Dancing for Joy on a Clear Day: Anti-imperialist Rhetoric and Perceptions of Chinese Policy in Kham

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忠櫬入城

巴夷勘定

鳳大臣之忠櫬至打箭鑪，鳳夫人啓棺審視遺骸僵而不腐，惟腦後及足趾為彈丸洞過。項下復有刀傷。因既改殮如禮，於十月四日抵省。

督軍憲暨文武各官營尊于南關外武侯祠。入城之時素旌載道觀者環堵。妖巢運盡，終歸谷吉之喪。絕幕功成，當瞑荀瑩之目矣。

Martyr's Coffin Enters Chengdu

Batang Barbarians Defeated.

When Commissioner Feng's loyal coffin reached Dartsedo, Feng's wife on opening it and closely examining the body found his remains to be stiff but not decayed; the cavities of bullets evident only in his toes and the back of his head; a knife wound in the nape of his neck. His body then encoffined according to rites reached Sichuan on the fourth day of the tenth month [31 October 1905].

The governor-general and each civil and military official gathered respectfully at Wuhou Temple beyond the south gate. When his coffin entered the city, onlookers crowded the route lined with white banners. With the fortunes of the nest of demons exhausted, the body of Gu Ji has finally returned. With the curtain of his life closed, his exploits successful, Xun Ying may now close his eyes in peace.[1]

* This article is published in a volume edited within the frame of the Natinasia project which has received Funding from the French National Research Agency (ANR-21-CE27-0025).

1 Anon. "Zhongchen rucheng," *Sichuan guanbao* 28 (November 16, 1905): 1a. Gu Ji (d. 45 BCE) was killed in Xiongnu territory after accompanying a Xiongnu envoy to the Westen Han dynasty (206 BCE–9 CE) during his return journey. Xun Ying (d. 560 BCE), aka Zhi Ying 智罃, was a loyal general and adviser to Duke Dao (Dao Gong 悼公) of Jin state (Jin Guo 晉國) during the Spring and Autumn period of Chinese history (771–476 BCE).

Scott Relyea, "Dancing for Joy on a Clear Day: Anti-imperialist Rhetoric and Perceptions of Chinese Policy in Kham", *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 78, Juin 2025, pp. 142-185.

Introduction

On the morning of April 5, 1905, Assistant Amban to Tibet Feng-quan 鳳全 (1846–1905) met his fate in a site known to Sichuanese as *yinggezui* 鸚哥嘴, the Parrot's Beak.[2] Known to locals as *Degodraklam* (Sde mgo brag lam), this narrow section of the southern road stretching eastward across Kham (Khams) toward Dartsedo (Dar rtse mdo; Ch: Dajianlu 打箭爐)[3] and onward to Chengdu 成都 is situated some 20 *li* 里 southeast of Batang ('Ba' thang; Ch: Batang 巴塘) Town, near Sichuan 四川 Province's border with Tibet. On reaching this spot, which clings to the rockface nearly 100 meters above the floor of the narrow valley, Feng-quan confronted some 500 Khampa men who had lain in wait for many hours. As boulders tumbled down the steep cliff to his left, another group of Khampas appeared from behind to block his retreat along the rocky path. With volley upon volley of gunfire converging from all directions, all but two of the more than 70 men in his retinue were killed, many plunging helplessly into the raging river to his right. According to an oft-repeated legend, on emerging from his shattered palanquin, Feng-quan turned in the direction of Beijing, knelt thrice and kowtowed nine times before his Khampa assailants converged on him, Lungpon Namgyel (Lung dpon rnam rgyal, ?–1905) striking the final blow with a bullet shot point-blank into the back of the Assistant Amban's head.[4] What precipitated this violent outburst and what were its ramifications for the Sino-Tibetan relationship before and after the impending Xinhai Revolution (*Xinhai geming* 辛亥革命)? This chapter will focus on both assertions and perceptions regarding sentiments and events that contributed to historical interpretation of Feng-quan's slaughter. This interpretation morphed into a narrative transcending this single event which rhetorically cast any local opposition to Qing 清 (1644–1912) and later Chinese rule as instigated by external actors.

In the days following Feng-quan's demise, the two *depa* (sde pa, governor) of Batang affixed their seals to a petition addressed to the

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2 In some Chinese sources, this site is referred to as Hongtaizi 紅台子.

3 Known today in Chinese as Kangding 康定.

4 See Sichuan sheng Batang xianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 1993: 252; The (British) National Archives (BNA), FO 228/2571 D1, Enclosure in No. 23, Consul General Wilkinson to the Marquess of Lansdowne, June 30, 1905; *Qingdai Zangshi zoudu* (QZZ), "Bafei qianghai Feng-quan mou luan yi chi hanfan guanbing yanfang zhe," May 31, 1905: 1208–1209; *Qingmo Chuandian bianwu dang'an shiliao* (QCBDS), No. 0036, April or May 1905: 49–52. In Chinese documents, his name was rendered 隆本郎吉 Longben-Langji.

Dartsedo magistrate (*tongzhi* 同知), Liu Tingshu 劉廷恕 (n.d.), and directed at the Qing Emperor Guangxu 光緒 (1871–1908). Explaining the situation, pleading for both understanding and forgiveness, the petitioners sought acknowledgment that their violent action did not undermine imperial Qing authority in Kham, rather protected it. Although initial assessments by regional Qing officials centered on Feng-quan himself, his actions and demeanour toward the residents of Batang, they could not—or would not—perceive the Assistant Amban's slaughter as representative of resistance to shifting Qing policies toward borderland regions in the early 20th century. Such shifts were indicative of new concepts of governance and authority emanating from both the Court in Beijing 北京 and the provincial government in Chengdu. Rather, analysis by both regional Qing officials and later Chinese historians displaced the explanation articulated in the Batang petition, instead injecting into the historical narrative an external catalyst for what became known as the "Batang Incident" (*Batang shibian* 巴塘事變). By absolving both the Assistant Amban and the newly shifting Qing policies which he sought to intensify in Batang and throughout Kham, this narrative forged a template for interpreting future unrest across the Tibetan Plateau, thus effecting characterization of resistance to Qing and later Chinese authority in subsequent decades as instigated by external actors from central Tibet, though not necessarily "foreign." In doing so, this narrative template simultaneously drained the agency of Khampas in the Batang Incident and later Tibetans more generally, who were perceived as acting not of their own accord. This displaced blame from intrusive Qing and later Chinese policies and actions in the region onto an external abstraction.

Rhetorically depriving Khampas of agency in resisting Feng-quan's actions complemented early 20th century perceptions—shared by both Qing officials and foreign missionaries posted to Kham—of an indigenous population oppressed and manipulated by local Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, typically condemned as the agents of outside forces in Lhasa or later the Thirteenth Dalai Lama Tubten Gyatso (Thub bstan rgya mtsho, 1876–1933) himself. Pointing to the simultaneous destruction of the French Catholic mission in Batang in 1905, this narrative erroneously came to posit a parallel link between the Batang Incident and resistance in central Tibet to British invasion during the earlier Younghusband Expedition (1903–1904), with Batang's monasteries serving as conduits of instigation. Yet temporal proximity cannot alone demonstrate causation, particularly as there is no evidence of Batang residents, known as "Bapas" or local Qing officials equating the two events. Nevertheless, even before the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 replaced Qing claims to authority with those of the

Republic of China (ROC), the British would assume the narrative's role of external instigators throughout Kham and ethnographic Tibet,[5] sometimes alone, sometimes in concert with the Dalai Lama or central Tibetan monasteries.

As detailed below, the petition submitted by Batang leaders did employ the character *yang* 洋 (foreign) in its condemnation of Feng-quan and his implementation of shifting imperial policies but did not claim that either he or the policies *were* foreign. Rather, the petition asserted that both the man and his policies were anomalous and thus detrimental to local society and Qing rule therein. The narrative of the Batang Incident that later coalesced among Sichuan officials, subsequently entrenched by historians, miscast the petitioners' use of "foreign" to absolve Feng-quan and especially the shifting imperial policies he endeavored to intensify in Batang. In fact, some aspects of the policies could be considered "foreign" in that they reflected the influence of newly globalizing norms of governance and authority pervading the New Policies (*xinzheng* 新政), which were transforming Qing military, government, and society in the decade before the Xinhai Revolution. It was these unfamiliar aspects which the Batang petitioners perceived as anomalous when compared with longstanding Qing borderland policy in Kham.

Another legend, likely apocryphal, nonetheless reflects local perceptions of Feng-quan's malice toward the people of Batang, a malice which they believed permeated his intensification of shifting imperial policies. At dawn on many a day during his stay in town, it was said Feng-quan could be spotted dancing atop the roofs of Batang's stone houses, peering upward into the sky and exhaling. Many Bapas interpreted his action as praying for the heavens to align the clouds and prevent rains from visiting the valley, which would have further wilted crops already damaged by a drought for which his arrival was deemed partly responsible.[6] In accord with the narrative coalescing after 1905, the Batang Incident indeed was provoked by an actor external to Kham, an actor whose intrusive policies the local population deemed detrimental and anomalous, thus improper. Yet contrary to this narrative, the slaughter of Feng-quan was neither precipitated by foreign incursion into central Tibet nor prompted by misperceptions of the Assistant Amban's "foreignness," nor instigated by external actors—whether in Lhasa or in Calcutta—projecting their will onto the Khampas through local monasteries or missionaries, respectively. As

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[5] In this article, "ethnographic Tibet" encompasses both the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and the predominately Tibetan regions of today's Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Qinghai, and Gansu.

[6] *Batang xianzhi*, 251–252.

the narrative evolved in the years following 1905, the latter two presumed catalysts—external and "foreign" —morphed into unidimensional, anti-imperialist rhetoric prevalent following the Xinhai Revolution, rhetoric which persists in displacing blame for unrest and resistance on the Tibetan Plateau away from Qing and later Chinese policies and actions.

Reclaiming "Eden"

> How is it that a Khampa dog can sport a peacock feather atop his head? I [Master Feng] already can see that you will not sport those butter-buttons for much longer!
> — Feng-quan, December 24, 1904[7]
>
> 蠻狗頭配載紅領花翎？鳳老子看你這個酥油頂子已快載不久了！

When Feng-quan and his bodyguard of fifty men first arrived in the Batang Valley 102 days, before events in the Parrot's Beak, both the senior *depa*, Trashi Gyeltsen (Bkra shis rgyal mtshan, n.d.), and the junior *depa*, Drakpa Gyeltsen (Grags pa rgyal mtshan, n.d.), greeted him on the outskirts of town. Described as "loyal and submissive" to Qing authority by Wu Xizhen 吳錫珍 (n.d.), the Qing-appointed *liangtai* 糧台 (commissary) in Batang, both indigenous rulers held *tusi* 土司 (local headman) titles and seals granted by the Qing Emperor, typically wore Chinese dress, and had taken Chinese names.[8] Yet as they kowtowed before their visitor, he stepped forward, prevented Drakpa Gyeltsen from rising, and uttered the words above as he rapped the red cap perched atop the junior *depa*'s head. Several weeks earlier, Feng-quan had greeted the Litang *depa* on a bridge leading into that town with similar disdain. Whacking the Litang ruler atop the skull with the stem of his pipe, he observed, "If you [Khampas] don't all again submit, then I will certainly chop off your heads."[9] Before the Assistant Amban's arrival, the two Batang *depa* had willingly provided land and assistance to Wu's initially limited implementation of *kaiken* 開墾, the reclamation of "wastelands" for transformation into cultivable land,

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7 *Batang xianzhi*, 251. The red cap with peacock feathers and buttons of different colors was a symbol of high status during the Qing officially awarded only by the emperor.

8 Anon., "Weiguan Batang liangwu tongzhi Wu Xizhen kaiban kenwu liu tiao qingxi," *Sichuan guanbao* 8 (May 24, 1904): 4a. The senior *depa*'s Chinese name was Luo Jinbao 羅進寶, the junior *depa*'s Chinese name was Guo Zongzha 郭宗扎. When their Tibetan names were referenced in Chinese documents, Trashi Gyeltsen was rendered 扎西吉村 Zhaxi-Jicun and Drakpa Gyeltsen was rendered 扎巴吉村 Zhaba-Jicun.

9 *Batang xianzhi*, 251.

an intrusive policy which however rankled the *khenpo* (*mkhan po*, abbot) and influential monks of Ba Chode Monastery ('Ba' chos sde dgon pa; Ch: Dinglinsi 丁林寺).[10] With his rather pointed affront, Feng-quan not only soured the sympathy of potential allies in Batang, his subsequent actions also provided one spark for igniting a conflict which rhetoric would reverberate across the Tibetan Plateau for decades.

In a letter written from Dartsedo in late October 1904, before setting out for Batang, Feng-quan described Kham as a land ruled by "*manyi* 蠻夷 (savages) and monks" wherein no one followed the Confucian five relationships.[11] Though acknowledging that the indigenous rulers reportedly esteemed Confucianism, the disdain with which he greeted the two Batang *depa* was not unique, rather informed by widespread perceptions of Khampas as both uncouth and utterly beholden to the monks of local monasteries, who were especially denigrated by both Sichuanese and many foreigners. Official Qing documents and opinion pieces published in periodicals from Sichuan and across the empire in subsequent years persisted in describing Khampas and Tibetans as either "simple-minded and muddle-headed" (*hunhun'e'e* 渾渾噩噩) or as "ignorant and uncivilised" (*mengmei* 蒙昧).[12] An article from 1908 even derided them as mere "marionettes" (*mu'ou* 木偶).[13]

Qing and foreign missionary observers attributed the "ignorance" of the Khampas to monastic oppression, both corporeal and spiritual. Indeed, after visiting Batang in 1894, Hou Yongling 侯永齡 (n.d.), a resident of Yazhou 雅州, blamed local defiance to Qing authority on such subservience to monastic control.[14] In 1909, years after Qing reprisals and efforts to restructure authority in Kham, then Sichuan Governor-general Zhao Erxun 趙爾巽 (1844–1927) wrote, "*manren* 蠻人 (i.e., Khampas) are bewildered and ignorant without knowledge and follow all that the lamas say. The lamas are thus able to use their religion in the light of day to achieve benevolent goals and in the shadows to spread evil schemes."[15] And in 1911, the Canadian missionary

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10 In some Chinese documents, the monastery is referred to as Dingningsi 丁寧寺. The monastery is known today in Chinese as Kangningsi 康寧寺.

11 *Feng-quan jiashu jianzheng* (FJJ), "Pingzi Letter no. 1," October 15, 1904: 42.

12 See, for example, "shuxi fensheng chuyan," *Guangyi congbao* 194 (March 1, 1909): 1a–2b; *Zhao Erfeng Chuanbian zoudu* (ZECZ), "Chuandian bianwu shi yi jun guan jinyao ju shi," July 20, 1907: 46–54; ZECZ, "Qing chibu banfa zhu Zang dachen guanfang pian," April 7, 1908: 171.

13 Anon., "Xizang yu Sichuan qiantu zhi guanxi," *Sichuan* 2 (January 15, 1908): 45.

14 Hou, "You Batang ji," *Wanguo gongbao* 125 (1899): 20–24.

15 ZECZ, "shouhui Chunke Gaori jiaohui tusi yinxin jingnei Langji Ling yibing gaitu guiliu zhe," November 15, 1909: 304.

W.N. Fergusson (1869?–1954) observed, "These people are oppressed on every hand by their spiritual fathers, by their chiefs and princes, whose lands they have to cultivate and harvest *gratis*, and often by their Chinese superiors, who always speak of them as dogs and barbarians."[16]

The Amban You-tai 有泰 (1846?–1910) was perhaps cognizant of simmering unrest across the region beneath the veneer of Qing authority, a climate that would contribute to Feng-quan's demise. "The lamas [sic] of each monastery are terribly conceited, and the power of their abbots is greater than that of local Qing officials." Crossing Kham en route to Lhasa in 1903, several months before Feng-quan reached Batang, he observed that the *depa* of Batang and Litang (Li thang; Ch. 理塘) though "obedient" to the Qing Emperor were ultimately quite powerless. "If [the lamas] are unsatisfied even just a little bit, then they gather a crowd and run amok. They savagely oppress the people who are supposed to be under their protection."[17] Perhaps aware of his superior's views, Feng-quan may have perceived the two *depa* not as allies, rather as irrelevant in either aiding or obstructing his ambitious plans for Batang. Just days before their first encounter, Feng-quan wrote, "In large monasteries there are as many as four or five thousand lamas, and for many years it has been their enduring habit to use coercion in order to control the chieftains and oppress the people."[18] The Assistant Amban's perception of the local population and the monastic establishment in Batang, as well as his demonstrated disdain for both *depa* threatened to undermine the delicate support Wu Xizhen had extracted from both lay and religious leaders for his limited initial endeavor to farm reclaimed land.

In early September 1903, before You-tai departed for Lhasa and three months before Francis Younghusband's British Indian army crossed into Tibetan territory at the Jelep Pass (Tib. Rdzi li la) north of Sikkim, an imperial edict alerted the future Amban to the dangerous situation in Kham. Suggesting the influence of a series of rejected memorials submitted in the last years of the 19th century by then-Sichuan Governor-general Lu Chuanlin 鹿傳霖 (1836–1910), who in 1903 sat on the Grand Council (*junji chu* 軍機處), the edict advised limited establishment of mines and wasteland reclamation colonies (*tunken* 屯墾) in

[16] Fergusson, "Anterior Tibet; or, The Mantze Marches," *West China Missionary News* 13, no. 12 (December 1911): 24.

[17] QCBDS, No. 0006, February 12, 1904, vol. 1: 7–8.

[18] QCBDS, vol. 1, No. 0027, January 26, 1905: 40–41.

Batang.[19] Sichuan Governor-general Xi-liang 錫良 (1853–1917) responded to this edict in December 1903, a year before Feng-quan offended the Batang *depa* and several days after Younghusband entered Tibet. Citing the potential for Indian tea to undermine Sichuan's tea monopoly on the Tibetan Plateau among his concerns, Xi-liang expressed his support for the policies as a means to both "protect Tibet and strengthen Sichuan" (*baozang guchuan* 保藏固川), thus directing Wu Xizhen to investigate.[20] Though perhaps not yet aware of British incursions, his support mirrored Lu Chuanlin's persistent concerns for British influence penetrating Sichuan through Batang's border with Tibet, both while Sichuan Governor-general and while a member of the Grand Council.

After several months investigating the implementation of these policies with two officials dispatched by the Sichuan mining office, in April 1904, Wu submitted a memorial urging selectivity in recruiting farmers to effect reclamation. Despite verdant, productive fields carpeting the Batang valley and dotting other polities in Kham, he explained, "since the local people are foolish and ignorant of agriculture, it is absolutely necessary to recruit men from *neidi* 内地 (China proper)."[21] Subsequent negotiation with the town's three powers ultimately yielded support from both *depa* and later tenuous acquiescence by the monastery, prompting Wu to promulgate regulations for land reclamation in June.[22] With the more fertile lands closer to town and stretching along the banks of the Drichu ('Bri chu; Ch. Jinsha jiang 金沙江) and tributaries already cultivated by Bapas and controlled by either the monastery or either of the two *depa*, Wu initiated limited reclamation near the village of Tsasho (Tsha shod) some 20 *li* southwest of Batang town along the southern road stretching westward

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19 *Qing shilu* (QSL) 58: 855. On Lu Chuanlin's earlier proposals for colonization in Kham, see Relyea 2019: 184–187. Lu served as Sichuan Governor-general from 1895–1898.

20 *Xi-liang yi gao (zou gao)* (XYGZG), No. 342: 365–366. Xi-liang served as Sichuan Governor-general from 1903 to 1907.

21 Anon., "Weiguan Batang liangwu tongzhi Wu Xizhen kaiban kenwu liu tiao qingxi" (1904): 4b. The Qing polity's core comprises the 18 provinces commonly called "China proper" in historical literature and designated *neidi* (inner lands) by Qing officials, merchants, and soldiers in contrast to contiguous territory "beyond the passes," administered by the *Lifanyuan* 理藩院 (Court of Colonial Affairs). In relation to Kham, those traveling west of Dartsedo were said to *chuguan* 出關 (cross the pass), i.e., leave *neidi*.

22 QCBDS, No. 0010, June or July 1904 and No. 0011, July or August 1904: 11–14.

toward Lhasa.[23] Since the *khenpo* asserted that there were no lands available for reclamation, whether on the plains or in the mountains, aside from pastures where horses and cattle grazed, much of which also fell under monastic control, Wu shifted his efforts closer to and up the mountain slopes. Irrigation proved more difficult, but opening such lands generated less consternation in the monastery and for the two *depa*.

While Wu seemed to share Feng-quan's negative perception of Khampas, with no Han settlers likely to ascend the plateau that summer, he recruited locals to work alongside soldiers from the Qing garrison in Batang, roughly 200 men in all. By September 1904, they had cleared 200 *mu* 畝 (more than 130 acres) of land and constructed residences for future farmers. With buckwheat already growing on some 80 *mu*, Wu considered seeking more land for reclamation, which Alexander Hosie (1853–1925), observed was "not regarded with a favourable eye by the lamasery, which sees its percentage of land and crops being lessened and its profits likely to be curtailed."[24] Since Wu had initially promulgated regulations and started reclamation without the monastery's explicit agreement, he contended that expansion could move forward even if approved only by the two *depa*, but favored prudence.

After barely a month in the valley, in late January 1905, Feng-quan sought to test both the delicate balance that had facilitated initiation of limited reclamation and Wu's assertion that an absence of monastic acquiescence for expansion could be ignored. Having identified potentially cultivable land during his journey through Dartsedo and Litang, Feng-quan proposed initiating reclamation endeavors across Kham, but reserved highest praise—and his greater ambition—for Batang, a land once dubbed the "Eden of Eastern Thibet" by the English traveller T.T. Cooper (1839–1878).[25] He advocated immediately expanding reclamation to 1,000 *mu* (nearly 700 acres) in 1905 in the Tsasho village area and throughout the valley.[26] Training local recruits was a task

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[23] Today, this village is known as Chaxue 茶雪 in Chinese; in the Republican era, it was known as Chashushan 茶樹山.

[24] BNA, FO 228/1549, Report by Mr. A. Hosie, His Majesty's Consul-General at Chengtu, on a Journey to the Eastern Frontier of Thibet, August 1905: 45. See also *Batang xianzhi*, 11 and 250–251 and "Huiyi Batang liangyuan bing zunban kenwu bing ni zhangcheng yingzhun zhao ban xiangwen," *Sichuan Guanbao* 20 (September 19, 1904): 8a–9b. Hosie was the British consul general in Chengdu from 1903 to 1908.

[25] Cooper, *Travels in Western China and Eastern Tibet*, JMS 10/43, Royal Geographical Society, London, 1870.

[26] QCBDS, No. 0025, January 26, 1905: 38–39. For Wu's estimates, see Jin Fei, "Qingmo Xikang kenwu dang'an shican," *Bianzheng* 9 (July 1932): 11.

which Feng-quan deemed even more critical to strengthening Qing authority in Kham than land reclamation—and one perhaps more alarming to both lay and ecclesiastical rulers in Batang. After receiving the Court's second edict while in Dartsedo, it was a subject which permeated both Feng-quan's letters to family and memorials to Xi-liang.

The initial edict appointing him Assistant Amban in late May 1904 mentioned neither these tasks nor Younghusband's army, which had entered Tibet some five months earlier, slaughtering Tibetan soldiers at every encounter on its northward march to Lhasa. But the Court's second edict, issued on October 3, less than a month after Younghusband had compelled the Tibetan government to sign the Lhasa Convention, explicitly enumerated his mandate. Forwarded to Feng-quan by Xi-liang on October 24, the edict first decried Younghusband's invasion of a land which had been under imperial oversight for more than two centuries before emphasizing two tasks—"land reclamation and training soldiers"—as essential to strengthening Qing authority in Kham. After delineating the territory under his jurisdiction, the edict advised him to utilize soldiers as farmers in reclaiming and cultivating wastelands and reaffirmed Feng-quan's posting to Chamdo (Chab mdo; Ch: Chamuduo 察木多).[27]

By highlighting the dire situation in Kham, the edict seemed to embolden in Feng-quan a sense of duty and obligation, though he was equally anxious not to dishonour the emperor's favour. "In these times when the country is weak and affairs difficult, who dares return home to comfort and ease?" he lamented in a letter to his wife. "Yet as my old illness worsens day by day and I cannot endure cold and fatigue, if I am really forced to stay in this place, I can only try my best."[28] Though willing to remain in Kham, even before departing Dartsedo, Feng-quan was wary of assuming his post in Chamdo, situated northwest of Batang beyond the Ningjing Mountains (Ningjingshan 寧靜山) which at the time marked the boundary between Sichuan and Tibet proper.

Before receiving the emperor's inspiring edict, Feng-quan perceived greater difficulty training soldiers in the colder, harsher climate of Chamdo, standing 3,200 meters above sea level, some 700 meters higher than Dartsedo and 500 meters higher than Batang. This belief was strengthened after spending only two weeks in the Batang Valley. Though yet to visit Chamdo, he lamented in a mid-January letter to his wife the impossibility of accomplishing anything in such a cold place

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[27] For the initial edict, see *Guangxu Xuantong liang chao shangyu dang* (GSLXD) 30, No. 609: 168. Chamdo is known today in Chinese as Changdu 昌都.

[28] FJJ, "Pingzi Letter no. 3," November 26, 1904: 86–89.

with no viable land to reclaim, no capable men to train as soldiers, and located too far from sites further east in Kham which he had deemed of strategic importance and in which he planned to pursue mining and land reclamation. While his poor health and the comparatively temperate climate of the Batang Valley may also have influenced Feng-quan's appeals either to remain in Batang or to split his time between Batang and Dartsedo, both proposals were rejected by the Court, which commanded him to proceed to Chamdo.[29] Nonetheless, he continued to linger in the valley, especially focused on training local military recruits, which he found more difficult than anticipated.

Whereas Feng-quan, like Wu, ultimately sought to entice commoners from *neidi* to cultivate reclaimed lands in Batang and elsewhere, he came to believe that he should rely primarily on indigenous recruits for his frontier battalion. He observed that soldiers from Sichuan proper were intolerant of the plateau's bitter cold, could easily fall ill, and preferred to consume rice, which was expensive to transport and difficult to cultivate at high altitudes. By contrast, Khampa men were already acclimated to the harsh climate of Kham and would eat local grains and produce. Despite some difficulty communicating in Chinese, a language unfamiliar to the Khampas, Feng-quan was apparently pleased with the quality of potential recruits in Dartsedo, assigning 50 men, half of the armed escort which had accompanied him from Chengdu, to train them after his departure for Batang.[30] After consulting with the Dartsedo magistrate, Liu Tingshu, he anticipated recruiting some 400 men in Batang, Litang, and Dartsedo, but after arriving in Batang was less impressed. Complaining in a letter to his wife from January 1905, that the locals had no desire to learn civility, their character little better than that of livestock, Feng-quan exclaimed that among the pool of indigenous men, "The many unwilling to wear trousers are certainly unwilling to engage in military drills!"[31] His impression of the local population only seemed to deteriorate further during his 102 days, as did the patience of both the monastery and two *depa* for his continued presence in Batang, lingering longer than the usually allotted single week for Qing officials transiting en route to Lhasa.

From the moment he reached the valley, both his demeanor and his actions intensified perceptions of his malicious intent among Bapas,

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[29] FJJ, "Pingzi Letter no. 2," 27 October 1904 and "Pingzi Letter no. 7," January 13, 1905: 58 and 137–138, respectively; QZZ, "Kan ban tunken bing qing biantong yi zhu zhe," January 26, 1905: 1274–1275; and QCBDS, No. 0025, January 26, 1905: 38–39.

[30] FJJ, "Pingzi Letter no. 2," October 27, 1904: 64 and QCBDS, No. 0024, November 27, 1904: 37.

[31] Qin Yongzhang 2005: 136–137.

who were already suffering, perhaps lending local credence to tales of him dancing atop their roofs. Characterised by fellow officials as arrogant and obstinate and described by British Acting Consul General C.W. Campbell as "headstrong," Feng-quan ignored the Court's order to proceed to Chamdo, ignored Wu's advice to move more slowly in land reclamation, and increasingly ignored simmering local opposition, especially to the monastery policy he proposed in January 1905.[32] A poor harvest earlier in 1904 had depleted local granaries, threatening famine, but Feng-quan decreed that all grain—including reserves—be sold only to his soldiers and to workers recruited locally and from nearby communities to engage in reclamation. Under threat of outright seizure, in less than three months, Batang residents asserted that he extracted more than 2,000 *taels* worth of their physical labour and such basic provisions as beef, lamb, eggs, firewood, and soy products.[33] Yet it was his memorial of January 26 seeking to finally implement a policy first proposed some two centuries earlier by then-Sichuan Governor-general Nian Gengyao 年羹堯 (1679–1726) that worsened the climate in Batang. Decrying communities that reached nearly 5,000 in Litang, Feng-quan proposed limiting to a mere 300 the resident monk population first in Ba Chode Monastery—then in all monasteries across Kham. To achieve this number, and eying an increase in the population of taxable commoners, his proposal forbade the monastery from accepting new initiates for a period of twenty years and proclaimed that all monks younger than thirteen should immediately be sent home to resume a life of farming.[34] In response, many Bapas drafted petitions pleading with the Assistant Amban to reverse his policy, only to endure scoldings laced with foul language and accusations of being but bandits foolishly following the monks. One resident was even flogged.

Seeking to defuse percolating passions in the valley, the *khenpo* and two *depa* all pleaded with Feng-quan to proceed to Chamdo as instructed by the Court, but he only cursed them too. By contrast, the French missionary Henri Mussot (1854–1905) (Ch. Mushouren 牧守仁), who seemed to support any effort to weaken the French Mission's monastic nemesis in Batang, advised the Assistant Amban to request

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[32] See Zha Qian 1990, vol. 2: 1b and BNA, FO 228/2571, D1, No. 12, Acting Consul General Campbell to Sir E. Satow, March 30, 1905. Campbell was one of two Acting Consuls General reporting from Chengdu while Hosie was traveling.

[33] QCBDS, No. 0030, April 6, 1905: 43 and "Lettre du P. Giraudeau, Tatsienlou," May 24, 1905 (quoted in Deshayes 2008: 139).

[34] First Historical Archives, Beijing 499/45 *Lifanyuan dang'an* No. 699 and QCBDS, No. 0027, January 26, 1905: 40–41. On Nian's proposal, see Herman 1993: 141.

reinforcements.[35] In correspondence with Dartsedo magistrate Liu Tingshu on March 1 and again in a more urgent letter on March 14, Feng-quan indeed requested the immediate dispatch to Batang of the fifty men he had tasked with training recruits in Dartsedo, as well as another 200 soldiers recently stationed there under Battalion Commander Zhang Hongsheng 張鴻聲 (n.d.).[36] His second appeal was intercepted by Bapas, only further exacerbating the situation.

As suffering intensified for residents of Batang, Feng-quan ignoring their pleas as extraction of labour and grain increased, frustration finally boiled over. On March 26, 1905, some 500 residents of villages situated upstream from Batang town torched reclaimed fields near Tsasho Village, killing several Han farmers. Despatched in reprisal and led by Commander Wu Yizhong 吳以忠 (d. 1905) a group of soldiers encountered what Feng-quan characterised as unprovoked gunfire while passing Ba Chode Monastery, injuring several of his men.[37] Noting potential danger around the monastery, one corner of which stood on a cliff above a sharp bend in the river below, an American missionary had once observed that "no Chinese dared go near [this place] in those days, or they were unceremoniously dumped into the river."[38] The Bapa petitioners, however, asserted that the monks' gunfire came in response to Wu leading an assault on the monastery, which destroyed the outer wall of the neighbouring nunnery and left more than ten monks dead.[39]

Three nights later, at around two in the morning, Mussot left the compound of the French mission, never to return. On hearing the news later that morning, the junior *depa* sent four soldiers to search for the wayward Frenchman, but they too never returned.[40] According to a Batang soldier quoted in an obituary for Mussot, the priest was taken to Ba Chode Monastery on April 1 or 2, where he remained in chains for three days before being flogged with thorns and finally shot. His severed head and hands were then purportedly hung as trophies

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35 QCBDS, No. 0030, April 6, 1905: 43–44; Ganzi zhouzhi biancuan weiyuanhui 1997: 107; Fu Songmu 1988 [1912]: 7a; and Pekin 37 "Lettre du P. Bourdonnec au P. Maire, provicaire de la Mission du Yunnan, Weixi," April 18, 1905 (quoted in Deshayes 2008: 140).

36 QZZ, "Zhihan Liu Tingshu qing cui guan dai Zhang Hongsheng xuan dai ying yong chuguan," March 1, 1905, and "Zhihan Liu Tingshu qing cui diao weidui fu Batang zhufang," March 24, 1905: 1279–1280.

37 QCBDS, No. 0032, April 11, 1905: 47.

38 "History of the Tibetan Mission Events in their order of 1903–1904," Disciples of Christ Historical Society Library & Archives, Nashville, Tenn., Tibet Mission: DOM Tibet Administration, Box 2.

39 QCBDS, No. 0030, April 6, 1905: 44.

40 QCBDS, No. 0036, April or May 1905: 49–50.

above the monastery's main door.[41] While the French priest suffered at the hands of Batang's monks, Feng-quan and his fellow Qing officials were besieged by as many as 3,500 Khampas from throughout the valley and as far away as Litang.

Following a clandestine meeting in a village east of Batang Town, as the clock struck eight in the evening on April 2, the sounds of gunfire started to reverberate through the dusty streets.[42] Roughly half of the angry crowd surrounded the French mission, which was situated on a slight hill south of town, overwhelmed guards posted by Feng-quan, scaled the walls and set the small internal chapel ablaze. Described as visible for several kilometers, the raging flames thrashed the stone walls in an intense dance of brilliant oranges and reds, creating the illusion that the chapel was suspended in mid-air, crumbling at the center of a vengeful inferno. As the fire spread, so too did the Bapas, in search of converts living near the mission who were reportedly killed where they stood. The other group headed for central Batang Town, first encircling Feng-quan's residence, riddling its walls with bullet holes until realising he was not there. They then surrounded the home of Wu Xizhen. "The more rebels gathered like ants, the more wild grew the gunfire," wrote Wu, who was trapped inside with some twenty Han residents and no weapons.[43] On learning Feng-quan's location, most of the crowd abandoned the siege of Wu's home, instead encircling the yamen compound. Forsaken by his hundred Batang recruits, the Assistant Amban and the bodyguards who had accompanied him from Dartsedo fought valiantly through the night, losing more than ten and killing more than one hundred assailants.

Around four in the morning on April 3, local soldiers loyal to the senior *depa* successfully rescued Feng-quan, his bodyguard, and the injured junior *depa*. Reportedly tossing Indian rupees into the air to distract the assembled crowd, the former captives burst through the yamen's rear gate and hurriedly fled to the senior *depa*'s residence. After storming the yamen, the Khampas killed Wu Yizhong and any remaining men before torching the compound and moving on to

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41 Giraudeau, "Obituary, M. Mussot, Missionnaire Apostolique du Thibet," l'Institut de recherche France-Asie (accessed September 17, 2023, https://irfa.paris/en/missionnaire/1486-mussot-henri/).

42 The following is drawn from: QCBDS, No. 0036: 49–52; Zha 1990 : vol. 2, 3a–3b; BNA, FO 228/2571 D1, "Enclosure in No. 23"; QZZ, "Bafei qianghai Feng-quan mou luan yi chi hanfan guanbing yanfang zhe": 1208–1209; Fu 1912: 7a–7b; *Batang xianzhi*, 252; Bacot, "Réunion du 19 Février: Conférence de M. Jacques Bacot," *Bulletin Mensuel du Comité de L'Asie Française* (1908): 58; BNA, FO 228/2571 D1, No. 24, Acting Consul General Goffe to Sir E. Satow, June 10, 1905. Herbert Goffe was one of two Acting Consuls General reporting from Chengdu while Hosie was traveling.

43 QCBDS, No. 0036: 50.

encircle the senior *depa*'s residence, which they also threatened to set ablaze unless their nemesis and his men were immediately handed over. Negotiation between a representative of the senior *depa*, and monastery leadership later that day yielded an agreement presented to Feng-quan more as an ultimatum than a suggestion—the crowd would withdraw only if he immediately departed for Sichuan with his bodyguard, never to return.

In the early evening of April 4, the road in front of the senior *depa*'s residence was cleared, Feng-quan and his remaining bodyguard joined by several other Qing officials set out with the two *depa* and the *khenpo* as escort—and a crowd of Bapas following close behind. With all the pomp and circumstance properly due a high imperial official, carried aloft, seated in a decorous palanquin, passing through the streets to the beat of drums and horns, the Assistant Amban and his procession marched to the junior *depa*'s residence, where his escort bade him farewell. The procession then marched out of Batang town, continued to the edge of the valley, and turned southeast along the rocky southern road as it climbed into the surrounding mountains. Ever defiant, Feng-quan planned to despatch a message as soon as possible to request reinforcements from Dartsedo meet him at Litang from whence he would return to teach the Khampas of Batang a lesson once and for all.

(Mis)Construing "Foreignness"

> Our character is like dogs and goats, born stupid and foolish. After much consideration, we determined there was no other course of action. We know only of the Great Emperor of the Qing Dynasty and that this corrupt official certainly was a calamity for the state, causing trouble in our locality. Therefore, we did not surmise that this would be a crime, and in a moment of derangement killed two Chinese officials and also one foreigner. Truly with no recourse, we took this action in order to rid the state of calamity. We plead for good judgment, leniency, and kindness, not military conflict.
>
> — Representatives of the residents of Batang (6 April 1905)[44]

為夷性犬羊，蠢愚生成，再四思維，無法可施，只知有清朝大皇帝，此乃是爲國内之禍患，擾害地方之貪官故耳。不揣有罪，一時錯亂，以將漢官二員及洋人一并誅戳。此番原爲國除害，實出無奈。求乞恩宥善辦，無生兵衅。

[44] QCBDS, No. 0030, April 6, 1905: 44.

The authors of the petition knew their audience well. By exploiting derogatory perceptions of Khampas widespread among Sichuan officials in the above quote, they affirmed both their reverence for the Manchu emperor and his munificence, while demonstrating that the people of Batang in fact acted in desperation—and on his behalf—to protect the integrity of his rule. Nonetheless, their appeal could not dissuade the emperor from sending soldiers in reprisal, could neither prevent the slaughter of monks fleeing a burning Ba Chode Monastery nor the arrival in Batang of a perhaps even more disastrous Qing official who would earn the moniker "Butcher of Kham."[45] The language of the petition, however, endeavoring to shift culpability for their slaughter onto the victims, proved both influential and enduring. The petition sought to accomplish several goals—both explicit and implicit.

By focusing on Feng-quan, his improper actions and aggressive intensification of Wu's land reclamation policy, the petition deftly shifted culpability away from loyal Bapas—both monk and commoner—and also away from newly intrusive Qing policies. The petition only briefly referenced the *yang* (foreign) character of Feng-quan's method of drilling both his bodyguard and indigenous recruits, juxtaposed with the historical presence of French missionaries, to reinforce their assertion of the illegitimacy of his presence in Batang. This minor point would come to contribute the core assertion of a historical narrative that coalesced in the years after 1905, forging a template for characterising resistance to Qing and later Chinese authority on the Tibetan Plateau in subsequent decades. Yet neither Feng-quan nor his "foreignness" were the true catalysts for resistance articulated by the petitioners. Although overtly blaming shifting Qing borderland policies would have contradicted the narrative of Bapas acting out of loyalty for the emperor, thus undermining their effort to avert imperial reprisals, the following discussion argues that the content of the petition implicitly attributed their resistance to this very catalyst. Ultimately, for the petitioners, it was the policies themselves that were perceived as illegitimate, an assertion evinced by the petition's closing threat of continued resistance.

The petition needed to justify not only Feng-quan's slaughter and the demise of Batang's French missionaries, but also explain why Wu Xizhen lived while Wu Yizhong did not, though both had been posted to Batang long before the Assistant Amban's arrival. Translated from

[45] See Relyea 2015 and Edgar 1908: 16. As the emperor's army entered Batang on July 28, in order to prevent Qing soldiers from sacking and looting Ba Chode Monastery, its monks hurried to remove statues and other treasures from the compound before pre-emptively setting it and the nearby bridge ablaze. On later representations of Zhao, see also Suh 2016.

Tibetan into Chinese, the text was written properly in the tone of a loyal subordinate humbly addressing his most benevolent emperor, on the strokes of whose brush rested their fate.[46] The first substantive section of the petition opened with acknowledgment of Wu Xizhen as a Qing official legitimately posted to Batang initiating a land reclamation policy properly decreed by the Court. Though implying some disquiet among the people of Batang with a policy which already had reclaimed some 300 *mu* (more than 200 acres) of land amidst fields cultivated by local farmers, the authors emphasized that no Batang commoner dared obstruct Wu. His cautions, gradual implementation during 1904, as well as his ultimately successful effort to gain at least the tenuous acquiescence of the two *depa* and the monastery ensured an initial peace which the petition next asserted was impossible following Feng-quan's arrival.

Midway through the text, the authors informed the emperor of the Batang commoners' deep devotion to Buddhism and the longstanding loyalty of the 1,500 monks inhabiting Ba Chode Monastery, constructed many years before.[47] The authors affirmed that these monks never failed to reverently pray for the boundless fortune and long life of many generations of Qing emperors, thankful for his grace, proclaiming that they could therefore never commit any offence. From the moment of his arrival in Batang, the petition contended, Feng-quan demonstrated his contempt for Buddhism. One prime example was his proposal—perceived as a proclamation and condemned by the petitioners—reducing the population of Ba Chode Monastery to 300, thus ordering some 1,200 monks to return to secular life. Feng-quan purportedly warning, "Those who do not abide by this order, will certainly be executed," ultimately compelled some Bapas to threaten the tranquillity of the valley.

Through a parallel construction, the authors contrasted legitimacy, reverence, and loyalty—Wu Xizhen, the commoners and monks of Batang—with illegitimacy, arrogance, and corruption—Feng-quan, the French missionaries—as part of justifying the petition's shift in culpability. The authors simultaneously, and subtly, also distinguished the nature of these two threats—Feng-quan and the French. "Soon after [arriving], Feng-quan bade his soldiers to drill indigenous recruits with *yang* (foreign) techniques, and the recruits to learn a *yang* (foreign)

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[46] For the full text of the petition and quotes therefrom used in the following discussion, see QCBDS, No. 0030, April 6, 1905: 43–44.

[47] The monastery was established in 1659 by the Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobzang Gyatso (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mstho, 1617–1682). *Kangningsi gaikuang* (bilingual sign in Tibetan and Chinese outside Kangning Monastery, Anon. photograph taken on September 8, 2006).

language and salute in a *yang* (foreign) way." Furthering criticism of his new, unfamiliar, and thus illegitimate policies, the authors next asserted that the Assistant Amban took it upon himself to initiate a population register of all Batang commoners, both Han and indigenous. Then with no linguistic or causal connection, in its next phrase the petition abruptly shifted to denounce the long-standing presence of French missionaries, whom the authors accused of "offending the gods and defiling heaven and earth" ever since their arrival.

The first French Catholic priest, Jean-Charles Fage (1824–1888), reached Batang in 1864, renting a house with a second priest, Jean-Baptiste Goutelle (1821–1895), who arrived in 1866, four years before an earthquake struck the region. Although the priests helped rebuild the town, rewarded by one of the *depa* with a plot of land on which to build a permanent structure, their presence was ultimately blamed for both an earthquake and subsequent drought which struck the valley in 1872. As a result, from September to October 1873, the monks of Ba Chode Monastery, supported by the two *depa*, incited Bapas to desecrate the French cemetery, destroy the mission's buildings, and drive the priests out of town. In January 1875, several months after the priests had returned to Batang, a newly-appointed Qing official coerced both *depa* and the *khenpo* to jointly prepare two proclamations admitting the errors of the local population and acknowledging the priests' right to reside and proselytize wherever they chose.[48] Translated into French by Goutelle, one proclamation assured, "there will be complete harmony and perfect friendship on both sides" and "we undertake not to allow our subjects, either secular, or religious, to in any way harm the Europeans in the future." [49] Joseph Chauveau (1816–1877), the Apostolic Vicar of Tibet at the time, concluded from these proclamations that the people of Batang were not at fault, rather they were incited by both the monastery and the *depa*, a conclusion which would underlie the narrative of the Batang Incident coalescing after 1905 among Chinese historians and foreign observers alike.

Even before this first assault in Batang, French missionaries believed that the main monasteries in Lhasa sought to slow their spread of Catholicism in Kham, citing a message purportedly disseminated to the region's monasteries: "as long as the Europeans" remained in the region, the monks would receive "no further respect … in Lhasa."[50] Another apparent pronouncement from Lhasa received in Batang in

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[48] Deshayes 2008: 82–83 ; 85–88.

[49] Desgodins, "Rétablissement des stations de Bathang et de Bommé," *Les Missions catholiques: Bulletin hebdomadaire de l'Œuvre de la propagation de la foi* 7 (January-December 1875): 354–356.

[50] "Lettre de F. Biet, Tsékou," December 4, 1873 (quoted in Deshayes 2008: 85).

1887 and shared with Pierre Giraudeau (1850–1941) by a local monk, called for the expulsion of all Europeans, blamed for yet another drought then ravaging the region, promising support to those who obeyed. "If you tolerate the Europeans any longer at your side … greater evils will come again, there will be great trouble among the people."[51] That same year, an edict posted outside Ba Chode Monastery declared, "Jesus Christ and Buddha cannot rule the same country together; Tibet belongs to Buddha, the religion of Jesus Christ must be destroyed there without leaving the slightest trace of it."[52] By summer 1887, the *depa* were unable to stop the monks from inciting Bapas to again desecrate the French cemetery, destroy the mission's buildings, and drive the priests out of town. In each case, the French described the Qing official in Batang as either powerless to intercede or, as in 1887, grudgingly aiding the priests' flight in adhering to stipulations to protect missionaries in the unequal treaties imposed on China.[53] Each incident, in 1873 and 1887, also reinforced the dual perception, reflected in Feng-quan's response to Bapa reports opposing his limit on the population of Ba Chode Monastery, that Khampa commoners were wholly subservient, manipulated and incited by the monastery, and that its *khenpo* and monks were themselves acting at the behest of "external" forces—the monasteries in Lhasa.

The brief sequence of phrases at the outset of the 1905 petition juxtaposed denunciation of the illegitimate presence of French missionaries with identification of the *yang* military methods favored by Feng-quan, quoted above, implying association or perhaps a shared "foreignness" among them. However, not only did the bulk of the text articulate a different catalyst for violence erupting in late March, the authors also implicitly distinguished the "foreignness" of Feng-quan and the French. In a petition of nearly 1,100 total characters, the authors used the character *yang* only six times, four within the brief sequence of phrases, which also included the sole use of *faguo* 法國 (France), in reference to mission buildings, thus affirming that this observation was not a catalyst for events in the Batang Valley culminating in the Parrot's Beak.

Distinguishing the French in Batang from the perhaps merely peculiar "foreignness" enveloping Feng-quan and his unfamiliar demeanour, the missionaries were styled *waiguo yangren* 外國洋人, which roughly equates to "foreigners from outside the country." Interestingly, Pierre-Rémi Bons d'Anty (1859–1916), the French Consul

[51] Launay 1903: 221.
[52] Deshayes 2008: 102.
[53] Ibid., 102–103.

General in Chengdu from 1905 to 1916, translated these four characters as "*Étrangers européens*" (foreign Europeans), rendering *yang* as "European" throughout his translation of the petition.[54] Some scholars suggest that *yang* at this time conjured images of the "West" or "Europeans" among Qing officials, rather than the merely "foreign."[55] The leather boots and Western-style uniforms worn by Feng-quan's bodyguard, formerly police cadets in Chengdu, certainly resembled those of European constables in Shanghai or Berlin, but the authors of the petition made no mention of their clothing, only their actions.[56] Without the original Tibetan, we can assess any distinction between Feng-quan and the French and their respective "foreignness" perceived by the Bapas only through the Chinese translation, however the narrative which coalesced soon after Feng-quan's slaughter and the template for characterizing Tibetan resistance which emerged thereafter both were forged exclusively from the Chinese text. The sparse use of *yang* in the text corresponds with the relative unimportance of Feng-quan's perceived "foreignness" to the authors of the petition as a meaningful catalyst for resistance and ultimately violence.

Indeed, after this brief sequence of phrases, the petition returned to its primary concern, Feng-quan's improper actions, such as the population register, and the shifting policies he intensified, attributing the arrival of both his bodyguard and additional reclamation workers recruited from nearby communities by Wu Yizhong for exacerbating local suffering. Although there is no mention of the Assistant Amban dancing atop Bapa roofs, his malicious disregard for the local population was demonstrated by his exclusive appropriation of all grain in Batang and refusal to import grain to supplement swiftly depleting stocks. According to the petition, Feng-quan threatened "to send his soldiers and workers to eat within the homes of any who refused to sell their grain to him." The authors emphasized the futility of commoners and officials alike, presumably including Wu Xizhen, to mitigate the impending disaster.

Midway through the text, contrasting the piety of local commoners and the monks of Ba Chode Monastery with Feng-quan's perceived

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[54] (French) Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (FMAE), 148CPCOM/70, Annexe no. 2, Dépêche no. 39, Bons d'Anty à la Légation de la République Française en Chine, May 25, 1905.

[55] See Fang 2013: 61–62 and Chen 1990: 301–310. Fang explains that *yang* first equated only with "overseas" in the 19th century but came to mean the "West" or "Europeans" by its last decades as the character was used to signify "progress" or the "modern," as for example in *yangxue* 洋學 (western learning).

[56] Stapleton 2000: 87. Even Xi-liang, a strong advocate of the New Policies and police reform in Chengdu, had criticized the new police uniforms as "too foreign" on arrival in the city.

contempt for Buddhism, evinced by his plan to limit the latter's population, both introduced above, the petition's tone continued to intensify, mirroring escalating concern and desperation among the local community unfolding in March. As the Assistant Amban continued to berate them, ignoring the deteriorating situation, several soldiers reportedly spread a rumour that their impending deployment would begin with an attack on the monastery before torching the homes of Bapas. The authors then cast the subsequent late March gathering in Batang of representatives from each village as a discussion centered on once again submitting petitions to Feng-quan in an effort to "bring tranquillity to the region" and foster "harmony among Qing officials and local people." Perhaps offering justification for his slaughter, the text emphasized that Wu Yizhong personally led soldiers to attack the peaceful meeting before assaulting the monastery on March 26. As noted above, Qing reports, however, asserted that Wu's soldiers were responding to the gathered Bapas destroying reclaimed fields and killing Sichuanese farmers. His illegitimacy now comparable to that of his recently arrived superior, the authors of the petition accused Wu Yizhong of colluding with Feng-quan "to thoroughly transfer the people of Batang—Han and Khampa, commoner and monk—to the dominion of *yangren* 洋人 (foreigners)."

Zha Qian 查騫 (n.d.), who assumed the *liangtai* post in Litang several months after events in the Parrot's Beak, pointed to a similar rumour spreading throughout the valley as the catalyst for Bapas attacking reclamation fields. "[T]he short uniforms of his bodyguard (*weibing* 衛兵), their *yang* (foreign) drums and *yang* (foreign) drills all introduced by *yangren* (foreigners) indicated that Feng-quan was not an imperial commissioner sent by the Emperor." According to this rumour, "He will confiscate our land, livestock, and property and bequeath them to *yangren* (foreigners)."[57] Having likely read the petition, Zha appears to conflate its statements in associating the "foreignness" of the Assistant Amban's soldiers with Bapa perceptions of his illegitimacy, but throughout the text, its authors instead credited his improper actions—and his soldiers' assault on the monastery led by Wu Yizhong. Nevertheless, Zha's characterization did highlight a new concern for the foreign presence in Batang perhaps more significant than offending the gods or Lhasa monasteries—falling under their dominion. But was this a reference to the French or the British? Writing in 1902, the French missionary Jean-André Soulié (1858–1905) (Ch. Sulie 蘇烈), who visited Mussot in Batang in late March 1905 and was himself tortured and killed near his mission station in Yarigang

[57] Zha 1990: vol. 2, 2b.

(Yar ri sgang; Ch. Yarigong 亞日貢) in mid-April, observed, "Due to its geographical position, the principality of Batang, close to Yunnan, seems destined to enter the zone of countries under French influence."[58]

Available records cannot confirm the nature of Feng-quan's relationship with the missionaries in Batang, though he apparently had good rapport with the French during his time in Chengdu and environs.[59] Both he and the French perceived Ba Chode Monastery as the greatest impediment to their respective pursuits, thus the missionaries likely supported his efforts to weaken the monks' apparent domination of both the commoners and the two *depa*. As noted above, Mussot provided advice to the Assistant Amban on at least one occasion, and as the climate in the valley deteriorated, Feng-quan advised the priest to vacate his mission and seek refuge in the junior *depa*'s residence, though he never arrived.[60] As with previous Qing officials posted to Batang, including Wu Xizhen, Feng-quan was bound by treaty to ensure the safety of the missionaries, which may have been perceived as his privileging them over the Bapas. But aside from the brief sequence of phrases juxtaposing the two, the petition drew no explicit connection between Feng-quan and the French missionaries.

The narrative which coalesced in the years immediately following the Batang Incident, both within China and beyond, focused on British, not French imperial designs on the Tibetan Plateau.[61] Representative of this perspective, in a 1910 article detailing the previous decade's events in Kham, the French explorer and diplomat Charles Eudes Bonin (1865–1929) erroneously credited Feng-quan for initiating land reclamation, mistakenly portraying this and his appointment as the Qing's direct response to the Younghusband Expedition.[62] The emperor's second edict reaffirming Feng-quan's appointment on October 3, 1904, indeed implicitly associated British incursion and the signing of the Lhasa Convention with the new Assistant Amban's mandate. Demonstrating his awareness of these events in central Tibet, Feng-quan, too, mentioned the Convention in an October 27 letter to his wife, but only as a factor in deciding if British presence should influence

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58 BNA, FO 228/2561 D48, Enclosure No. 1 in Mr. Hoffe's letter No. 16A to Sir E. Satow, March 19, 1906.

59 Forges 1973: 75.

60 Deshayes 2008: 140.

61 Note that the only provocative action in Tibetan regions of either imperial power was Younghusband's march to Lhasa, and that British Indian rupees passed current throughout much of Kham in 1905, see Relyea 2016.

62 Bonin, "Le tueur de lamas," *Revue de Paris* 12 (March-April 1910): 658.

whether to reside in Chamdo or in Batang.[63] Yet the origins of each component of his mandate predated the Younghusband Expedition, and the emperor's initial appointment edict months earlier made no mention of the British.

In October 1903, two months before the British Indian army crossed into Tibet, Feng-quan's immediate predecessor, Gui-lin 桂霖 (b. 1848), submitted a memorial several months into his tenure as Assistant Amban proposing to move the post from Lhasa to Chamdo, where he planned to recruit and train local soldiers. Two months earlier, a group of Sichuan officials submitted a memorial seeking appointment of a high-level official to manage the Sichuan-Tibet border region and initiate both mining and land reclamation, the latter investigated as early as December 1903 by Wu Xizhen at Xi-liang's direction.[64] Notably, neither the Batang petition nor official reports of the Batang Incident mentioned British incursion into central Tibet, nor did they suggest Bapa actions were influenced by Lhasa's monasteries, to which French missionaries had attributed previous instances of persecution. Rather, the catalyst for action, the motivation to violence when all other recourses had seemingly evaporated, arose within the Batang Valley, among the Khampas, both commoner and monk, in reaction to the intensification of shifting Qing policies, the perceived illegitimacy of an Assistant Amban, the improper actions of Feng-quan and his bodyguard from Chengdu, as well as the actions of Wu Yizhong. The petition asserted that Feng-quan's actions, such as the population register, threatened not only indigenous, but also Han commoners, thus reiterating that Bapa actions sought to preserve—not challenge—the emperor's legitimate authority. The petition's final section evinced an even greater desperation, but also a hint of defiance, revealing the root catalyst for Bapa resistance.

Though his article conflated several actors and events, producing historical errors, Bonin cast the Bapa petition as less an appeal for mercy than an expression of the "lamas' insolence," almost daring the Qing to attack, capturing both the text's closing tone and the climate in Batang in the aftermath of April 5.[65] Tucked between lengthy, solemn pleas for leniency, contingent admissions of guilt, and praise for the Emperor's benevolence, one of which is quoted above, the petition warned the Emperor not to send another official leading soldiers into Batang. The text threatened abandonment of all imperial courier

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[63] FJJ, No. 243 in *Guangxu Xuantong liang chao shangyu dang* 30: 61 and "Pingzi Letter no. 2," October 27, 1904: 58.

[64] Mei Xinru 1934, 213; QCBDS, No. 0001, November 16, 1903: 1–2; XYGZG, No. 342: 365–366.

[65] Bonin 1910: 659.

stations between Litang and Ladun (Lha mdun; Ch. Nandun 南墩) at the border with central Tibet southwest of Batang, thereby obstructing Qing correspondence with Lhasa. "We are prepared to exterminate the people and devastate the land, leaving nary a chicken, dog, or blade of grass. We vow to uproot everything with no regret." Indeed, even as its authors composed the Batang petition, Khampa men, some armed with matchlocks, fortified strategic mountain passes leading into Batang and along the southern road toward Litang.[66] The petition ended with a final pledge of obeisance—only if the emperor pardoned their actions would the people of Batang acknowledge their guilt, allow imperial correspondence to travel unfettered, forever remember and submit to his grace.

While the petition carefully enumerated the Assistant Amban's improper actions as the justification for resistance later dubbed the Batang Incident, this final threat revealed the root catalyst for both resistance and the penultimate act—the slaughter of Feng-quan in the Parrot's Beak. It was not the "foreignness" of Feng-quan, his bodyguard or his drilling methods, nor his perhaps favouring the true foreigners in their midst—French missionaries. Both were mentioned in only a brief sequence of phrases early in the petition. It was not his improper actions nor his perhaps dancing atop Bapa roofs. Rather, it was the authors' warning of apocalyptic consequences if another Qing official were to arrive with soldiers not merely to punish the community, but also to expand the land reclamation plans cautiously initiated by Wu Xizhen many months before Feng-quan's arrival, or to implement other new policies like the population register and limiting the population of monasteries. Through the petition, the people of the Batang Valley implicitly declared their opposition to any Qing official henceforth seizing land on which the commoners and monasteries depended for livelihood and revenue, intensifying settlement of Batang with Sichuanese farmers, strengthening imperial authority by introducing Sichuanese soldiers and training indigenous recruits. In effect, they opposed the implementation of policies inflected by the New Policy reforms then sweeping China proper and only beginning to trickle into its frontier regions.

Needing not only to justify the slaughter of Feng-quan and Wu Yizhong, but also to dissuade the Emperor from retribution, the petition sought to appease him with reverence and recognition of imperial dominion by contrasting the legitimate Qing official—Wu Xizhen—with the illegitimate Feng-quan. Thus, since its authors could not directly criticize Wu's cautious initiation of land reclamation, which was the

[66] QCBDS, No. 0036: 52.

emperor's policy, the petition instead displaced the focus onto the egregious, improper actions of the Assistant Amban and his bodyguard in support of aggressively intensifying a legitimate policy. Whether planned or not, violence near Tsasho Village in late March effectively halted if not also curtailed land reclamation in Batang, an outcome which the petition's quixotic forbiddance of new Qing officials sought to preserve. However, by displacing the cause of violence onto Feng-quan himself, by briefly mentioning his drilling both bodyguards and indigenous recruits in a foreign style, juxtaposed with denouncement of the French presence in Batang, the petition opened the door for others to misconstrue the catalyst for resistance and violence in the narrative coalescing in subsequent years. The Khampas by killing not only Mussot in Batang and Soulié in nearby Yarrigang, but later two French priests near Dechen (Bde chen; Ch. Adunzi 阿敦子) in Yunnan,[67] provided further legitimacy for the coalescing narrative's focus on the "foreign."

After Sichuan Provincial Military Commander Ma Weiqi 馬維騏 (1845–1910) had fought his way along the southern road at the head of an army of 2,500 soldiers, reaching Batang town on July 26, 1905, he immediately seized both the junior and senior *depa*. Though they had offered to mediate between the Qing general and the monks of Ba Chode Monastery, Ma, like Zha Qian and other officials, believed that the pair shared culpability for plotting Feng-quan's demise with the primary instigator, the monastery's *khenpo*, who was captured on August 14.[68] All three were beheaded, along with the man accused of striking the final blow in the Parrot's Beak. Yet the petition asserted that the slaughter of both Wu Yizhong and Feng-quan occurred "in a moment of derangement." Offering some corroboration, though of uncertain reliability, a man who purportedly "escaped" from Batang blamed the Assistant Amban's last words to the local community for his own death. While departing the senior *depa*'s residence for the last time, Feng-quan reportedly pointed to a Khampa child and proclaimed, "Just wait until I return, this child certainly will not live, and I will command that nary a chicken or dog remain in this place." According to the tale, a man who heard these defiant words relayed them to a group of Khampas who then followed the Assistant Amban and his retinue out of the valley.[69] Perhaps Feng-quan's slaughter in the Parrot's Beak was not preordained.

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[67] Known today in Chinese as Deqin 德钦.

[68] QCBDS, No. 0047, September 11, 1905: 61–64; and "Batang jiyao," *Sichuan guanbao* 24 (October 18, 1905): 1a.

[69] You-tai 1988: vol. 9, 34b.

From "Foreign" to "External" to "Imperialist"

> Recently, the *khenpo* spread deceptions to incite the Batang people to rebel, compelling Feng-quan to send his soldiers to impose heaven's punishment. Although his soldiers fought bravely without support, the angry mob swelled swiftly, ferociously achieving its evil scheme, annihilating the upright official and his soldiers. Zhong Jun died unexpectedly when the Nanyue people attacked Han envoys, and Zhou Chu perished suddenly when the Western Qiang people raised a disturbance on the Jin frontier. It is the same today as in ancient times, misfortune befalls loyalty.
>
> — Imperial inscription on Feng-quan's memorial tablet[70]

昨者巴塘構釁，堪布譸張，爾以牙兵，往申天討，雖孤軍敢戰，而群醜滋多，逞其惡上之凶，奄致殲良之酷。南越之攻漢使，竟殞終軍，西羌之擾晉疆，頓亡周處。忠誠遭禍，今古同符。

The imperial inscription on his memorial stele embedded Feng-quan's sacrifice in China's long history of loyal officials martyred in frontier disturbances. Like the Assistant Amban, both Zhong Jun 終軍 (133–112 BCE), a Han Dynasty scholar, and Zhou Chu 周處 (236–297 CE), a Jin Dynasty general, were celebrated as virtuous officials stoically confronting impossible odds in service to their emperor. While posted as envoy to the Nanyue Kingdom in 112 BCE, accompanied by 2,000 soldiers, Zhong Jun perished in a "rebellion" led by the prime minister who opposed his pressuring the newly enthroned king to acquiesce to Han imperial dominion. Four centuries later, in 297 CE, Zhou Chu died at the head of an army of 5,000 soldiers despatched to Liangshan 凉山 to suppress some 70,000 Qiang "rebels." Outnumbered in a distant corner of the empire, Zhou Chu perhaps knew he was doomed, like Feng-quan, as he confronted armed locals by early April. Zhong Jun was perhaps unaware of the magnitude of opposition to Han intrusion simmering within Nanyue society, like Feng-quan when he decided to intensify land reclamation and diminish the monastery's population and power soon after arriving in Batang.

From the Emperor's perspective, Zhong Jun, Zhou Chu, and Feng-quan all were killed by a community deceived by powerful, ungrateful leaders, unwilling to accept the civilizational benefits of imperial grace—and defiantly obstructing either the expansion or

[70] FJJ, "Feng-quan Batang xunnan": 327.

strengthening of imperial authority in their lands. Though period maps, both Chinese and foreign, depicted the region of Kham from Dartsedo west to Batang and the Ningjing Mountain boundary with Tibet proper as part of Sichuan Province, other than Dartsedo, no Kham polities were ruled directly as part of Qing bureaucratic administration, thus limiting real imperial authority. [71] While initial assessments partly blamed the Assistant Amban himself, paralleling the Batang petition's displacement of focus away from shifting Qing borderland policies, these two legends complemented the narrative beginning to coalesce as Feng-quan's coffin reached Chengdu more than six months after his demise. By citing the *khenpo*'s "deception," the inscription absolved Batang's commoners of culpability, reflecting widespread perception of Khampa subservience to the monasteries' will, but did not displace blame to distant, "external" forces based in Lhasa, as had French narratives of their earlier persecutions. This would change in the years following the Xinhai Revolution of 1911.

In diary entries from the weeks following Feng-quan's slaughter, You-tai assessed various reports from Batang, suggesting that the Assistant Amban bore some responsibility for events spiralling out of control. In an entry from April 30, he praised a report from a local official, possibly one of the two *depa*, who complained that the Assistant Amban should not have treated him poorly and questioned why the emperor would appoint such an abominable person as his commissioner in the region. The Amban's entry from the very next day related a report blaming Feng-quan's demise on his drilling both bodyguards and recruits with foreign weapons and his plan to defrock some 1,200 monks of Ba Chode Monastery, neither reportedly supported by the two *depa* or the Qing officials in town. Nevertheless, You-tai emphasized the Assistant Amban's condescending demeanour toward the Bapas while focusing on increased opposition to his monastery policy. [72] Indeed, Zha Qian observed that Feng-quan had grown accustomed to insulting any Khampa he encountered, apparently unconcerned about potential reprisal, while Bons d'Anty observed, "Feng is a sadist, unbalanced and quick to enter into fits of uncontrollable rage." [73] Such sentiment, though, was absent from official assessment of the Batang Incident, including a memorial in which You-tai integrated several reports received from local informants.

Though the amban centered blame squarely on the primary instigators of the violence, the *khenpo* and the two *depa*, his memorial did not seem to fully exonerate the Assistant Amban. Accordingly, he advised

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[71] Relyea 2015: 989–990.

[72] You-tai: vol. 8, 37a–38a.

[73] Zha 1990 : vol. 2, 2b and FMAE, 148CPCOM/70, Annexe no. 5, Dépêche no. 37, Bons d'Anty à la Légation de la République Française en Chine, April 29, 1905.

the emperor to execute only the "heads of the bandits" while eschewing punishment for residents of the Batang Valley, which reflected widespread, underlying perceptions of Khampas lacking agency, utterly beholden to the monasteries. But in characterising their resistance as "unusual," You-tai perhaps alluded to Feng-quan's disruptive presence and abusive demeanour, implicitly suggesting his partial culpability. He observed that Tibetans, though often belligerent could nonetheless be amenable to imperial authority when treated with respect, which was not forthcoming from the Assistant Amban.[74] Although Ma Weiqi similarly implied that Feng-quan might have exacerbated the situation, Xi-liang perceived that he bore no accountability whatsoever, implicitly also absolving imperial policy as catalyst for the disturbance.

Describing for the Japanese traveller Yamakawa Sōsui 山川早水 (n.d.) the climate in Batang when the Assistant Amban arrived, General Ma focused on the same trio as You-tai. "At that time, the local rulers and head lama were extremely brutal, treating the people harshly and tyrannising the women, wielding their power to abuse everyone." Though noting his support for seizing control of gold mines as possible cause, Ma firmly asserted that it was Feng-quan's threatening posture toward the monastery, his angering the monks that ultimately incited the violence that ended in his demise.[75] In neither of his first two memorials from late April or early May 1905 did Xi-liang credit Feng-quan's actions or policies as catalysts for violence, rather emphasizing that he died for a "just cause," but his September 11 memorial detailing final suppression of the rebellion did introduce the Assistant Amban's desire to dramatically expand reclamation. The Governor-general, though, seemed to discount this as catalyst, instead, like Ma, focusing on local reaction to the Assistant Amban's plan to limit the monastery's population.[76] By his final memorials on the matter from October and December, Xi-liang referred to Feng-quan as a "martyr," expressly blaming the *khenpo* for inciting violence, colluding with both *depa* to spread nefarious rumors against the imperial policy of land reclamation.

The text of these two memorials seemed also to counter specific assertions in the Batang petition, as well as criticism of the Assistant Amban's character. Praising him as a loyal and brave official, thoroughly devoted to his duties, the Governor-general explicitly affirmed

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[74] QZZ, "Bafei qianghai Feng-quan mou luan yi chi hanfan guanbing yanfang zhe": 1208–1209.

[75] Yamakawa 1909: 155.

[76] QCBDS, No. 0035, April 25, 1905: 49; and XYGZG, No. 443, May 8,1905: 477–479 and No. 474, September 11, 1905: 512–516.

that Feng-quan "never severely punished a single person nor harshly enforced a single policy" in Batang. Indeed, in every official post, he demonstrated a selfless commitment to protect the people from external bandits, just as in Batang. By relating his actions to those of Lu Chuanlin and Xi-liang's predecessor, Cen Chunxuan 岑春煊 (1861–1933), the October 1905 memorial embedded Feng-quan's actions in a decade of efforts to strengthen Qing authority in Kham, thus confirming Feng-quan as the Emperor's legitimate commissioner taking proper action to enact the Emperor's policies.[77] This displacement of blame from the Assistant Amban, however, perhaps inadvertently acknowledged newly implemented imperial policies as the root catalyst for Bapa resistance, though the coalescing historical narrative would center on a different part of the petition.

You-tai included a report about Feng-quan's bodyguard and recruits drilling with foreign weapons in his May 1 diary entry, but no mention of "foreignness" appeared in his May 31 memorial to the Emperor, suggesting the Amban perceived this as insignificant to understanding the cause of violence in Batang.[78] Xi-liang also mentioned the Assistant Amban drilling his soldiers in foreign methods in a late July memorial that quoted from the concluding section of an alternate version of the Batang petition analysed above. This version, perhaps addressed to the Sichuan Governor-general, prefaced a similar warning of dire consequences if—in this case—Sichuan were to send soldiers into the valley, by relating Feng-quan's slaughter to both drilling and his purportedly privileging foreigners in Batang.[79] Nevertheless, since reference to perceptions of the Assistant Amban's "foreignness" were absent from Xi-liang's subsequent memorials, it would seem that he, like You-tai, perceived this as insignificant to understanding the catalyst of the Batang Incident.

The first memorial to explicitly link this perception of Feng-quan with Khampa resistance in 1905 was prepared by Fu Songmu 傅嵩炑 (1870–1929), the second and last Qing official to hold the post of Sichuan-Yunnan Frontier Commissioner (*Chuandian bianwu dachen* 川滇

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[77] QCBDS, No. 0051, 4 October 1905: 66–67 and XYGZG, No. 496: 538–540.

[78] See You-tai: vol. 8, 37b–38a and QZZ, "Bafei qianghai Feng-quan mou luan yi chi hanfan guanbing yanfang zhe": 1208–1209.

[79] QZZ, No. 474: 514. The people of Batang reportedly prepared four different versions of their petition; the one analysed here and available in *QCBDS* was addressed to the magistrate of Dartsedo, Liu Tingshu, but intended for the Emperor's eyes. Bons d'Anty translated a second, much shorter petition which text encompassed only the desperation and defiance, the implicit threat with which the petition analysed above concluded, FMAE, 148CPCOM/70, Annexe no. 2, Dépêche no. 39.

邊務大臣). A comprehensive history of Kham from the beginning of the 20th century, the memorial never reached the emperor, arrested in Chengdu by the advent of the Railway Rights Protection Movement and broader Xinhai Revolution in late 1911. However, his characterization of events in Kham spread widely when *Account of the Establishment of Xikang Province* (*Xikang jianshengji* 西康建省記) was first printed for distribution in 1912, then republished in serialised form the following year in the Shanghai periodical *Eastern Miscellany* (*Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜志). Under the section, "A history of bureaucratization in Batang" (*Batang gailiuji* 巴塘改流記), Fu wrote, "The bodyguard accompanying Feng-quan all drilled in *yang* (foreign) ways and played *yang* (foreign) musical instruments. Suspecting that they were foreign officials, local residents obstructed land reclamation." Though the petition articulated no such causation, a Batang informant quoted in You-tai's diary presented a similar suspicion.

The entry from late July, nearly two months after the amban had submitted his memorial on the incident, included details contradicting an oft-repeated legend of Feng-quan's last moments. Forced out of his chair and to the ground on reaching the Parrot's Beak in this tale, the Assistant Amban was left stomping his feet and sighing as the informant and his accomplices fled with the empty palanquin. With his body crumpled to the ground after a bullet pierced his temple, his Khampa assailants proceeded to pluck every hair of his beard while musing aloud whether he was truly the Emperor's commissioner or in fact a foreigner in disguise.[80] Writing in 1918, Zha Qian transformed these musings reported to You-tai and the suspicions related by Fu into fact by citing a rumour from the time, quoted above, which explicitly asserted that the "foreignness" of the Assistant Amban's soldiers was the catalyst not only for obstructing reclamation, but also violent unrest.[81] In his introduction to a selection of Feng-quan's memorials published in the early 1980s, Wu Fengpei 吳豐培 (1909–1996), an astute scholar of Tibet since the 1930s and strong proponent of strengthening ROC rule in Kham and Tibet, further crystallised this narrative of the Batang Incident. Praising the Assistant Amban's actions as essential to reinforce Sichuan authority in its borderlands thereby protecting Tibet, Wu condemned as "slander" You-tai's criticism of the Assistant Amban in his diary but did not follow Xi-liang in casting the Assistant Amban as a martyr. Instead, like Fu and Zha, he focused on the brief observation in the petition to affirm that Feng-quan drilling his bodyguard and indigenous recruits with foreign methods was the catalyst

[80] You-tai: vol. 9, 32b–33a.

[81] Zha 1990: vol. 2, 2b–3a.

for discontent among the monks and others, sparking unrest culminating in the Parrot's Beak.[82]

Even if describing Feng-quan's condescending demeanour toward the Khampas, even if mentioning his effort to reduce the monastic population or his intensification of land reclamation in the valley, subsequent discussion of the Batang Incident followed this narrative, blaming the "foreignness" of Feng-quan for Khampa resistance. A detailed discussion of his 102 days in Batang in the *Batang County Gazetteer* (*Batang xianzhi* 巴塘縣志) epitomises this. Embellishing parts of the petition and rumors purportedly spread by angry monks, both discussed above, and asserting that the local population was "disgusted" by Feng-quan's many "foreign ways," even claiming that the hairs of his beard were red, the gazetteer text unequivocally stated that many believed he was in fact a foreigner.[83] Foreign scholars, too, came to accept this narrative, for instance S.A.M. Adshead who wrote later in the century, "Anti-foreignism produced the final outbreak."[84] Although this narrative displaced focus from newly implemented Qing policies, the root catalyst for resistance articulated in the petition, the influence of global concepts transforming these policies was perhaps greater and more distressing to the people of Batang.

Land reclamation in frontier regions implemented by farmer-soldiers was not new in Chinese imperial history, indeed such settlements appear in the historical record as early as the Han dynasty (202 B.C.E – 220 CE).[85] Proposing to limit the population of monks in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries also was not new, as discussed above, nor was training indigenous recruits to serve as imperial soldiers protecting its frontiers. The main tasks in the Assistant Amban's mandate, employing soldiers as farmers in reclaiming and cultivating wastelands and training recruits, thus was embedded in two millennia of imperial frontier policy. Yet Feng-quan's methods in 1905 reflected the influence of European and Japanese models on Qing New Policy reforms. More significantly, the method and goals of their implementation also responded to a changing global reality touching the Tibetan Plateau with the 19th century emergence of the "Great Game" in Central Asia between the Russian and British Empires, joined by the Qing in the first years of the 20th century.

A trio of memorials submitted in July 1901 by Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837–1909), Governor-general of Huguang Province 湖廣省, and

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82 QZZ, "Feng-quan zhu Zang zougao": 1273.

83 *Batang xianzhi*, 251–252.

84 Adshead 1984: 66

85 Yu 1986: 377–462.

the influential official Liu Kunyi 劉坤一 (1830–1902), dubbed a "blueprint" by the Court, articulated two of the central concerns in the New Policies: modernization of the army and administration of the Qing territorial bureaucracy.[86] Though the latter focused primarily inward through judicial and constitutional reform, in Kham and other imperial frontiers like Xinjiang 新疆 and the Mongolian grasslands north of Beijing, these reforms manifest during the first decade of the 20th century in the extension of that bureaucratic structure accompanied by the infusion of settlers from *neidi*. The resultant strengthening of Qing authority internally and its demonstration of governmental competence within these territories externally satisfied in principle the newly globalizing norm of territorial sovereignty, which demonstration could forestall global imperialist incursion.[87] Lu Chuanlin recognised this relationship in the last years of the 19th century when he recommended replacing indigenous Khampa rulers with magistrates appointed from *neidi*, a long-standing imperial frontier policy known as *gaitu guiliu* 改土歸流 (bureaucratization). This would become a central component of the actions of Zhao Erfeng 趙爾豐 (1845–1911) in the aftermath of the Batang Incident, one which success depended on an influx of Han commoners from Sichuan settling on continuously expanding reclaimed lands.[88] With Xi-liang's support, Feng-quan too had planned to recruit Sichuanese commoners to tend reclaimed fields in the Batang Valley, and he had expressed support while in Dartsedo for replacing indigenous Khampa rulers.

From the beginning of his tenure as Sichuan Governor-general in September 1903, Xi-liang initiated New Policy reforms. He focused first on training new-style army units (*xinjun* 新軍), which he deemed essential to the Qing Empire's survival in general and to "halting lawlessness" within the province. He then turned to training a modern police force, which he deemed essential for maintaining peace and regulating morality among the urban populace and quelling the sprouts of calamity outside towns and cities.[89] Such new army soldiers accompanied Ma Weiqi on his punitive mission to Batang and formed the core of Zhao Erfeng's frontier army afterward, but it is important to note that new army soldiers did not accompany Feng-quan on his journey west. Foreign instructors, many from Japan, in newly established

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86 Reynolds 1993: 129–130; Li 2007: vol. 2, 210–213.

87 On the relationship between the New Policies and the emerging principle of sovereignty in Qing China's frontier regions, see Relyea 2017.

88 On the consolidation of territorial authority through settlement in Kham, see Relyea 2019.

89 On Xi-liang's implementation of the New Policies in Sichuan, see He 1995 and XYGZG, No. 520, March 29, 1906: 566–567.

schools and training academies not only educated these soldiers and police officers, but also supported Xi-liang's parallel effort to improve agriculture and bring peace and stability to the hinterlands of Sichuan.[90] Wu Xizhen's limited initial endeavor to reclaim wastelands in Batang beginning in mid-1904 is a product of the Governor-general's goal of strengthening Qing authority, as was the Assistant Amban's intensification of this policy.

In the half dozen years before Xi-liang took charge in Sichuan, Feng-quan had established his credentials suppressing rebellion and bringing peace to unsettled areas. First as magistrate of Zi Sub-prefecture (Zizhou 資州), situated in the Red Basin near Chengdu, in 1898 he trained a militia of local inhabitants and others from nearby jurisdictions that eliminated a band of rebels led by Tang Cuiping 唐翠屏 (n.d.) who had been terrorizing the town. Four years later, in Jiading Prefecture (Jiadingfu 嘉定府), also near Chengdu, Feng-quan again raised a militia, this time to defeat bandits who had been disrupting commerce along the banks of the Min River. His efforts were reportedly so successful that no bandit dared enter the sub-prefecture as long as he was in charge. Under the new Governor-general, Feng-quan served as Deputy Military Commander (*fudutong* 副都統) and also headed Chengdu's newly trained police force before accepting the post in Tibet.[91] Feng-quan's record and commitment to New Policy reforms may have encouraged Xi-liang to appoint him Assistant Amban, but Feng-quan's overconfidence in the power of these reforms might also have contributed to his failure to curb resistance to his perceived improper actions in Batang.

Wu Fengpei suggested that Feng-quan's impatience fostered a misbelief that marching a troop of transformed indigenous recruits through the dirt streets of Batang would awe both *depa* and the monastery into renewed submission.[92] The 50 men comprising his bodyguard and tasked with training these recruits in Batang, however, were recent graduates of Chengdu's Police Academy, not provincial military academies. In a situation quite different from the hinterlands of *neidi*, their training likely left them unprepared to quell simmering resistance among a non-Han population in the frontier, which Feng-quan acknowledged in a March letter to Liu Tingshu.[93] The Assistant

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[90] He 1995: 142–144. On the influence of German, Japanese, and Russian models on Qing military reforms in particular, see Wang Jianhua 1995.

[91] Anon., "Duxian zouqing jianli Feng dachen zhuanci bing qing yu shi li zhuan zhe" *Sichuan guanbao* 32 (January 4, 1906): 6b–7a; Zhao Erxun 1997 [1928]: 3229–3230; and BNA, "Thibetan Affairs," FO 228/1549, General Series No. 16.

[92] QZZ, "Feng-quan zhu Zang zougao": 1273.

[93] Ibid., "Zhi han Liu Tingshu qing cui diao weidui fu Batang zhu fang," March 24,

Amban too confronted conditions quite different from his previous postings in *neidi*, realising in the first days of April that the one hundred Bapa recruits were not as dependable as the militias he had trained in Zizhou or Jiadingfu. Though unfamiliar and perhaps disconcerting, neither enduring foreign drilling nor wearing different insignia alone could have compelled the recruits to abandon the Assistant Amban. Rather, when the bullets started flying in late March, they likely abandoned him because their sympathies lay with the local population reacting to his improper actions.

The Khampas resisted these policies not only because they threatened their livelihood, especially Feng-quan's extractive actions, but also their society. Seizing lands for reclamation previously overseen by the *depa* and especially Ba Chode Monastery diminished their respective financial bases and thus their local power. Hoping to populate these lands with Han settlers from *neidi*, defrocking more than 1,000 monks and disrupting the tradition that at least one male child from each Khampa family take monastic vows would similarly weaken the monastery's societal penetration and thus its influence within Batang. The resultant strengthening of Qing authority over local society was a central objective of New Policy reforms across China, evincing the influence of globalizing norms in the concomitant reorientation in the internal methods and new external goals for such old imperial frontier policies as land reclamation and bureaucratization.

Since Qing officials perceived Kham monasteries as conduits of influence either for the monasteries of Lhasa or for the Dalai Lama himself, the projection of governmental competence effected by these policies was crucial to demonstrate Qing sovereignty in Kham, whether to British India and Imperial Russia—or to Lhasa. This was especially true since the abbots of Kham monasteries were appointed from Lhasa and Qing officials perceived Khampas as subservient to their manipulation. Implementation of these policies with new external goals and transformed internal methods, both influenced by globalizing norms, was perhaps even more critical for governance in Kham and across the Tibetan Plateau during the first years of the succeeding Republic of China. Thus, in the dominant narrative of the Batang Incident, the "foreignness" of the New Policies implemented in Kham was first displaced onto the superficial "foreignness" of Feng-quan and his bodyguard—mentioned only fleetingly in the Batang petition. Following the collapse of Zhao Erfeng's frontier army and Han settlers fleeing for Sichuan proper in the aftermath of the Xinhai Revolution, however, intensified Khampa resistance to the advent of ROC rule and the reinvigoration of these policies necessitated another

1905: 1280.

displacement centered on "external" instigators, not merely superficial markers of "foreignness."

After Ma Weiqi departed Batang, Zhao, appointed the first Sichuan-Yunnan Frontier Commissioner, quelled remaining resistance east of the Ningjing Mountains, then sent his army to expand direct Qing control west of the range, to within 250 kilometers of Lhasa. Promulgated in 1907, forty-three Regulations for the Reconstruction of Batang (*Batang shanhou zhangcheng* 巴塘善後章程) served as the blueprint for his comprehensive endeavor to transform both governance and society across Kham by further expanding the policies intensified by the Assistant Amban, thereby deepening the imprint of New Policy reforms on the region. Though much of his endeavor crumbled along with Qing imperial rule by early 1912, Yin Changheng 尹昌衡 (1884–1953), the first Republican era frontier commissioner in Kham, attempted both to resuscitate its many policies and to reinstate his predecessor's expansive territorial control, but was largely stymied by intense–and better armed–Khampa resistance.[94] ROC authority remained ambiguous on the ground throughout Kham until the 1939 establishment of Xikang Province (Xikang *sheng* 西康省), though this ambiguity arguably continued even under the governorship of the warlord Liu Wenhui 劉文輝 (1895–1976).[95]

After Feng-quan and his bodyguard perished in the Parrot's Beak, resistance to policies implemented by Zhao, Yin, and their successors could no longer be attributed to foreign demeanour or appearance. Thus, the narrative initially fostered by the Batang Incident to explain resistance to policies intended to improve Khampas' lives, introduce "civilization" as Zhao, Xi-liang, and others had asserted, displaced blame to the monasteries of Kham as conduits of instigation by external forces. Throughout the 20th century, this displacement onto an external stimulus oscillated between the Dalai Lama and "imperialists." In the years following the Xinhai Revolution, the narrative focused on British imperialism, reinjecting the Younghusband Expedition as an important stimulus.

By the 1930s, "The Tibet Question" (*Xizang wenti* 西藏問題) and "The Xikang Question" (*Xikang wenti* 西康問題) had become topics of concern in ROC government and society. Five books published before 1940 carried the former title and one the latter, while dozens more publications addressed either concern in studies of China's borderlands,

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[94] For a discussion of Zhao and Yin, see Relyea 2015. For the forty-three regulations, see Sichuan Provincial Archives, Chengdu, Qing 7–74; and ZECZ, "Gaitu guiliu," 1907: 190–197.

[95] On Xikang, see Lawson 2013.

its nationalities, or the regions themselves. Asserting its influence on events in the region, the author's foreword to *The Xikang Question* (1930) emphasized the disruptive role of British imperialism in Tibet, the text later detailing each incidence and the stipulations of all relevant treaties, including the Lhasa Convention.[96] Despite the violence wrought by Younghusband several years earlier, the Tibetan government welcomed British support following the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's flight to India in 1910, prompted by Zhao Erfeng sending part of his frontier army to Lhasa.[97] British influence in Lhasa continued to deepen alongside greater attention to the situation in Kham after negotiations at the tri-partite Simla Convention (1913–1914) stalled over the territorial extent of ROC sovereignty on the Tibetan Plateau.[98] To Chinese observers at the time—and in historical works since—any British interaction with Tibet was deemed imperialism, and indigenous resistance to Chinese actions in Kham or elsewhere on the plateau before 1950 a consequence of imperialist instigation. On Feng-quan, *The Xikang Question* stated that he and his soldiers were killed by the abbot and *depa* after the Assistant Amban's rebuke.[99] There was no mention of the people of Batang nor their obstructing implementation of new Qing policies. After stating that Ma Weiqi executed the *khenpo* and more than 500 Bapas, including Lungpon Namgyel, the text turned in the subsequent dozen pages to detailing British imperialism from the mid-19th century through the Xinhai Revolution, grounding resistance in this stimulus.

While one of the five *Tibet Question* books, that by Chen Jianfu 陳健夫, included no discussion of Kham, the other four all cited British imperialism and especially the Younghusband Expedition as catalysts for unrest in Batang.[100] The text by Xie Bin 謝彬, published in 1935, offered the most comprehensive discussion of Feng-quan's tenure in the valley, in a section which quoted extensively from Fu Songmu's 1911 memorial crediting his implementation of policies to strengthen Qing authority for the unrest. Paralleling *The Xikang Question*, Xie alone explicitly blamed the monasteries for inciting the Bapas to violence, while the other three texts mentioned only the people—often characterised as a mob (*zhong* 眾)—for slaughtering the Assistant Amban. The author of each text other than Xie, including *The Xikang Question*, conflated history to render the Younghusband Expedition as the sole

96 Chen Zhongwei 1930.
97 See Fabienne Jagou article in this RET issue.
98 On the Simla Convention, see Acharya 2022.
99 Chen Zhongwei 1930: 20.
100 Wang Qinyu 1929; Hua 1930; Qin Moshen 1931; Chen Jianfu 1935; and Xie Bin 1935.

impetus for Feng-quan's appointment, erroneously crediting the Assistant Amban for initiating land reclamation and related policies to strengthen Qing authority. By characterising the Bapas as a "mob," a term also used by Xie, each text displaced agency from the local population, thoroughly expunging from the narrative the catalyst for resistance articulated in the Batang petition—shifting Qing borderland policies. Indeed, the people—Tibetan or Khampa—as autonomous actors were largely absent from these six texts, which instead emphasized incitement by monasteries, cast as agents of forces external to Kham—the Dalai Lama or central Tibetan monasteries—or by an abstract imperialist threat to Tibet writ large, sometimes both. As resistance to intrusive policies in Kham persisted following the Xinhai Revolution, intensifying in subsequent decades, this elision and focus on British imperialism as external catalyst pervaded other Chinese publications throughout the 1930s and 1940s.

In a 1942 history of Kham and Tibet, Ren Naiqiang 任乃強 (1894–1989), one of the most prolific researchers of the region during the Republican era, did not focus on Khampas resisting the policies of either Feng-quan and Zhao Erfeng before the Xinhai Revolution or those of Yin Changheng after.[101] Rather, he cited British imperialism as the origin of the "Tibet Question" and blamed monks for inciting both obstruction to Feng-quan's land reclamation policies and the ensuing chaos in Batang in the aftermath of the Younghusband Expedition. On Yin's effort to reassert authority purportedly established by Zhao west of the Ningjing Mountains, Ren continued to ignore local resistance, instead focusing on the Dalai Lama seeking and receiving support from the British. Nearly a decade earlier, in the book entitled *Xikang*, Mei Xinru 梅心如 (b. 1899) similarly blamed the monks while embedding the Batang Incident within the context of previous British incursions into Tibet proper. Continuing to ignore local actors, Mei further blamed British interference for bloody fighting between Sichuanese and Khampa soldiers in 1918, detailing the British provision of guns and ammunition.[102]

Writing in the early 1930s, Liu Jiaju 劉家駒 (1900–1977) subtly displaced culpability for such resistance—and violence—further from Qing and later Chinese policies and events within Kham. The son of a Han teacher in Batang and a teacher himself, he concluded in the afterword to his book *Kangzang* 康藏 that imperialism in central Tibet had exacerbated "ill feelings" (*e'gan* 惡感) between the Han and

[101] Ren 2000: especially chapter 3.

[102] Mei 1934: especially 68–70; 91.

Tibetans.[103] His belief perhaps epitomised an underlying assertion in the narrative, the persistence of late Qing perceptions of subservient Khampas, their actions manipulated and minds clouded by superstition and the interrelated influence of monks as conduits for the will of either the Dalai Lama or the government and monks of Lhasa. Two chapters discussing Tibet in a 1934 book on China's "Borderland Question" (*bianjiang wenti* 邊疆問題) integrated the narrative's fundamental displacement with this underlying assertion.[104] Though events in Kham are not mentioned, the authors implicitly elided local Khampa and Tibetan agency by condemning imperialism—particularly continued British interference—for introducing the concepts of self-rule and independence from Chinese authority to Tibetan polity and society. Each of these books—and those on the Tibet and Xikang "question"—represent the culmination of displacements detailed above, from misreading the Batang petition to emphasize the "foreignness" of Feng-quan and his soldiers as the catalyst for resistance established in the initial narrative of the Batang Incident, to a focus on external stimuli, and finally the instigation of external or imperialist agents.

Conclusion

As fanciful as the image of Feng-quan dancing upon the roofs of Batang houses is the narrative of external forces instigating resistance among manipulated Khampas and Tibetans to the implementation on the Tibetan Plateau of policies presumed beneficial by Qing and Chinese authorities. The instantiation of an underlying template initially crafted from a misinterpretation of the Batang petition in the first official assessments of the Batang Incident represents a tale of historical revision, of government officials and historians recasting a tangential observation in a document as its core message in support of preferred conclusions. By positing Bapa resistance culminating in violence in April 1905 as an extension of Tibetan resistance to British incursion a thousand kilometers away and more than a year earlier, Qing and Chinese officials and historians displaced the agency of local actors, instead condemned as puppets, manipulated by external instigation projected via local monasteries. By positing perceptions of Feng-quan's "foreignness" as the root catalyst of resistance, intertwined with such characterization of "external" manipulation, they further displaced local consternation with the implementation of shifting

[103] Liu 1932: 107–110.

[104] Ling 1934: chapters 3; 4, especially 27–29.

imperial policies, exacerbated by the egregious actions of Feng-quan in support of those policies.

The persistent implementation of increasingly intrusive policies across Kham both before and after 1911 could not be cast as the cause of the disturbance in 1905, though the Batang petition implicitly articulated the initiation of such policies and their intensification by Feng-quan as the root catalyst for resistance. Representative of New Policy reforms sweeping the Qing Empire during the first decade of the 20th century, reflecting the transformative influence of global concepts of governance and authority, these shifting borderland policies were not only deemed beneficial to the Khampas, but—more importantly—essential to strengthen Qing and later ROC authority within Kham and demonstrate sovereignty to neighbouring polities. Thus, the initial narrative of the Batang Incident absolved both the policies and their implementation by displacing blame onto Feng-quan's foreignness, while simultaneously absolving the people of Batang by displacing blame onto local monasteries. As resistance intensified following the Xinhai Revolution and the advent of ROC rule in Kham, the coalescing narrative displaced perceptions of foreignness for the primacy of monastic manipulation, characterised as instigated by external forces projected into Kham from Lhasa. With a concomitant deepening of British involvement with and support for the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the Ganden Phodrang (Dga' ldan pho brang) government following 1911, the narrative fused external instigation via monasteries with prior perceptions of foreignness to displace the root catalyst for continued resistance to Chinese policies among Khampas and Tibetans finally onto foreign, imperialist actors with which the Dalai Lama was occasionally accused of conspiring. Although the narrative template, which coalesced from interpretations of the Batang Incident, did not initiate such rhetoric, blaming foreign or imperialist instigation for any resistance to Chinese policy in Kham and across the Tibetan Plateau, this mischaracterization of the Batang petition represents an early instance of such displacement that persists today.

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