

⁵ In the late 19th century and early 20th century, Japan was competing over Tibet in the international arena while Britain, China and Russia played out their "Great Game" (Kobayashi 2018: 1). The later study has also made clearer the interest taken by the Tibetan government itself in Japan (*ibid.*).

⁶ For a study of the image of Tibet in Japan see Komoto 2009a and 2009b, 2010. On the relations between Tibet and Japan in the late 19th and early 20th century, see Hyer 1972 and Kobayashi 2019.

⁷ See Kawaguchi 1909.

⁸ See Komoto 2012b.

branch of Japanese Buddhism.⁹ Then there was Bunkyō Aoki 青木文教 (1886–1956)¹⁰ who was also dispatched to Lhasa by Kōzui Ōtani and stayed there three years, and after his return to Japan worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japanese army. And finally, Tōkan Tada 多田等観 (1890–1967),¹¹ who after studying at Sera Monastery for ten years, brought the great Tibetan Buddhist scriptures to Japan.

Next, those classified as later visitors are Yasuteru Narita 成田安輝 (1864–1915), who was dispatched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1901; then Jinzō Nomoto 野元甚蔵 (1917–2014), Hisao Kimura 木村肥佐生 (1922–1989) and Kazumi Nishikawa 西川一三 (1918–2008), all of whom entered Tibet as agents of the Japanese secret military agency.

To this day, material such as personal belongings, documents, and biographies have only been investigated and organised for four of these individuals, namely Ekai Kawaguchi, Yutaka Nōmi, Tōkan Tada and Bunkyō Aoki.¹²

The tenth figure, Yasujirō Yajima, on whom this paper focuses, was not affiliated to either of these aforementioned groups. And his personal belongings, documents and biography have not yet been sufficiently sorted and examined. Indeed, among the ten individuals mentioned, Yajima, along with Yasuteru Narita, is the person about whom the greatest amount of information remains unclear.

In 1909, Yajima planned a trip around the world and left Japan.¹³ Having only extremely limited means, he himself described the enterprise as a “penniless journey”.¹⁴ In his plan, Tibet was initially intended to be no more than a stopover on the journey. In March 1911, he succeeded in reaching Lhasa for the first time from China. He then went back to Japan for a while, before visiting Lhasa again in 1912, where he stayed for six years, from July 1912 to October 1918. He then

⁹ Shirasu 2012.

¹⁰ See Nagano and Komoto 2010, and Komoto 2013.

¹¹ See Komoto 2012a.

¹² References on these figures: Sumida 1989; Okuyama 2003; Tada and Yamaguchi 2005; Komoto, 2012a; 2013. About Japanese *nyūzōsha* as a whole, non-academic works include that of journalist Emoto Yoshinobu published in 1993 and 1994, and Berry 1990.

¹³ Yajima Yasujirō joined *Nihon Rikkō Kai* (日本力行会 Japanese Striving Society) eleven days after he left the army. *Nihon Rikkō Kai* was established by Shimanuki Hyōdayū (島貴兵太夫, 1866–1913), a Christian minister, as a private organisation, to support underprivileged Japanese to migrate overseas. Under the support of this organisation, Yajima planned to go on a trip around the world in the order of China, India, the Middle East, Africa, South America, North America, Siberia and Manchuria for ten years (Kanai 1983: 98–101).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*: 96. See later in this paper for a presentation of this source.

married a Tibetan woman and a son was born to them in 1917.¹⁵ The following year, he came back to Japan with his wife and child (see Photograph 2).

In comparison to the *nyūzōsha* previously mentioned, two aspects of Yajima's profile are worth pointing out as unusual. The first is that unlike all the others, he did not travel to Lhasa entrusted with any kind of political or religious duty or mission. It is clear that his travel was made possible only by individual and personal financial support. For example, we know that Nōmi, Aoki, as well as the monks who worked towards the introduction of Tibetan Buddhist scriptures to Japan, were financially supported by important temples and their devotees. Nomoto, Kimura, and other agents who worked towards military intelligence and negotiations, on the other hand, were supported by the Japanese army and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. By contrast, the greater part of what money Yajima was able to secure came from his own family.¹⁶

The second remarkable point relates to Yajima's direct involvement and level of connection to the Tibetan army, which was unmatched by any of the other *nyūzōsha*. During the same period, military secret agents such as Nomoto and Kimura were carrying out investigations on the Tibetan army as part of their general research on the situation in Tibet, but Yajima was actually employed as an "instructor" for the army itself for four years.¹⁷

¹⁵ According to "Yajima Yasujirō ryaku nenpu" in Kanai 1983, Yajima married a Tibetan lady named "Noburā" (ノブラー, 1894–1923) in 1916 and gave birth to a son named "Ishinobu" (意志信, 1917–1944) in March, 1917.

¹⁶ Among the manuscripts and correspondence material that remain with the Yajima family, are several accounts relating to funding requests. For example, before his first trip to Tibet, in a letter thought to have been written in Beijing, one finds the following words: "Even if I use all the money that my family possesses for my trip to Tibet, it will not be wasted. On the contrary, as a way of using money, it will be unmistakably beneficial to all the people of this world. Personally, I hope that the family will gladly support me financially" (Undated letter written by Yajima, Ms. Nakako Yajima private archive).

¹⁷ This is discussed further below. A personal résumé (*Curriculum Vitae*) written after Yajima's return to Japan still remains in the possession of his family. In this résumé, Yajima wrote about three entries relating to his activities during the time he stayed in Tibet: 1) The drawing of a military style map of Lhasa and its environs, covering an area of approximately 36 square km; 2) The draft plans for a barracks to accommodate Tibetan army troops; 3) The training of Tibetan army troops as an instructor during four years.



Photograph 2. Yajima's wife and son (Maebashi, 1919, photographer unknown; source: Ms. Nakako Yajima private archives).

In post-war Japan, especially after the 1970s, research on the “visitors to Tibet” (*nyūzōsha*) attracted greater interest. Yet research on Yajima remained somewhat neglected. I would suggest that one of the reasons for this was Yajima’s military involvement.¹⁸

2. Public Interest in Yajima’s Story in Japan

In Japan, the first publications to deal with Yajima date back to the 1980s. The impetus for these came from a series of NHK documentaries (NHK is Japan’s public television broadcasting company), which prompted a great upsurge in public interest on the subject of Central Asia generally.¹⁹ Attention also increased towards Tibet in particular, and a number of publications ensued, leading to the “rediscovery”, so to speak, of Yajima and the other Japanese *nyūzōsha*. The first example came in the form of a booklet published in 1983, commemorating the one-hundredth anniversary of Yajima’s birth. It was published under the title *Nyūzōnissshi* (*My Diary in Tibet*, hereafter referred to as such) edited by Akira Kanai (金井晃).²⁰ However, this “diary” was not directly written by Yajima himself. It was composed by Kanai, based on notes kept at the Yajima family home in the town of Maebashi (Gunma

¹⁸ For example, the Japanese writer Ito Keiichi (1917–2016), who also experienced going to war between 1938 and 1945, described the atmosphere that prevailed in Japan for the period of twenty years after the war as follows: “As exaggerations in the way war history and so on told of how Japanese soldiers acted [during the war] flowed continuously, those who served in the war remained reluctant to speak about it” (Ito 2008: 17–18). I think that this background is reflected in the delay in interest towards Yajima in comparison to other *nyūzōsha*.

¹⁹ The most important trigger was a documentary series broadcast by NHK, entitled *Shiruku rōdo* [Silk Road]. This series was co-produced by CCTV (China Central Television). Local field reports were made in 1979 and 1980, and then broadcast once a month between April 1980 and 1989, with a total of twelve episodes. At the time, there was a very strong reaction from the Japanese public, and in answer to that, a second series entitled *Rōma eno michi* [The Way to Rome] was created and broadcast once a month between April 1983 and September 1984, in a series of eighteen episodes. Concurrently, a thirty-minute programme entitled *Mō hitotsu no shiruku rōdo* [The Other Silk Road] was broadcast in a series of twenty-four episodes during the year 1981. Then, a third series entitled *Umi no shiruku rōdo* [The Maritime Silk Road] was broadcast in a series of twelve episodes between April 1988 and March 1989. Furthermore, in 1989 highlights from the footage of the first to third series were edited and compiled in a short series of three episodes entitled *Shiruku rōdo · Sōdai na tabi gojūman kiro* [A Magnificent Journey. 500 000 km along the Silk Road] and broadcast in August 1989. After that, special editions, paperback editions, as well as photographic books and related publications continued to be published over a period of time.

²⁰ Kanai 1983.

prefecture) as well as on newspaper interviews. This was the first publication that accurately collated the fragmentary information to be found in the various mementos available. This “diary” became a valuable foundation for ensuing research, and a number of critical biographies followed on its heels.²¹

In these various early accounts, references to the relation between Yajima and the Tibetan army predominately related to two points, namely his involvement in the training of Tibetan soldiers (see Photograph 3), and his participation in the design of the military barracks. In *My Diary in Tibet*, training as well as command practices and other such disciplines taught by Yajima to the Tibetan infantry are described as being based on Japanese infantry drill manuals, and performed in the Japanese style.²² The details it contains relate to the descriptions of the barracks are given later in this paper.



Photograph 3. Training of the Tibetan army, Lhasa (date unknown, but probably taken in 1916; source: Ms. Akiko Tada private archives).

²¹ For reference on Yajima and besides Asada Teruhiko's *Sekai musenryokōsha: Yajima Yasujirō* [The World Hitchhiker: Yajima Yasujirō] (1986), see the work of Tibet specialist Yamaguchi Zuihō's *Tibetto* [Tibet] (1987: 98–103) and Emoto Yoshinobu's *Tibetto hyōhaku* [Wanderings in Tibet] (1994: 68–77).

²² Kanai 1983: 81.

A further point of discussion related to Yajima raised in recent years, is the debate about whether Japanese *nyūzōsha* may have been involved in the creation of the Tibetan national flag. As far as Yajima himself is concerned, his diary only touches on the subject of the “flag” in two instances: 1) during his second stay in Lhasa (1913), he relates that in order to celebrate the new year, he raised the Japanese (rising sun) flag on the roof of the house he was staying at, and that doing so attracted the attention of the people of Lhasa;²³ and 2) at the time he was involved with the training of the Tibetan army, he mentions making a “cavalry flag” (*kihei no hata* 騎兵の旗).²⁴ Consequently, as far as Yajima is concerned at least, it appears that he did not have any direct involvement with the creation of what is now known as the Tibetan national flag.²⁵

In addition, a further point should be added to the present discussion, namely Yajima's involvement with weapons, and rifles in particular. Indeed, the 15th Infantry Regiment to which Yajima belonged in the Japanese army was particularly known for its superior expertise in shooting techniques.²⁶ One can see Yajima's deep interest in firearms from the several references made to these weapons in the accounts he left.²⁷ Yajima himself mentions rifle practice at the time of his stay in

²³ *Ibid.*: 130–131.

²⁴ *Ibid.*: 82.

²⁵ However, other Japanese travellers did have an influence at least on one early version of a flag used by the Tibetan military. Aoki Bunkyo relates that on his way to Lhasa (from October 1912 to the mid-January 1913) he stayed at Chökor Yangtsé, an occasional palace of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. While there he observed a Tibetan army rifle practice using real bullets. According to Aoki's travel account, on this occasion these soldiers used a new “military flag” whose design was created by Aoki himself together with the “military commander” (i.e. Tsarong Dasang Dadul). The lower half of the design included a lion on a snow mountain, and the upper half showed a rising sun and the moon on a yellow background. He notes that there were discussions about making further modifications, because in this form it looked too similar to the Japanese military flag. Aoki also noted that a previous design of “military flag” used by the Tibetan army had a bigger lion and snow mountain, as well as a very small sun and moon on a triangular red-coloured cloth background (Aoki 1920: 135). A part of Aoki's possessions are currently housed at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, and these include a hand-made drawing entitled “Military flag of Tibet” (Tibetto no gunki 西藏の軍旗). However, this is again slightly different from the above-described design of the “military flag” which Aoki says he created together with Tsarong.

²⁶ For example, the 15th Infantry Regiment was known for frequently achieving excellent marks in the shooting contests that were held in the Japanese army; see Teikoku Rentaisi Kankōkai 1917: 20–21.

²⁷ For instance, in *My Diary in Tibet*, there is mention of the fact that the commander of the Tibetan army possessed a rifle that bore a seal from the Imperial Japanese Army Tokyo Arsenal (Kanai 1983: 44), and that similarly, the soldiers who served the Dalai Lama were equipped with “1918 type soldier guns” (*ibid.*: 55).

Lhasa, during training of the Tibetan army.²⁸ It would be worth examining further whether the technology and knowledge possessed by Yajima in this regard were put into practice within the activities of the Tibetan army.

Among the points mentioned above, let us now take a closer look at Yajima's involvement in the design of military barracks, and the sources available to us on this subject.

3. *Private Sources Related to Yajima*

Among the extant personal belongings and documents related to Yajima's entire life, those that give us most information about Yajima's whereabouts at different periods are held by his eldest daughter, Ms. Nakako Yajima (矢島仲子氏), who possesses more than 500 items. At present, the present author is carrying out a complete survey of these materials. Given the fact that in the field of Japanese history and research on Tibet there has been almost no scientific interest in Yajima until very recently, this constitutes the first time that this data will have been looked at in the context of scientific research.²⁹

Among the more than 500 items extant are documents that are thought to have been written by Yajima himself. These include journals, manuscripts, notes and other memoranda, as well as correspondence. Unfortunately, the journal he wrote during his stay in Tibet remains nowhere to be found. However, in addition to his personal correspondence, there are three documents in the hands of Ms. Nakako Yajima that refer directly to Yajima's stay in Tibet.

The first is an untitled manuscript of about 16,000 Japanese characters that Yajima wrote during his stay in Lhasa, in January or February 1913. Although the location of the original document is unknown, a copy remains in the hands of Ms. Nakako Yajima. This document contains detailed accounts of the battles that took place from the end of July 1912 onwards between the Chinese and Tibetan armies, as well as of the Dalai Lama's return to Lhasa. It is thought that this account was not extracted from Yajima's personal journal, but that it was a separate report made for a third party. However, the identity of the addressee remains unknown and to this day this paper has not been published.

The second is a manuscript of about 3,000 characters entitled *Rirekisho* (lit. *Curriculum Vitae* and hereafter referred to as such), which he wrote after he had returned from Tibet at the beginning of the

²⁸ *Ibid.*: 82.

²⁹ The author would like to express sincere thanks to Ms. Nakako Yajima for generously facilitating this research in Japan.

Shōwa period, probably in 1931. It is a record of Yajima's personal story up to 1931. However, this descriptive account contains only a brief allusion to Yajima's stay in Tibet of about 500 characters.

The third is an account entitled "Henkyō wo saguru" (lit. "Japanese Frontier Now" and hereafter referred to as such), which was serialised in the Japanese newspaper *Yomiuri* between the 14th and the 22nd of July 1940. It is an article of about 11,000 characters, which mentions Yajima's journey and his stay in Tibet. No original manuscript relating to this article remains in the possession of the Yajima family. It is possible that he dictated this story to a reporter who transcribed it for the newspaper.

4. Concerning the Japanese Model of the Tibetan Army Barracks

Among the three documents discussed above, reference to his involvement in the construction of army barracks can be found in the last two, although neither of these were written at the time of his stay in Tibet itself, but rather at least ten years after his return to Japan. They were therefore written on the basis of recollection. For example, his *Curriculum Vitae*, which is thought to have been written towards the end of the 1920s, tells us the following:

I received a request from the general, who was chief of the General Staff Office and also a minister. This request was for the building of a military camp with accommodation for several thousand soldiers. So I designed the plans based on what I could remember of my time spent at the Instruction Battalion (教導大隊)³⁰ of the Toyama Military Academy (陸軍戸山学校). When I presented the project to the Tibetan government, they were very happy with it. It took three years to complete the project based on my plans. Then once again, I was thanked by the Tibetans.³¹

Similar information appears in the 1940 newspaper article.³² That is to say that following a request from the Tibetan authorities involved in

³⁰ More will be said later on the exact function of this battalion in the Toyama Military Academy.

³¹ Yajima's *Curriculum Vitae*.

³² "In regards to the accommodation for the soldiers, there were difficulties with the barracks. I was not an architect so I didn't know how to design them. Oh well, I remembered barracks from the old days, and drew up the plans for buildings that could house up to about 2000 troops"; see Yajima, "Henkyō wo saguru" [Japanese Frontier Now], *Yomiuri*, July 20, 1940.

military matters, Yajima drafted the architectural plans, and the Tibetan army completed the construction of the barracks within three years.

So, what would these drawings actually have looked like? We know from the account above, that his design imitated the barracks of the Instruction Battalion at the Toyama Military Academy, and that they were on a scale suited to housing about 2,000 soldiers. In the year following the end of the Russo-Japanese war, in April 1906, Yajima had been promoted to the rank of sergeant 陸軍軍曹, and on the 15th of the same month he was appointed to the first squadron of the aforementioned Instruction Battalion, where he would remain for more than a year and a half, up to the time of his discharge, which took place at the end of December 1907.³³



Photograph 4. Toyama Military Academy (from A guide to Toyama Military Academy, Yasukuni Jinja Library and Archives).

³³ With regard to these circumstances, in the section entitled “Yajima Yasujirō no sokuseki” [The life of Yajima Yasujirō] in *My Diary in Tibet* (*ibid.*: 96), it is said that he pretended to have a mental illness in order to realise his plan of “penniless journey around the world”. However, if we consider the period of Yajima’s discharge from military service, we can see that at the time, the Instruction Battalion was undergoing personnel reduction in order to shift to a new organisational structure. Consequently, it is probable that Yajima’s military discharge was also due to these circumstances and was not just a matter of his own individual will; see “Rikugun kyōikushi-Toyama gakkō no bu” [A History of Military Education-Toyama Academy], Yasukuni Jinja Library and Archives, undated.

The Toyama Military Academy (see photograph 4) was created in 1873. Within the Japanese army, it was the institution where the upper echelons of mainly infantry soldiers and officers received education and training in cutting-edge military technology.³⁴ This elite military education, as one might call it, differed from the Imperial Japanese Military Academy in two regards. First, in terms of educational target, it was aimed at those already in active service, and second, all the students belonged to ranks ranging from sergeant (陸軍軍曹) and corporal (陸軍伍長) to captain (陸軍大尉). In other words, the Toyama Military Academy was a place for training active-service commanders. At the end of their training, those educated at Toyama Academy would return to their original units and put the knowledge and techniques they had acquired into practice. Through this practice-based approach, Toyama Military Academy aimed to improve standards across the Japanese military as a whole.

The students who belonged to this Academy were divided into three main groups. The first consisted of students of the Tactics Department, the majority of whom had a rank higher than that of lieutenant, and studied infantry operations. The second was composed of students belonging to the Physical Training and Drilling Department, and the status of these students went up to second lieutenant (陸軍少尉). They engaged in physical development and training. The third group was composed of military music students who received education and training as future trumpeters and leading members of military bands. All students, in all three of these groups, studied practical skills and related topics intensively from six months to a year.

In addition to this, for practical skills training performed by the students of the Tactics Department, actual soldiers with ranks ranging from private first-class (陸軍上等兵) to sergeant were brought in from each regiment of the Japanese army. This experimental unit was designed for the purpose of studying the application of the latest military technologies, so to speak, for actual fighting. This was the unit called the "Instruction Battalion", and it was in this battalion that Yajima served.

According to the "Rikugun Toyama gakkō henseihyō" ("Toyama Military Academy's organisation chart"), when Yajima was actually

³⁴ At first the Academy was housed in the Tactics Department 兵学寮 (the former suburban villa of the Owari Clan), but was then moved to Toyama the following year (present day Toyama area of the Tokyo Shinjuku district). The Instruction Battalion itself was established in 1887. It was designed for "training studies" and "development of soldier education", which became the goal of its everyday activities; see *ibid.*

enrolled in 1906, the structure of this battalion consisted of four companies, 54 non-commissioned officers, and 1,000 soldiers.³⁵

Let us now examine the question of the external form of the Toyama Academy barracks that served as a model for the architecture of the Tibetan troops' barracks in Lhasa. There is little extant documentation on the Toyama Military Academy, and the greater part of the existing data does not deal with 1906–1907, when Yajima was there, at the end of the Meiji era (1868–1912), but rather with the 1920s–1940s, from the end of the Taishō 大正 (1912–1926) to the beginning of the Shōwa 昭和 (1926–1989) periods. In addition to this, in 1912 the Instruction Battalion and the Tactics Department were moved from the Academy's Toyama site to the Army Infantry School (陸軍歩兵学校) in Chiba. This move is considered the main reason for the dearth of documents relating to the earlier period of the Instruction Battalion. To date, no graphic materials such as specific photographs or drawings of the Instruction Battalion barracks dating from Yajima's period have been found.

However, among the Toyama Academy's records,³⁶ the "Records of the New Constructions and Repairs" (Shinchiku narabini Eizen 新築並営繕) in *The History of Toyama Military Academy*, does mention that the barracks of the Instruction Battalion were newly built on the 5th of September 1887.³⁷ Also, in the 1969 publication, *Rikugun Toyama gakkō ryakushi* (*A Brief History of Toyama Military Academy*), by Naonobu Uzawa (鵜沢尚信), himself a graduate of the Academy who later became its headmaster, we find a reference in an entry dated June 1895 to: "1,500 military imperial guards housed in the Instruction Battalion's barracks",³⁸ which confirms that the buildings had such a capacity at that time.

We are thus forced to imagine what kind of buildings the barracks of the Instruction Battalion were likely to have been. First, many of the

³⁵ "Rikugun kyōikushi-Toyama gakkō no bu" [A History of Military Education: Toyama Military Academy], Annexe table number 11.

³⁶ Inspectorate General of Military Training, *Toyama gakkō rekishi* [The History of Toyama Military Academy]. This material is undated, but it has an explanatory note: "This description is appendix for *A History of Military Education* vol. 20". Consequently, because "A History of Military Education in Japan: Toyama Military Academy" goes as far as 1914, *Toyama gakkō rekishi* also might have been written at the same period.

³⁷ (unpaged). Student accommodation and so on were built in August 1886 and the buildings inside the Toyama Academy were all newly built approximately around that year.

³⁸ Uzawa 1969: 20.

buildings built at the Academy during the Meiji era fortunately remained intact until the last years of the Pacific war.³⁹ Even after the Instruction Battalion was relocated to Chiba, it is believed that the former barracks which had housed it until then continued to exist. One can therefore assume that the buildings we see in photographs taken at the site during the Shōwa era were the same as those previously used as barracks for the Instruction Battalion.

Secondly, since there existed a standard type of barracks in the Japanese army, we can assume that the Instruction Battalion's buildings were likely based on the same model. This basic design included two floors, and a corridor along which the soldiers' rooms were aligned. Inside each room, a specific place was designed for the storing of each soldier's rifle. Also, in order for the non-commissioned officers to be able to keep eye on the soldier's rooms at all times, there were no dividing walls between the corridors and the adjoining living spaces. In addition to this, the officer's room was situated on the same floor as those of the soldiers.⁴⁰ Later however, alterations were made to this basic layout. For example, in the early years of the Meiji era, each house had been occupied by a single company, but from the late 1870's each house was occupied by two companies, and a single side corridor became the standard. From the end of the 1880s until the end of the 1890s, how to improve sanitation and living quarters in the barracks became a concern, particularly with regards to lighting and ventilation. For this reason, the design consisting of a single central corridor with rows of rooms on both sides was again modified. It is also possible to examine concretely the interior layout of the barracks between 1902 (the year that Yajima had first enrolled in the army) and 1907 (when he joined the Academy), by using the plans and elevation drawings for

³⁹ However, during the last years of the Pacific War, most of them were destroyed during air raids. Only the foundations of the open-air concert hall and the Officers' mess partly remain.

⁴⁰ Description based on the "Infantry Domestic Affairs Report" (1880). This material was written in 1872, but the author used the 1880 edition as reference. In 1888, it was renamed the "Military Domestic Affairs Report" and it was revised in 1894, 1900, 1907, 1921 and 1934. In 1943, it was yet renamed the "Military Domestic Affairs Ordinance" (or the "Code of Military Domestic Affairs"), but there were no major changes as to the stipulations regarding the quarters of non-commissioned officers. The relevant original text goes as follows: "A 'non-commissioned officer's room' requires to be appropriately located separately from the soldiers' rooms and allow him to see through across to these rooms" (chapter 8, "Rule for each barrack room", art. 2, p. 12), and "The room of non-commissioned officers must be located on the end of each company's rooms in order not to be inconvenient for supervision" (*ibid.*, art. 3, p. 120).

the barracks of the First Foot Regiment of the Third Battalion of the Tokyo Imperial Guards, which were of the same type.⁴¹

It is difficult to imagine that Yajima's "plans" for the barracks at Lhasa would have truly been like the "professional" barrack construction drawings, since as Yajima himself wrote, he was not an architect and had no formal knowledge of architectural design.⁴² Consequently, our hypothesis is that rather than conceiving entirely new plans, Yajima based his plans on a number of points, to provide a conceptual scheme, so to speak.

Among these points, the most important was the stipulation of "approximately 2000 beds".⁴³ This is the only point to which Yajima specifically referred in his writings concerning the barracks, so it can be assumed he regarded it as the most important point. In other words, at the heart of Yajima's plans were two main considerations, one being the way a great number of people use a space when they live together, and the other being the way such a space can be managed and controlled. If we consider the solutions provided by Japanese army barracks design with regards to the first point, we can see that pigeon-hole shelving was provided for the storing of personal effects, and that bed and eating places were fitted in a compact manner.⁴⁴ With regard to the second factor, it is noticeable that in the typical Japanese design, the non-commissioned officer could gaze upon all areas of the soldiers daily life from the vantage point of his room, and that the area where a great deal of water is consumed, such as toilets and the place of washing items, as well as the cooking area, were all situated in separate areas outside the building. We can also observe that rifles were not kept in a separate armoury, but in a rack inside the individual soldiers' living quarters, where they would be looked after by them. Finally we can observe that meals were not served in a canteen but in each room. We can only assume that Yajima's plans for the Lhasa barracks were influenced by these specific features.

*Conclusion: Future Points of Attention and the Reassessment of
Yajima's Personality*

This paper has tried to provide a better understanding of the Japanese background of Yajima's known involvement in the architectural design of the Tibetan army barracks at Lhasa. In the future, it is our hope

⁴¹ Nakamori 1993: 1457–1458.

⁴² *Japanese Frontier Now*, Yajima Nakako private archives.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ According to the research of Mr. Masao Fujita, who thoroughly searched and examined modern Japanese military records, the space allotted to each person was of 15 to 16 cubic meters; see Fujita 2018: 38.

to also bring further clarification in regards to the military background of Yajima himself, through a thorough and accurate examination of his military experiences in Japan, in order to better understand what type of military training he is likely to have offered to the Tibetan troops prior to 1916.

In order to do so, it would be necessary to focus on two aspects of his story, the first being his experience of the Russo-Japanese war as the site of a fierce modern war, and second his experience at Toyama Military Academy as a place for practical training in cutting-edge military technology. That is to say, it is likely that Yajima's experiences of modern military methods in the areas of command and training, both during the Russo-Japanese war and at the Toyama Academy, informed his practical implementation of such methods in Tibet. This aspect of our study will be based on the thorough examination of remaining documents.

Such further study would also enable us to shed new light on the image of Yajima as a person. Indeed, until now, the image of Yajima has consistently been that of an "adventurer" (*bōkenka* 冒険家). After the Meiji in Japan, this word was generally used with a connotation of bravery and courage, and conveyed the idea of a character's physical strength and physical prowess predominating over intellectual refinement. This is the kind of individual that Yajima was reported to be.⁴⁵ Furthermore, it is suggested that Yajima was not imbued with the same kind of noble feelings or motivations ascribed to other Japanese travellers to Tibet (*nyūzōsha*) in this period. For example, the priests such as Yutaka Nōmi and Ekai Kawaguchi are considered to have been motivated by unyielding religious passion and intellectual curiosity, while Jinzō Nomoto and other special agents felt a deep sense of sacrifice and duty towards their nation. Furthermore, while these men stayed in Tibet for the purpose of acquiring the *Tripitaka* or doing intelligence work, Yajima had no such official purpose. This has contributed to an image of Yajima which is in stark contrast with the others, and tends to emphasise the idea that he lacked the knowledge or sense of duty of the others. This may be the primary factor for explaining why the focus to date has been mainly on the other more "adventurous" episodes of his life, rather than on his military experiences in Tibet. But was Yajima really devoid of knowledge and culture?

⁴⁵ For example, Hisao Kimura, the author of the foreword to *My Diary in Tibet*, uses the expression "adventure lover pioneer" about Yajima, meaning that he is the archetype of the "brave guy" (*bōken-yarō* 冒険野郎) living in adventure (*My Diary in Tibet*, "Foreword", unpagged).

In some of the later accounts of this period of his life made by Yajima himself, there is reference to an episode that triggered his connection with the Tibetan army. This relates to a story about the aforementioned “military-style map” he made of Lhasa. It is said that this map caught the attention of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, and that it was as a consequence of this that Yajima was asked to train the Tibetan army.⁴⁶ However, a simple but important question remains—how was Yajima able to make such a map, an enterprise that requires both knowledge and techniques? Unfortunately, because the map itself has not been found among Yajima’s mementos, there is no way to verify the level of expertise that was applied to its making. Nevertheless, if it is true that Yajima made such a map, we can assume that he possessed the required knowledge and techniques to do it. To date, at least with regard to the various above-mentioned secondary Japanese language sources, hardly any attention has been paid to the question of Yajima’s knowledge, technique or abilities in this regard.

In the meantime, we can only put this question into perspective with the following two facts: Yajima had received a high school education, and had belonged to the Toyama Academy Instruction Battalion. In the society of the Meiji era, access to high school was economically unrealistic for people who did not come from wealthy families. Except in the case of larger cities such as Tokyo and Osaka, the proportion of elementary school graduates that went on to high school was only about ten percent. This means that, relatively speaking, Yajima received a privileged education.

In addition, the fact that Yajima was a non-commissioned officer in the Instruction Battalion also attests to his abilities. As a rule, non-commissioned officers in the Instruction Battalion were selected from individuals from all over the country who excelled in work attitude, physical condition, knowledge and skill.⁴⁷ At the time of Yajima’s service, there were 54 non-commissioned officers in the Instruction Battalion, which means from the entire country, only 54 had been qualified for this position. This proves that Yajima was deemed excellent, as a soldier at least. Furthermore, at Toyama Academy’s Instruction Battalion, the instructors also served as battalion commanders, company commanders, and company officers.⁴⁸ From time to time, as part of the training exercises, these people gave lectures for both the soldiers and the non-commissioned officers who belonged to the Battalion. Well, several descriptions of such lectures can be found in Yajima’s diary

⁴⁶ For example, see his *Curriculum Vitae*, and *My Diary in Tibet*, 80.

⁴⁷ “Toyama Military Academy Ordinance”, art. 28, edict number 54. See “Rikugun kyōikushi-Toyama gakkō no bu”.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

during his days in the Instruction Battalion. This clearly indicates that Yajima, along with the other officers and soldiers of the Instruction Battalion were in a privileged environment that enabled them to come into contact with cutting-edge military technologies and methods. Therefore, the knowledge and skills that Yajima required to draw a “military-style map” of Lhasa were no doubt acquired at Toyama during his year and a half stay there.

Although it is fair to assume that the trigger for the Dalai Lama’s interest in Yajima was his “military-style map”, the interest taken by the Tibetan ruler in Yajima was most probably based on his discernment of the Japanese officer’s wider military expertise. He had a direct personal experience of the modern army of Japan, a country regarded with admiration by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, and possessed the necessary skills to transmit his knowledge. Despite this, it was eventually the British military model, and not the Japanese, which prevailed from 1916 onwards as the main model for training Tibetan troops.

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