

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

* The research for this article received funding from 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 views of the author and the ERC is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

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.

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

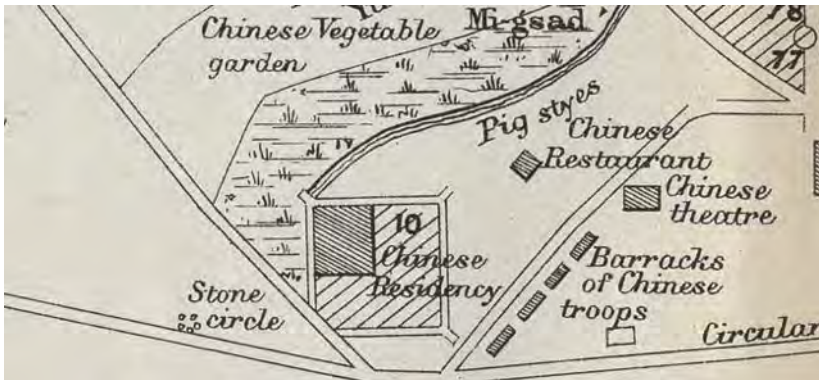
³⁰ For a detailed description of the Lhasa map see Lange 2016b.

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 Ambans” (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 Yamdrokto.
Extract of Add. Or. 3016 f3 © British Library Board.*

There are two more “Qing posts” shown between the Yamdrokto 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 Yamdrokto 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, Jiangong, 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’ ldan 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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