Tibet Incorporated:

Institutional Power and Economic Practice on the Sino-Tibetan Borderland 1930-1950

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Abstract

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This dissertation explores the path of Tibet's economic integration with China in the first half of the twentieth century. It particularly examines the borderland region of Kham that encompasses parts of present-day Sichuan, Qinghai, and Yunnan. Drawing on borderland histories and bringing together Tibetan and Chinese archival sources, it focuses on indigenous institutions and local economic practices in order to demonstrate that the twentieth-century Sino-Tibetan integration was mediated primarily by Tibetan economic institutions and actors.

While previous scholarship has examined the history of Kham in relation to Chinese state-building practices, this dissertation acknowledges the equally important place of Tibetan state-building practices and their impact on the region. As a borderland, Kham was caught between two modernizing states with conflicting agendas. Understanding its economic history, I argue, requires a direct engagement with the Tibetan financial and monetary structures, taxation practices, and labor regimes that not only dominated life Kham but also conditioned the development of the Chinese state itself in the frontiers. Chinese officials frequently collided, clashed, and collaborated with local Tibetan leaders, while Chinese merchants and companies engaged in trade and partnered with and worked alongside Tibetan merchant companies, whose economic reach extended from Shanghai to Calcutta.

This dissertation focuses on four main institutions to rethink this history on the Chinese borderlands by focusing on the indigenous Tibetan institutions and structures: *ulak* conscript labor, currency, monasteries, and merchant companies. All four of these institutions were rooted

in Tibetan socio-economic practices and were critical in the transformation of Tibetan society in the Sino-Tibetan borderland. The economic interconnectedness of the twentieth century and the increased links between Tibet and China brought a simultaneous and seemingly contradictory economic trajectory to Tibet. As the Chinese presence on the plateau increased, so did the power of Tibetan economic institutions, for the Chinese government, military, and merchants had to rely on them to exist. In a politically and economically fragmented environment, Tibetan institutions challenged state building efforts and thrived by asserting their own political, religious, and economic power across the Tibetan Plateau and beyond. A history of Tibetan economy as seen and written through the eyes of the Tibetans offers a new perspective to not only rethink modern Chinese history, but also the present day in which the Tibetan institutions still continue to mediate social and economic life on the fringes of the People's Republic of China.

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Note on Transliteration

In transliterating and translating Tibetan terms into English, I have used the most pronounceable form for English speakers. Following the first use of each term, I use the Wylie Transliteration System in parenthesis followed by a Chinese translation for the term if available. I have done my best to include alternative spellings in the footnotes.

I have transliterated Chinese terms according to the standard Pinyin system except when other transliterations are more familiar or used more frequently in English language rendering. In transliterating from Chinese into Tibetan, I have done my best to employ the Tibetan spelling when possible. Occasionally, a Tibetan name rendered in Chinese is unclear and I have provided possible Tibetan transliterations in those cases.

Introduction

In 1943, yaks and mules of a Chinese transportation company were carrying loads of cotton from India to China through the high Tibetan plateau. The shipment was able to go across the mountain passes thanks to the connections of the Pangdatsangs—one of the largest Tibetan family companies in the first half of the twentieth century. The Pangdatsangs were a family of contradictions, at least they may be seen as such in the eyes of a twenty-first century observer. They hailed from the region of Kham, the eastern Tibetan region along the Sino-Tibetan borderlands. The father of the family accumulated a fortune until he was assassinated in the 1920s. Following his death, his three sons took over the family business. One was an official of the Dalai Lama's government, one was working with Sichuan warlords, and the third one was a member of the Nationalist party in China. In addition to their multiple and conflicting alliances, they also regularly donated to the three most important monasteries in Central Tibet; Sera, Ganden, and Drepung. Without the coalitions, collaborations, and negotiations that the Pangdatsangs were able form with monasteries and political powerhouses, the Chinese company's shipment of cotton from Calcutta to Chongqing would have never made it across the plateau.

The economic and political infrastructure that enabled the shipment of goods from India to China captures the core of this dissertation. When considering the implications of a trans-Tibet study of economic institutions, the Pangdatsang merchant company offers one of the best examples. Entrenched within the socio-economic systems of Central Tibet and Kham, the Pangdatsangs were involved in every aspect of government finance between Tibet and China during the first half of the 20th century. As such, the Chinese reliance on Tibetan actors and institutions in the shipment of goods offers a window into the economic history of modern Tibet.

The path of Tibet's economic integration with China in the first half of the 20th century was not an inevitable progression of total Chinese domination, as the PRC's occupation of Tibet in the 1950s might lead one to believe. Throughout the 20th century, Chinese regimes not only contended with but relied on Tibetan economic institutions, from monasteries to merchants to transportation infrastructures. Until the 1950s, the Sino-Tibetan border region was a space of intense economic activities where Tibetan financial and monetary structures, taxation practices, and labor regimes dominated the Tibetan and Chinese interface. Additionally, Chinese merchants and companies not only engaged in trade with Tibetans but also partnered with and worked alongside Tibetan merchant companies in and beyond the Tibetan plateau. These patterns of economic practice during the first half of the 20th century set the stage for the Tibetan and Chinese interactions in the second half of the 20th century, and their presence still reverberates today.

This dissertation focuses on four interconnected subjects that provide a new understanding of Tibetan economic institutions and practices from the 1930s to the 1950s, when the Tibetan region was integrating with China and the greater world economy. Specifically focusing on ulak conscript labor, currency, monasteries, and merchant companies, I approach these institutions and practices at a point of unprecedented socio-economic rupture during the 20th century. All four of these institutions were rooted in Tibetan socio-economic practices and were critical in the transformation of Tibetan society as the state-building efforts in both Tibet and China collided, clashed, and collaborated. The economic interconnectedness of the twentieth century and the increased links between Tibet and China brought a simultaneous and seemingly contradictory economic trajectory to Tibet. As the Chinese presence on the plateau increased, so did the power

of Tibetan economic institutions, for the Chinese government, military, and merchants had to rely on them to exist.

The four institutions that this dissertation charts offer a way to rethink economic history on the Chinese borderlands by focusing on the indigenous Tibetan institutions and structures, instead of Chinese ones. Ulak, the transportation-cum-taxation system, was one of these indigenous institutions. Having originated in the thirteenth century as part of the Mongolian postal system, it was subsequently adopted as the dominant system to mobilize labor in Tibet, and by the twentieth century, it had become a highly decentralized system of taxation that was far from standardized across the plateau. Due to its effective and flexible methods, ulak was able to adapt to new economic conditions, as it had in the past centuries. In order to mobilize labor, Chinese forces had to rely on ulak, which not only helped the Chinese gain access to the plateau, but also strengthened the institutional power of ulak itself.

A similar process of entrenchment was evident in monastic institutions as well. As early as the 10th century, Tibetan monasteries molded the political, social, and economic life around them.[1] By the 17th century, monasteries dominated the political and economic spheres to the extent that monks made up roughly 25 percent of the entire male population.[2] The Ganden Podrang government of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682), based in the holy city of Lhasa, began an expansion into Kham in the 17th century, founding hundreds of new monasteries and repurposing others for the Dalai Lama's sect, the Geluk school of Tibetan Buddhism. With this monastic expansion not only came spiritual developments, but also the expansion of the

[1] R.A Stein, "The Evolution of Monastic Power," in *The Tibetan History Reader*, eds. Gray Tuttle and Kurtis Schaeffer (New York: Columbia, 2013), 196-210.

[2] Melvyn Goldstein, "Tibetan Buddhism and Mass Monasticism," in *Des Moines et des Moniales dans le monde. La vie monastique dans le miroir de la parente*, eds. Adeline Herrou and Gisele Krauskopff (Presses Universitaires de Toulouse le Mirail, 2010).

monastery as an economic and bureaucratic institution. In certain respects, Tibetan monasteries were similar to our modern-day universities, as they managed the education and livelihood of hundreds if not thousands of monks as well as large land assets.[3] But unlike our universities, they were also managing commercial expeditions across the plateau. Even the reincarnation system, when read from an economic perspective, was a means to control property and capital ownership by keeping it within the reincarnation lineage of the lama and the monastery. The economic bureaucracy that developed around the growing needs of these monasteries thereby became the dominant bureaucratic model that was powerful enough to not only perpetuate itself but also expand into new economic territory. Dargye Monastery in Kham, as this dissertation will expand upon, was a particularly strong example of this trend. While most large monasteries engaged in commerce and maintained bank-like functions, such as lending out funds at high interest rates, Dargye Monastery, founded during the Fifth Dalai Lama's expansion into Kham, had by the 20th century established itself as a powerful economic force, rising as one of the top import-export traders of the 1940s, and it even began printing its own paper currency. Dargye Monastery's semi-autonomous economic power was indicative of the significance of monasteries in Eastern Tibet, where they had to negotiate their place between two major nation-building powers—the Tibetan Government in Lhasa and the successive China-based governments.

Often growing out of and alongside large monastic institutions, merchant companies offer another example of an influential economic institution in Tibet. The Pangdatsang merchant company offers an illuminating example. Led by the three Pangdatsang brothers, they encapsulated the diverse intersection of Tibetan economic experience, as I briefly mentioned in the initial pages. As the patrons of a powerful monastery in Kham, the Pangdatsang brothers

[3] The largest of these monasteries could reach ten thousand monks.

were multifaceted merchants and politicians in their dealings with China and Tibet. The oldest brother was an aristocrat and the official trade agent of the Ganden Podrang government in Lhasa; the middle brother was an intellectual and politician who worked for the Chinese Nationalists while also forming his own political party in India; and the youngest was a military leader and the biggest businessman in Kham.[4] Working with international companies across India, Tibet, and China they exemplified a new form of transnational Tibetan institution that grew out of indigenous economic practices.

Be it in the administration of ulak, the development of monastic powers, or the emergence of merchant companies, one of the central issues that both Tibetans and the Chinese had to deal with throughout this period was the problem of currency. Prior to the emergence of nation-states and the dominance of managed economies, bullion-based currencies, typically silver coins, circulated from Mexico to the Mediterranean to the Himalayas to China. In China, the Mexican silver peso circulated alongside local silver and bronze currencies, bank notes, and subsidiary currencies, while in Tibet, Nepalese minted coins circulated alongside British Indian rupees and tea in the form of dried bricks. The existence of multiple currencies was one of the biggest obstacles in the modernization of Tibetan economy, especially in the Sino-Tibetan borderland region. Understanding the complexity of currency and the engine of economic integration that sought to create an equivalence of exchange is thus central to understanding the transformation of Tibetan economy in the twentieth century.[5] As such, currency is a theme that flows through this dissertation in the same way money flows through markets. Each chapter treats currency, its

[4] Carole McGranahan, *Arrested Histories: Tibet, the CIA, and Memories of a Forgotten War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

[5] Overall, I draw much of my larger understanding from the work of Kuroda Akinobu whose recently published book *A Global History of Money* (New York: Routledge, 2020), which provides a full summary of his research and theories.

diversity and functions, as a means to understand exchange, labor relations, and capital flow.[6] This dissertation demonstrates that despite Tibet and China's different currency regimes and historical trajectories, integration was not a one-way street. It was, at its very core, a dialectic between multiple systems of economic value-making.[7] Through an investigation of the day to day clashes between emerging currency regimes and the financial institutions that sought to control them, the negotiation of economic power and the question of economic integration comprise a central part of this study.

This dissertation examines the history of these economic institutions and financial structures to reevaluate the history of Sino-Tibetan borderland economy. It particularly explores the history of Kham as the meeting point between Tibetan and Chinese economic systems. In doing so, it highlights the complexity and diversity of Tibetan economic institutions in the making of modern Tibet, and by extension, modern China. "Tibet Incorporated" thus uncovers the long-lasting significance of the Tibetan economic institutions themselves as it tries to understand how Tibet was incorporated into China in the twentieth century.

[6] Luce Boulnois, *Poudre d'Or et Monnaies d'Argent au Tibet* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1983). Her work on Tibetan gold dust and silver currency during the 18th century in particular informs my study of currency on the Tibetan Plateau and is the most complete work of Tibetan economic history founded on primary source material.

[7] There is also a lot of anxiety about exchange, and about currencies equaling other currencies, how to compensate labor, this is as much my anxiety as it is the Chinese interlocutor's anxiety. The anxiety about incorporating Tibet into China begins in the late 19th century and is well documented by Wang Xiuyu, *China's Last Imperial Frontier: Late Qing Expansion in Sichuan's Tibetan Borderlands* (New York: Lexington Books, 2011). And Scott Relyea, "Victorianizing Guangxu: Arresting Flows, Minting Coins, and Exerting Authority in Early Twentieth-Century Kham," *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review E-Journal* No. 19 (June 2016) (http://cross-currents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-19). WWII brings about yet another moment of intense anxiety about integrating Tibet into China, at this point for very real geopolitical security reasons.

Tibetan Economic History and Historiographical Limitations

To date, the dominant historiographical question governing discussions of Tibetan economic history has been, "Was Tibet feudal?" While feudalism might seem as an outdated Eurocentric category, the conditions under which Tibetan economic historiography developed in the past decades have turned "feudalism" into a politically charged domain. On the one hand the term has been used by Western scholars who exported European categories and historical experiences to the study of Tibet along with other non-Western regions. On the other hand, since the 1950s, PRC historians have used the term within a crude Marxist framework of teleological progression in history, and portrayed Tibet as a place of a backward feudal space in need of the Chinese state's benevolent support.[8] "Feudalism" still holds sway over our understanding of Tibetan economy, even though it at best obscures our understanding of the Tibetan socioeconomic system; and at worst, it demeans and delegitimizes the Tibetan economic institutions whose history is already overlooked.[9]

The question of "feudalism" and backwardness long plagued the study of Chinese economic history as well, but historians since the 1980s have taken a leading role in rectifying

[8] Authors either explicitly or implicitly make this assertion. For example, Zhu Wenli and Mao Yanghai, "Jianxi Xizang gaxia shiqi chawula zhidu," *Zhongguo Zangxue,* no. 1 (zongdi 57) (2002), 55-62. Melvyn Goldstein makes an implicit claim that the Tibetan government was so backward and chaotic that it makes sense that the Communists took over. See, Melvyn Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Volume 1: The Demise of the Lamaist State 1913-1951* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). Other scholars have confronted the issue of the "gift of Chinese development" such as Emily Yeh*, Taming Tibet: Landscape Transformation and the Gift of Chinese Development* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), and Andrew Fischer, *The Disempowered Development of Tibet in China: A Study in the Economics of Marginalization* (New York: Lexington Books, 2014).

[9] Derong Zeren Dengzhu. *Zangzu tongshi: jixiang baoping [A General history of Tibet: The Auspicious Treasure Vase]* (Lasa: Xizang renmin chubanshe, 2001). A response to this: William Coleman "Writing Tibetan History: the discourses of Feudalism and Serfdom in Chinese and Western Historiography" (Master's thesis, University of Hawaii, 1998). Furthermore, despite Melvyn Goldstein's substantial contributions to the creation of a Tibetan economic history, he is a scholar who is adamant that Tibet should be characterized as a feudal state. Melvyn Goldstein, "Reexamining Choice, Dependency and Command in the Tibetan Social System: 'Tax Appendages' and other Landless Serfs," *The Tibet Journal*, Volume 11, Issue 4 (1986), 79.

the history of Chinese economy by demonstrating its complexity and rationality. Madeleine Zelin's works on Qing economic history, for instance, cast away the spell of backwardness and showed the intricate details around the Qing's fiscal regime.[10] R. Bin Wong systematically critiqued the use of Eurocentric socioeconomic terminology and forced scholars to consider *Chinese* models and trajectories of historical change.[11] And Kenneth Pomeranz's comparative study of Jiangnan and England in the eighteenth century showed the economic similarities between the two regions. He not only refuted arguments for "European exceptionalism" and "Chinese backwardness," but also provoked the Western scholars to think about the environmental and global contingencies in the birth of the industrial revolution.[12]

This dissertation draws inspiration from these scholars to rethink Tibetan economic history. I build on a growing scholarship that has been giving Tibetan history its due place in academia. Since the early 2000s, scholars who have been rewriting the modern history of Tibet emphasize the Eurasian and global connections that transformed the Tibetan society since the 1600s, when the state-making efforts of the Ganden Podrang government coincided with similar imperial projects across the world. [13] Instead of emphasizing "difference," historians have

[10] Madeleine Zelin, *The Magistrate's Tael: Rationalizing Fiscal Reform in Eighteenth-Century Ch'ing China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

[11] R. Bin Wong, *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

[12] Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Making of a Hinterland: State, Society and Economy in Inland North China, 1853-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

[13] The scholars who participated in this movement were many, just to name a few are Gray Tuttle, Lauran Hartley, Lobsang Yongdan, Elliot Sperling, Janet Gyatso, Kurtis Schaeffer, and many others, in particular all the contributors to the papers in Gray Tuttle (ed.) *Mapping the Modern in Tibet* (Andiast, Switzerland: IITBS, International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies GmbH, 2011). Overall, the vision is well exhibited in Gray Tuttle and Kurtis Schaeffer (eds.) *The Tibetan History Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013). This field creation in the United States is largely due to establishment of the modern Tibetan history position at Columbia University, which still is the only university in North America offering degrees in the subject.

recently been underlining similarities and trying to put Tibet on a shared global timeline.[14] This endeavor, however, is still at odds with Chinese academic production on Tibetan history, which is intent on justifying the incorporation of Tibet into China, and persists on the trope of a "backward" Tibet and its need *to be* modernized.[15] While this applies to all of Tibetan and Sino-Tibetan studies, it is most palpable in the research on economic history. Apart from a small assortment of preliminary scholarship that takes the Tibetan economy seriously on its own terms, we have yet to fully move beyond the aforementioned historiographical and political confines, to explore the specifics of Tibetan economic institutions and practices. While not claiming to fix any of these momentous issues, it is my hope that this dissertation can at least begin to bridge the intellectual divide and rise above inherited narratives on the economic history of Tibet.

This study further builds on the "social history turn" in Tibetan studies that came out of the early-2000s scholarship on modern Tibetan history. Efforts in finding the "modern" in Tibet generated further inquiry into the framework and structuring of Tibetan society. While still in its nascent stages, the first fruits of this academic turn were published as a compilation of a papers, *Tibetans Who Escaped the Historians Net* in 2013. True to its name, the papers focused on less studied aspects of Tibetan history from the diverse status of commoners to the significance of

[14] Most notably, Wim van Spengen, *Tibetan border worlds: a geohistorical analysis of trade and traders* (New York: Kegan Paul International, 2000), Tina Harris, *Geographical Diversions: Tibetan Trade, Global Transactions* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013), and Luce Boulnois, ibid.Wim van Spengen's work in in particular establishes provocative theories on the scope of the Tibetan economy, yet his work relies on western travelogues and secondary literature and is not founded on Chinese or Tibetan language primary source material.

[15] Yeh, ibid.; Fischer, ibid.; and C. Patterson Geirsch, *Corporate Conquests: Business, the State, and the Origins of Ethnic Inequality in Southwest China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020). The historical production on Tibet has been fraught with so many layers of political and linguistic antagonism that often it is impossible to sift through long enough to form arguments political and cultural authority. While Tibetan language scholarship out of India (and China pre 2008) has been arguing against this for decades, English language scholarship is only just starting to directly engage in subject that are a given in Chinese historiography.

Tibetan translators.[16] Additional publications emerged in the following years marking the foundation of a new standard for research on the social history of Tibet. Kham also found its place within this new social turn notably through the "Frontier Tibet" project which generated a set of articles in 2016 and 2020 on the social, cultural, and economic history of Kham.[17] It should be noted that the social history turn dovetailed with efforts in digital humanities, as historians created large databases ranging from the Buddhist Digital Research Center to the Bonn University Kundeling archives. This has created incredible strides in the production of information on Tibetan history, elucidating sometimes the most foundational of subjects from the meanings of Tibetan socio-economic terms to the operation of the Dalai Lama's army.[18] While China historians have long engaged with the field of social history, the historiographical interventions in Tibetan studies only truly formed in the early 2000s, and it was only in the last decade that one can claim that a foundation for social history in Tibet and Kham has been established. This dissertation is an attempt to carry it forward.

I further locate my research within the field of Sino-Tibetan history. While the 20th century history of nation building in China is a well-developed field,[19] Sino-Tibetan history of

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[16] Jeannine Bischoff and Alice Travers (eds.), *Commerce and Communities: Social and Political Status and the Exchange of Goods in Tibetan Societies* (Berlin: EBVerlag, 2018); Alice Travers and Federica Venturi (eds.), "Buddhism and the Military in Tibet during the Ganden Podrang Period (1642-1959)" *Cahiers d'Extreme-Asie* 27 (2018); Charles Ramble, Peter Schwieger, and Alice Travers (eds.), *When the Taxman Cometh: Tax, Corvée and Community Obligations in Tibetan Societies* (Leiden: Brill, [forthcoming]). There should also be yet another forthcoming compilation in the works based on the proceedings of the conference "Labor in Tibet": "History and Organization of Labour in Tibetan Societies". http://www.tibetanhistory.net/

[17] This has also been true for Amdo studies, such as the Marie-Paule Hille, Bianca Horlemann, and Paul K. Nietupski (eds.), *Muslims in Amdo Tibetan Society: Multidisciplinary Approaches* (New York: Lexington Books, 2015).

[18] However, while the data production is absolutely critical, we are only just beginning to utilize theoretical frameworks that could even better connect us to other fields.

[19] Prasenjit Duara. *Resucuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.); John Fitzgerald, "The Nationless State: The Search for the Nation in Modern Chinese Nationalism," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 33 (Jan., 1995).

the 20th century can be separated into two distinct but related categories: the history of Chinese state-building along the Sino-Tibetan frontier, and the political history of the Tibetan government in Lhasa (the Ganden Podrang government of the Dalai Lamas) and the status of Tibet vis-a-vis modern China.[20] I diverge from these previous works by emphasizing the presence of a competing Tibetan state-building process and the power of local Tibetan institutions in economic engagement with China and the world. While many scholars have looked to the Chinese state's perspective in the Sino-Tibetan region, this research focuses on the *Tibetan* institutional experience in order to show Chinese state building from a Tibetan institutional perspective.[21] In particular, I model my research on the exceptional work of Yudru Tsomu whose ground-breaking book *The Rise of Gönpo Namgyal in Kham* told the story of a 19th-century chieftain in Kham whose power threatened the competing powers of Central Tibet and Qing China. In doing so, Tsomu demonstrated how local events on the so-called peripheries had far reaching consequences for the histories of Tibet and China.[22] The same was true, I argue,

[20] Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet Vol. 1;* Lin Hsiao-Ting, *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier: Intrigues and Ethnopolitics 1928-49* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006). Notable recent exceptions to this have been the recently defended and wonderful dissertations of Huasha Zhang, "Our Kind of Tibetan: the Political Life and Times of Liu Manqing 1906-1942" (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 2019) and Mark Frank, "The Rooted State: China's Growth in Eastern Tibet, 1905-1950" (PhD dissertation, University of Illinois Urbana-Champagne, 2020).

[21] Scholars who work on the Sino-Tibetan frontier from the China perspective include: Mark Frank, ibid.; Joseph Lawson, "Warlord Colonialism: State fragmentation and Chinese Rule in Kham, 1911-1949," *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 72, No. 2 (May, 2013), 299-318; Lin Hsiaoting, ibid.; Wang Xiuyu, *China's Last Imperial Frontier: Late Qing Expansion in Sichuan's Tibetan Borderlands* (New York: Lexington Books, 2011); William Coleman, "Making the State on the Sino-Tibetan Frontier: Chinese Expansion and Local Power in Batang, 1842-1939," (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2014), and Scott Relyea, "Gazing at the Tibetan Plateau: Sovereignty and Chinese State Expansion in the Early Twentieth Century" (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2010). Mark Frank's research, while certainly focusing on state building in Kham, provides a more nuanced and locally minded approach than historians who have come before him. Joseph Lawson's study, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two, was highly influential for me in writing about ulak. Some correctives to the China-centered focus have been achieved by Paddy Booz, "Tea, Trade and Transport in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands" (PhD dissertation, Oxford University, 2011); Huasha Zhang, ibid.; and Yudru Tsomu, *The Rise of Gonpo Namgyal in Kham: the Blind Warrior of Nyarong* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2015).

[22] Other works that deal with the long-term Tibet-China relationship include Max Oidtmann, *Forging the Golden Urn: The Qing Empire and the Politics of Reincarnation in Tibet* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018) and his dissertation "Between Patron and Priest: Amdo Tibet under Qing Rule 1792-1911" (PhD dissertation, Harvard

for economic institutions as well, which not only conditioned what was possible for Tibetan society, but also responded to broader social and political transformations. Moving beyond China-centered narratives of state-building and Lhasa-centered political histories, "Tibet Incorporated" demonstrates the crucial place of Tibetan economic institutions in understanding 20th-century history in China and Tibet.

Fig 1.1: Tibet and the Surrounding regions[23]

University, 2013), as well as the upcoming dissertation by Lei Lin, "The Limits of Empire: The Qing-Gurkha War, China's Borderlands, and The Trans-Himalayan Paradigm, 1788–1850" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, forthcoming).

[23] Karl Ryavec, *A Historical Atlas of Tibet* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015), 3.

Why Kham? Sino-Tibetan Borderlands

On the crossroads between China and the vast Tibetan plateau, Kham was a gateway between the Sino-Tibetan worlds. To speak of "Tibet" as a homogenous category is akin to speaking of "Europe" as one. Much like Europe, Tibet had and continues to have extreme linguistic and cultural diversity. Sitting at an average altitude of 4,000 meters above sea level, the regions of Central Tibet, Kham, and Amdo encompass roughly a quarter of modern-day China.[24] For the purposes of this dissertation, I use the word Tibet to mean the geographic, cultural, and linguistic spread across what is now known as Tibet, Kham, and Amdo. I will use the term Central Tibet (Utsang), Kham, and Amdo in order to be more geographically specific despite their fluctuations of meaning and geography over time.[25] Even within these three regions may be found diverse languages and cultures. Amdo and Kham in particular manifest significant differences. Amdo, which can be thought of as the gateway between Tibet and the rest of the Inner Asian world, was a significant gateway for the Tibetan Buddhist intellectual world and the middle ground between Tibet, the Mongols, and Qing China, ethnically and geographically diverse as the plateau gives way to the deserts of Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia. Kham on the other hand, linked the plateau to the China, Sichuan, and Yunnan, with the tea trade and commercial networks connecting China and Southeast Asia. Furthermore, after Qing

[24] "Historical Tibetan texts often describe the geography of Tibet in terms of a western 'upper' region of Ngari, a central 'middle' region of U-Tsang, and eastern 'lower' regions of Dokham, which in recent centuries have come to be called Amdo and Kham…The name U-Tsang is a combination of U, de-noting the eastern Lhasa region, and Tsang, covering the western part based on the towns of Gyangtse and Shigatse. Eastern Tibet or Kham is a vast region covering the upper watersheds of the Salween, Mekong, and Yangtze Rivers, from high plateau grasslands to where they merge into bamboo forests along the foothills of Sichuan and Yunnan. Northeastern Tibet, or Amdo, is based on the farming valleys in the upper Yellow River watershed bordering the deserts and loess regions of Gansu." Ibid., 14-15.

[25] While certainly this topic applies to Amdo, the region is largely outside the scope of this dissertation.

consolidtation of power, Kham became the dominant route of official and economic exchange from the mid 1700s to the 20th century.

As Karl Ryavec shows in *A Historical Atlas of Tibet*, monasteries were and continue to be important centers of political and economic activity.[26] Throughout the history of monasticism in Tibet, roughly 20% to 25% of the male population were ordained monks and an even greater percentage of people were monastic dependents, farming monastic land, or acting as monastery merchants.[27] Large monasteries attracted commerce and markets grew up around them while ceremonies and fairs brought in hundreds if not thousands of pilgrims on a yearly basis.[28] Monasteries were the de-facto towns and cities and the development and spread of monasteries across time provides the most accurate depiction of population density and economic production. As Ryavec demonstrates in his reconstruction of local densities of nearly 3,000 Buddhist and Bon (an indigenous religion of Tibet) monasteries, one sees a concentration of population along

[26] Ryavec, ibid., 14-16.

[27] The percentages of the population who were monks shifted slightly over the centuries but broadly speaking there is a consensus that monks (this should include nuns as well) constituted on average 20 to 25% of the male population, likely only after the rise of the Geluks, and this percentage shifts depending on the region. I think it is critical to understand however that the people who were part of the group of monastic dependents would have been significantly higher. Ryavec, ibid., 14. The contemporary Tibetan population of the greater Tibet is roughly 6 million (the population is higher if one includes the migration of Han Chinese onto the plateau since the 1950s). Ibid., 14-15. Goldstein's overall estimation regarding monastic population: "There are no real data on how many monks and monasteries existed in Tibet when the 5th Dalai Lama came to power four hundred years ago in 1642, although his chief minister, Desi Sangye Gyatso, wrote in his history of the Yellow Hat sect Vaidurya Serpo (Yellow Beryl)) that there were 1,807 monasteries and 97,538 monks (of all sects) in 1694 (including Kham but not Amdo). For later periods, the Tibetan exile government has estimated that there were 2,700 monasteries and 115,000 monks in 1951 or about 10-15% of the population and 20-30% of all males. This figure must have included many temples (*lhakhang*) where one or two monks presided as overseers since the average number of monks per monastery otherwise would be only 40 and that is far too few. Chinese government reports also state that surveys conducted in the 1950s revealed more than 2,700 monasteries *and temples* and 120,000 monks, or about 24% of the male population. Although these are obviously just crude guesstimates, they show interesting similarities and generally reveal the extent of mass monasticism in traditional Tibet. By contrast, in Thailand, another prominent Buddhist society, only about 1-2 percent of the total number of males were monks and most of these were not life-long permanent monks." Goldstein, "Tibetan Buddhism and Mass-monasticism," 3.

[28] Van Spengen, ibid.; Berthe Jansen, *The Monastery Rules: Buddhist Monastic Organization in Pre-Modern Tibet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018).

the edges of the plateau, in Lhasa, Central Tibet, but even more in the Kham and Amdo borderland regions, pushing one to question the "centrality" of Central Tibet.[29] Eastern Tibet, including Kham, had the greatest density of monastic institutions (and still does today).[30] While acknowledging the regional differences, this dissertation seeks to place Kham, frequently seen as the economic crossroads as the focal point of historical analysis for the whole of Tibet and Tibet's position vis-à-vis international and Chinese powers.[31] Recent scholarship has begun to create what we may call a "Kham studies" field as a subfield of Tibetan studies to show the diversity of cultures that generally are buried under "Tibet." This is best exemplified by the recent papers published in *Frontier Tibet*, edited by Stephan Gros, with each article building up to a comprehensive foundation for the future of social history of Kham, beyond a strictly political or religious framework.[32] These works take seriously the notion of Kham as a borderland, a simultaneous center and periphery, eschewing the China-centered and Lhasa-

[29] Ryavec, ibid., 12-14.

[30] In particular, Serta Larung Gar Monastery and its sister institution Yachen Gar in Kham in modern day western Sichuan. Despite recent policies to decrease the number of monastic and lay residents, both institutions are home to nearly 10,000 and 5,000 monks, nuns, and practitioners respectively.

[31] There is a surprising dearth of scholarly work on the structural links between Central Tibet and Kham. Notable exceptions exist within religious history, which places the non-sectarian movement centrally in Kham. Furthermore, Kobayashi's groundbreaking article draws attention to the military religious framework where Dargye Monastery was effectively a military outpost for 13th Dalai Lama's expansion during the 20th century. See, Ryosuke Kobayashi, "Militarisation of Dargye Monastery: Contested Borders on the Sino-Tibetan Frontier During the Early Twentieth Century," in *Buddhism and the Military in Tibet during the Ganden Podrang Period (1642-1959)*, 139-171; Lucia Galli, "Money, Politics, and Local Identity: An Inside Look at the 'Diary' of a Twentieth-Century Khampa Trader," in *Frontier Tibet: Patterns of Change in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands*, ed. Stephane Gros (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 313-336.

[32] Stephane Gros (ed.) *Frontier Tibet: Patterns of Change in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019). Directly related to this question of connectivity is Katia Buffetrille, "The Increasing Visibility of the Tibetan 'Borderlands,'" in *Frontier Tibet*, 85-113. She further points out that there has been a recent shift to Kham as the "center" of Tibetan culture today. Overall, I see a bifurcation in studies on Kham history, and a field of Kham history has really only started to take shape in the last decade or so. The main bifurcation can be designated as "history of the Chinese frontiers" and "local histories of Kham" which can also incorporate religious histories of the region. I strongly believe that this bifurcation is not helping anyone understand the greater picture of the region, and although this is largely a framing issue, it has been far too lopsided on side of the China or Qing frontier state building.

centered standards. Kham, an area the size of modern France, was a contested space with overlapping matrices of Tibetan, local, and Chinese governmental control.

The overlapping influences from Central Tibet, the Mongols, and China that converge in Kham make the region a productive point from which to analyze economic institutions. This dissertation particularly examines eastern Kham, which is not only one of the most densely populated regions in Tibet, but has also been the crossroads of Tibet and China from the 18th to 20th centuries.[33] The relationship between Central Tibet and Kham are too often overlooked or taken for granted.[34] This dissertation attempts to link them through economic institutions and trade while critically considering the impact they had in the longue durée in terms of economic integration between the Tibetan regions and China. Kham as a Sino-Tibetan borderland helps us think beyond the spatial boundaries of what is considered Tibet and China. Economic institutions through their inherent position within commerce and exchange offer a unique lens through which to see these interconnectivities over time.[35] The simultaneous enduring and shifting nature of economic institutions makes them unparalleled for our understanding of the importance of Tibetan economic institutions and practices in the 20th century world. Additionally, as a borderland space where cultures collide, it presents a possibility to think beyond state-centered narratives and find alternative means of understanding and expressing institutional development.

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[33] Tsomu, *Rise of Gonpo Namgyal*; Paddy Booz, ibid.

[34] A key exception can be found in religious histories of Kham, which connects Kham and Central Tibet via religious networks. See, Alexander Gardner, "The Twenty-Five Great Sites of Khams: Religious Geography, Revelation, and Nonsectarianism in Nineteenth Century Eastern Tibet" (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2006); Jann Ronis, "Celibacy, Revelations, and Reincarnated Lamas: Contestation and Synthesis in the Growth of Monasticism at Katok Monastery from the 17th through 19th Centuries" (PhD dissertation, University of Virginia, 2009).

[35] C. Patterson Giersch, "Afterword: Why Kham? Why Borderlands? Coordinating New Research Programs for Asia," *Cross-Currents East Asian History and Culture Review, E-Journal,* No. 19 (June 2016); Eric Tagliacozzo, Helen F. Siu, and Peter Perdue (eds.) *Asia Inside Out: Connected Places* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

Fig 1.2: Kham in Eastern Tibet[36]

My study draws on the American tradition of borderland studies that conceptualized borderlands as zones of contact, conflict, and cooperation. Similar to the "middle ground" that Richard White explores or the Native American agency that Pekka Hamalainen investigates through his study of the Comanches, my research discloses the critical institutions of ulak labor, monasteries, merchant companies, and currency that embody the feeling of being pulled "in

[36] Karl Ryavec, *A Historical Atlas of Tibet*, 7.

hundreds of localized directions."[37] Together they allow us to question complex networks and overlapping historical trajectories. From the military network of Dargye Monastery to the transnational business connections of the Pangdatsangs to the labor and multiple currencies that made up the fabric of everyday transactions, my work establishes Kham as a place "where national narratives become unraveled."[38]

Tibetan History in Economic Perspective

This section provides a broad overview of Tibetan economic history, roughly from the seventeenth century onward, to contextualize the dissertation within a larger historical framework. It is important to point out that there has never been a unified "Tibetan economy" to speak of; if anything, Tibetan economy was a nested multiplicity of overlapping regions and networks. Institutions across Tibet, such as monasteries, managed their own "economy" by governing their own space through trade, land rent, and labor conscription.[39] And while Tibet is not unique in this matter, it offers a good example for a decentralized region that had various economic centers and pressures governing it. To date, there has been little to no attempt at a

[37] Quote from Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, "On Borderlands," *The Journal of American History* 98/2 (Sep 2011), 338. Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Pekka Hamalainen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

[38] Ibid., 338.

[39] Some are general history narratives that include economics (Derong, ibid.) while others are works of local history that include economic analysis in a discrete geographic area, such as Rinzin Thargyal, *Nomads of eastern Tibet: social organization and economy of a pastoral estate in the Kingdom of Dege* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Booz, ibid.; Paul Nietupski, *Labrang Monastery: a Tibetan Buddhist community on the inner Asian borderlands, 1709-1958* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012); Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet Vol. 1*; Jack Patrick Hayes, *A Change in Worlds on the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands: Politics, Economies, and Environments in Northern Sichuan* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013). Other works in Chinese looks closely at the economy of Tibet but is also limited in geographic scope or focuses primarily on secular economic institutions. See, Duoji Caidan and Jiangcun Luobu (eds.) *Xizang jingji jianshi [A Short History of the Economy in Tibet]* (Zhongguo Zangxue Chubanshe, 2002).

chronology or narrative construction for Tibetan economic history, except state-sanctioned Marxist ones. The following therefore is an attempt to draw attention to key moments in time that define Tibet's economic engagement with the surrounding regions and the world.[40] These are my own reflections on the periodization of Tibetan history from an economic perspective, keeping in mind the key themes that I deal with throughout this dissertation.[41]

Ulak Labor and Mongol Empire

The fall of the Tibetan Empire in 842 AD ushered in four centuries of decentralized rule across Tibet with Buddhist hierarchs and monasteries beginning to solidify as the major political and economic power holders across the vast Tibetan regions.[42] The arrival of the Mongol Empire at the foot of the Tibetan plateau in the 13th century marked the starting point of a centuries-long Tibetan-Mongolian interface.[43] According to Luciano Petech, the four supporting pillars of Mongol rule throughout the outer reaches of their empire were the census, tribute, militia, and mail service (jam).[44] Organizing Tibet into a series of administrative units, which formed the basis of military and taxation service, the ulak tax for military transport and official service was

[40] This does not take into account agricultural or animal husbandry related developments. For that, see, Pedro Carrasco, *Land and Polity in Tibet* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1959); Thargyal, ibid.; and Frank, ibid.

[41] I draw inspiration from Bryan Cuevas, "Some Reflections on the Periodization of Tibetan History," in *The Tibetan History Reader*, 49-63.

[42] For more information on this period see Tsutomu Iwasaki, "The Tibetan Tribes of the Hexi and Buddhism during the Northern Song Period," in *The Tibetan History Reader,* 146-165.

[43] Also, within this period the Sakya ruler converted the Mongols to Buddhism, establishing the twofold system of religious and political authority (*lugs gnyis*). This also gave rise to the patron-priest relationship, an important religio-economic institution in Tibet.

[44] Luciano Petech, "The Mongol Census in Tibet," in *The Tibetan History Reader,* 233-240.

established.[45] Of these institutional structures, the mail service (and tribute practices surrounding it) had a long lasting institutional impact on the Tibetan plateau in the form of ulak labor service.[46] While ulak would eventually become an integral part of the Tibetan taxation system across Central Tibet and Kham, it began as a Central Asian transportation system.[47]

With the largest land empire in world history, the Mongols created an extremely sophisticated communications and transportation network supplied with an organization of tribute and taxation in order to manage the flow of people and horses. One significant element of this communication and transportation network was the conscript labor system called ulak (Tib. ‘u lag) which was an effective means to supply labor to a series of postal relays (like a pony express) across the Mongol Empire. Etymologically, ulak is of Turkic-Mongolian origin meaning “horse,” or more often than not “relay horse,” and there are traces of this word found in languages across Eurasia—in fact the Turkish word “ulak” is still used to mean “messenger” in Turkey today.[48] Officials or couriers traveling along the routes would carry passport tablets and receive free transport and accommodations. It was a system used all across the Mongol Empire, as there are references to ulak in Persian texts from India.[49] Importantly however, these relay stations had to be maintained by the local population. The postal system was first established in

[45] Petra Maurer, "The Tibetan Governmental Transport and Postal System: Horse Services and Other Taxes from the 13th to the 20th Centuries," *Buddhism, Law & Society* 5 (2019-2020), 15-16.

[46] Maurer, ibid., 13.

[47] For more information, see Chapter Two of this dissertation.

[48] Denis Sinor, “Notes on the Equine Terminology of the Altaic Peoples,” *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 3/4, Proceedings of the Ninth Meeting of the Permanent International Altaic Conference, 29 August-3 September 1964 (December 1965), 307-315. However, despite Tibet’s close proximity with many of these Turkic or Altaic languages before and during the Tibetan Empire (7th to 9th century) ulak didn’t enter the Tibetan language until around the time of the Mongol Empire (13th to 14th century).

[49] Sunil Kumar, “The Ignored Elites: Turks, Mongols and a Persian Secretarial Class in the Early Delhi Sultanate,” *Modern Asian Studies,* Vol. 43, No. 1, Expanding Frontiers in South Asian and World History: Essays in Honour of John F. Richards (Jan., 2009), 45-77.

Amdo and Kham in the 1250s and in Central Tibet in 1269, needing local Tibetans along the postal route to manage and supply the stations. Over time, this foreign institution was incorporated as an integral part of the Tibetan taxation system.[50] Based on a survey of legal and state documents, from the period of Mongol rule (13th century) to the Ganden Podrang period (17th-20th century) taxes and ulak increased greatly. From a more simple designation of official transportation labor, ulak evolved into a tax that encompassed almost any kind of labor, from "the building of houses, support for the construction of dams, the fertilization of the government's fields, the nobility and the monasteries, the sweeping and supply of water and firewood for the district authorities, the transportation of hay from the government's estate, tolls for bridges, the transportation of meat and butter, the transportation of wood from the borderlands, the weaving of fabric, and the execution of handicrafts."[51] Clearly, ulak was seen by subsequent leaders as an effective way to mobilize transportation labor in a region with low population density, scarcity of labor, and low degrees of monetization; thus, the use of ulak spread beyond its original purview of official transportation for the postal system.

Additionally, similar to most taxes, ulak was a land or locality-based tax. Overall, Tibet had a land-based taxation system where property relations were directly related to political organization. Land was almost exclusively owned by a ruler, monastery, or the state; in Central Tibet, one of the Dalai Lama titles was "Dakpo Chenpo" (bDag po chen po), "the great owner,"

[50] Eventually ulak became most commonly seen within the phrase "khral 'u lag", frequently translated into English as tax and corvee labor, however, as discussed above, I employ the term conscript labor throughout the dissertation. The presence of ulak in Tibet can be traced through historical texts and dictionaries and I am in the process of organizing all of this data but so far, through BDRC, I have identified roughly one hundred texts that mention 'u lag and its various spellings, that range from *namthar* (biographies), to *sungbums* (collected works), to *ca yig* (monastic regulations), to dictionaries. Even the Depther Marpo the Red Annals by Kunga Dorje (published in the 14th century) mentions the word "'u lag" a few times. And we can start to gain an appreciation for the spread, shifting practices and meanings, or even disappearance of ulak throughout the centuries through these historical texts and dictionaries.

[51] Maurer, ibid., 19-20. Maurer is specifically quoting a document from the Polhane's reign (1728-1747).

and all disputes having to do with land had to be referred to him.[52] Land was then rented or granted out to commoners, known in Tibetan as miser (mi ser), in return for their produce or labor, and among whom was a stratified hierarchy that was more or less fluid depending on the region.[53] While much diversity existed, the commoners could be broadly categorized as the taxpayers, aka those who were granted land and paid taxes, and those without land who worked for the taxpayers or ruler directly and paid through labor (ulak).[54] If there were any problems with tax or ulak payments individuals could bring them to a court or (more often) to a lama or monastery for mediation.[55] Through her study of legal documents from Central Tibet during the Ganden Podrang period (17th-20th century) Jeanine Bischoff argues for the existence of a broad social contract that bound together the commoners to the rulers. Her study shows through close analysis of contract terminology that Tibetan societies could be defined through a sense of moral community and mutual obligation and, their, "wording connects the societal group of *mi ser* with groups of higher status, [and] with monastic authorities. As such, they have to be seen as a tool of communication between different hierarchical groups. They are a ritual-like reminder of the shared values on which central Tibetan society was based."[56] While Central Tibet and Kham differed substantially in terms of their socio-economic structure, most larger institutions and systems remained the same and the taxation and ulak system is one institution that helps connect the analysis of socio-economic relationships through all of Tibet.

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[52] Carrasco, ibid., 28.

[53] Ibid., 3.

[54] For more discussion on the stratification of commoners in Kham, see Chapter 2.

[55] Maurer, ibid., 18-19.

[56] Jeanine Bischoff, "Completely, Voluntarily and Unalterably? Values and Social Regulation among Central Tibetan mi ser during the Ganden Podrang Period," in *Social Regulation: case studies from Tibetan history*, eds. Jeannine Bischoff and Saul Mullard, (Boston: Brill, 2017), 151.

The fundamental reason for the incorporation of ulak into the broader taxation system of Tibet was labor scarcity.[57] By at least the 1600s there was a codification of ulak and conscript labor tied together with taxation (Tib. khral 'u lak). From then on, it was not just a postal system but had been incorporated into the fundamental aspects of taxation across Tibet. Taxation in Tibet was not monetized to the extent that one witnessed in China during the late Ming dynasty; it was mostly paid in grain and labor service. Furthermore, in Central Tibet, a region with a far stronger centralized state, this evolved into a highly regulated control over the movement of dependents, while in eastern Tibet (defined by decentralization) dependents or renters experienced more flexibility and mobility. [58] Rinzin Thargyal, an anthropologist conducting field research in early 1980s, was one of the first scholars to make the connection between the ulak labor service and the scarcity of labor.[59] He even suggested that, at least in Kham, the scarcity of manpower necessitated local rulers to attach dependents to landed estates, and that they were incentivized to create favorable conditions in order to keep them.[60] Command over labor power meant prestige, political power, and protection from outside forces. The dependents engaging in

[57] While others have noted the effects of labor scarcity in Tibet and made the connection between social hierarchy and the scarcity of labor, there has been no thorough study on th effect of low population density and the scarcity of labor on the Tibetan economy. For more see Goldstein, "Rexamining Choice, Dependency, and Command in the Tibetan Social System," ibid.

[58] Specifically, Central Tibet collected tax and labor through estates and then estates managed their own internal taxes and labor. For more, see Melvyn Goldstein, "The Circulation of Estates in Tibet: Reincarnation, Land and Politics" in The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. 32, No. 3. (May, 1973), 445-455; Melvyn Goldstein, "Serfdom and Mobility: An examination of the Institution of 'Human-lease'in traditional Tibetan society" in the Journal of Asian Studies, Vol 30, Issue 3 (May 1971) 521-534; and Han-seng Chen, *Frontier Land Systems in Southernmost China: A comparative study of agrarian problems and social organization among the Pai Yi people of Yunnan and the Kamba people of Sikang* (New York: International Secretariat Institute of Pacific Relations, 1949), 83-84. Another point of difference between Kham and Central Tibet is that the cultivators or peasants in Tibet had far less freedom of movement from one place to another. See, Chen, ibid., 101.

[59] Thargyal, ibid. Chen Han-seng writing in the 1940s saw ulak as the number one aspect governing all possible economic development in the region, and his writings will be a subject in Chapter 2. Chen, ibid., 83-84.

[60] Thargyal, ibid., 63.

the reciprocal agreement to farm the land and provide labor also received protection and could move freely for purposes of trade or pilgrimage.[61] While corruption and abuse of the system certainly occurred (Chapter 2), at a basic level the scarcity of manpower placed the dependent in a better bargaining position vis-à-vis the ruler or chieftains, and at least in Kham, it was pragmatic necessities, brought on by a scarcity of labor, that created a higher level of reciprocity.[62] It also to some degree ensured that all communities' itinerant persons were "welcome and found employment with relative ease."[63] Overall, the use of ulak as a broad system of labor taxation was related to labor scarcity and managed by land ownership and rent.

In sum, by the rise of the Ganden Podrang government in the 17th century at least, ulak was institutionalized as part of the taxation system for official transportation. In Kham in particular, ulak was further institutionalized through the military expeditions of the Qing Dynasty after the 1720s when they firmly established control over the "official route" from Sichuan, through Kham, and into Tibet.[64] It was essentially through its status as a borderland region, its decentralized rule, and the powerful external forces of Lhasa and Beijing that shaped the ulak system into a far more fluid labor and transportation system that existed into mid-20th century Kham.

[61] Ibid., 69.

[62] Ibid., 66.

[63] Ibid., 66-67.

[64] For more see Dai Yincong, The Sichuan Frontier and Tibet (Seatle: University of Washington Press, 2009). However, to my knowledge, she does not address the issue of ulak directly.

The Rise of the Dalai Lamas, Monasteries and the Tea Trade: 16th to 19th centuries

Perhaps the most inspiring article on the Tibetan economy was the late Elliot Sperling's "Some Preliminary Remarks on the Influx of New World's Silver into Tibet during China's 'Silver Century' (1550-1650)."[65] This spurred a new way of looking at Tibetan history, one that connected it to the global economy and global trade in a historically significant way, through silver, through currency. As Sperling pointed out, this influx of silver to China, which had an incredible impact on the economic efflorescence of the Ming Dynasty, facilitated a flow of capital to Tibet through the Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs and the famous (highly political and economic) system of the patron-priest relationship. Taking it a step further, Sperling suggested that this silver influx was the starting capital that launched what would later be known as the era of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama.[66]

The Fifth Dalai Lama (r.1642-1682), builder of the iconic Potala Palace in Lhasa and head of the Geluk school of Tibetan Buddhism, was by all accounts the single most important figure in Tibetan history.[67] After successful proselytizing missions, the Geluk sect succeeded in converting the Qoshot Mongols, a branch of the Oirat or western Mongols, whose leader Gushi Khan led violent campaigns across eastern and central Tibet, pacifying the regions for Geluk expansion. By 1642 Gushi Khan was victorious and set the stage for the Fifth Dalai Lama and the founding of Ganden Podrang Government that would remain in power under the

[65] Elliot Sperling, "Some Preliminary Remarks on the Influx of New World's Silver into Tibet during China's Silver Century," *The Tibet journal* 3/2 (2009), 299.

[66] To further Sperling's points, Gray Tuttle explains that extent of wealth bestowed on the Fifth Dalai Lama in Gray Tuttle, "A Tibetan Buddhist Mission to the East: The Fifth Dalai Lama's Journey to Beijing, 1652-1653," *Power, politics, and the reinvention of tradition: Tibet in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*, eds. Bryan J. Cuevas and Kurtis R. Schaeffer (Leiden: Brill, 2006.)

[67] Kurtis Schaeffer, "The Fifth Dalai Lama," in *The Tibetan History Reader,* 348.

reincarnations of the Dalai Lama as the spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet until 1959.[68] Engaging in extensive state-building, the Dalai Lama, conducted a census of all the monasteries and monastic populations of Tibet, renewed the fiscal organization, and endowed each monastery with landed estates. Additionally, there was a reorganization of taxpayer status and their contributions were fixed at specific amounts of taxation in goods or labor.[69] Famous for their bureaucratic organization the Geluk excelled in promoting celibacy of its ordained, ecclesiastical abbots, scholastic training, and doctrinal orthodoxy.[70] In particular, celibacy ensured that the wealth of the sect remained within the sect and the combined practice of celibacy and reincarnation were mutually reinforcing and concentrated the wealth accumulated by the incarnate in the lineage's financial estate (*labrang*).[71]

The institution of reincarnation took its full form and expanded during this period as a political and economic institution that ensured the transmission of all lands and wealth from the previous incarnation to the next.[72] This allowed for the consolidation of wealth in the hands of individual Buddhist sects and states throughout Tibet, and for the Geluk sect, this effectively created the conditions by which a monastery in Kham or Amdo could maintain its own local rule

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[68] Peter Schweiger, *The Dalai Lama and the Emperor of China: A Political History of the Tibetan Institution of Reincarnation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 127; Federica Venturi, "To Protect and Serve," in *Buddhism and the Military in Tibet during the Ganden Podrang Period (1642-1959)*, 22-27; Johan Elverskog, *Our Great Qing: the Mongols, Buddhism and the state in late imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006). The Mongol-Tibetan relationship for the Dalai Lamas is very important as the 3rd Dalai Lama was given his title by the Altan Khan, with Dalai meaning ocean in Mongolian. And the 4th Dalai Lama was from the family of Altan Khan. The Dalai Lamas were the incarnation of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara.

[69] Carrasco, ibid., 23-24.

[70] Rachel M. McCleary and Leonard W.J. van der Kuijp, "The Market Approach to the Rise of the Geluk School," *The Journal of Asian Studies,* Vol. 69, No. 1 (February, 2010), 164-165.

[71] Ibid., 165.

[72] Schweiger, ibid.

while still being connected to a network of powerful monasteries centering on the Dalai Lama and the Ganden Podrang in Central Tibet.[73] The expansion of monasteries during this period is significant to understanding the central role that monasteries played in politics and the economy.[74] As Gray Tuttle's work on the growth of the institution of reincarnation and spread of the Gelukpa in Amdo shows, from the 17th century onward reincarnation spread in conjunction with the growth of the Geluk sect in the region.[75] With control over large portions of land, with monks or lay dependents cultivating the land, monasteries were centers of religion, politics, agriculture, and trade with a sophisticated bureaucracy to back it up.[76] I posit that specifically from the period of the Fifth Dalai Lama's expansion, monasteries represented the political, religious, and economic network of temporal and spiritual power across all the Tibetan regions.[77]

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[73] Oftentimes, this was only after forceful conversion of monasteries to the Geluk during the Fifth Dalai Lama period. And the reorganization was aimed at monastic guidelines and bureaucratic organization. Jansen, ibid., 57. Furthermore, being Geluk did not necessarily demand political allegiance to the Ganden Podrang. At many points in Kham history from the 19th century rise of Gonpo Namgyal to the 1930s Dargye Beri conflict, Geluk monasteries would set their allegiance to Chinese forces.

[74] McCleary and van der Kuijp, ibid., 173. After consolidating power in Central Tibet, regional Gelukpa monasteries in various parts of Tibet were established and eventually brought into an institutional network of the "three seats," coinciding with the concentration of political power of the abbots of Ganden, Drepung, and Sera in a central government. They developed a national network drawing upon the resources of monasteries around Tibet (this is shown to some extent in the colleges of these monasteries, for monks from all around Amdo and Kham, as well as the head Ganden Tripa, was frequently from Kham).

[75] Gray Tuttle, "Pattern Recognition: Tracking the Spread of the Incarnation Institution through Time and across Tibetan Territory," *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 38, (Février 2017), 29. The greatest concentration of reincarnate lineages is found in Amdo (with over 400 named lineages out of a total of more than 1000 throughout Tibet), while even Kham (with some 374 lineages) has over twice the number of Central Tibet (with 150 lineages). Tuttle also shows how in Amdo the Gelukpa base was far stronger than in Kham which had strong Kagyu sect and Sakya sect representation (for example the Kingdom of Derge).

[76] Berthe Jansen, *The Monastery Rules*; Melvyn C. Goldstein, "The Circulation of Estates in Tibet: Reincarnation, Land and Politics," *Journal of Asian Studies* 32, no. 3 (1973), 445–455; Robert J. Miller, "Buddhist Monastic Economy: The Jisa Mechanism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 3, no. 4 (1961), 427–438; Giuseppe Tucci, *The Religions of Tibet*, trans. Geoffrey Samuel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 158–162; and Martin A. Mills, *Identity, Ritual and State in Tibetan Buddhism: The Foundations of Authority in Gelukpa Monasticism* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 61ff.

[77] Tuttle, "Pattern Recognition," 32-33. Another innovation included the consolidation of the diverse teaching faculties in Lhasa (religious philosophy, tantra, and medicine) within the context of single massive Gelukpa monasteries, which also sometimes included specialized faculties for teaching religious dance as well as specific tantric traditions, such as that of the Hevajra tantra or the Kalachakra tantra, with its complicated mathematical

Specifically, within this expansion we see the establishment of monasteries with sophisticated bureaucracies that not only oversaw the educational development of their monks but paid salaries, gave out loans, and funded long distance trading expeditions.[78] Martin Mill's and Berthe Jansen's detailed work on monastic bureaucracies in many ways demonstrates an institutional consistency throughout the Tibetan plateau, one that started in Central Tibet and radiated outward.[79]

As this dissertation, and particularly Chapter Three demonstrates, monasteries accomplished a type of economic ordering through their management of land, labor, and trade as well as currency. Dargye Monastery, and Tibetan monasteries in general, were not simply organizations that managed religious activities, but also ones that controlled economic exchange

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traditions. Later, the development of Gelukpa teaching institutions seemed to inspire a response from other Buddhist traditions such as the Nyingma and Kagyü, which developed formal teaching institutions (called shedra) in Kham that followed their own set of texts leading to formal degrees.

[78] Across the Tibetan regions one can make the general assertion that monasteries were economic institutions and that the bureaucratic structure of monasteries was duplicated and expanded across the broader Tibetan cultural region from the start of monasticism in Tibet in the 7th century. For more on the long history of Buddhist and economic matters see: Gregory Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters: Still More Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004); Jonathan A. Silk, *Managing Monks: Administrators and Administrative Roles in Indian Buddhist Monasticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). For Chinese Buddhism, see Michael J. Walsh, *Sacred Economies: Buddhist Monasticism & Territoriality in Medieval China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010). For examples in European middle ages see, Barbara H. Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909–1049* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

[79] What I find interesting is that the Geluk sect dominated the communications pathway between Sichuan and Central Tibet and, more than in Amdo, the monasteries in Kham did act as a type of military outpost for the Ganden Podrang. In other words, their political and economic connections were stronger. It is possible that this relates to the stronger competition by the non-sectarian movements in Kham. Sketches of monastic development in Kham however can be seen in work by Ryavec, ibid., and unpublished data compilations by Sonam Tsering and Gray Tuttle. The best source for the spread of monasteries in Kham however is the three volume Kardze Khul Monastery Surveys created in the 1980s *Ddar mdze khul gyi dgon sde so so'i lo rgyus gsal bar bshad pa*, vol. 1 [A Clear History of Each Monastery of Kardze Prefecture] (Beijing: Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1995). Accessed online at http://tbrc.org.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/#!rid=W19997. While Dargye Monastery in Kham only grew to 2,500 monks and had seven incarnation lineages in the 20th century, starting during the Fifth Dalai Lama's period monasteries across Tibet could reach 10,000 monks at their peak. See, Berthe Jansen, "How to Tame a Wild Monastic Elephant," in *Tibetans who Escaped the Historian's Net. Studies in the Social History of Tibetan Societies*, eds. Charles Ramble, Peter Schwieger, and Alice Travers (Vajra Books: Kathmandu, 2013).

and created opportunities and constraints on the behavior of economic actors.[80] William Rockhill, an American diplomat at the turn of the 20th century, stated that monasteries "are everywhere the de facto masters of the country. In their hands is nearly all the wealth of the land, acquired by trading, donations, money-lending and bequests."[81] The range of elite economic actors who participated in the economic activities of Dargye Monastery included high lamas, monks, local headmen, brokerage houses at the edge of the Sino-Tibetan borderlands, and powerful Tibetan trading families, and connected them to the farmers, traders, caravaneers, and nomads.[82] Dargye Monastery's control over transportation services, access to labor, pack animals, and military supplies to protect traders in route also gave them unparalleled domination of economic activities in the Eastern Tibetan region.[83] Additionally, this dissertation demonstrates how the monastery, as a powerful economic institution, managed to accomplish all of these tasks.[84]

The expansion of the Dalai Lama's power across Tibet was not only contingent on obtaining powerful patrons and founding Gelukpa monasteries, but also on the foundation and continuation of long-distance trade. When the Manchu Qing Dynasty in China (1637-1911)

[80] I draw from Douglass North's conceptualization of economic institutions and how they shape and govern economic interactions around them. Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1990).

[81] William Woodville Rockhill, *The land of the lamas: notes of a journey through China, Mongolia and Tibet* (London: Longmans, Green, 1891), 215-216. Another interesting quote from Ekai Kawaguchi, a Japanese spy in Tibet, reads: "Business was part of monastery life, with institutions large and small having organizations and personnel to carry on trade. … Priests are not too proud to deal with dollars and cents, and monasteries often trade on a large scale." Ekai Kawaguchi, *Three years in Tibet, with the original Japanese illustrations* (London: Theosophical publishing society, 1909), 458.

[82] Yudru Tsomu, "Guozhuang Trading Houses and Tibetan Middlemen in Dartsedo, the 'Shanghai of Tibet,'" *Cross-currents* 5/2 (2016), 291.

[83] Kobayashi, ibid.

[84] Jansen, ibid., 85.

began their consolidation of power across China and Inner Asia, they capitalized on the pervious connections of the Mongols to Tibet while eradicating Mongol groups who opposed them.[85] In 1720 the Qing established a protectorate over Tibet creating garrisoning stations along a direct route through Kham to Central Tibet. However, despite the Qing assertion of power in Kham, the overlap of Central Tibet and Qing political influence, with many local polities frequently shifting their allegiances, created a patchwork effect on the Kham region.[86]

Following the consolidation of the Qing Empire in the 1700s, local rulers and monasteries capitalized on the increased trade and communication flowing through Kham. During this period strong and embedded trade networks formed and many of these would continue or even expand after the fall of the Qing in 1911. Chapters Four and Five focus on this trade route that connected northern India to Central Tibet, to Kham, to China. One of the most significant arteries of trade and communications from at least the 17th to 20th centuries, this route was traversed by a diverse array of merchants and economic institutions linked by the institutions and individuals that traversed them were Tibetan chieftains, monasteries, Shaanxi merchants, nomads, petty traders, large trading families, Hui Muslims, Nepalese, Indians, Chinese among others. By the beginning of the twentieth century, "no less than 200,000 Chinese traders visited Dartsedo," and most of these were Shaanxi merchants.[87] By the 20th century, this made Dartsedo the number one economic nexus between China and Tibet, driven by the tea trade and strengthened by their business in international goods. The most significant commodities to cross the Tibetan plateau

[85] Peter Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).

[86] Stephane Gros, "Chronology of Major Events," in *Frontier Tibet*, 20; Scott Relyea, "Yokes of Gold and Threads of Silk: Sino-Tibetan competition for authority in early twentieth century Kham," *Modern Asian Studies* (2015), 1-47.

[87] Yudru Tsomu "Guozhuang Trading Houses," 85.

were wool and tea. Wool was the number one export from the Tibetan regions, and tea the primary import. The ebb and flow of these two commodities and the shifting geography of their transport routes were among of the most significant factors in regional economic developments in Tibet. While both commodities have a much longer history, following the Qing Empire's consolidation of power in Sichuan and Eastern Tibetan regions in the early 1700s, tea became not only the most significant and lucrative import trade, but also a stable commodity that could be stored, stockpiled, and even used as a type of currency for payment and small-scale trading.[88] And the amount of tea was significant. Collecting extant information on tea amounts, Paddy Booz explains that one estimate shows in 1883, that the value of the tea trade was between £150,000 and £200,000, another estimate from 1887 put the value at £160,000 on the 10,000,000 lbs sent annually from Ya'an in Sichuan to Dartsedo, while in 1903 it was reportedly around 11,377,333 lbs, with a value of £125–130,000. Finally, by the 1920s, it was estimated at 10 million catty per year and valued at 200 million silver yuan.[89]

Profiting in particular off the tea trade through Kham, monasteries were not only major consumers of tea but also were central in (if not holding a near monopoly over) the transportation and storage process. Works by Madeleine Zelin and C. Patterson Giersch supply an important addition to my thinking about the diverse ways that business firms have operated in different environments and over long distances and through my dissertation I argue that monasteries (especially by the 20th century) used their developed organizational bureaucracy to become large-scale businesses and financial institutions all on the foundation of tea as not only their store

[88] Wolfgang Bertsch, "The Use of Tea Bricks as Currency among the Tibetans," *The Tibet Journal.* 2.32 (2009), 35.

[89] Booz "Tea, Trade and Transport in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands," 199. While these number are not exact, it is also important to understand that due to transportation fees (and the price increases created by the monasteries and merchants) the price of tea was increased as it traveled from Sichuan to Lhasa.

of wealth but also their major trading good.[90] Furthermore, Booz explains, while trade was measured in silver, everyone understood that genuine wealth was measured in tea.[91] A tea brick was standard in weight and size, easily transportable, and it did not go bad. It was the de-facto commodity-currency and store of value from roughly the 18th century until the mid-20th.[92] Even though silver coins began to circulate in larger quantities starting in the 19th century, tea remained a standard into the 20th century and even in the 1940s, merchants and travelers, Tibetan, Chinese, or western, could not enter the plateau without carrying some tea bricks.

Currency in Tibet: 1750-1912

In order to paint a picture of the historical state of Tibetan currency, each chapter of this dissertation successively builds on the topic of currency, starting with the coins themselves (silver and commodity monies), and moving to monetization, financial institutions, and global financial networks. This section details the development of currency in Tibet with particular focus on the 18th to 20th centuries and the links between Tibet, the Himalayas, and China. [93]

Work on the history of Tibetan money has recently been gaining academic attention. While the history of Tibetan currency was pioneered by Nicholas Rhodes and Luce Boulnois, the most thorough study of Tibetan money was conducted by Wolfgang Bertsch, a numismatist,

[90] Booz "Tea, Trade and Transport in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands," 59.

[91] Ibid., 290. "From the late Qing through the late 1930s, tea was valued according to silver, with the Chinese monetary unit of 1 cheng of silver (50 liang) equal to 70 yuan (yinyuan, silver currency, equal to 70 dayang money or silver coin)."

[92] Bertsch "The Use of Tea Bricks as Currency among the Tibetans,"40-41.

[93] Boulnois's *Pourdre D'or et Monnaies d'Argent au Tibet (principalement au xvnr siècle)* can be separated into two parts: the first part covers the myths of gold and silver in Tibet (an El Dorado to some), the actual quantities of gold mined (more specifically panned) in Tibet, and the use of gold in Tibet; the second part deals with silver currency in Tibet from the 17th to 18th centuries and Tibet's monetary relationship with Nepal and China.

whose work created the bedrock of all studies on Tibetan currency.[94] In Tibet, there were two standards of measurement (or units of account): the *srang*, a standard silver ratio that was similar to the Chinese tael, and the *tamka*, a later standard based on the Nepalese silver ratio.[95] Currency itself, however, was (and still is) referred to as *dngul* or *sgor mo*.[96] Recent work on the history of Tibetan money includes wonderful studies by Kalsang Norbu Gurung and Alice Travers, both of which focus on currency and taxation systems in Central Tibet.[97]

Monetary history of Tibet and China differs in a few significant ways. First, the bimetallic system of silver and copper in China did not have an exact correlation in Tibet. Functionally, Tibet worked on a silver standard but minted coins in silver and gold, only adopting a copper

[94] Nicholas Rhodes, "The Development of Currency in Tibet," in *Tibetan studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson: proceedings of the International Seminar on Tibetan Studies*, eds. Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi (Oxford, 1979) 261-268; Wolfgang Bertsch, *The Currency of Tibet: A Sourcebook for the Study of Tibetan Coins, Paper Money and Other Forms of Currency* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan works and archives, 2002); Wolfgang Bertsch, *The Paper Currency of Tibet* (Lalitpur, Nepal: Thyaka Research Centre, 2012). There is also considerable interest in the history of Tibetan money in the Chinese academy with work by Wang Haiyan, *Xizang Difang Huobi* (Qinghai Renmin Chubanshe, 2007); Xiao Haiyuan, *Xizang Difang Huobi Shi* (Minzu Chubanshe, 1987); Zhu Jinzhong, *Zhongguo Zizang Qianbi* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2002). However, their work tends to more broadly discuss Tibetan money in the context of Chinese money and Chinese economic history.

[95] A Chinese tael changed over place and time but was roughly between 36 and 40 grams. The srang could also be set to a gold standard ratio and was equal to slightly more than 37 grams. However, in the 20th century the srang was reduced to 50% of its original weight. The tam or tangka was introduced to Tibet by Nepal and was set at around 10.5 grams of silver. The coins were debased to 5.6 grams which was one of the catalysts for the Gurkha wars. Bertsch, *The Paper Currency of Tibet*, 3-4.

[96] "In terms of trade and transaction, the Tibetan words for money, i.e. *dngul* or *sgor mo,* would seem to fit this definition. However, in practical and public usage they are more limited than their English translation as "money". To date, no etymological or theoretical studies on *dngul* or *sgor mo* have been carried out, and there is no extant word in the Tibetan language that exactly matches the term "money". Although the Tibetan words *dngul* (literally meaning "silver") and *sgor mo* (literally meaning "round one") are etymologically derived from the substance used for the coins with the highest value (Srang or tamkha) and the shape of the coin respectively, their meaning applies to coins regardless of the substance used, and banknotes. Unlike the English definition of money, these two Tibetan words do not cover other forms of money such as primitive money and commodity money in practical usage." Kalsang Norbu Gurung, "The Value of Tibetan Money: A Study of the Use of Srang in Late 19th Century Tibet" in Jeannine Bischoff and Alice Travers (eds.), *Commerce and Communities: Social and Political Status and the Exchange of Goods in Tibetan Societies* (Berlin: EBVerlag, 2018)., 224-225.

[97] Bischoff and Travers, *Commerce and Communities*; and specifically, Gurung, ibid. Others have taken critical approaches to the currency and barter systems in Kham from the 18th to 20th centuries, such as Remi Chaix, Paddy Booz, and Scott Relyea. Lei Lin is also exploring currency during the late 18th century.

currency in the Central Tibetan region in the early 1900s. Furthermore, Tibet did not use a silver standard (like the Chinese tael) for paying taxes or establishing standard large transactions. Instead, commodity-payments and credit were used. Even so, in both Tibet and China foreign silver coins circulated in abundance, the most prevalent of which were foreign silver dollars of high purity silver levels, usually 90% silver and 10% copper (most commonly Mexican pesos in China and Nepalese minted coins in Tibet). The value of these coins fluctuated slightly with global prices of silver but were also heavily affected by local market conditions and circulated alongside other silver coins of various origins and purity, copper coins, paper currency in the form of banknotes, promissory notes, vouchers, bonds, and in Kham, tea bricks.[98]

Although foreign coins regularly circulated in the region, the history of Tibetan minted money only began in 1763 or 1764, when the ruling regent in Lhasa, Demo Ngagwang Jamphel Delek Gyamtso, struck the earliest Tibetan coin.[99] And from this point forward, currency (and the minting of currency in particular), took on a political importance in the geopolitical arena, sparking conflict and even wars between Qing China and the Himalayan regions. What might be termed as "currency wars" has a long history in Tibet that involved the Nepal Gurkha Kingdom and the Qing Empire. From the mid 17th century until the late 18th century, the Ganden Podrang commissioned the Nepalese Gurkha government to mint Tibetan coins from silver supplied by

[98] Kuroda Akinobu, "The Maria Theresa dollar in the early twentieth-century Red Sea region: a complementary interface between multiple markets," in *Financial History Review* 14.01 (2007), 89. Throughout much of Tibetan and Chinese history, silver was seen as a commodity and a store of value. While it maintained an exchange value, it was not primarily used for exchange. Richard Von Glahn, *The Economic History of China: from Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016). This was largely due to its intrinsic value which remained stable, and its exchange rate, similar to gold, did not fluctuate drastically. This left other commodities to take on the function of a unit of exchange, especially for lower level transactions. The use of cowrie shells in the ancient world provides one famous example, but in Kham, the primary currency was tea (Bertsch "The Use of Tea Bricks as Currency among the Tibetans").

[99] This coin was based on the tamka standard. Like the term *ulak*, tamkha also has Turkic-Mongolian roots. For more, see Rhodes, ibid., 117; and Gurung, ibid. Also, as mentioned above, there were two "weights" or standards of coins the tamka and the srang.

Tibet.[100] However, in late 18th century, conflict broke out over the devaluation of the purity of the Nepalese minted coins which eventually lead to a full-scaleGurkha invasion resulting in the sacking of one of Tibet's richest monasteries, Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in Shigatse.

At this point, the Qianlong emperor (1735–96), seeking to assert Qing authority, sent an army all the way to the gates of Kathmandu. The subsequent Gurkha Wars (1788-93) resulted in the Qing's increased attention to Tibetan affairs, and they began working with the Tibetan government to mint silver coins specifically for the Tibetan market.[101] This was significant as Chinese governments did not mint silver currency. They minted copper currency for smaller transactions, and a diverse array of foreign silver coins filled in for larger local transactions but taxes were paid in taels, silver melted down to a precise purity level. The Qing, in other words, was truly invested in managing Tibetan silver currency, which it saw as directly linked to its imperial sovereignty.[102]

However, the Qing's interest in managing the Tibetan currency situation waned over the course of the nineteenth century. With the hemorrhaging of silver that accompanied the Opium War (1839–42) and subsequent incursions of foreign economic interests in China thereafter, the Tibetan government was largely left to its own minting practices and during this period the mint in Lhasa produced not only silver coins but copper and gold coins as well.[103] At the same time

[100] Boulnois, ibid., 161.

[101] The Qing launched two expeditions, one in 1788 and one in 1792, to expel the Gurkhas from Tibet. For more information, see Luce Bounois and Lei Lin. Also, interestingly, "between 1791 and 1793, the Tibetan government introduced its own coin called Kong par Tam kha, with the specific aim of paying the Chinese soldiers who were fighting against Nepalese soldiers." Gurung, ibid., 229.

[102] Gurung, ibid., 242-244.

[103] Rhodes, ibid., 266. Between 1836 and 1911, the Tibetan government issued its own coins: namely, Tam kha dkar po (known among Western numismatists as "Ganden Tamka") and once again the Kong par Tam kha, dated 1890-1891. Gurung ibid., 229.

however, the Tibetan government faced the influx of a competing currency, the British Indian rupee, which began circulating in Tibet with the increased import of Chinese tea into India. And with the newly reestablished ties between Central Tibet and Kham following the suppression of the Gonpo Namgyal uprising in the 1860s (and possibly due to large military expenditures in Kham and increased merchant activity between India, Central Tibet and Kham) the British India rupee flooded the Kham market.[104]

A further strengthening of the position of the British Indian rupee in the Tibetan market was marked by the signing of the Lhasa Treaty following the Younghusband mission (or invasion) in 1904. With a small army this British led mission fought its way to Lhasa with the goal to open Tibetan trade to the British.[105] Similar to previous unequal treaties it required reparations to be paid in a specific currency preferable to the dominant force, in this case British Indian rupees, which effectively enforced increased trade with British India.[106]

[104] Scott Relyea, "Victorianizing Guangxu." He argues that the British Indian rupee potential to supplant brick tea as the currency of exchange threatened to weaken the commercial component of the monasteries' authority in Kham. While there might certainly be something to this and can possibly explain why there was no initiative to develop a monetary system in Kham or one linking Kham and Central Tibet. I think also the focus on a strictly monetary system really obfuscates the important point that tea was really working for a lot of people (aka working for the monasteries) and making them incredibly rich. Perhaps Dargye monastery was an exception, one that figured out how to tap into the new monetary flows (eventually making paper currency) and adapting. I am not convinced that other monasteries were not also adapting. See, ibid., 363. Furthermore, particular trade commodities and currency seem to frequently be linked. For example, India was buying tea from China through Tibet and paid in Indian rupees and since most of the tea was being process through Dartsedo, the coins could make it that far way. Basically, trade networks have major overlap with currency networks.

[105] This expedition was ostensibly to counteract the Russian influence in Tibet as part of the "Great Game". While these conditions did catalyze the event, Colonel Francis Younghusband was not acting under direct orders from the crown. For more on the Younghusband Expedition/Invasion, see Timothy Myatt, "British, Chinese, and Tibetan Representations of the Mission to Tibet of 1904" (PhD dissertation, Cambridge University, 2011).

[106] This was not the first treaty to impact the Tibetan use of the rupees, as Relyea explained, "first extensive wave of British Indian currency infiltrated markets across the plateau in the aftermath of the two-year Nepalese-Tibetan War, the result of a provision in the 1856 Treaty of Thapathali which obligated the defeated Tibetan government to remit an annual indemnity of 10,000 Indian rupees." Relyea "Victorianizing Guangxu," 362.

In reaction to the British invasion of Tibet, the Qing sought to consolidate its westernmost borders through any means necessary. The most significant individual was Zhao Erfeng (1845-1911) a Qing bannerman whose notorious and violent colonization project left him the nickname "Zhao the Butcher."[107] He promoted the increased production of a new silver coin, the *zangyang* (also called Sichuan rupee, *zangbi*, *zangyuan* or *sgor* in Tibetan) which was minted exclusively for the Tibetan market immediately following the Younghusband mission in 1905.[108] Aesthetically based on the British Indian rupee, with the coin's obverse depicting the profile of Emperor Guangxu (see image below), it also mimicked the rupee's silver content of 90% silver or .32 taels of silver.[109] According to Scott Reylea's research, between 1905 and 1911, 60% of all coins minted by the Qing were *zangyang*, overall 7,283,934 yuan or roughly 1,000,000 taels of silver, and it was made illegal to pay taxes in Kham in anything other than *zangyang*. [110]

[107] For more on Zhao Erfeng see Elliot Sperling, "The Chinese Venture in K'am, 1904-1911, and the Role of Chao Erh-Feng," *The Tibet Journal*. I(2) (1976), and Coleman, ibid.

[108] For a brief period from 1910 to 1911, Chinese influence was again dominant in Central Tibet, the Lhasa mint was put under Chinese supervision and a new type of Sino-Tibetan coinage in the name of Xuantong was minted. Wolfgang Bertsch, *The Currency of Tibet: A Sourcebook for the Study of Tibetan Coins, Paper money, and other forms of Currency*. (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 2002) 1.

[109] Lawson, ibid., 301.

[110] The Qing initiated an earlier minting of a *Luguan* coin which was minted by a Qing official in Dartsedo in 1902 and 1903. Zhao's colonization and development of Kham was halted by the fall of the Qing and not taken up again to such an extent for decades to come. Lin, ibid., 204. Furthermore, until roughly 1920, when trying to implement the *zangyang*, even though it was used as the official unit of account, and for payment to soldiers and workers within the ulak system, they had to further negotiate the rates of exchange in order to entice merchants to use the *zangyang* over the British Indian rupee. Relyea, "Victorianizing Guangxu," 373-375.

Fig 1.3: The Rupee and the Zangyang - Left, obverse of the 1885 Empress Victoria silver rupee, on the right, the obverse of the silver zangyang or zangyuan, ca. 1905.[111]

Zhao Erfeng's implementation of minting the *zangyang* was also in keeping with the general provincial level minting practices of the last two decades of the Qing Dynasty.[112] For example, replicating the imagery of the British Indian rupee was a typical practice for garnering trust for a new coin within particular markets (the zangyang also looked similar to the later Yuan Shikai dollar which was based off the Mexican peso).[113] That is not to say that the treatment of Kham was the same as other Chinese provinces. There was a distinct difference in the longevity of the silver coinage. While the Guomingdang national currency (*fabi*) instituted in 1935 gained significant traction in other provinces, it was never accepted in Kham. To counteract it, the bank

[111] Relyea "Victorianizing Guangxu,"137.

[112] Despite Zhao's explicitly stated belief that currency was related to sovereignty, it is crucial to not conflate his colonial endeavors with the earlier late 18th century Qing minting of Tibetan currency or with the later Nationalist's continued minting of *zangyuan*.

[113] Relyea "Victorianizing Guangxu," 362-363.

of Xikang even printed its own bank notes in the early 1940s to entice Tibetan silver back into the provincial bank coffers. Ironically however, they continued to mint the silver coins even after instituting the bank notes.

Currency in Tibet, in short, embodied the complex international economic systems that Tibet had always been a part of. From the 1920s to the 1950s, Chinese and Tibetan actors' economic practices were entangled with the larger decentralized world of currency. As such, the establishment of a modern economic system in Tibet had to take place within the Himalayan, Chinese, and a multitude of Tibetan practices.

Visions of Centralized State Economy: 13th Dalai Lama after the fall of the Qing

The fall of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) gave rise to a new political order within the territories of the former Qing Empire.[114] The Ganden Podrang government, led by the 13th Dalai Lama Thupten Gyatso (1876-1933), began a period of de facto independence from China, inaugurating a new era in Sino-Tibetan relations and becoming an expansionist and nationalist power in its own right.[115] Two major components of the 13th Dalai Lama's nationalistic

[114] For more on the subject, see work by Amanda Cheney, "Tibet Lost in Translation: Power Politics, Language and the Mechanics of International Order Transformation between the Sinosphere and Westphalia 1890-1937" (PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 2017), Wang Xiuyu, ibid., and Scott Relyea, "Gazing at the Tibetan Plateau: Sovereignty and Chinese State Expansion in the Early Twentieth Century" (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2010).

[115] During the 18th century, the Ganden Podrang government in Lhasa yielded much of its former claim to Kham, but reasserted it over the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries. In developing what would soon become his actualized plans for a state-led economy in Tibet, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama wrote a code of conduct for the people of central Tibet in 1901. The English language translation of this document articulated these rules more in terms of civic values than Buddhist doctrine, the text refers to the "public" or the "welfare and happiness of the individual" and the "code of public behavior," suggesting that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama attempted to define a "good citizen" as deriving from the laws and public interest, in addition to Buddhist authority. See Thubten Gyatso, "The 1901 Proclamation of H.H. Dalai Lama XIII." Translated by Tenzing Chhodak. *The Tibet Journal* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1978), 31-33). However, other translations do not use the terms "public" or "citizen, I need to get a hold of the original document (Bell or Goldstein). Many of the rules deal with transportation, proper use of pack animals, public works, and labor – administrative rules without an obvious moral component deriving from Buddhism. Instead, the proclamation frames following the "laws" as the moral duty – that being a good citizen within a Buddhist state was equivalent to living according to the Dharma. Ibid., 30-31.

ideologies were military development and economic centralization. Central to economic and military development was strengthening the state's financial position through new taxation policies, increasing commercial ties to British India, and finally, promoting state relationships with powerful Khampa merchant families like the Pangdatsangs.

In order to manage these new taxes, the Dalai Lama established a new office called the Revenue Investigation Office, which, not unlike the Fifth Dalai Lama or the Mongols before him, surveyed the land and population of Central Tibet in order to establish taxation guidelines. And to revitalize the Tibetan currency and create more fluid monetary markets, the Dalai Lama instituted the printing of new paper currency backed by gold and silver and established a Government Finance Department to not only oversee currency issues but also manage the banking needs of the state.[116] Additionally, in order to manage the large purchases of military equipment from British India, banks were opened in the major trading towns of Gyantse and Shigatse in 1932 and 1933.[117] But the extraordinary expenses of a modern military required the Tibetan government to institute new taxes on internally traded goods (specifically wool, yak hair and yak tails)[118] as well as a new levy on aristocratic and monastic estates.

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[116] According to Bertsch, the Dalai Lama "realized that backing the currency in silver or gold was important [but] it is likely that measures towards a backing of the notes with gold were not taken until about 1925. Supposedly from that year onwards 300 gold ingots weighing 27 tolas each were imported from India and were stored away in the Potala palace." Bertsch, *The Paper Currency of Tibet*, 6-7.

[117] These banks operated until 1935 and were under the supervision of the Trabshi Lekhung mint (grwa bzhi glog 'phul las khungs literally the Trabshi Electrical Machine Factory) and largely had to manage the exchange of rupees and Tibetan currency. Bertsch, *The Paper Currency of Tibet*, 7.

[118] According to Goldstein this was just for internal levies and not for imports or exports, Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet Vol. 1*, 86-87.

Unsurprisingly, this was not well received by most aristocrats and monasteries.[119] The most significant of them was Tashilhunpo monastery, the seat of the Ninth Panchen Lama Thupten Choekyi Nyima (thub bstan chos kyi nyi ma 1883-1937), the second most powerful Geluk hierarch in Tibet. But not only did the Dalai Lama request that the monastery pay taxes on its extensive lands, he also asked for the Panchen Lama to pay one fourth of the costs of all the military expenditures.[120] This came to head in 1924 when Panchen Lama refused to pay the requested amounts and instead fled first to Inner Mongolia and then to China where he worked to create a competing Chinese-backed Tibetan center of power.[121]

Even without the direct support of many Central Tibetan aristocrats and monasteries, the 13th Dalai Lama continued his state expansion plan with military backing from British India.[122] While the details are yet to be unraveled, I would argue that the granting of the Pangdatsang wool monopoly (and other monopolies) and their establishment as trade agent was a direct promotion of Khampa businessmen on the part of the Dalai Lama and the Ganden Podrang government as part of a larger attempt to create a managed state economy. And although the Dalai Lama's untimely death in 1933 (at only 58 years old) stunted the development of the Ganden Podrang and Tibet as a centralized nation-state, the legacy of the Dalai Lama's

[119] Previously, taxes in Central Tibet were paid on a type of internal external system where landholders paid their rent (effectively a land tax) to the aristocrat or monastery that owned the land and then only the aristocratic estates paid tax to the Ganden Podrang. The Revenue Office however levied a new tax on all religious and aristocratic estates and redirected landholding families' taxes directly to the Ganden Podrang. Furthermore, according to Goldstein, the Dalai Lama went so far as to back-collect taxes from previous years. Ibid., 87.

[120] Ibid., 110-112.

[121] For more on the Panchen Lama, see Fabienne Jagou, *The Ninth Panchen Lama (1883-1937): A Life at the Crossroads of Sino-Tibetan Relations*, trans. Rebecca Bissett Buechel (Paris: Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, 2011).

[122] This was not consistently backed nor was it acknowledged on a geopolitical scale.

economic development projects is directly reflected in the position of the Pangdatsang's and their merchant company.[123]

The specter of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's untimely death is a starting point for my dissertation. The Ganden Podrang's military expansions into Kham and the Chinese colonization projects along the Sino-Tibetan borderland are the backdrop for the activities of the economic institutions central in my narrative. The legacy of the Dalai Lama's attempts at a state-controlled economy is seen through not only competition of currency regimes but also the economic power of both Dargye Monastery and the Pangdatsang merchant company.[124]

Chapter Outline: Sources and Methodology

Many before me have stated the difficulty of attempting to write an economic history of Tibet.[125] The vast majority of standard economic materials, such as financial records, state treasury documents, business communications, and accounting ledgers have either been destroyed over the course of the twentieth century or are not available to historians. Furthermore, among the extensive Tibetan literary output, economic information, from the management of

[123] For more on the Pangdatsangs, see Chapter 4. Although monasteries famously opposed these new state building endeavors (the Dalai-Panchen conflict being the primary example), it is still unclear to me what exactly their impact was on the economic elements of this process. They were still some of the major economic power holders, and for example, the Pangdatsang's series of large donations to the monasteries must have affected the relationships in some ways.

[124] Bertsch, *The Paper Currency of Tibet*, 88. After the death of 13th Dalai Lama Tibet entered a prolonged period of political instability, and the currency was likewise unstable. Banknotes were issued in ever larger numbers to cover government deficits and consequently inflation increased, in particular after the release of the 100 tam srang notes in 1937/38. To give an idea of how big inflation grew in those years one may take the price of barley, the main Tibetan stable, as example: in 1959 the price for this essential commodity was twenty times that of 1936.

[125] Jeanine Bischoff and Alice Travers, "The Exchange of Goods in Tibetan Communities and their Social and Political Implications: An Introduction," in *Commerce and Communities*, 13-14; Remi Chaix, "Les aspects économiques de l'édition xylographique à l'imprimerie de sDe dge (I) : La réalisation des blocs xylographiques sous le règne de bsTan pa tshe ring (1713/14-1738)," in Edition, editions: L'ecrit au Tibet, evolution et devenir, eds. A. Chayet, C. Scherrer-Schaub, F. Robin, and J.-L. Achard (Munich: Indus Verlag, 2010), 85-114.

resources to records of wealth, was not as highly valued as Buddhist liturgical production. My work draws inspiration from other scholars who have encountered similar difficulties—such as Pekka Hämäläinen's work on the Comanches, a powerful Native American group who controlled commerce and travel across the southwest of America, and Ildikó Bellér-Hann's historical ethnography of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang that revealed economic structures through travel accounts.[126] My dissertation circumnavigates the problem of the scarcity of sources by surveying a wide variety of genres, from archival documents to Chinese statistical surveys and field reports, to Tibetan monastic histories and autobiographies in order to piece together the scattered information on twentieth-century Tibetan economy.

My larger questions and methodology draw inspiration from two aspects of Gray Tuttle's work. His first book, *Tibetan Buddhists and the Making of Modern China*, looked at how Tibetan and Chinese Buddhists reimagined their relationship and paved the way for the popular understanding of Tibetan Buddhism in a Han Chinese society and how this shifting of popular understanding was instrumental for the *conceptual* incorporation of Tibet into the Chinese nation-state. His work since has resituated Tibet, and specifically the region of Amdo, as a critical middle ground between the Dalai Lamas and the Qing Dynasty. I situate my work between these two goals. First, I show how Tibetan economic institutions and practices impacted Tibet's interaction with China and the world, thereby shaping our understanding of Tibet's place in China today; and secondly, I reconceptualize Kham as the economic middle ground, where we can witness overlapping influences and practices between Tibet and China. And finally, I do this while utilizing *both* Tibetan and Chinese sources.

[126] Ildiko Beller-Hann, *Community matters in Xinjiang, 1880-1949: towards a historical anthropology of the Uyghur* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

Chapters One and Two bring us into the world of Kham on the Sino-Tibetan borderland during the 1930s and 40s. The 1930s were a period of protracted border wars between local provincial powers, the Tibetan Government in Lhasa and the Chinese Nationalist Government. This violent and chaotic period witnessed the increased presence of Chinese forces along the frontier as well as China's increased attempts at control over the region and specifically over labor and transportation. Chapter One explores payment, receipt, and labor practices through a bridge reconstruction project undertaken cooperatively between local Chinese officials and the Tibetan chieftains in the Tibetan area of Kardze. Using the lens of currency and monetization, this chapter presents the complicated nature of taxation, labor, and payment practices presenting not only the textures of local construction projects but also the inherent difficulties of the conversion of economic values. Chapter Two, on the other hand, looks more broadly at the Chinese impact on *ulak* labor in eastern Kham and the issues of translation in borderland regions. In particular, I examine how the Chinese word *wula* 烏拉 represents the Chinese state's attempt to produce knowledge through simplification and how this simplification belied not only the diverse meaning of the term ulak in Tibetan but how the attempt to manage through simplification created an entrenchment of the system itself. In the end, I argue, the continued reliance of the Chinese on *ulak* and their lack of knowledge regarding Tibetan socio-economic structures entrenched the system even further and made it almost impossible to do anything without calling on *ulak* labor.

In both Chapters One and Two, I utilize Tibetan and Chinese language documents found in the Sichuan Archives—primarily from the archive of the Sichuan Kham Frontier Defense Force (*Chuankang bianfang jun* 川康邊防軍), the dominant Chinese army in eastern Tibet. In this archive are hundreds of highly local bureaucratic communications, mostly regarding ulak

and Chinese issues with the ulak system. They also include compilations of receipts for reconstruction projects, the only complete set of which regards the bridge reconstruction projects of the early 1930s. Within these handwritten documents, terms were unstandardized; titles, measure words, and other local terminology proved difficult to translate not only for me but also the Tibetan or Chinese interlocutors from the 1930s. Most of the time, the confusion on the borderland had nothing to do with any political agenda, but more to do with a lack of knowledge circulation between all the people involved in my narrative. Apart from the body of archival documents, I also make use of the survey work by Chinese intellectuals in the 1930s-40s, who were often involved with the colonial state-building process. While the communications of the Chinese army and the Tibetan petitions they collected reflect the day to day texture of life in Kham and generalized economic practices, the surveys provide an on-the-ground report of how the society functioned.

In Chapter Three, I look at Dargye Monastery's rise to economic power during the 1940s, and discuss the central role monasteries played in all economic life in Kham. Dargye Monastery was one of the largest and most powerful monasteries in the region with over two thousand monks at the height of its power in 1930. First, I examine how Dargye and other major landholding monasteries managed *ulak*, and thus transportation and taxation. Second, I demonstrate that in addition to managing land and transportation, monasteries also acted as banks at the local level. Dargye Monastery in particular provided startup capital for long distance expeditions and functioned as a corporation with trade agents across the plateau and as far as Kalimpong and Calcutta in India. Within the increasingly commercializing landscape of the 1940s, stimulated by a growing Chinese presence and increased trade during WWII, Dargye Monastery even began printing its own paper money that circulated alongside the competing

currencies of China, Tibet, and British India. In this chapter, I utilize a broad variety of materials, almost all of which are published. They include Tibetan monastic histories, historical and contemporary survey work such as the *Investigations on History and Culture* (*shehui lishi diaocha* 社會歷史調查). The survey work, backed by the Chinese state and Chinese universities, conducted predominantly in the 1950s and published in later years, includes a Chinese language monastic survey of monasteries in Sichuan Province as well as an academic survey in Tibetan compiled in the 1980s. While I rely heavily on those documents, I also use a small collection of Tibetan and Chinese archival materials regarding Dargye Monastery from the Sichuan Archives and Academia Historica in Taiwan.

Chapters Four and Five step away from monastic trade to focus on Tibetan and Chinese merchants themselves. They in particular address the growth of the Pangdatsang merchant company and their relationship to the Yunnanese Chen Ho Industrial Corporation as the trans-Tibet transportation business blossomed during WWII. With the fall of the Burma Road in 1942, the Nationalist government entered into negotiations with the Tibetan Government in Lhasa and the British Indian Government, eventually opening a trans-Tibet shipment route for necessary wartime goods. Chapter Four introduces one of the key actors along this route, the Pangdatsang merchant company and the three Pangdatsang brothers, Yampel, Rapga, and Tobgye, who ran the business from the 1930s onward. Originally from Kham, the Pangdatsang's power was unmatched.[127] Apart from the families of the Dalai Lamas, the Pandatsangs were the first lay family to become ennobled by the Tibetan Government in Lhasa; Yampel acted as the Tibetan government Trade Agent; Rapga was an intellectual and dual agent for the Chinese Nationalist

[127] Originally, the family name was Pomdatsang (spom mda' tshang) but they changed it before the turn of the 20th century. For more see, Carole McGranahan, "Nyigyel Pangdatsang" Treasury of Lives, https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Nyigyel-Pangdatsang/TBRC_P1KT2

Party and his own Tibet Improvement Party in India; and Tobgye maintained their economic power base in Kham by aligning with Sichuan warlords and the Nationalist Party. Like any successful international company, the Pangdatsang brothers wove together their economic and political alliances, capitalizing on all opportunities that came their way.

Chapter Five takes a closer look at Pangdatsang family's business with the transnational Chen Ho Industrial Corporation which had branches in Tibet, India, and China. Detailing the day-to-day business and financial practice of the Pangdatsangs and Chen Ho Industrial Corporation, this chapter provides the first look into a Tibetan company's engagement with foreign currency exchange and newly established transnational banking networks. Overall, these chapters separate the Pangdatsangs and their Yunnanese associates from teleological narratives of Tibet's incorporation into China; instead, I argue that they were independent merchants with their own politics and agendas, utilizing political and economic power for their benefit.

The foundation of Chapter Four and Five is a compilation of archival materials from the Chongqing Municipal Archives and the British Library in London. From the Chongqing Municipal Archive, I surveyed nearly one thousand communications that discussed the Chen Ho Industrial Corporation's business activities in Tibet. Topics covered within these documents include issues of day to day business from the banking situation, payments, and government regulations. Unfortunately, no actual transaction documents, ledgers, receipts, contracts etc., were available in the archives. Especially in order to supplement my understanding of the Pangdatsang merchant company, I rely on research based on interview compilations, namely Mölam Tsondru (Ch. 美郎宗贞 Tib. smon lam brtson 'grus) in-depth biography of Pangda

Tobgye,[128] as well as memoirs from a Chinese Communist state project referred to as the *Materials on History and Culture* (*wenshi ziliao* 文史資料), of which there is a limited number of Tibetan language versions (Tib. rigs gnas lo rgyus).[129]

Over the course of five chapters, this dissertation contends that until the final incorporation of Tibet into the PRC in 1959, no single state entity managed to control Eastern Tibet. In this environment of political and economic fragmentation, Tibetan institutions challenged state building efforts and thrived by asserting their political, religious, and economic power throughout the Tibetan Plateau and beyond. A history of Tibetan economy as seen and written through the eyes of the Tibetans offers a new perspective to not only rethink modern Chinese history, but also the present day in which the Tibetan institutions still continue to dominate local social and economic life on the fringes of the People's Republic of China.

[128] Meilang Zongzhen (Tib. *smon lam brtson 'grus*). Meilang Zongzhen, *Bangda Duoji de Zhengzhi shengya yu shangye li cheng* (Lasa: Xizang Renmin Chubanshe, 2008). Bio of Mönlam Tsondru available at: https://m.sohu.com/a/275405530_523159 accessed March 12th, 2020.

[129] Author of the wenshi ziliao volume is Edong Wala 俄东瓦拉, also known as Jia Ruiqing 贾瑞青. Edong Wala author, ed. Xizang Zizhiqu Zhengxie Wenshi Ziliao Xuexi Weiyuanhui, *Bangdacang Shiliao*. Xizang Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji, Di 30 ji, (Beijing: Zhongguo Zangxue Chubanshe, 2014).

Chapter One

Bridges Over Troubled Water: Receipts, Reconstruction, and Titles in 1930s Kham

In the Tibetan town of Kardze in 1933, in the aftermath of yet another devastating border war between the Tibetan and Sichuan forces, the local Kardze leaders and the Chinese officials worked together to rebuild two bridges: the Tashu'da Bridge (Tib. rta chu'i 'dab),[130] known in Chinese as the Dajintan Bridge (Ch. 大金攤) and the Beri Bridge (Tib. be ri), known in Chinese as the Baili Bridge (Ch. 百利).[131] In fixing these bridges that had been damaged in a flood, both sides joined forces to reconstruct the local transportation infrastructure. The local Tibetan leaders, from chieftains to village heads, worked alongside the local Chinese county officials and army units, and recruited *ulak* laborer, carpenters, and woodcutters to literally build bridges between the Tibetans and the Chinese. The disastrous border war, retroactively called the Dargye-Beri Conflict, which ended immediately prior to the start of the bridge project, began right in the vicinity of the two bridges, the names of which are resonant in the two Chinese names of the bridges as well—*dajin* and *baili*. The reconstruction began on March 1st and ended on August 15th, 1933. Likely enjoying typically beautiful summer weather, two undated sketches were drawn up by the Chinese planners:

[130] This is the contemporary spelling, རྟ་ཆུའི་འདབ་ in the documents it is spelled as སྦྱག་ཆུ་མདའ.

[131] Here I have chosen to reflect the Kardze pronunciation in my Romanization for the rTa Chu'i 'Dab Bridge.

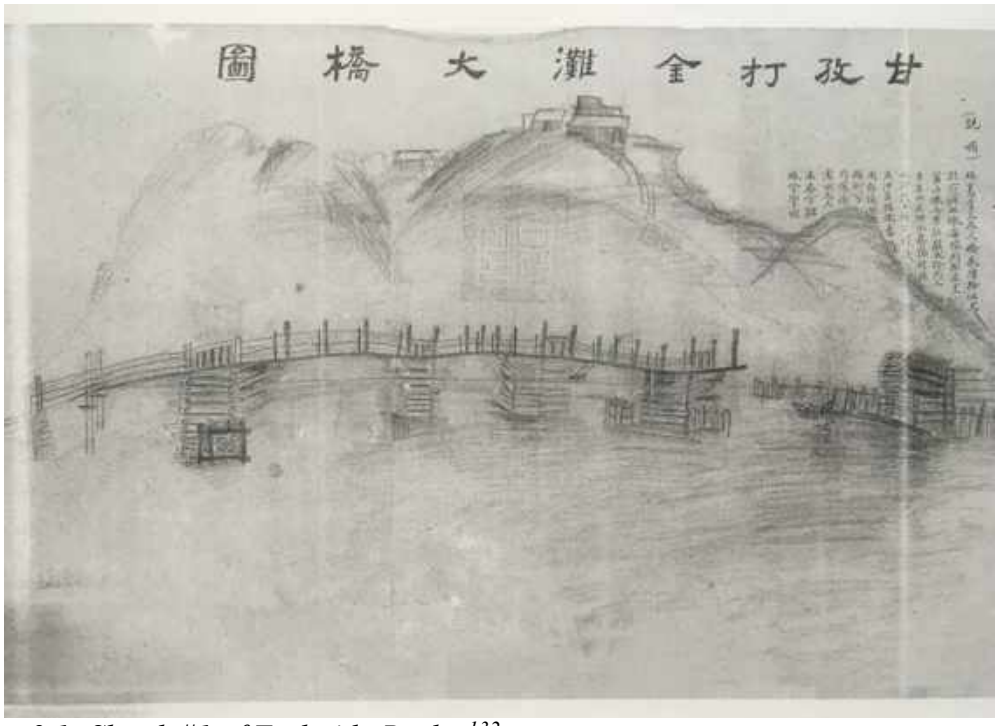

Fig 2.1: Sketch #1 of Tashu'da Bridge[132]

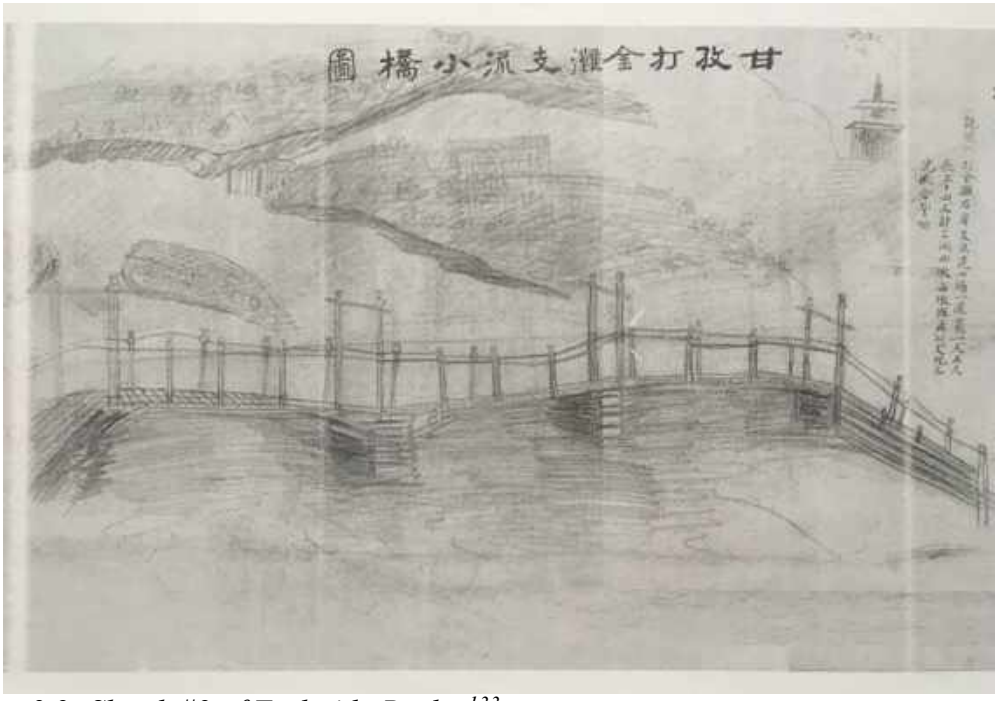

Fig 2.2: Sketch #2 of Tashu'da Bridge[133]

[132] Sichuan Archives 240-01-0007

[133] Sichuan Archives 240-01-0007

While they are certainly reminiscent of landscape paintings that traditionally use blank spaces for inserting introspective poems, these sketches were made for the Chinese army, and as such they contained valuable information. The notes written on the side of the sketches explain the construction plan for the Tashu'da Bridge and its smaller off-shoot. Made of stacked wood logs and weighed down by rocks, "the bridge should be 1 *zhang* and 3 *chi* wide and 65 *zhang* long.[134] There should be six arches and seven pillars… it will require three hundred or more logs" and so on.

Although we cannot be sure of the paper quality, they seem to have been using a type of lead pencil. And perhaps with the intention of accuracy, or most likely for artistic reasons, the drawer even included a sketch of a temple building on top of the hill.

While its accuracy may be questionable, the sketch certainly captured the general environmental conditions of Kham, and more specifically Kardze. Known as the "Six Rivers [and] Four Ranges" (Tib. chu bzhi gang drug ཆུ་བཞི་གངས་དྲུག), Kham is best thought of as a series of valleys between rivers and mountain ranges that run north to south, and while there are many mountain passes that allow one to travel east to west. Historically and economically, goods and information flowed in a north to south axis rather than east to west. Kardze town is nested within Zelmogang mountain range, in a large fertile valley, with the Nyak chu (Ch. 雅礱江 Yalongjiang), a tributary of the Yangtze River, running through it. Resting at an average elevation of 3,400 meters, Kardze's proximity to the river enabled a rich agricultural tradition in

[134] *Zhang* 丈(a traditional unit of length, equal to 10 chi (市尺), and equivalent to 3.333 meters or 3.65 yards), *chi* 尺 (a traditional unit of length, equivalent to 0.333 meter or 1.094 feet). The total length of the bridge would then be 13 feet wide and roughly 650 feet long.

the town, in addition to the pastoral and semi-nomadic lifestyles observed throughout the plateau.

Fig 2.3: Map of Eastern Tibet (Kham) and Kardze in the red box.[135]

Having examined the longue durée of Tibetan history in the introduction, this chapter brings us into the world of 20th-century Kham which witnessed an increased Chinese presence

[135] Ryavec, ibid., 7. For a detailed description of the border negotiations between Central Tibet and China during the early 20th century see Ryosuke Kobayashi, "Tibet in the Era of 1911 Revolution," in Journal of Contemporary East Asian Studies, 3:1, (2014) 91-113.

that brought with it new bureaucratic systems, titles, and pressures on the Tibetan local economy. Recent scholarship has described in great detail the Chinese political and military presence in Kham, painting a thorough portrait of the region as seen through Chinese eyes. Lin Hsiao-ting's *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier* is the most in-depth treatment of Tibet's role in Chinese politics, nation building, and Sino-Tibetan issues at large; and more recent studies, such as Relyea's "Yokes of Gold and Threads of Silk," explored early 20th century tensions between the Lhasa and Sichuan based governments as they attempted to establish absolute authority in Kham, and the difficulties these governments encountered due to a bifurcated structure of authority between the spiritual and the temporal.[136] Other scholars have examined other pertinent topics such as the Sichuan warlords' engagement with local economic systems,[137] the Chinese reimaginings of the Sino-Tibetan frontier,[138] and other Chinese attempts at colonization and integration.[139]

My primary purpose in this chapter is to turn the focus on Tibetan institutions and Tibetan actors that were at the center of these larger geopolitical conflicts through the everyday practice of labor and reconstruction. In particular, I use the Tashu'da Bridge as a setting to investigate currency systems, labor conscription, and payment practices that were embedded in a Tibetan socio-economic network. The Chinese presence in Kham in the early 1930s heavily relied on Tibetan socio-economic infrastructures and day-to-day engagements with the Tibetans

[136] Lin, ibid.

[137] Lawson, "Warlord Colonialism"; Leibold, ibid.; Sperling, "The Chinese Venture in K'am."

[138] Yudru Tsomu, "Taming the Khampas: The Republican Construction of Eastern Tibet" *Modern China* 39(3) (2013), 319.

[139] Mark Frank, ibid.; Scott Relyea, "Gazing at the Tibetan Plateau"; Coleman, ibid.; Wang, ibid. There is a significant amount of Chinese language archival sources detailing Nationalist and warlord experience in Kham (Xikang) and much of the work by scholars I have mentioned rely on the wealth of information from these archives.

themselves. Understanding the politics of Chinese presence in Kham necessitates a deeper understanding of the local people and institutions, for it was the Tibetan institutions, formed over the course of centuries, that defined and shaped the Chinese presence. The reconstruction of the bridge offers a unique lens through which to recover the history of the mundane interactions between the Tibetans and the Chinese, and a rare opportunity to see and hear the voices of the former, unknown to even the most diligent and caring historians.

The bridge reconstruction project occurred at an important yet tension-filled moment in Sino-Tibetan history. The 13th Dalai Lama's efforts to build a Tibetan state ruled from Lhasa fared well neither with the warlord regimes in China that plagued the country since the fall of the Qing Empire, nor with the Chinese Nationalist Party's plans to build a state ruled from Nanjing. The tensions which had been building since the fall of the Qing Empire in 1912 culminated in 1930-31, when Kham witnessed one of the worst border wars between the Tibetan Government in Lhasa and the Sichuan armies led by the Chinese warlord Liu Wenhui (Ch. 劉文輝). Known as the Dargye-Beri Conflict, this war began right in the vicinity of these bridges and caused incredible strain on the local population. A treaty between the two sides was finally drawn up in 1938, but for eight years prior to its signing, the people of Kardze did not have a clear image of what the future would bring. The reconstruction of the bridge in 1933 was thus undertaken in the midst a period of uncertain authority and chaotic recuperation. When reconstruction began, local people in Kardze were not only attempting to recover but they would have also still had in their minds the possibility of Tibetan territorial re-acquisition, since the 13th Dalai Lama was still alive. It was only when the 13th Dalai Lama passed away on December 17th, 1933, four months after the completion of the bridge, that the Sino-Tibetan power balance fundamentally changed.

This chapter begins by outlining the geopolitical importance of Kham during the early 20th century. It then details every aspect of bridge building, from political cooperation, to building, to financing and payments, to rewards as well as receipts. Finally, it looks at currency and remuneration practices as they were carried out on the ground and reflected in official communications.

For this chapter I look to materials collected under the daily communications related to the Sichuan Kham Frontier Defense Force (Ch. 川康邊防軍). This army unit was one of the main (nominally) KMT controlled forces in the eastern region of Kham and after the Dargye-Beri Conflict they were tasked with maintaining Chinese control in the region as well as the upkeep of all communication infrastructures. The archival materials pertaining to bridge reconstruction further provide a close-up example of new Tibetan and Chinese titles and terminologies present on the Sino-Tibetan borderlands. When reading the Tibetan language receipts, one can see how these new, mostly Chinese, administrative titles were incorporated into the Tibetan socio-political landscape in inconsistent ways. The inconsistent incorporation of Chinese administrative titles in the Tibetan socio-political landscape simultaneously reflects Chinese attempts at state-building, and the resilience of Tibetan institutions in the face of these attempts.

Overall, through the lens of reconstruction, we can gain an unprecedented appreciation of the granular details of the local transactions between Tibetans and the Chinese officials in Kham at a critical moment of the Sino-Tibetan borderland relationship.

The Geopolitical Importance of Kham during the 20th century

Similar to many borderland regions, Kham's identity shifted in the eyes of surrounding state powers. A place of overlapping local and regional authorities, control over Kham meant control over major communications and trade routes that connected Central Tibet and the Himalayan region to China. The Ganden Podrang government, led by the state-building and expansionist 13th Dalai Lama Thupten Gyatso (1876-1933), the China-based powers of the early Republican government, and later the Nationalists and Communists, viewed Tibet and Kham as an important border region, a contested area with overlapping and competing networks of power and authority. The Kham region was one of the primary trade and communications routes between Tibet and China, and Kardze, was along one section of this route.[140]

Following the late-Qing colonization activities of Zhao Erfeng in Kham from 1908 to 1911,[141] the Nationalists began to perceive Tibet and Kham as an important buffer zone between China and the Russian and the British Empires, and acted accordingly. In 1912 the Republican government in Beijing abolished the Bureau of Border Affairs (*Li fan yuan* 理藩院) that had previously administered the relationship between the Qing and Inner Asia and replaced it with the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Bureau (*Meng zang ju* 蒙藏局) which would later be reorganized into the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission (*Meng zang weiyuanhui* 蒙藏委員會), with ministerial status under the Executive Bureau.[142] Following the completion of the

[140] Xikang Province 西康, while conceptualized in the late Qing, was not formally established until 1936. For that reason, it is rarely mentioned in the source material. For more on Xikang, see work by Relyea, "Gazing at the Tibetan Plateau; Lin, ibid.; and Frank, ibid.

[141] For more information on the history of Qing involvement in Kham and Central Tibet, see Tsomu, The Rise of Gonpo Namgyal; Dai, ibid.; and Wang, ibid.

[142] Lin, ibid., 33.

Northern Expedition in 1928 led by Chiang Kai-shek, the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission played a significant role in Chiang Kai-shek's dealings with provincial warlords whose sphere of influence were adjacent to the frontier territories. However, despite the 1931 Nationalist constitutional claim of full sovereignty over Mongolia and Tibet, in terms of actually managing Mongolian and Tibetan affairs the *Meng Zang Weiyuanhui* was no more than an "advisory and planning group."[143] In a 1934 speech, Chiang Kai-shek explained, "If a country's power is sufficient…it can rely on brute strength to solve the frontier problem - securing its borders and unifying the nation - yet during times of internal weakness the state must develop a cautious, flexible and well-crafted strategy to prevent the problem from deteriorating further and making it more difficult to solve in the future."[144] This theme of laissez-faire politics combined with "flexible" colonial practices on the Sino-Tibetan frontier would define the Nationalist's activities with respect to Tibet until the start of the War Against Japan in 1937.

While Chiang Kai-shek rose to power in Nanjing, Sino-Tibetan borderlands were still sites of contested authorities. Over the course of the 1920s, the Chinese warlord Liu Wenhui's 24th Army pushed the Tibetan forces west of the Yangtze River, gradually garrisoning Dawu, Litang, Nyarong, Derge, Kardze, Batang and other counties on the eastern shore of the Yangtze River.[145] By 1932, Liu Wenhui's military, largely in the form of the Frontier Defense Force,[146]

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[143] Ibid., 33.

[144] Leibold, ibid., 171.

[145] Ibid., 179-180.

[146] My quest for information on the Frontier Defense Force has been partially obscured by the fact that it does not even show up in the Ganzi County Gazetteer (*ganze zhou zhi* 甘孜州志). It appears as though the army unit spent most of its time in Liangshan and Ningshu, a region coterminous with eastern Kham and within Xikang Province. While more work needs to be done on the background of the military units, overall the armies were under the control of Liu Wenhui.

had already formalized the position of some of the Tibetan *tusi*, (土司) i.e., native officials, by giving them regular positions in his military bureaucracy. Throughout Kham, these *tusi* were given monthly wages and allowed to supervise militia and administer provisions.[147] While the actual payment of wages may be open to debate, it was certainly the case that the Chinese military was assigning titles and incorporating local Tibetan leaders into the state apparatus. Joseph Lawson gives a brief background of the army unit in the 1910s and 1920s, explaining that the Sichuan-Kham Frontier Defense Force was overseen and paid for by the Sichuan provincial government and had limited control in eastern Kham during the 1920s and 30s.[148] In 1927, Liu took over control of the Frontier Defense Force and became the paramount leader of the Chinese military and political bodies in Kham. By the early 1930s, Liu was in the process of consolidating his power over the Kham region, first as the Governor of Sichuan in 1929 and then as the Governor of Xikang in 1934.[149] Liu Wenhui's increasing strength only exacerbated the border disputes between China and Tibet.

The Dargye-Beri Conflict

Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist vision offered nominal support to Liu Wenhui's military might in the early 1930s. This period further witnessed an increase in Chinese presence in Kham as the Nationalist government sought to establish the new Chinese province of Xikang, creating

[147] Lawson, "Warlord Colonialism," 304. He gets this information from the *Niansi jun jiyaochu you guan Kangqu jiaotong dang'an* (2006 [1932]), 465.

[148] Ibid., 304.

[149] Coleman, ibid., 413. Liu shared control of governance in the provincial capital of Chengdu with rival (and sometimes partner) warlords Deng Xihou and Liu Xiang. An individual who warrants further study, Liu Wenhui was deeply involved in the governing of Xikang, building relationships with Tibetan Buddhists and apparently was even a Buddhist himself.

once and for all a base and a buffer zone on the Tibetan Plateau. But despite the encroachment, Kham was far from being under Chinese control. Up until the 13th Dalai Lama's death in 1933, the Tibetan Government in Lhasa sought to maintain a territorial claim on Kham which was contested through multiple border wars with Sichuan warlords and the Nationalist Government. One of these major border clashes, the Dargye-Beri Conflict, was directly catalyzed by events involving the Dargye Monastery, one of the most powerful monasteries in the region. While this monastery and its economic power is the subject of Chapter Three, here it will suffice to discuss the border war that arguably signaled the last great offensive by the Tibetan Government and marked the beginning of Chinese control in the region. It began as a conflict between Dargye Monastery and a local chieftain of Beri in 1930, and soon drew in the Tibetan Government and Sichuanese warlords. Eventually, the monastery complex was destroyed, and while the fighting came to an end in 1933, the subsequent negotiations and treaties were not finalized by Tibetan and Chinese powers in 1938.

The conflict started in the summer of 1930 as a moderate clash between the leader of Beri and Dargye Monastery over the control of about fifteen dependent (*khor pa*) families. According to Lin Hsiao-ting's account, which is based on Chinese and British reports, the dispute occurred when the Abbot of Beri Monastery attempted to donate a portion of Beri Monastery's assets to Dargye Monastery. The Abbot of Beri Monastery had spent his novitiate years at Dargye Monastery and therefore did not see this as an issue. This idea however was fiercely opposed by the chieftain of the Beri Village. Fighting broke out when the abbot called on the monks of Dargye Monastery to occupy Beri Village.[150] Yet other Chinese language sources make different

[150] Lin, ibid., 60. Melvyn Goldstein mentions the same incident briefly in volume one of *The Modern History of Tibet*. His information comes only from a couple of interviews with Tibetans in exile and the names and series of events are rather different: "The dispute began when the chief of Beri [Pehru- this is the same name just a different transliteration] seized the estates of the incarnate lama of Nyarong monastery in Beri, forcing the lama to stay in

claims. Some find the root cause in a licentious Dargye monk who slept with a woman from the Beri leader's village; others locate it in a dispute over the incorporation of another smaller monastery into Dargye; and yet others even claim that the conflict was instigated by the Beri leader's stolen horse.[151] Although there are considerable discrepancies between the accounts, the events seem to have unfolded as follows before culminating in a full-fledged war: soon after the initial conflict, Tibetan and Chinese forces came to the aid of Dargye and Beri respectively. First, Chinese armies came and attacked Dargye, and in response, Dargye called on the Tibetan Government for help and Lhasa was quick to send army units and guns from their station near Derge in northern Kham.[152] What started as a local conflict turned out to be the key event that determined the geopolitical future of Kham.

By August 28th, 1930, the Lhasa army section stationed in Chamdo (Tib. chab mdo, ch. 昌都) had arrived and joined Dargye in the fray. By October, however, Dargye was suffering a setback and asked again for help from the Tibetan Government. In response, the Dalai Lama sent Dargye five hundred English-style guns, three artillery teams, and one thousand soldiers from the Tibetan army.[153] In January 1931, Dargye Monastery had been joined by four thousand soldiers from the Lhasa army and right after the Tibetan New Year, they suddenly attacked their foes and

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Targye [Dargye] monastery in a different principality. The Chinese commander in chief of Xikang at this time, the semi-autonomous General Liu Wenhui, supported the chief of Beri, as did the Panchen Lamas officials, who were thought to be inciting the chief. In June 1930, the Nyarong Lama and monks from Targye monastery seized possession of Nyarong monastery. The Beri chief then sought assistance from General Liu, whose troops took control of the area. The Targye monks responded by asking Lhasa to deploy the Tibetan border troops in Kham in their aid." Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet Vol. 1*, 221.

[151] Zuozhong Lai, "Cong DaBai Shijian Dao Gangtuo Xieyi," in *Ganzi Zhou Wenshi Ziliao Jicui, vol 1* (Ganzi: Zhongguo ren min zheng zhi xie shang hui yi Ganzi Zangzu Zizhizhou wei yuan hui, 2008), 172-180.

[152] Specifically, the Chinese garrison in Kardze and Liu Wenhui's 24th army.

[153] Guo Qingyou, compiler, "Minguo Zangshi Tongjian," in *Xizang Tongshi Vol. 10* (Beijing: Zhongguo Zang xue chu ban she, 2008). 112.

the Chinese armies went into retreat. By March, the Tibetan army had taken over all areas up to Drango (Tib. brag mgo, modern day Luhuo 爐霍) and by June they had hit almost as far as Dartsedo.[154] By 1932 Liu Wenhui's army arrived and started driving back the Tibetan army. In July, 1932 Liu Wenhui's army reached Dargye, and the retreating Tibetan army set the monastery on fire and destroyed the arsenal and grain storage so that Liu Wenhui's army could not take it over.[155] This conflict and the destruction of an economically and politically important monastery left a major strain on the society and the economy of the Kardze region not only because the area had been forced to support the military, but also because the fighting had blocked the trade routes going through the region. Furthermore, roughly four to five thousand people under the control of Dargye Monastery were displaced, either fleeing with the Tibetan army to Chamdo or resorting to banditry, terrorizing the region.[156]

Building Bridges

The Tashu'da and Beri Bridge were some of the first reconstruction projects following the wars. While the bridge damage was ostensibly due to flooding, the constant warfare that raged in the region and heavy use of the bridges for transport during battles could not have helped the situation. Communications surrounding the bridge reconstruction show that this was part of broader infrastructure reconstruction projects across the region, including postal stations and transport systems.

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[154] Ibid., 112. Lin Hsiaoting explains that "for the Tibetan government, losing control of such an important monastic foothold in Kham would mean losing both ecclesiastical and theocratic influence in the area, along with economic interests that were desperately [needed]… [also] the Tibetans sought to acquire more territories with a possible borderline fixed far east of the upper Yangtze River." Lin, ibid., 60.

[155] Ibid., 114.

[156] Ibid., 119-120.

A close examination of the bridge reconstruction process shows us that despite the difficult post-war conditions in Kham, much was happening on the ground, and these Tibetan and Chinese leaders needed to continue dealing with the practical day-to-day issues of broken bridges. These also give us an unprecedented view of how Tibetan and Chinese borderland finance and labor conscription and payment functioned in the 20th century.

The two leaders in charge of organizing and financing the construction projects were the newly installed Khangsar Pönpo (Tib. ཁང་གསར་ དཔོན་པོ Ch. *Kongsa* 孔薩) named Dechen Wangmo (Tib. Bde chen dbang mo, Ch. *Deqin wangmu* 德欽汪姆), and Chinese Magistrate Wu Jinxiu (Ch. 伍進修). Despite her significant role in borderland politics during the late 1930s,[157] Dechen Wangmo was only 16 years old in 1933 (her photograph below is dated circa 1934) and given that she was never mentioned directly by name, it can be assumed that it was her officials who were dealing with the day to day activities of the bridge reconstruction project. Either way, both the Khangsar Pönpo and Magistrate Wu are reoccurring characters throughout the archives of the early 1930s, and while I will return to this topic in the next chapter, they and other officials are actually known by and recorded as having a number of different titles. In Chinese, the Khangsar Pönpo is referred to as the Khangsar Tusi (Ch. 土司), her officials are referred to the Khangsar Baozheng (Ch. 保正)[158] while Magistrate Wu is known as either "county magistrate" (xianzhang 縣長) or "governor" (zhishi 知事).[159]

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[157] Lin, ibid., and Coleman, ibid., both discuss this topic.

[158] This term is rather ambiguous. Sometimes it is clearly referring to the Khangsar Tusi herself while at other times it seems to be referring to her officials or agents. Perhaps it will be best to think of this as a term for an institution rather than a specific person.

[159] There is also the Beri Tusi, but he is only mentioned in the funds ledger and not anywhere else in these communications. Chiefdom of Béri (Tibetan: བེ་རི་རྒྱལ་པོ, Wylie: *be ri rgyal po*) or Chiefdom of Baili (Chinese: 白利土司).

The title *tusi* was established as a system of frontier management that began in the Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1261-1368) and continued through the Qing, as the emperors in Beijing bestowed titles upon the leaders in the borderland regions in return for allegiance and a nominal payment of taxes. While the *tusi* system in Kham was nominally abolished during the late 19th century, it is important to recognize that the vestiges of this system continued into the Republican period. Yudru Tsomu gives a thorough summary of the *tusi* system in Kham explaining that, compared with other regions with *tusi* title investiture, such as Sipsong Panna region in modern-day Yunnan, Kham experienced little integration within the Chinese imperial framework. [160] It wasn't until the 1700s that the Qing was forced to send military expeditions, creating a base in Dartsedo (Ch. Kangding 康定) and investing titles on many local Tibetan leaders in Kham. The Tibetan elites who received the title *tusi* were most commonly known as king (*rgyal po* རྒྱལ་པོ,) or chieftain Pönpo (*dpon po* དཔོན་པོ) as the Khangsar Pönpo mentioned above. The commonly discussed initiative known as "abolition of native chieftainship and extension of direct bureaucratic control"[161] (Ch. *gaitu guiliu* 改土歸流) was carried out across much of the Qing Empire's borderland regions starting in the mid 18th century, but it was officially initiated in Kham only under Zhao Erfeng's rule (1905-1911) on the eve of the Qing Empire's collapse. While Zhao's state-building success as well as brutal violence has been well documented, what most scholars fail to recognize is that despite the destruction of Tibetan power and execution of Tibetan leadership at the end of the Qing, by the 1930s, the tusi system had been essentially *revived*. Former chieftains indeed exercised considerable influence on the government officials

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[160] C. Patterson Giersch, *Asian Borderlands: The Transformation of Qing China's Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

[161] Lin, ibid., 67.

because the Chinese officials needed to be aligned with the Tibetan local leaders in order to obtain legitimacy.[162] Furthermore, new official titles were created in order to legitimize the reliance on local power. Essentially, the limited personnel and financial resources of the KMT made it necessary for them to rely on the local Tibetan leaders causing "*gaitu guiliu*" to exist in name only.[163]

A close scrutiny of the Chinese and Tibetan titles may demonstrate this point. Due to the shifting socio-economic structures during the first half of the 20th century in both China and Tibet, one finds a multiplicity of new terminology and layering of old titles within both languages. Furthermore, it was not as simple as an overlapping of old and new, but as shown below, there was also a Tibetan practice of title transliteration and translation. While it is unclear when this practice of transliterating Chinese titles began, I have yet to find any examples of this in the Kardze region prior to the early 20th century. I will discuss more specific terms and titles as they arise within the Tibetan receipts but for the time being, here is a brief set of the most elite titles found within the bridge documents:

1. Xianzhang 縣長 County Magistrate
2. Zhishi 知事 County Magistrate, official
3. Tusi 土司, Native Chieftain, Local Leader
4. Baozheng 保正, Chinese title for a local leader during the Republican period
5. དཔོན་པོ dpon po, Chieftain, leader, or lord

[162] Ibid., 67.

[163] Here is a good example of how the official rhetoric completely misrepresents the reality on the ground: "In 1931, the Nationalist government issued an order, emphasizing again that no native chieftain system was allowed to exist within the republican system," while at the same time stating that the, "indigenous elites were required to pay taxes, in return for which they were granted full autonomy in managing local affairs." Lin, ibid., 67. I am not convinced that there was a systematic collection of taxes, as I will discuss in Chapter Two. The actual functioning of the Chinese regime on the borderlands was more ad-hoc than most historians give it credit for.

6. ཐུས་སི thus si “Tusi”, the Tibetan transliteration of the Chinese title
7. ས་སྒོ་མཁན་པོ sa sgo mkhan po “Sago Khenpo”– this is often used to translate county magistrate 縣長, sa sgo is often used to mean “county”, and appears to be a new term for the 20th century and exclusive to Kham[164]

Zhishi was a later Qing term that came from *zhixian* 知縣 and was further changed to *xianzhang* 縣長 after the fall of the Qing.[165] As far as the Kham documents from the 1930s are concerned, *xianzhang* and *zhishi* were completely interchangeable, indicating and titular confusion rather than a specific role.[166] The titles *baozheng* and *tusi* were a different matter. The term “baozheng” was used throughout various regions in eastern Kham and especially for the Kardze region. Referring to the leader of a “baojia”, or the head of one hundred households, “baozheng” was a Republican Chinese bureaucratic invention.[167] One study on Kardze during the early 1940s showed the title Baozheng was most often given to those who were referred to as *rje tshang* (རྗེ་ཚང་) in Tibetan or *da tou ren* (大頭人) in Chinese.[168] These local leaders were

[164] As the transliteration of the title implies, many of the *xianzhang* were Tibetan. Suppliers to the monasteries, such as the wealthy Khampa trading family known as Sagenggo (Tib. Sa skas mgo), needed to stay abreast of events, especially during difficult economic times such as the 1930s. Booz, “Tea, Trade and Transport in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands,” 60.

[165] Charles Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 162. Entry number 1050, “chih-shih 知事, Chin-Ch’ing: Administrative Clerk, normally a lowly official with rank between 7b and 9a, found in a great variety of agencies. N.B.: in earlier periods, chih (agency name insert) shih was commonly used for important dignitaries serving as active heads of the agencies named; see under chih (to know).”

[166] There was more than one *zhishi* appointed for Kardze, we have reference to the Kardze Zhishi Zhang Jialin 甘孜知事 張嘉麟, and while in these documents Wu is always referred to as *xianzhang*, in other files he is referred to as *zhishi*.

[167] Xiao Ruping, *Minguo shiqi de baojia yu xiangcun shehui zhili* (Beijing Shi: She hui ke xue wen xian chu ban she, 2017).

[168] I believe this is slightly different from simply “tou ren” mentioned in the receipts below. As Chen Han-seng explains, “Below baozheng, Chei-tsong are the O-ba [འཇོག་པ head man]. In Kantze, O-ba themselves are virtually the

elected by each village, who would then receive between ten and twenty-five Tibetan silver dollars per year. About five of these leaders (chosen by the Tibetan Pönpo or based on set rotation out of roughly twenty families holding the title of rje tshang) were designated as Baozheng who would serve for a term of one year, subject to renewal, and were allotted a stipend of six taels of silver per month. By at least the early 1940s, the appointed Baozheng often lived in a military fort built by the Chinese garrison troops.[169] While this title was used for official communications and records, we don't see any example of it being transliterated into Tibetan. With that said, the Tibetan leaders at least tacitly accepted this designation, signing their names and adhering stamps to documents with this title.[170]

While the complexity of titles poses a considerable challenge to historians, the reality it reflects is one of Chinese and Tibetan new creative practices. It shows both sides' engagement in establishing new translations of power structures and administrative authority. The creation of new titles and positions was a common practice in the early 20th century period across Tibet and China. With the fall of the Qing Empire, officials and leaders were constantly developing new structures of government and the multiplicity of titles that at least nominally promised stability and control. However, for these titles to carry any weight, the men who held them needed to

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village headmen. In the Kamba language, O means head and ba means man, or men. Like Chei-tsong most of the O-ba in Kantze are hereditary office-holders, O-ba is actually the headman of several or indeed of many villages, as the population here is spread thin. He therefore administers the area of three to twelve villages, sometimes over a territory which can be traversed only by horse in an entire day. Most of the O-ba in Kantze district occupy no special public buildings, but do the official routine work in their own homes…There are no salaries paid but a system of gifts and tribute… Thus, O-u carried out, the order of O-ba in matters of corvée and other requisitions; O-ba administers all affairs for Chei-tsong; and Chei-tsong often controls O-ba of the region for its chieftain. Fifth and finally, there is no fixed salary, or rather no salary at all, for all administrative officers, who rely for their income on tribute and bribes from the general population." Chen, ibid., 83-84.

[169] Chen, ibid., 83-84. A prolific international socialist academic who conducted research on Kardze, Chen Han-seng will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

[170] For example, one of the Khangsar Baozheng was named Tsering Dorje (*ci ren ri da ji* 次忍日大吉) and his name and seal appear on multiple Chinese language petitions. He signed his name to two Chinese language petitions: Sichuan Archives file 024-01-0005.

showcase their power in their communities, through projects like bridge reconstruction. This was more important for the Chinese officials who were new to the region and whose relationship to the local Tibetan elites was established through these new titles. But apart from their novelty, the titles were, to say the least, fluid place holders for an assortment of social and political relationships.

Monetary Matters

Titles were not the only examples for administrative confusion and fluidity in the borderlands. Kham was also the home to a multiplicity of competing and complementary currencies whose functions elucidate the foundations of economic activity along the Sino-Tibetan border. As discussed in the introduction, foreign and regionally minted silver coins circulated alongside commodity monies, most prevalent of which was tea in the form of tea bricks. These currencies all maintained slightly different values and functions. Economic historian Kuroda Akinobu draws attention to the existence of what he calls "concurrent but non-integrable currency circuits" where multiple currencies existed and were used for different purposes within the market. He points to many markets across the globe that have historically needed and used multiple currencies, including India and the Red Sea region. In the case of China, these currencies took the form of the Mexican, Spanish, and Japanese silver dollars, accompanied by a wide range of coins, bank notes, and fiat currencies by the 1930s. [171] The markets along the Sino-Tibetan frontier were not exceptional in their use of multiple currencies. This section details the history of minting practices along the Sino-Tibetan borderland, the use of

[171] Kuroda Akinobu, "The Maria Theresa dollar in the early twentieth-century Red Sea region: a complementary interface between multiple markets," *Financial History Review*, Volume 14, Issue 1 (2007), 89; Kuroda Akinobu, "Introduction to the New Series: Uncommon 'Common sense,'" *International Journal of Asian Studies,* Volume 4, Issue 1 (2007), 45.

tea bricks as commodity money, and the political implications of the production of these currencies.

The silver coins circulating along the Sino-Tibetan borderland were known by many different names in multiple languages, from the zangyang (藏洋), sgor mo (སྒོར་མོ), rgya sgor (རྒྱ་སྒོར)[172], zangyuan (藏元), Sichuan Rupee 四川卢比, and Tibetan Coin 藏币.[173] I refer to them as zangyang or "Tibetan silver coins" for the remainder of the chapter but there is little indication as to which minting any particular coin originated from, and they use multiple words to discuss what was likely the same type of coin. The zangyang was first minted in Chengdu in 1902 by Qing officials in Sichuan.[174] Modeled off the silver content and visual imagery of the British Indian rupee, it had the purpose of expelling the Indian rupee from the Tibetan plateau and incorporating the Tibetan economy into the Qing empire.[175] This attempt was part of the late Qing's colonization policies, and the choice to mint these coins was a political decision, one rooted in turn-of-the-century geopolitics, that the Nationalists attempted to carry out but with

[172] This would have historically meant Indian currency, or the Indian rupee, but by the 1930s, I saw very little explicit reference to Indian coins and this almost exclusively meant *zangyang* and the *rgya* meant Chinese. This lack of clarity makes sense, however, given that *rgya* can refer to either India or China and that *zangyang* was directly modelled off the Indian rupee. A far more exhaustive study of money terminology and naming would be necessary to understand the linguistic transformations overtime.

[173] And also *chuan ka* 川卡, perhaps in reference to the Central Tibetan *tamka*? Wang Chengzhi, "*Zangbi juan* (Tibetan Bank Notes)," in *Ganzi Zhou Wenshi Ziliao,* Vol. 21 (Kangding: Zhonguo Renmin Zhengzhi Xie shanghui yi Ganzi Zangzu Zizhizhou Weiyuanhui bian, 2004), 296-312. According to Bertsch, *The Paper Currency of Tibet,* the Indian rupee was the dominant currency in Eastern Tibet which might explain why I have seen no reference to Lhasa minted or printed currency in the eastern regions of Kham.

[174] This was not the first minting of a silver coin by the Qing in Kham, for more discussion on the Luguan coin minted in Dartsedo in 1902, see Relyea "Victorianizing Guangxu," and Wang Xiaofei "A Research on Issues about Circulation of Main Currencies during the Establishment of XiKang Province (1905-1939)" (MA thesis: Sichuan Shifan Daxue, 2019). For total mintings on all these silver coins see Wang, ibid., 19.

[175] Basing a new minting of a silver coin off of a dominant foreign silver coin is not new in this case. The other silver coins minted by the late Qing were also based off of the Mexican silver peso and would have had to match the foreign coin in silver purity in order to circulate in the market. While the political discourse of the time was important, one should not conflate the discourse of consolidating a nation with the practical functioning of monies.

much less funding and fewer brutal colonizing directives. The earliest minting occurred in Chengdu between 1902 and 1926: the coins were made with good silver and near equal to the silver content of the Indian rupees. These were valued at one third of the Chinese silver yuan (mostly the Yuan Shikai dollar, also called dayang, minted from 1914 in Tianjin) and owing to their high silver content could circulate at par, with only at a small discount, to the Indian rupee. However, the Sichuan rupees which were minted in later years in Chengdu and all those which were minted at Dartsedo from 1930 to 1942 had a much lower silver content (due to drastically decreased silver reserves in China) and therefore circulated only at a huge discount in relation to the Indian rupee and to the Chinese silver yuan.[176] The worst specimens from the late minting period at Dartsedo were only worth one seventh to one eight of a Chinese silver yuan. [177] It is important to note however, that at no point in the documents I read did they appear to value one particular silver coin over another. I saw reference to the dayang (the Chinese silver coin minted in the early Republican period 大洋) very infrequently. According to research by Wang Xiaofei, in 1931 zangyang did not circulate east of Dartsedo, and by the time one arrived in Luding (瀘定), the town just east of Dartsedo and famous as a tea packaging and processing location, the predominant coins in circulation were the dayang, gangyang 鋼洋 (a type of silver coin), and copper coins (tongyuan 銅元).[178] Circulation points to the scope of trade networks; for example, in Batang, historically one of the main stops on the official communications route between Tibet and China, which was also home to one of the largest Han communities in the region, one found

[176] Wang, ibid., 18.

[177] Bertsch, *Paper Currency of Tibet*, 174-175. For images of the *zangyang* see the Introduction.

[178] Also, the region of what is now Jiulong County, south of Dartsedo and closer to Yunnan, *dayang* 大洋, *gangyang* 钢洋, and *tongyuan* 铜元 were also the main coins in circulation.

dayang, zangyang, and copper coins in circulation. When moving north through the Hor states of Da'u, Drango, and Kardze, one found almost exclusively zangyang.[179] With that said, the prevalence of tea bricks and other payments in kind may point to the unreliability of the zangyang, Tibetan silver coins.

Tea bricks, packaged in set amounts, were considered stores of wealth, units of account, and a units of exchange well into the 1940s. It was a stable commodity, didn't go bad or deteriorate, and was therefore reliable to the extent that monasteries stored it like money in a bank. A ubiquitous commodity and an intrinsic part of everyday life, tea was consumed by all Tibetans. It also functioned as a unit of value and a commodity money for transactions and compensation.[180] Understanding tea and its uses not only helps in providing context for the bridge reconstruction expenditures but it also gives a more complete picture of economic transactions in Kham.[181] With the consolidation of Qing control over Kham during the mid 1700s, Kham became the center for the tea trade between China and Tibet. While tea was used as unit of exchange for small denomination transactions for centuries,[182] this particular style of

[179] "表 4.1 1931 年康属 14 县货币流通情况统计表" Wang, ibid., 38. Wang notes however that in Kardze one also found *dang shi tongyuan* (當十銅元), which should mean something along the lines of a denomination ten copper coin.

[180] "That Tibetans imbibe large volumes of tea and drink it through the day is true. It is common to drink one or two bowls of tea in the morning before heading off for the day's activities, and then at periodic times for meals and refreshment. The common amount is ten to twelve bowls a day." Booz, "Tea, Trade and Transport in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands," 137.

[181] "Tea went primarily to the monasteries and the Tibetan government storehouses, because if the core monastic institutions with their hundreds of thousands of monks were to have tea, others would have to do without. In Lhasa, the three dominant Geluk Monasteries of Sera, Drepung, and Ganden housed 17,600 monks. Records show that the kitchens supplied each monk with eleven or twelve bowls of tea a day, bringing the daily consumption to approximately 200,000 bowls. To brew this amount in the kitchens' huge copper cauldrons required some 2,200 pounds of brick tea every day, or approximately 800,000 pounds per year. These three monasteries thus consumed between 6 and 7 per cent of all brick tea delivered to Tibet from Dartsedo. Though smaller than Sera, Ganden, and Drepung, the monasteries of greater Tibet numbered in the thousands and their monks, too, relied on tea as a staple of life." Ibid., 155.

[182] Booz explains that tea bricks (in various forms) were used as currency for centuries, "By the 12th century, tea bricks were so prevalent and useful, they became a type of currency in Central Asia, Tibet, Mongolia, Siberia and

Sichuan tea brick was standardized in size, weight, and grade by the 19th century.[183] The monasteries dominated the tea trade and maintained large stores of tea bricks not only for consumption of the hundreds of monks residing there but also as a store of wealth. While monasteries will be discussed in great depth in Chapter Three, suffice to say that in Kham, the single most powerful economic institution were the monasteries and their wealth was founded on controlling the trade, distribution, and circulation of tea bricks. The monasteries theoretically functioned like banks, using trust to store the bricks and managing the supply of tea bricks in circulation. But unlike banks, they held a near monopoly on the trade itself, and their representatives were the most powerful merchants and brokers in Dartsedo.[184] Patrick Booz, a preeminent authority on the tea trade in Tibet, interviewed one of these monastery merchants in Dartsedo who reflected on the late 1930s and early 1940s period:

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parts of north and west China. They were of a generally uniform size and shape, and their value remained high. Tea bricks were often preferred over metal coins, and a nomad could even drink or eat his 'currency' in time of need. By the late 19th and early 20th century a brick 'of the third quality'… had become the commonest tea trade item. Such standard bricks were also used for barter and sold to Bhutan and Ladakh." Booz, "Tea, Trade and Transport in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands," 190.

[183] The most commonly used tea brick for transactions was according to Booz, the third standard (or third in quality) called *jyapa* (Tib. brgyad pa, "number 8, eighth"). Dark yellow in color it was the most common for payments as well. "Lowest quality tea took several names, often just shing ja, 'wood tea,' meaning composition of a great quantity of stems and twigs (almost no leaves), or that it included wood only. The Tibetan names jong ma (Tib. mjug ma, 'tail end, last bit') and go ka (?) also appear for this poor tea." Booz, "Tea, Trade and Transport in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands," 193. Rockhill quoted a pamphlet by Father Desgodins, published in 1883: "Discussing the third standard brick tea, called Jyä-pa, Desgodins says: Men bargain by stipulating so many bricks or packets (of four bricks) of tea. They say, 'This sword has cost three bricks; this horse is worth twenty packets', and so on. The wages of workmen and servants are paid in so many bricks of tea, etc. When bricks or packets of tea are mentioned as money, it is always the third standard, or jyä-pa, which is understood; then the bricks are not weighed, but counted. If it is agreed that tea be weighed, and not counted, then the fifth standard is understood to be the medium of exchange", William W. Rockhill, *The Land of the Lamas: notes of a journey through China, Mongolia, and Tibet* (New Delhi: Asian Publication Services 1891 [reprint 1975]), 279-280.

[184] See Booz "Tea, Trade and Transport in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands," and Tsomu, "Guozhuang Trading Houses".

> "We did not use silver much because its value always changed; we had paper money, too, but did not use it at all because it had such little value. Yes, each guozhuang (Ch., Tibetan-owned trading house) had some banking functions, but we did not readily lend money; we only trusted tea. The Guomindang (KMT) government wanted to buy Tibetan products, and used paper money and paper cheques. The price of products always changed, and the value of these paper pieces always depreciated, so we had to be alert. Tea! Tea was the thing."[185]

During the 1930s and 40s, tea bricks and silver currency created the most significant dual monetary system, instead of a bi-metallic standard of gold and silver, Kham had a bi-commodity standard of tea and silver and their values shifted vis-à-vis the other beginning in the mid 19th century with the increased circulation of the Indian rupee through the 1940s when the Sichuan tea industry failed.[186] While precise data is difficult to obtain, we can point to certain events and trends within the commodity and monetary circulations. Tea was the most trusted and stable commodity in quality and weight.[187] As discussed earlier, silver coins were increasingly debased into the 1930s and 40s, and with the runaway inflation of the Chinese fiat currency, the fabi (法幣) during the 1940s, tea continued to be a trustworthy currency. Even with the failure and degradation of tea production during WWII (when many of the tea producers turned to opium as

[185] Booz, ibid., 60-61.

[186] For more information see Booz, "Tea, Trade and Transport on the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands," Chapter 5.

[187] The exact values and prices of tea as they relate to silver needs to be more thoroughly investigated. The value of tea remained stable, more stable than silver, yet the price could change depending on where it was sold due to transportation costs and demand.

a more reliable cash crop) the monasteries' stores of standard, high quality tea effectively increased in value, making them even more appealing (and useful) as a commodity money.[188]

One major theory my work seeks to destabilize is the notion that money circulation was a form of authority and control. For example, the circulation of an official currency in a given region is generally seen as a type of domination, or at least a desire for domination, exercised by a central government. Within this framework, if two governing bodies issue currency, the power struggle is decided within the market place. The most common example given in Tibetan monetary history is the British Indian Rupee, which was issued by the colonial British government and circulated widely in Tibet. To Chinese political observers, this was proof of British imperialist desires in Tibet.[189] To my knowledge however, the British Indian rupee was not used for taxation or fiscal activities, it was only used for trade and for reparations to the British following the 1904 Younghusband invasion of Central Tibet. Even so, there was a well founded concern that Tibet was more connected to the British Indian economic network than the Chinese.

The present research complicates both of these theoretical frameworks, providing a more nuanced view of what minting and currency meant at the local level. Although control over Tibet

[188] Booz, ibid., 174. For more specifics on the degradation, "In time only zhuancha, jinjian and low coarse tea (Ch. cu) survived. But even the lowest, cheapest coarse tea, marketed as jincang, lost favour due to low market value (transport costs, based on weight, were the same for all grades of tea) and by 1921 few factories produced it. Quality declined so badly that the superior maojian and yaxi, once so valued, failed utterly at the production stage, and thus the best teas had disappeared entirely by the 1920s. First and best (but formerly of the fourth grade) was jinjian, utilizing some of the new season's early young leaf, but still considered cucha (coarse tea); it supplied most of Tibet's thousands of monasteries with tea, and also the local chieftains (tusi) of Kham. Jinjian corresponded to Tibetan jyapa third standard; second came jinyu ('golden jade'), mostly top leaves of run-out shoots down to red wood, also a coarse tea, sold mostly in Kham east of the upper Yangzi River; third was jincang (sometimes confused with jinchang, 'golden prosperity,' another lower grade), using the new season's coarse leaf from red wood with many stalks and some twigs, and for commoners, picked any time in summer; fourth was laocha (Ch., 'old tea'), with some leaf but stalks and twigs predominating." Booz, ibid., 194-195.

[189] Wang, ibid. This is very standard rhetoric in all Chinese publications.

was certainly the goal of the Chinese authorities minting *zangyang*, the currency's fundamental lack of influence on the Tibetan market prohibited any genuine economic authority over the Tibetan plateau. Competing currencies between British India, Tibetan government, and Chinese government were more about the respective governments' desire for control rather than practical everyday economic activities on the ground in Kham. It wasn't until the introduction of paper money, which requires trustworthy banks with centralized reserves, that a state (or state-like entity) can claim practical control over a region where the currency circulates. The existence of competing currencies in Kham during the 1911 to 1949 period illustrates not only the complicated economic environment, but also the subtle power struggles between many local and state groups who were simultaneously negotiating their future position within a rapidly developing and changing economy. It is only through paying close attention to local conditions and transactions that we can have a more complete understanding of Kham's economic history.

Financing Reconstruction

The bridge reconstruction in 1933 laid bare the local political economy in Kham. As mentioned earlier, the Chinese presence during this period should not be considered within the conventional scholarly paradigms of "state-building" in which a modern state apparatus imposed its rational and orderly system on the frontiers. The reality was far from that. Given the severely limited funds of the KMT and Sichuanese governments, the Chinese officials in Kham were in fact forced to rely on the support (and money) of the local community. The first financing strategy was for the Tibetan leaders and Chinese officials to collect levies (*juan* 捐) from the merchants passing through town. The Kardze County Magistrate Wu and the Khangsar Pönpo collected a set fee from these merchants depending on what goods they were carrying. Based on

the two ledgers, the rate of money collected by Magistrate Wu was slightly higher than the money collected by the Khangsar Pönpo. According to the Khangsar Pönpo's list: from merchants carrying tea, they collected one Tibetan silver coin per every ten loads (一茶每拾駄征藏洋壹元), from those carrying caterpillar fungus they collected one Tibetan silver coin (一虫草，貝母每征藏洋壹元), and from those carrying medicines they collected half a Tibetan silver coin.

But what appeared to be a more efficient financing method was the collection or contribution of funds from the local Tibetan leaders. It is unclear whether this was a common practice or a new method of local finance, but it represented a one-time lump-sum payment made ostensibly by all who would benefit from the rebuilding of the bridge.[190] The official ledger, compiled at the conclusion of the bridge construction projects, which was in the form of a list of contributions, was phrased in the ceremonial terms of "lending" or "borrowing" (Ch. 借來), included the following: one thousand Tibetan silver coins (*zangyang*) from the two villages of Adou Zhuwo (Ch. 阿都朱倭); five hundred Tibetan silver coins from Khangsar village, which was Khangsar Pönpo's village; five hundred Tibetan silver coins from Mazur village; two hundred and fifty Tibetan silver coins from Beri village; four hundred from Galuo village; five hundred from Donggu; and five hundred from rDza Khog Village. The total amount of these contributions from seven villages equaled three thousand six hundred fifty Tibetan silver coins. Apart from these contributions, the Chinese magistrates and the local Tibetan Pönpo were able to collect one thousand one hundred fifty Tibetan silver coins from the levies.

[190] It is unclear what actual benefits this held for the leader paying this lump sum. Perhaps they and their dependents did not have to then pay any tolls on the bridge?

In addition to these two documents on taxes levied and contributions from the surrounding villages, the archival materials also included the final summarizing ledger which documented the total labor and supply costs with a detailed breakdown for official purposes. While more details will be uncovered in a close analysis of the receipts below, according to the official ledger, there were at least four categories of people working on the bridges over the course of the six months:

1. Carpenters (Ch. mu gong, 木工)
2. Woodcutters (Ch. *Gaijiang* X匠, this first character, represented by an "X" here, is unique to Southwestern China and is written as 解 with a 金 radical)[191]
3. Ulak laborers (Tib. 'u lag Ch. *wula wa*, 烏拉娃) the Tibetans conscripted by the local leaders to do work on the bridge from carrying loads to construction work.
4. Ferrymen (Ch. *chuanfu*, 船夫)

Within the official documents is one list of the names of the carpenters and the artisans who worked on both the Tashu'da Bridge and the Beri Bridge, while there is no list of ulak laborers names. When reading through the names, one quickly realizes that many are Tibetan names transliterated into Chinese characters. Furthermore, the names that read as Chinese in origin could have been the Chinese names of local Tibetan people.[192] It is important to note that

[191] https://zhidao.baidu.com/question/986683078545808019.html?qbl=relate_question_2. Accessed on November 2, 2019.

[192] The Carpenters (木工): Wang Mingxuan (王明軒), Zheng Xingwu (鄭星五), Li Qingshan (李清山), Hao Yinan (郝銀安), Peng Xingfa (彭星發), Cheng Jianwu (程減？五), Wang Zhanhua (王占化), Zheng Zhenjian (鄭縝？建), Zheng Jiantang (鄭見堂), Zheng Zian (鄭子安), Zhu Bingchuan (朱炳全), Deng Lang (登郎), Si Lang Qin Pi (四朗秦批), Ci De (次得), De Luo (得洛), Qin Pi (秦批), Si Lang Da Ji (四郎大吉), Yan Ma (燕馬), Ban Jiu (班鳩), Na

the presence of a Chinese name does not necessarily mean that the individual was Chinese. As Yudru Tsomu's forthcoming work demonstrates, there were many mixed Tibetan and Chinese families and if the individual had a Chinese name, it was highly likely that the Chinese officials would use it over his Tibetan name.

Apart from the names of the workers involved in reconstruction, the surviving materials also include receipts, which offer a rare window into the day-to-day activities of reconstruction on the Sino-Tibetan borderland. A receipt may be defined as a written acknowledgment of something of value having been transferred from one party to another. The receipts that I examine below all fall under this definition. Yet, the content of transaction evades scrutiny, for the receipts do not explain *what* exactly was exchanged. Drawing on recent work by Remi Chaix on the building of the Derge Printing House in the 18th century, I use the word remuneration in order to convey the broad categorization of practices that served as compensation for carpenters, woodcutters, and ulak workers.[193] The Derge Printing House is one of the preeminent religious and cultural institutions in Kham, located in the center of Derge town, roughly two hundred kilometers northwest of Kardze along the northern trade route. Therefore, despite the significant

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Ma Ci De (哪嘛次得), Yang Ma Se Long (羊馬色龍), Zha Xi Du Ji (札喜獨吉), Wang Qing (汪青), Zha Xi (札喜), Na Li Ma (那里馬), Gong Bu (工布), Yan Ma Da Ji (燕馬大吉), Zheng Yongquan (鄭永全), Hao Zhaoan (郝紹安), Wang Tianshun (王天順), Luo Deng Ba (洛登巴), Ci Ri (次日), Xiang Ba Luo (祥巴洛), Yi Mingxuan (易明軒), Zhen Ji'an (陳吉安), Luo Mingzhi (駱明智), Feng Yuting (馮玉廷). The Woodcutters (gaijiang, X 匠): Peng Cuo (彭錯), Luo Ri (洛日), Ba Deng (巴登), Bai Ma (白馬), Rong Ga Yi Xi (絨噶一喜), Yang Ma Ci Ri (羊馬次日), Yi Xi Peng Cuo (一喜彭錯), Luo Ci De (洛次得), Qu Deng (曲登), Gong Bu (工布), Da Luo (達洛), Rong Bu (絨布), Yi Xi Ci Deng (易喜次登), Bai Ba (白巴). Sichuan Archives 024-01-0007.

[193] Tibetan financial, tax, or legal documents, defined broadly have been studied Jeannine Bischoff, Melvyn Goldstein, Berthe Jansen, and Kensaku Okawa (gtan tshigs, land tenure documents), and Kalsang Norbu Gurung among others, have looked at Tibetan contracts, monastic codes, and other types of legal documents in Central Tibet. Booz and Ryosuke have looked at *lamyig*, passports. A study of Tibetan payment practices for construction has been pioneered in a recent article by Chaix, ibid., who also draws from work by Dungkar Lobsang Thrinle. Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las (Dungkar Lobzang Trinlé), "Bod yig dpe rnying dpar skrun dang 'brel ba'i gnad don 'ga' zhig skor gleng ba." In *Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las kyi gsung rtsom phyogs bsgrigs* (Zi ling: Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1997 [1989]), 406–451. And Ibid., 2016. "Tibetan Woodblock Printing: An Ancient Art and Craft." Translated by Tsering Dhundup Gonkatsang. *Himalaya* 36 (1), 163–177.

time gap between the construction projects of the printing house and the bridges, the construction of the printing house gives us the only point of comparison for similar (if not much smaller in scale) construction projects in Kham. The workers on the receiving end of the receipts were being remunerated via "awards" (Tib. gsol ras, Ch. 獎勵) and their remuneration was in the form of either tea, food, or silver coins.

Overall, examples of Tibetan language receipts from any time period or region are extremely rare. While there are examples of receipts in a few other files from the Sichuan Archives collections, in this particular file on the reconstruction of Tashu'da and Beri Bridges, I found 35 receipts, 7 of which were in Tibetan. Here I will present five of the Tibetan receipts and their Chinese translations related to the Tashu'da Bridge reconstruction. We may be certain that these receipts were written as part of the reconstruction project because at the end of each receipt, there is a total cost summary which matches the official ledger for the Tashu'da Bridge construction.

In this first receipt, we see the first mention of the ulak laborers, the men and women (women were conscripted for ulak work as frequently as men) who were left out of the official registered list of names:

ཟླ་ ༤ ཚེས་ ༢ ལ་སྟག་ཆུ་མདའ་[སྟོང་ལོག OR སྟོན་ལེན] མི་ ༤༠ ཆུ་ནང་ཁྲོ་བ་དོད་ལ་ས་སྟོ་ཕང་ཚང་མགོ་ནས་སྟོར་༢༠ གསོལ་རས་གནང་བྱུང་བ་ཞུ་ལགཀ་མི་བཞི་བཅུའི་རྟགས།[194]

On the second day of the fourth month, the 40 people of sTag Chu mDa' [the lower part of Water/River Tiger Valley, located close to the bridge] who carried loads,

[194] Sichuan Archives 024-01-0007.

Sago [xianzhang] Ang tsang mgo [Magistrate Wu?] bestowed [gnang byung] as an award [gsol ras] 20 sgor [money]. The 40 ulak workers here sign [rtags][195]

今領到[196]

伍縣長發給獎勵落水烏拉娃四十名,藏洋式十元，正領信是实。次日札吉……批等 [this obscured part is where the names are]

Received:

Magistrate Wu gave to the 40 ulak workers who worked in the water [luo shui 落水], 20 yuan [dollars] of zangyang, as a reward, we state this as accurate, signed [Chinese words are obscured]

In Kham, while ulak was certainly part of one's taxation requirements, it would be better described as an ad-hoc system of labor conscription. Evolving beyond its original purpose to supply labor, horses, and pack animals for the postal service, ulak in the 20th century also included, "the ula [sic.] of occasional menial labor, such as road building, road repair, bridge repair, house construction, etc."[197] There was no set market for hired or free labor in Kham;

[195] This is referenced on page 68 of the total cost ledger. Much would be gained from a full cost analysis and comparison between the two bridges. Also, I only counted about 35 stamps or fingerprints as signatures. Thanks goes out to Palden Gyal and Ngawang who both helped me transcribe this.

[196] The phrase 今收到 or 今領到 mean that they are finalized transactions and that the people have been compensated.

[197] "Eighth, there is the ula of occasional menial labor, such as road building, road repair, bridge repair, house construction, etc. as there is hardly any hired labor in Sikang. Ninth, there is the ula of working for the local chieftain, such as performing field work on his land, building his houses, managing his business activity, attending his house-hold work, etc. This kind of ula is regular. Tenth and finally, there is the requisition in kind (fodder, fuel, timber, butter, cloth and saddle, etc.) by the local chieftain, all of which must be carried or transported by the ula wa themselves without compensation. These requisitions are the products of labor, plus the labor of transport, and therefore constitute a definite kind of ula." Chen, ibid., 121.

instead, the Tibetan men and women represented in these receipts were conscripted either directly by the Khangsar Pönpo as part of their taxation obligations, or by the local village leader also through tax related obligation. Here it appears that these people were in charge of carrying loads into the water.

Regarding the type of remuneration that the ulak workers were receiving, the term in Tibetan *gsol ras,* is the honorific word for receive, gift, or reward, where *ras* is a kind of silk cloth similar to *khata*, a silk offering scarf which would accompany all donations or offerings, religious or secular. When translating from the Tibetan, the translator was true to the Tibetan terminology, using the Chinese word *jiangli* 獎勵, to reward.

The category of ulak worker however was flexible and remuneration practices were far from standard. Remi Chaix's work on the 18th century building of the Derge Printing House introduces another category of ulak worker, the "paid ulak laborer" (Tib. 'u lag gla len pa). These laborers were paid in the form of generous daily food rations "thirteen bowls of tea and soup every day, and 1.5 *dong* of tsampa (roasted barley flour)" as well as wages (Tib. gla yon) calculated in measures of tea (not silver), and consisting of "tea, tobacco, cotton, yawa (possibly a kind of fabric), silk, brocade, various kinds of woolen cloth and leather goods, horses and cattle, different types of clothing, cast bronze pots, and other essential utensils."[198] Despite all of this, according to Chaix, paying ulak laborers was the exception rather than the norm and in later construction projects he found that they were not paid but merely supplied with daily food and necessities.[199]

[198] Chaix, ibid., 55.

[199] Ibid., 57

> "In 1940, the annual wage of a yearly laborer on the farm in Kantze was 40 to 50 Tibetan dollars, plus daily food, one woolen coat, two shirts and two pairs of shoes. It is clear that the major portion of the annual wage is paid in kind. Day laborers are paid one Tibetan dollar a day in theory, but in practice it takes the form of food: either 1.7 kilograms of salt, or about 5 bowls of oat flour, or 4 bowls of coarse noodles. Very often both seasonal and annual laborers are paid nothing more than their daily food. In many instances, employment is offered as charity and relief. The purely economic labor market is very limited indeed."[200]

Given the nearly two hundred year difference, it is perhaps surprising that there was no substantial change in ulak remuneration practices. More work needs to be done in order to fully uncover the changes in this practice over time.[201]

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[200] Chen, ibid., 129. Another illustrative example from the mid-20th century in the region of Dege (a few days north of Kardze) presents a personal account of a typical day of ulak labor, here for the harvest time: "At about 6 a.m., all the labourers got up and gathered around the common hearth and had donja (don ja) or "breakfast". Each labourer produced his or her wooden cup to be first filled with tsampa [ground barley] and then with tea several times. However, before tea was poured into the cup half of the tsampa was set aside in a goat-skin bag for future consumption…Some complemented this breakfast with a lump of butter, but at their own expense. Each meal lasted for about half an hour. At about 9 a.m., donjab (don rgyags), a kind of "post-breakfast", was taken which was almost identical to the previous meal. At around midday, "lunch" known as drojab (dro rgyags) or cheka (phyed ka) was served. This being the principal meal of the day, Yudrug-tsang included a lump of butter in the meal of tsampa and tea. Around 3p.m., chija (phyi ja) or "late tea" was taken. Finally, "supper" or gonja (dgong ja) was taken at about 6 p.m. This meal might consist of tsampa and meat-soup or a meat-soup with small wheat flour balls which was called thugpa (thug pa) in the vernacular. After gonja, the labourers retired to their tents and often played and wrestled with each other as most of them were usually young and energetic. Apart from the meals, two short breaks were allowed before and after the midday meal. I was told that dependents in neighbouring communities or estates were given a certain amount of barley instead of the meals. My informants thought that their lord had been much more generous compared with others elsewhere. Any labourer could bring private foodstuffs with them as a supplement, but this was not essential." Thargyal, ibid., 589.

[201] Possible payment example from Sichuan Archives 024-01-0002, selection of a document from Litang 恐後有悞駐軍運輸粮餉之烏拉 ཀོང་ཇ་(公家) ལས་དམག་གསོལ་ཐོག་ *Gong ja*/*gong jia* might refer to the payment of tea work but could also be a transliteration of *gong jia*, i.e., public. It could also possibly be a military allowance (gsol phogs) from the state (gongjia or guojia).

One of many uncertainties in these receipts is the commensurability of the people and titles. If the Chinese translation is to be believed, then the Sago Ang tsang mgo should be referring to Magistrate Wu. While likely, it is hard to be certain, especially because the next receipt bears a much more accurate transliteration of Magistrate Wu's name:

དཀར་མཛེས་ས་སྒོ་དབུ་ཚ་སུས་ནས་རང་རེ་ཇ་ཁོ་ཤོན་པའི་ཚན་ཀྱམ་རྣམས་ཇ་ས་ཁ་གནང་བྱུང་། ཟླ་བ་ཀ་པའི་ཚེས་བཟང་པོ། ཇ་ཁོ་ཚན་ཀྱང་ཕྱལ། བསོད་ནམས་ཚེ་རིང་རྟགས།[202]

The Sago [xianzhang, magistrate] of Kardze, dBu tsha mus [Magistrate Wu] awarded the village leader of the people of Ja Kho Shon[203] five packages [sa kha?] of tea on the 5th month on an auspicious day [could be corresponding to a specific date, bzang po]. Offered to[?] the Jakho village leader and signed by Sonam Tsering [the village leader of rDza sTod]. [Four stamps and three finger prints]

领到

甘孜縣之長伍獎勵三？科[corresponds to རྫ་ཁོག་ཤོན and is the same place referenced in the ledger 褲科鄉] 砍伐木料村長 [missing character] 茶伍甑領結是实（合洋拾柒元）

Received:

[202] Sichuan Archives 024-01-0007.

[203] Should be rDza Khog shon from the ledger. Also, the same as the other Ja Khog references.

> Magistrate Wu of Kardze gave as a reward to the [Ja kho shon] village leader, head of the woodcutters, five zeng of tea was received (which is equal to 17 yuan of Tibetan silver coins).

It is unclear to me whether these are different woodcutters (and not registered in the official ledger) or if they are the same woodcutters and we really are dealing with a Tibetan who has a Chinese name. Either way, tea is being given as remuneration. Interestingly, the parenthetical phrase "which is equal to 17 yuan of Tibetan silver coins" is included in the receipt itself. Based on a comparison between the Tibetan original which does not include this conversion and the Chinese translation, it appears that this conversion was for the benefit of Chinese records specifically. We can take this as a rough conversion rate for tea to silver in this time and place.[204] The tea listed in these receipts and ledgers was called Golden Jade Tea (*jinyu cha* 金玉茶), which Patrick Booz explains was a middle-grade type of coarse tea which was produced in bulk and the most common of the teas used for transactions.[205] Furthermore, while the measure words for tea appear to be particular to this region of Kham, the *kha* in the Tibetan might correspond to the word *khor*, which is a measure-word for tea bricks.

[204] There are certain issues and limitations when trying to establish conversion rates before the PRC period. Not only were there multiple currencies, commodities used as currency, and many transactions established on credit or other more intricate economic relationships (between a monastery and a patron for example or a Chinese Government official and a subject of one of the local Chieftains) but values and conversion rates were in incredible flux during the 1930s and 1940s. Also, without the upper and lower limits of values it is hard to say precisely if a certain amount of goods or money was significant. To say for sure would require an incredible amount of reconstruction of numbers and prices of goods for specifically the 1930s and 1940s. The secondary literature that exists tends to skirt this topic, simply leaving the numbers given by the sources themselves. See Bertsch's work, which is easily the most thorough in the field of Tibetan numismatic history, though it could be slightly more attuned to this issue when giving conversion rates.

[205] Booz, ibid., 194-195.

Additionally, the word *tshan krang* (Ch. *cun zhang* 村長), usually used to describe a village leader, was here used to describe the title of the head of the woodcutters. During this period, there were many examples of Tibetan local leaders receiving and using Chinese titles in transliteration. The title *tshan krang* comes up frequently in the documents with multiple spellings in Tibetan. It is a clear example of how a new Chinese bureaucratic term was incorporated into the Tibetan political realm, yet remained unstandardized.

རྡ་སྟོད་སྨད་ནས་ཤིང་བཙད་སྐབས་ ཨུ་ལག་དང་གྲུ་པ་སྤྱི་ལ་ཇ་གེ་རྣ་བཅུ་གཉིས་སྒམ་རྒྱབ་གཞོག་གནོག་ཡར་གནང་བྱུང་བར

རྡ་སྟོད་ཚོགས་ཀྲམ་བསོད་ནམས་ཚེ་རིང་རྟགས རྡ་སྨད་ཚོགས་ཀྲམ་ཨ་བློའི་རྟགས[206]

When[?] the woodcutters came from rDza stod [the same place as above], the ulak workers and ferrymen all together, every[?] month were given/bestowed one load of twelve sgam of tea. Signed by the tshigs kram [a Chinese title?] of rDza sTod Sonam Tsering and the rDza sMad tshigs kram A bLo

今領到

伍縣長獎勵 茶？[should be a number, means “x loads of tea”] 馱 領結/信[207]是实

上下褳科[corresponds to རྡ་སྟོད་སྨད་]烏拉娃村長四朗次里阿洛等/喜具/是

Received

Magistrate Wu awarded [X] loads of tea. Received by[?] the upper and lower areas [of rDza] ulak workers and the village leader(s) Silang Zili (and) A luo

[206] Sichuan Archives 024-01-0007.

[207] It really looks like xin 信 in every one of these documents.

This receipt provides the first reference to the ferrymen. In Tibet, the most common forms of boats were large flat barges or animal-hide coracles. It is unclear exactly what type was used here but likely it was a barge that could carry wood and other supplies.[208]

སྟག་ཆུ་མདའ་སྐོང་པ[209]་རྣམས་ལ་ཟླ་ཤ་ལ་ཇ་བོག་བག་བཅུ་ས་སྒོ་ཙ་ཚང་ལོ་ནས་གནང་བྱུང་། སྐོང་པ་སྤྱི་རྟགས།[210]

During the fifth month, all the ferrymen of sTag Chu mDa [Water Tiger valley] received ten boxes [bag bcu] of tea from the Sago [magistrate] A tsang lo. Signed by the general leader of the ferrymen [grong pa spyi, stamp and fingerprints included] [There is a number written under grong po spye rtags which is 107, this is might be the total number of people this leader represents but it seems like too many to be representing ferrymen.][211]

今领到

伍縣長發給三月份至八？月份共計六月津貼茶共拾弍甑中間又[missing a character]領給是实

船夫十名等具

Received

From March to August, Magistrate Wu gave, in total for the six months, an allowance [津貼] of 12 for tea for 12 zeng to share among all.

[208] Diana Lange's forthcoming work on water transport in Tibet. IATS panel July 2019.

[209] This should be ferrymen, Gru pa.

[210] Sichuan Archives 024-01-0007.

[211] I counted about nine stamps or fingerprints. There is also a number list on the top of these pages from 第二十九 to 第三十二 but only one receipt is attached.

Accepted by ten boatmen

Here, we see that the ferrymen of Tashu'da (sTag Chu mDa, Water Tiger Valley, that the bridge is named after) were awarded tea for their work. However, it is important to note that in the official ledger (which reflected similar work), the ferrymen were awarded or paid more than this. Again, the measure words for tea are not consistent in these documents which strongly suggests that there was a variety of tea sizes that were given as remuneration. Despite knowing many of the measure words and packaging styles used for tea in Kham, these are likely local terminologies. Further, while some of the local leaders had their own seals (the circular ones are typical personal seals) most of the men and women who performed the work would not have had their own seals nor would have likely been literate, and therefore a common practice was to use one's fingerprint as a signature (this was common in China as well).

Finally, not everything went smoothly in this reconstruction project and at least once there was recorded a compensation for the untimely deaths of two of the ulak workers who were helping ship logs down the river.

རྫ་བར་གྱི་ཤིང་ཕུད་སྐབས་ཆུ་ནང་ནས་མི་གཉིས་ཤི་མངའ་ཐེ་ཚ་ཚང་མགོ་ནས་ལྟུ་བཏུ་སོགས་དང་དངུལ་སྐོར་༡༠ གསོལ་རས་གནང་བྱུང། རྫ་བར་གྱི་རྫོང་དཔོན་དགེ་རྒྱལ་[rdzong dpon may have been translated as xianzhang][212]

When sending the logs from rDza bar ku, two people died by drowning, so the local leader [mnga' sde A tsang mgo? Wu Xianzhang?] bestowed ten boxes [sgam] of grain/barley [nye 'bru] and ten silver coins [dngul skor]. Signed [and stamped by] the

[212] Sichuan Archives 024-01-0007.

rDza bar ku rdzong dpon Ngag rGyal[213] and Sonam Tsering[214] [The little notes on it are རྫོང་པ་གཉིས the two people who died are from this place, this is the village mentioned in the ledger and in all of the other receipts]

今領到

伍縣長發給獎勵本村烏拉娃放木料淹死二名信家處叁拾甑又洋分拾之領結[？]是实上中?保正木回朗[？]加仁 等具

It has been received:

To the families of the two ulak workers of the local village who died of drowning during transporting of the wood logs Magistrate Wu gave as a reward 30 zeng of [grain/barley] and X amount of Zangyang [the character should mean ten].

Signed by the Baozheng [name not clear]

Construction in Tibet is a dangerous activity. The waterways to this day are mostly unnavigable and the drastic changes in elevation result in torrential or unpredictable water flows. Historically, logs are floated down the river for transport and it is likely that during the process of transporting logs, two people died. What is worthy of mentioning is that the families of the deceased received generous compensation.

[213] Not sure who this is exactly but should be the leader of the area where the ulak pa were from, seems to be from the same place as most of the people in these receipts referred to in the official ledger as *zakexiang* 褡科鄉.

[214] Sonam Tsering is mentioned in a few of these receipts. I am still unclear as to who he is. There are a few things that are slightly unclear about this receipt and its translation. The numbers do not exactly match up. This could be my own issue with the difficulty of the handwriting or it could be a mistake on the part of the translators.

Summary of the Chinese Receipts

In general, the Chinese receipt structure is similar to the Tibetan style. Every single receipt starts with "received" (*shoudao* 收到) and then almost every single receipt continues with *jingli qiaogong zhuren falai* 經理橋工主任發來 which refers to the specific people, in this case bridge workers or a supervisor, who worked for a certain amount of time. Other details frequently included are the specific number of workers, the amount of remuneration (in tea, grain, or silver coins) and finally the names of the headmen (Ch. *tou mu* 頭目). The three main headmen in charge of Tashu'da Bridge project were named Yu Caiqing (余才清), Li Shaotang, (李紹堂), and Ma Jinshan (馮金山).[215] The receipts finally end with the word "receipt" (Ch. *shou tiao* 收條).[216]

The terminology used in these Chinese receipts, when compared to Tibetan/Chinese bilingual receipts detailed above, raises several questions. As mentioned above, most of the extant receipts (nearly 30 in total) are in Chinese only. First, in these Chinese receipts (not translations of the Tibetan ones) we don't have any "reward" terminology. They are compensation for work with no ambiguity. The Chinese language receipts focus mainly on the remuneration of the carpenters, woodcutters, and ferrymen, as well as the cost of supplies. All are on a monthly basis, and almost all of them are signed by either of the (possibly Chinese) men in charge of the two separate bridges.[217] As far as I can tell, these Chinese receipts are fully

[215] There are different headmen for the Baili Bridge.

[216] On the last page of the receipts, Tibetan and Chinese, there is a short summary statement saying 以？上收據式拾捌張共去藏？洋参千玖百玖拾陸？元半正？ [According to the above 28 receipts altogether, cost (gong qu?) 3996.5 yuan in total] This is echoed in the summary ledger for Tashu'da Bridge as well.

[217] The Chinese receipts include receipts for the Beri Bridge reconstruction.

reflected in the official ledger. These three men, despite having Chinese names and their own (state issued?) seals, could have been either Tibetan or Chinese.[218] Given the possible ethnic diversity in list of carpenters and woodcutters, if these men were not Tibetan, they may have had to hire translators, yet we have no reference to translators in any of these documents. Furthermore, the title they have, "headman" (頭目 or 頭人), was one of the new common bureaucratic titles for Tibetans who held power a lower level.[219]

I think it is highly likely that we are talking about the same group of forty carpenters in all these sources. This means that the Tibetan receipt with the forty fingerprints is representative of all the carpenters working. This is further confusing because despite all the Chinese receipts and ledgers referring directly to these three leaders, we don't have any references to them in Tibetan. If one were to read the Chinese documents exclusively, there would be a false clarity of the remuneration system. The receipts, like the official ledger show that these three (maybe Chinese) men were receiving wages, food, and even funds for offerings to the gods for themselves and on behalf of their workers.[220] What was at work here was two different ways of defining and

[218] The picture is from the Sichuan Archives 024-01-0007.

[219] "The Kamba officers immediately below the erstwhile chieftains are called, in Kantze, Chei-tsong. ("Chei-tsong" is not the exact spelling in the Tibetan language, but a close transliteration of the sound in Kantze.) This term means "those who help to maintain the livelihood of the people". In the two localities of Kungse and Mashu there are more than twenty families holding this title. The Chinese used to call the Chei-tsong "Ta Tou Jen," or the Chief Lieutenants of the Tu-sse. The entire local administration is still in their hands." Chen, ibid., 83.

[220] Based on the receipts I have the Chinese ones did not include receipts for ulak workers even though these costs are reflected in the official ledger.

compensating for labor—two separate political economies that merged during the reconstruction of the bridge.

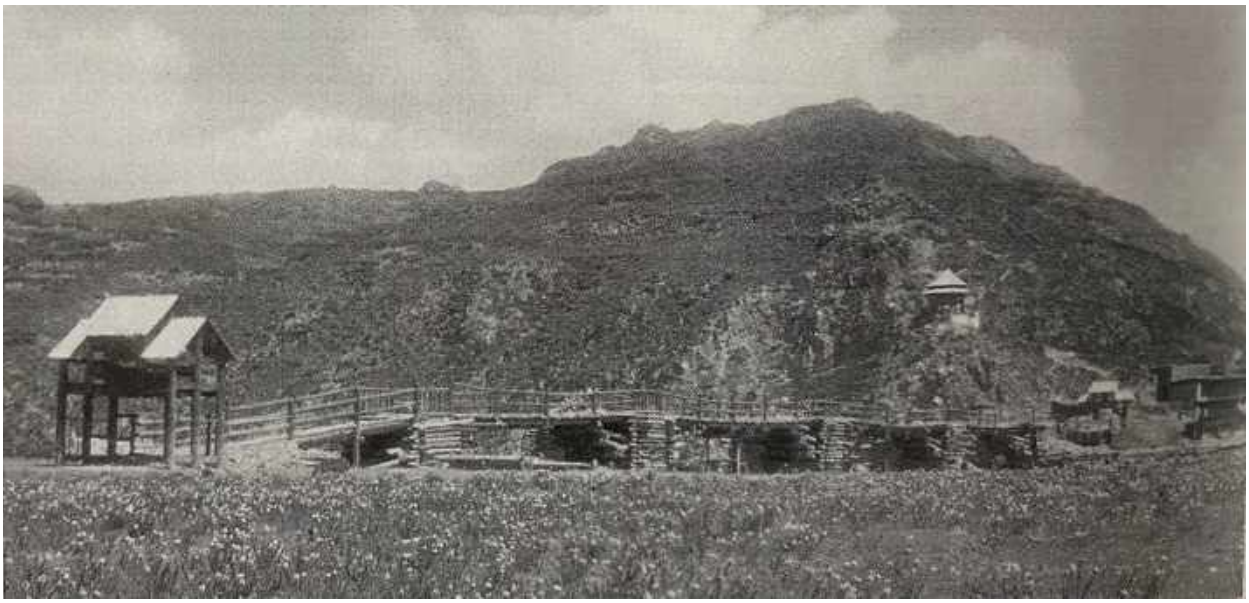

Fig 2.4: "A Tibetan Cantilever Bridge over the Yalung River near Ganzi" – Photograph by M.H. Duncan in August 1935. The 600 ft. long bridge was swept away by a flood not long after this photo was taken.

In the end, the Tashu'ta bridge was rebuilt, and yet, environmental forces (if not political) would tear down the bridge before the end of the 1930s.[221]

[221] Zhao, Aidong and Xiaoling Zhu. *Far, Far Away in Remote Eastern Tibet: The Story of the American Doctor Albert Shelton and His Colleagues from the Disciples of Christ 1903-1950* (St. Louis: Lucas Parks Books, 2014) 184.

Conclusion: Monetization in the Kham Economy

From the late 19th century to the mid 20th Kham witnessed an increase in the monetization of the economy but as this chapter (and subsequent chapters) demonstrates, monetization was incremental. While this process began with the influx of British Indian rupees during the mid 19th century, the more discernable increase was with the minting of the zangyang starting in 1902. Kham shifted from a tea and barley standard to a tea and silver standard.[222] Even by the early 20th century however, monetization in Kham was limited with practically no use of hard currency for smaller transactions or local remuneration. While zangyang or Tibetan silver coins were used as the primary unit of account in all Chinese official documents, as well as within the Chinese translations of the Tibetan receipts, within the original receipts, there are only two examples of coins being given, one for the lump sum given to the leader of the ulak workers and then for the case of the death of the two workers. It is possible that the levies imposed on the traders were also collected in coins but the documents are not clear. When looking exclusively at the Chinese ledgers and receipts, one can gain a false sense of orderliness. With everything listed in zangyang silver coins and "rewards" given in the form of coins, tea, and grain, one can easily look over the fact that the tea and grain was in fact the more common form of payment for laborers and workmen in these regions. Tea was not in addition, it was the main compensation to be expected.

[222] There is still much left unanswered. For example, why did the Central Tibetan minted coins despite arriving in the market in the late 18th century not have as high of a circulation in Kham as the later British Indian rupees? British trade policies in India certainly impacted the flows as did increased trade networks between Kham and northeastern India.

Chapter Two

Entrenching the System: Translation, Confusion, and Ulak Transportation in Kham 1932-1947

In the summer of 1933, the leader (Tib. dpon sde དཔོན་སྡེ Ch. baozheng 保正) of Zhowo Village (Tib. sbro bo) in Nyarong, made one of many requests and official complaints about malpractice in the acquisition of ulak labor (Tib. ‘u lag, Ch. 烏拉). The letter was addressed to the “holder of the two systems, the guardian of all laws and the exalted (precious) one,”[223] the battalion commander of the Sichuan Kham Frontier Defense Force (*Chuan Kang bianfang jun* 川康邊防軍).[224] This document, written in Tibetan and translated into Chinese, presents a snapshot of the translation and labor issues present in Kham during the 1930s and 40s. In the titles and address alone, one finds a telling dissonance between the original Tibetan and the Chinese translation. In the Tibetan, the leader of Zhowo is called “dpon sde” meaning “dpon po” (leader or chieftain) and “sde pa” (སྡེ་པ governor) of a “sde khag” (སྡེ་ཁག group, unit, village). As discussed in Chapter One, in Chinese, the leader was given the common Republican period title of “baozheng” 保正 usually given to leaders who used to hold the title “tusi” 土司, a hereditary title used from the Yuan dynasty onward to denote a leader of a borderland region.[225] In contrast, the

[223] ལྷག་ས་གཞིས་གང་(གོང་)མ་ཁྲིམས་ཐྱིས་བདག་པོ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ཞབས་དྲུང་ཏུ(དུ) Sichuan Archives 024-01-0002.

[224] The Tibetan document says Water Bird year, month 6, which corresponds to March 1933. The Chinese documents corroborate this date. For a full translated version of the Chinese document see the Appendix.

[225] “In addition, Yuan officials also continued the Song dynasty’s refinement of frontier policy, the designation of loose rein prefectures, jimifu, above and loose rein counties, jimixian, hierarchically below the existing jimizhou, by investing some native rulers with titles corresponding to civil officials in the interior such as Native Prefect, tuzhifu, Native Department Magistrate, tuzhizhou, and Native County Magistrate, tuzhixian. Collectively, these frontier rulers, both military and civil, were known as native officials, tuguan, though this frontier bureaucracy remained thoroughly separate from that of the interior…On reconfirming investitures in the borderlands during the first years of the dynasty, Ming officials designated native rulers as either civil officials, tuguan, or military officials, tusi,

address within the Tibetan petition does not specify a particular individual but instead dedicates it only to the "holder of the two systems, the guardian of all laws and the exalted (precious) one" where "holder of the two systems and guardian of all laws" was used to address the Qing emperors and "exalted (precious) one" or "Rinpoche" is the common term for Buddhist lamas.[226] The latter was also a term used to address Qing emperors but is rarely (if ever) used for lay officials let alone Chinese military leaders or a specific individual.[227] In Chinese however, the translator summarized this simply as "great man" (*daren* 大人) and specifically addressed it to battalion Commander Deng of the Sichuan Kham Frontier Defense Force. The leader of Zhowo continued with his petition, requesting that he and his people only be required to provide labor service for their specific region[228] and recounted a serious conflict where he and his people were deceived by a neighboring region and made to perform ulak duty of the other region.[229] He asked

based on several criteria, including the ruler's prior status. Although the two terms were also used by the Yuan bureaucracy, this distinction was of far less relevance to its administration of the borderlands than under the Ming, which used the term tusi also in reference to all native chieftains, both civil and military. In general, civil tusi were situated within provincial boundaries while military tusi could be found in remote, often mountainous regions of the South and Southwest, within and beyond the imperial frontiers." Relyea, "Gazing at the Tibetan Plateau," 26-28.

[226] This was a very common occurrence in these Tibetan petitions and can likely be traced back to what Peter Schweiger explains was a hierarchy and code in Tibetan-Qing communications. Not only did the Qing bestow titles and rank, but also dictated that the Tibetans adopt a submissive tone in their writing. Perhaps in reaction to this, Tibetan letters developed a language of devotion and humility. Schweiger, ibid., 200-202.

[227] "Gongma" was usually how Tibetans addressed the Chinese emperors. Rinpoche was also used as an honorific to Chinese emperors. Gongma Rinpoche was widely used.

[228] Zhuwo Village of Zhanhua county (Nyarong), Suozu (station), Tongxiao, and Geri. These villages are all referenced in the *Zangchuan fojiao simiao ziliao xuanbian*, 12.

[229] See the appendix for a full transcription of the Chinese document. Much thanks go out to Ngawang (Tib. Ngag dbang, Ch. 阿旺) and Palden Gyal for their help on the Tibetan transcription. For the Chinese translation, much thanks go out to Zhaohua Yang and his class. Translation of the first half of the Tibetan petition: "To the holder of the two systems, the guardian of all laws and the exalted (precious) one, the sincere leader of Zhowo, Michu Tong, would like to state the following: at the border of Sotsuk, I a landless person of Zhowo had to go for labor service, I a person of Zhowo was sent to Sotsuk. Sotsuk, Thangcha and Chiredak are far away. I am grateful if we can just protect [cover] our own lands. I [a person of Zhowo] was sent for labor to three regions within Zhowo, for which I can say that I have never deceived anyone, not even a little. I am grateful [if] we are not to be sent [to other regions]. Earlier, when Che Abok was the Cheso [a position? Spyi so monastery manager of daily tasks], we did not have to protect [cover] other regions except our own. During Lhapon Dotak, Luo Qiexi deceived people by saying

the Chinese, in his now many attempts, to fix this problem and to stop requesting more labor service than they can bear.

This petition and its translation, which we will come back to throughout the course of the chapter, introduces two seemingly unrelated issues. First is that of translation and second is of how the Chinese army and state were trying to interpret and manage the taxation and labor practices in Kham. Drawing from Lydia Liu's work on translingual practice and difference in the values put on words and their meanings within unequal forms of exchange, I argue that these titles, new and old, translated and transliterated, point to the process by which the incommensurable socioeconomic values present within particular Chinese and Tibetan titles were rendered commensurable.[230] This incommensurability, shown clearly through titles and the socioeconomic terminology of ulak, continued through the 1930s and into the 1940s. With that said, the differences in translation and the sometimes surprising adoption of particular transliterated terminology (of which *ulak/wula* is the prime example) provides a window into the inner workings of the ulak system and the impact of Chinese presence in Kham.

The translation of Tibetan socio-economic practices into Chinese was a process of both knowledge and capital accumulation in the borderlands, and this process, I argue, not only co-opted but entrenched the existing Tibetan socioeconomic systems. The Tibetan labor system of *ulak* serves as the primary example. This taxation-cum-transportation system, grew stronger and more entrenched through both Chinese transportation needs and attempts to translate and build knowledge about local taxation practices.

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that he would pay (to these regions or for people working in these regions) for Thangcha and Srung". Sichuan Archives 024-01-0002.

[230] Both the Chinese and the Tibetan armies had been occupying Kham only a year prior – animosities would have existed in all directions.

The first three decades of the 20th century in Kham witnessed great upheavals, one of which, the Dargye-Beri conflict discussed in the previous chapter, was a major catalyst for the increased Chinese presence in Kham. Its aftermath further witnessed increased attempts in consolidating Chinese control as part of the establishment of a new Chinese province: Xikang.[231] While bridge building and reconstruction was one facet of this army's day to day activities, so was dealing with the problems that emerged under any colonial government, such as labor requisition and taxation. Drawing from the same archive, the documents analyzed in this chapter paint a picture of the Tibetan socioeconomic landscape and its interface with the Chinese provincial administration. Included among these documents was a small archive of bilingual, Tibetan and Chinese, communications which provide us a rare snapshot of the local Tibetan leaders and commoners, and the newly appointed Chinese officials, who were dealing with issues surrounding ulak and day-to-day logistics.[232]

[231] The 1930s was a very chaotic period along the Sino-Tibetan borderland. For example, in 1932 was the Kelsang Tsering Batang conflict, the two Liu Wars, and the Panchen Lama incidents during the later 1930s. The Communist Long March also reached this area by 1935. This overall was an incredibly dynamic, hugely disruptive and chaotic period in Kham history. For more, see Laurence Epstein (ed.), *Khams pa Histories: Visions of People, Place and Authority*. PIATS 2000: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000 (Leiden: Brill, 2002). For more on the establishment of Xikang Province, see Frank, ibid., (2020).

[232] Overall there appears to be no explanation for why files on ulak were generated (or collected) by the Frontier Defense Force for the years 1932 to 1933. These are documents that were in the possession of the Frontier Defense Force and were almost all addressed to the Number Two Brigade, Brigade Commander Deng, who is attributed to Deng Xihou by the later archivists but nothing I have found confirms this. About a quarter of the documents were sent by Deng and were all in draft form. Based on the send-receive dates, documents reached Deng in about a week on average which implies that he was in Dartsedo (Kangding). While I do not have the space to present all the themes here, the documents from Sichuan Archives largely cover the following topics: the costs and expenditures (in multiple currencies but mostly Zang yang 藏洋) of the local governments on ulak, petitions to the local governments by Tibetan headmen or labor organizers that discuss details of the service and general complaints, official petitions by the Tibetans at all levels of society, local government networks and their "Chinese" titles/positions, the structure and costs of relay posts (*shao* 哨) versus stations (*zhan* 站), particular case studies of ulak issues that range all over the Kham region, and payment methods and locally produced receipts. Finally, these are just the communications that happened to reach this particular army unit, there would have been a lot more for the individual *xianzhang* or *zhishi* archives (or any of the county level archives).

Adapting new or old taxation techniques to meet logistical needs was not unprecedented in Chinese state-building, nor was this unique to state-building in Kham during the Nationalist period.[233] The wholesale adoption of the term *ulak* as *wula* by the Chinese was brought on by a scarcity of labor in Kham, and its (mis)conceptualization can be readily witnessed through the bilingual local communications. Taxation, a term I use loosely to include any form of accepted state extraction, was applied most prominently in labor acquisition. While successful taxation on land was being carried out in other non-Tibetan regions of the soon-to-be-established province of Xikang,[234] in eastern Kham, labor was the most valuable commodity, and levying taxes on labor was the only effective way for the Chinese army and officials to sustain their foothold in Kham. The exceptional aspect of this interaction was the prolonged and consistent use of the Chinese word "wula 烏拉", transliterated directly from ulak, to describe an ad hoc service, sometimes paid for and sometimes coerced by the Chinese, that was part of the Tibetan taxation system (and described as such) of the Tibetans. What was occurring here in the use of wula, was what James Scott identifies as translation as a form of simplification and standardization to increase government efficiency and for the Chinese forces, ascertaining how tax or ulak worked during this period was as much a bureaucratic and socioeconomic issue as a linguistic one.[235]

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[233] Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China, 1900-1942* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

[234] Frank, ibid., (2020).

[235] James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). Furthermore, Joseph Lawson makes the astute observation that ulak may have been the primary point of contact, between the Tibetans and the Chinese in Kham. This was very likely true, making ulak a unique lens by which to assess Chinese understanding of the Tibetan socioeconomic landscape. These documents do not provide any conclusive summary of the ulak, transportation, or taxation systems in Kham but they do help us raise questions about how they worked (or in many cases did not work). Joseph Lawson, "Xikang: Han Chinese in Sichuan's Western Frontier, 1905-1949," (PhD dissertation, Victoria University of Wellington, 2011), 161.

Since the turn of the century, the Chinese saw ulak as a backward system in dire need of reform. Discourse in Chinese regarding ulak reform can be traced back to Qing bannerman Zhao Erfeng. One of central problems that Zhao had to engage with during his military expedition was ulak, which to him seemed as an inefficient system of labor acquisition. The same discourse of backwardness continued into the 1930s and 40s. The most prominent and vocal of these reformers was Ren Naiqiang (任乃强, 1894-1989), an intellectual who was responsible for "rationalizing" the Kham society to the Chinese and who paved the way for the acceptance of Kham into a modern Chinese state.[236] His studies continue to be the bedrock for mainstream historical narratives of Tibet and China today, and his work on ulak in particular has led to a scholarship that exclusively defines ulak as backward and "feudal."[237] Ren's 1936 article on ulak published in the periodical *Kang Zang Qian Feng* (康藏前峰, *The Vanguard of Kham and Tibet*), was based off his extensive survey work conducted under the auspices of the Sichuan provincial government and warlord Liu Wenhui (1895-1976). The article entitled "A Proposal for the Establishment of a Public Transportation Bureau to handle Livestock, Inter-Station Transport, and Permanently Abolish Ulak" (建议设立公运局办理牧站联运期能永废乌拉以纾) was a detailed description and articulate plan for ulak reform and abolition. The article was an unabashed appeal to the people of China to alleviate the Tibetans' hardships and (eventually) abolish ulak forever. Steering political perception and political discourse by nearly orientalizing the Tibetans and their oppressive system, Ren provided detailed suggestions for the reform of ulak backed up with quantifiable data on the amount of relay stations, the distances between them, geographic descriptions and estimated costs of establishing this new transportation and

[236] Tsomu, "Taming the Khampas."

[237] Zhu, ibid., 55-62.

communications system. Highly compelling in its thorough rationalization, the article (among his other works) filled the vacuum of information on Tibet and Kham for Chinese government. In fulfillment of his plans and with the backing of the Xikang Provincial government, Ren Naiqiang even oversaw the development of the Xikang Animal Transportation Company (Mu yun gongsi 牧運公司) in 1938, a state-owned company that was dissolved only after a year it was established.[238]

This, however, is not a story of Chinese state failure. Instead, this chapter shows that the rhetoric of Ren Naiqiang and other Chinese intellectuals and officials demonstrates not just the Chinese anxiety regarding the ulak system but also their clear reliance on it. The goal therefore is to demonstrate that the new Chinese administrative mappings and reliance on ulak and Tibetan mobilization of labor further reinforced the already existing socio-economic structure in Kham; and that the only effect of the Chinese discourse was to reify the notion of Chinese superiority and the backwardness of Tibetan socio-economic systems.

[238] This was not the first attempt at a state-led company to fix the ulak. Joseph Lawson completed the preliminary work on Chinese perceptions of ulak by examining the arc of Chinese discourse on ulak and the "'ulak problem." Joseph Lawson explains that "in August 1932, he tasked Brigade Commander Yu Songlin 余松琳 with establishing a State Wula Agency (*guan yun wula shiwusuo* 官運烏拉事務所). The Agency's provisional constitution (*shiban zhangcheng* 試辦章程) ordered every county magistrate to organize a local office and a certain number (to be determined by the army) of encampments (*zhang* 帳). Each encampment was to purchase 100 yaks from the nearby pastures at "approved prices" (*heding jiage* 核定價格). These yaks were to be used for nine to twelve outward supply journeys in the six months from April through September (the busy season for official transport). On return journeys and in the case that official demand for transport was low they were to provide a commercial transport service which would help pay for the Agency's costs. It seems unlikely that the Agency could have made much money in this manner because transport rates going from west to east were very cheap in comparison to the other direction. This was not the only difficulty facing the Agency, however, and the scheme was a failure. Many animals died from sickness and exhaustion and the organization was wound up within a year, after more than twenty thousand Tibetan yuan had been spent on it." Lawson, ibid., 151-156.

Ulak Labor in Kham

As described in the Introduction, ulak was a regionally diverse transportation and labor service tied to rent and taxation. And while ulak was fundamentally a labor service tied to taxation, the specific perameters of its functions took different forms across time and place.

One telling example is from the biography of one of the most prominent 20th century Tibetan Buddhist masters, Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö (1893-1959) from the Dzongsar region of Kham:

> Before Khyentse Wangpo's time [a famous 19th century Lama], it was customary for local villagers to lend visitors the horses they needed to carry their luggage up to Dzongsar Monastery. But towards the end of Khyentse Wangpo's life, the great lamas and lords of China, Tibet, and Hor [Trehor, Kardze area] who flocked to Dzongsar to see him, used to demand that the villagers give them horses as their right. This caused so much hardship for the people of [the village] that they were even heard to say, "Why won't that old monk die?" Once Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö had established himself at Dzongsar, he appealed to the teachers of the royal family of Derge Tsang and all the high lamas of Kham – like Shechen Rabjam and Dzogchen Rinpoche – to stop forcing the locals to give them horses when they visited him. "I am happy to have you here," he said, "but compelling the villagers to help you in this way makes things very difficult for them." After Chökyi Lodrö made his appeal, whenever Shechen Rabjam, Dzogchen Rinpoche, and Situ Rinpoche visited, they always traveled as ordinary Tibetans, brought their own horses, were never high-handed, and never browbeat the locals into helping them.[239]

In this story, a memory of the Lama Kyentse Chökyi Lodrö demonstrates not only the semi-official status of ulak requisitions but also the localized nature of the labor. We also see the potential to overburden the labor supply. In this example, it is the Tibetan Buddhist lamas and elites who request ulak and expect it as their right, but by the 1930s as this chapter demonstrates, it was not only Tibetans that ulak had to account for, but the Chinese state as well. By the 20th

[239] Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche et al. trans., Janine Schulz ed. *The life and times of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö: the great biography by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and other stories* (Boulder, Colorado : Shambhala, 2017), 141.

century, ulak had evolved, at least in Kham, as encompassing both the official route and postal system functions, and also had emerged as a multifaceted "tax" based on a flexible form of labor and transport that was at times paid and at other times coerced.

The diverse forms of conscription that came to bear the designation "ulak" was a function of Kham's position as a borderland between Central Tibet and Qing China. Broadly speaking, there were two external forces driving the institutionalization of ulak in Kham, one was the Qing and one was Central Tibet. Both needed not only to communicate with each other but also to move officials (and sometimes militaries) through the region. Equally important was the local labor dynamic within Kham—the scarcity of labor was so severe that both Central Tibetan and Qing forces treated it as a commodity to be collected directly as "tax." These needs were tested at various points throughout Kham history and specifically at times of war, creating a sort of mixed system of labor requisition as taxation.[240]

In the last decade of the Qing Dynasty, bannerman Zhao Erfeng, who attempted to reassert Qing control over Tibet, began a process of bureaucratization that involved creating and eliminating titles all over the region, connecting Tibetan leaders to his colonial network, and reforming the ulak labor system. His reforms on ulak included the establishment of payment policies as well as a bureaucracy to manage the acquisition and payment of ulak labor. As opposed to later Chinese regimes learning from and employing Zhao's restructuring of power relations, its long-term impact was on the ways in which *Tibetans* in Kham organized ulak *for*

[240] "Both in Tibet and Sikang the domain of the chieftain, or Tu-Sse, forms the basis of the ula system and does not extend beyond that territory. This indigenous forced labor, however, was greatly intensified and made much more rigid than ever before by the military requisition of the Manchu Imperial troops. The original flexibility and leniency disappeared completely. The burden was suddenly increased by a double basis of imposition. While the O-ba requisitioned the ula in labor and in kind on a household basis, the Imperial rulers collected from the O-ba on the basis of land ownership and livestock ownership." Chen, ibid., 119.

the Chinese.[241] In the end, Zhao's colonization projects had an uneven imprint on Kham after the fall of the empire and Chinese state builders did not achieve the desired integration or bureaucratization until after the establishment of the People's Republic of China.[242] While previous literature has discussed Zhao's activities within a Chinese state-building narrative that consistently sought to bureaucratize Kham, I would like to suggest that the Chinese understanding of and impact on the system was limited. For the Chinese, ulak was the most necessary and most accessible transportation labor.

Translation in the Borderlands

While the translation of Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist texts is a highly developed field, many issues of political or day-to-day Tibetan and Chinese translation practices have escaped scholarly scrutiny. When expanding the time frame from the Tibetan empire to the Qing, one discovers rich research on multi-lingual translation practices from steles to edicts and dictionaries—mostly between Tibetan, Mongolian, and Manchu, and sometimes from Chinese to

[241] "In the ula regulations promulgated in 1901 by Viceroy Chao Erh-feng there were six points, 1) Ula requisition was exacted according to the scale of land tax. Those who paid less than a minimum tax were exempt from ula. Ula was required in a progressive rate as the land-tax scale went up, from one laborer to two laborers from each household, and then usually from one to two horses from each landowner. (Article 12) 2) Though by custom female laborers were often sent to meet ula exactions, it was expected that no person, male or female, should be taken who was under 15 or above 50 years of age. (Article 13). 3) Those households that owned no land but possessed livestock were required to meet ula also in a progressive scale. Those who kept 10 head of horses or cattle paid one horse as ula, and for each additional two head, an additional half an ula unit was exacted. Those who kept less than 10 head paid in labor (Article 14) 4) Owners of 100 sheep paid one horse each as ula, and for each additional 50 sheep an additional ula unit. Those who kept fewer than 100 sheep paid in labor (Article 15). 5) Households that owned both land and livestock had to meet the combined requirements for ula (Article 16) 6) Ten horses, or ten ula units, were fixed as the maximum requirement (Article 17)…Decapitation and cutting off ears were frequently the penalties for those who failed to comply with ula requirements. This of course set the entire land boiling with bitter resentment and activities which might have led to revolts. By way of appeasement Chao issued another decree in 1911 which forbade ula and introduced the hired-labor system in all places where the Tu-Sse had already been legally abolished, and magistrates appointed in their place." Chen, ibid., 119.

[242] The activities of the infamous Qing bannerman and later Amban, Zhao Erfeng, during the last decade of the Qing Dynasty have been well covered by scholars such as Sperling, "The Chinese Venture in K'am;" Wang, ibid., Scott Relyea, "Gazing at the Tibetan Plateau;" Coleman, ibid.; and Lawson, "Xikang."

Tibetan and vice versa.[243] In the English language, Fabienne Jagou has pioneered the research on Chinese to Tibetan translation in her articles on Qing-era translators and on elite-level Republican era Chinese and Tibetan titles.[244] The place of translation and translators at the local day-to-day level, however, has largely been overlooked in the history of borderlands, both during the Qing and twentieth-century China.

The absence partly stems from the difficulty of locating these activities in the archives. In all the Sichuan archive documents I surveyed, I only found one reference to a translator, tongshi (Ch. 通事) also commonly written tongsi (Ch. 通司).[245] These interpreters, translators, or guides, while not easily identified, were often multiethnic, Tibetan and Chinese, Khampas or

[243] "This idea was emphasized by the creation of dictionaries which incorporated the five languages of the Empire by the end of the eighteenth century. These dictionaries began with the first Manchu dictionary, published in 1708. These were followed by: a bilingual Manchu-Mongol dictionary (1717); a Manchu-Mongol-Chinese dictionary (1780); a Manchu-Mongol-Chinese and Tibetan dictionary (1780) (Si ti qing wenjian) the Uighur language was included within the last of these, with phonetic transcriptions for Tibetan and Uighur vocabularies, and all five languages of the Qing Empire (Wu ti qing wenjian) were eventually united within a dictionary concluded between 1787 and 1794. These dictionaries were progressively expanded to include vocabulary related to various fields such as religion, landscape and daily life, but very little about administration and administrative terms that might help with government correspondence. Nothing is known about the use of these dictionaries and their distribution within the Empire." Fabienne Jagou, "In Search of the Tibetan Translators" in *Tibetans who Escaped the Historian's Net*, eds. Charles Ramble, Peter Schwieger, Alice Travers (Kathmandu, Nepal: Vajra Books, 2013), 42.

[244] Fabienne Jagou has pioneered the work of Qing period Tibetan translation history. Her research is admittedly inconclusive, yet a stronger case can be made for a Manchu-Tibetan interface rather than a Tibetan-Chinese. "Our first insight would be to think that the Court of Border Affairs (Lifan yuan), would provide a translation department. But there is no evidence that such a department existed. The Court of Border Affairs was not a decision-making body within the Qing administration. It was an archive ministry: two archival services were in use, Chinese (where Manchu and Mongol literati worked) and Manchu (Jagou forthcoming). It is still uncertain what became of the documents written in Mongolian and in Tibetan. Were they kept within another administrative section of the Qing government? Were they left within the local Manchu yamen. We do know, however, that the Court of Border Affairs was in charge of Tibetan language classes. Indeed, in Beijing, from 1658, every banner had to appoint three men to learn the Tibetan language (Da Qing huidian, Kangxi edition, 1690, juan 144; Da Qing huidian, Yongzheng edition, 1732, juan 222). Later (1741), under the Qianlong Emperor, this informal structure became the "Office Dedicated to the Study of Tibetan" (Tanggute xue si). It was composed of one assistant teacher and four Mongolian secretaries (Da Qing huidian, Qianlong edition, 1748, juan 79). The office was reinforced with more members in 1839 by Emperor Daoguang (r. 1821-1850) and was supposed to enroll twenty four students for five years. A final examination directed by the Dalai Lama should have concluded their studies." Ibid. 42.

[245] I found no references to translators in the Tibetan documents.

businessmen and women who held an important status as respected educated elite.[246] Yudru Tsomu categorizes them as one of the "cultural brokers" of the Sino-Tibetan borderland, such as the Acha Khapa (Tib. a lcags kha pa ཨ་ལྕགས་ཁ་པ་ Ch. guozhuang 鍋莊) the managers of brokering houses in Dartsedo, the vast majority of whom were women who managed the majority of the trade flowing through Dartsedo up to the 1930s with their multilingual skills and business acumen.[247] The only interpreter mentioned in the bilingual petitions appears in the Chinese translation of the Nyarong petition, merely identified as Interpreter Xie (Ch. Xie tongshi).

Although their identity is elusive, when the translator (or translators) of the Nyarong document read the original Tibetan, they made a choice to attribute the Zhowo people's words with a diminutive tone. On behalf of the Zhowo people, the translator explained:

> "Now we have no choice but to go back and forth to Dartsedo to earnestly request to your honorable seat to grant us, people of Zhowo, with kindness, pity, and sympathy. *Since ancient times we have been good, respectful and submissive people of the Han areas and we are nothing like [those other villages]* and ask that you earnestly chase after the Tongxiao wa and ask them for the tax that they have owed us for years and then we request to be released from this burden of dispatching ulak for other stations."[248]

[246] Yudru Tsomu, "Traders as Cultural Brokers on the Sino-Tibetan Borderland during the Republican Period" Zangxue Xuekan (藏學學刊) Issue 1, 2016, 179; and Huasha Zhang, ibid.

[247] Tsomu, "Guozhuang Trading Houses," and Booz "Tea, Trade and Transport in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands."

[248] 派員調查 台站 地界 應規(gui should be return, belong to gui, 归） 何方支應現不得已只往來鈷(Dajianlu) 邀懇鈞座恩施憐恤我們朱倭娃 自古以來是漢方之恭順良民與他們各不相似並懇追 通消娃 所欠数年脚費再邀免支應. Sichuan Archives 240-01-0002.

Being respectful and submissive people of the Han areas was in fact not present in the original Tibetan document. The translator's decision to add this phrase attests to the power dynamics involved in translation. These petitions were the outcome of a hierarchical relationship between the local and the colonial; they were almost always dispatched from the local to the colonial, rarely the other way around. In this case, the translator likely knew that if they added the above diminutive phrases, the people of Zhowo were more likely to receive their desired outcome. In addition to the diminutive or humilific tone, the subtle expression of Chinese superiority can be further sensed through the transliteration of the name of the Tibetan village Zhowo, which in Chinese sounded like "Pigsty dwarfs (*zhuwo*)."[249]

Beyond the information provided in the Tibetan petitions themselves, we know very little about who wrote them. The leaders themselves, officials, scribes, and lamas, were all possible composers of these documents. Read all together, there is a compelling array of education levels on display. All appear to be aware of the petition genre and are written in a fairly similar structure. Some petitions are composed with beautiful penmanship (all are written in the *umed* cursive script), maintain proper spelling and utilize high level religious vocabulary. Others are riddled with spelling mistakes, difficult to read handwriting, and more straightforward vocabulary. Many include highly localized words which may have made it difficult for even the best translator to understand.[250] Perhaps the most formal of the petitions found in the archive

[249] Much more could be said on this subject and how it continues to the modern day. The Tibetan village of Zhowo offers a good example, which was translated into Chinese as Zhuwo (Ch. 朱倭) where together the words zhu, pearl, and wo, dwarf, give the homophonic impression of "pigsty" and "dwarf" respectively. This implication would have been apparent to any Chinese reader, and it provides context for the sense of superiority felt by the Chinese colonists.

[250] In Xinjiang, *tongshi* usually referred to the person who could translate orally. Someone else would then write it down. So here, probably there was a Tibetan who was translating the petitions orally to a Chinese clerk who was then writing it down in Chinese.

were the Dege petition and the petition from Da'u which were likely written by a high-level official or a lama, using ornate vocabulary indicative of high education.[251] All others, from Kardze, Dartsedo, Se'urong, etc. did not equal the quality of composition and thus leave many questions unanswered. I will return to the issue of translation throughout as I (and the historical actors) attempt to create a system of commensurability in a fundamentally unequal dynamic. Said inequality comes out clearly in practical issues surrounding everyday life, labor, transportation, administration, and translation. And although the identity of the translators in the below documents is unknown, their work helps provide the necessary context for understanding the possibilities and limitations of borderland translations.[252]

Administrative Mappings: Titles in Translation, Taxation, and Ulak

As is the case with other local institutions, ulak in Kham exhibited an incredible amount of diversity and fluidity. This section lays out the basic Tibetan administrative mapping within eastern Kham during the 1930s and 40s and Tibetan and Chinese titles in translation in order to give context to mutual knowledge production between local actors and the state. Overall, the goal is to show the socio-economic structure that the Chinese helped entrench.

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[251] བྱམས་གཟིགས་ཀྱི་མངའ་བདག་འདས(should be den)·གླུས་ཀྲམ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་མཆོག་གི་དྲུང་དུ། གུས་པ་སྨ་བུ (this is a place name but the umed is not totally clear)·ཨོག་ནས་མི་སེར་སྐྱི་དོན་དུ་གསེར་སྙན (honorific for ear, so golden ear?)·རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལྷང་ཙམ་མི་སྐྱོན་དུ་མེད་ལ་རྣམ་མཁྱེན་མཚམས་འབྲུགས་མི་ཡངས་པ་མཁྱེན་མཁྱེན། སྦྱོན་སྙན་ཞུ་ཕུལ་བའི་བཀའ་ལེན་འཕྲུལ་གནང་བྱུང་བ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ། ད་ལན་ཏ་བུ་ས་སྐོས་བཀའ་ཕེབས་མི་སེར་སྐྱི་ནས་དར་མདོར་ཞུ་འབུལ་དོན་དུ་མངགས་གཏོང་ཡོང་བའི་མི་གསུམ་ནས་ཞུ་དོན། ཀང་རྒྱའི་ཡུལ་ལག དྲིལ་༤༤ མཛོ༤༧ ·འབྲི༤ གླང༢ བཅས་འཁོར་བསྡོམ༡༣ ཡོད་ནང་། དྲིལ༤ ·མཛོ༧༡ འབྲི༢ བཅས་༢༡ ཤི་བ་དང་། ད་ཆ་ངོ་ཡོད་༤༤ རྗེས་འབུལ་ལ་ངོ་ཡོད་རྗེས་ལན་མཛད་གྲུབ་ན་བཀའ་དྲིན་གང་ཆེ། ད་མིན་ངོ་ཡོད་བཅས་བཞེས་མ་གྲུབ་ཚེ་མང་སྐོས་བཟའ་འདམ་བཞིན་རིན་བབས་འབུལ་ལམ་ཞུ་ཚོག་པ་ཞུ་བ་དོན་སྙིན་གྱི་བཀའ་དྲིན་མི་སེར་སྐྱིད་རྗེའི་ལ་གཟིགས་པ་གོངས་དབྱིངས་ནས་མངའ་བ་མཁྱེན་མཁྱེན། མི་སེར་ཕུ་ཐུགས་མི་ཞུ་ཅང་མེད་ལ། ཞུ་འབུལ་ཚོག་མིན་གྱི་འཆལ་·དགོངས་འགལ་སོང་ན་དཔོན་པོ་བདག་པོ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་མཆོག་ནས་བཀའ་གསུངས་ཇི་གནང་སྐྱབ་ཞུས་ཚོག་པ་དང་དགོངས་མཚམས་མེད་པར་སྐྱིད་རྗེའི་གཟིགས་པ་མཁྱེན་མཁྱེན། དུས་ཀྲང་མགོན་པོ་ཇོ་རྗེ་དང་དཀོན་མཆོག་ལྷུན་གྲུབ། སྙན་ཀྲགས་བཅས་མི་གསུམ་ནས་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས་པའི་ཞུ་ཡིན། བོད་ཟླ་ཕ་བའི་ཚེས་ཕ་ལ་ཕུལ Sichuan Archives 240-01-0005.

[252] There is much work to be done on this subject, especially in English. There has been some work done on this in the Chinese and Tibetan academy. For example, one Master's thesis on Tibetan and Chinese translation during the Cultural Revolution period, Sangjie Suonan, "rig gsar skabs kyi rgya bod yig sgyur la dpyad pa" (MA thesis, Xinan Minzu Daxue, 2018). As well as a Tenzin (Tib. bstan 'dzin Ch. *Danzeng* 旦增), "lo rgyus gzhung yig sgyur la cung zad dpyad pa" (MA thesis, Xizang Daxue, 2012).

One of the most thorough and descriptive studies on ulak labor in Kham comes from the prominent Chinese socialist Chen Han-seng's (Ch. 陳翰笙, 1897-2004) publication, *Frontier Land Systems in Southernmost China: A comparative study of agrarian problems and social organization among the Pai Yi people of Yunnan and the Kamba people of Sikang.* This work was based on two field studies in the Kardze region in the early 1940s and published in 1949.[253] Chen studied abroad in the United States and Germany, becoming the youngest professor at Beijing University at age 27, and over the 1920s and 30s, he not only conducted extensive surveys of rural conditions across China but worked as a communist spy, helping the Soviets build their network in Nationalist China.[254] While there are other Chinese intellectuals who conducted extensive field work in Kham, Ren Naiqiang being the most prominent, Chen's work and findings concur most closely with my own readings of the situation in eastern Kham during this time.

In eastern Kham there was a sharp division between two major groups, which Chen Han-seng calls the ruling group and the producing group. A more useful differentiation, however, would be those who own land and those who do not own land.[255] Within the first group were the chieftains (Tib. rgyal po, dpon po; Ch. tusi), the land-owning families (like the Pangdatsangs of

[253] Specifically, he looks at the region of Hor (as in Trehor) which includes Kardze. Also, as Ridzin Thargyal points out, "his research and writing is awash with the word feudalism." Chen's own description of his project: "This study is a product of what was originally planned to be a more comprehensive investigation of non-Chinese communities in southern and southwestern China. The project was begun in 1940 but wartime difficulties and the pressure of other duties made it impossible to carry out the whole program. The two field studies which are described in the present report were, however, completed and the results were written up in Chinese. It was not possible until recently to complete the translation of these reports into English. Fortunately, this delay has not appreciably diminished the value of the reports since, according to more recent evidence, the basic pattern of social relationships described herein have not been materially altered during the past few years." Thargyal, ibid. 51.

[254] John Gittings, "Obituary: Chen Han-seng: Chinese social scientist who witnessed a century of change," *The Guardian* (01/April/2004), 25.

[255] This does not apply to nomadic groups who certainly were also subject to ulak and taxation, but that is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Chapter 4), and the monasteries.[256] Of those who do not own land there were either renters or workers who have set relationships with people or families who own land. Within this latter group were the taxpayers (Tib. khral pa ཁྲལ་པ), the monastic dependents (Tib. lha sde ལྷ་སྡེ)[257], the *kholpa* (Tib. ཁོལ་པ), which can be loosely translated as "servant for hire,"[258] and the ta-du (Tib. mtha' dud མཐའ་དུད or mtha' sdod མཐའ་སྡོད)[259], which can be again loosely understood as a temporary

[256] There was an incredible amount of overlap between these broad categories. As one may recall from the Dargye-Beri conflict, the head lamas, the patrons, and the chieftains were more often than not related to one another.

[257] The Lhade in Kardze are describe by Chen as: "In many places La-da have to pay a portion of the harvest, and are also subject to corvée and other requisitions. In some places that portion of harvest is halved or entirely exempted, but La-da still have to meet corvée and requisitions. In other cases the reverse is true, i.e. corvee and requisitions are exempted but not rent in kind (which is really a form of tribute). Again, in a few cases, both are exempted. These variations have come from the different origins of the lamasery lands. Some land was granted by the chieftain to the lamasery in the remote past, and some land was granted recently under new conditions. Some was shifted to the lamasery by Tse-ba, and some was taken over by the lamasery by sheer force. In some instances where the locality did not have the necessary number of Tse-ba to shoulder the tax or requisition assessment, the lamasery ordered its La-da to pay tribute as Tse-ba…In principle, however, La-da are exempted from paying corvée, requisitions and any portion of the harvest. Generally speaking they are economically slightly better off than Tse-ba. Whereas Tse-ba are completely at the mercy of the chieftain, La-da often have the protection of the lamasery against the oppression and injustice which may come from the chieftain. In Kantze, out of the 1,744 households of 37 villages, 138 households, or nearly 8 percent are La-da. The percentage of La-da is about the same as that of Ko-ba." Chen, ibid., 90.

[258] According to Chen, in Kardze, "Ko-ba (Tib. khol pa) means those who have to follow and obey their masters. Ko-ba cultivate their chieftain's land as well as perform miscellaneous errands in his household. In return they receive a small piece of land to cultivate for themselves, seeds, implements and animal power being furnished by their master or landlord. The entire harvest from this little piece of land belongs to the Ko-ba. In other words, the Ko-ba pay labor rent, or rent in the form of labor, to their landlord, for the use of a little piece of land which often is not sufficient for their own subsistence… In Kantze, of the 1,744 households of 37 villages, 141 households or 8 percent are Ko-ba. The status of Ko-ba is obviously lower than that of Tse-ba. Ko-ba do not pay tribute, corvee, or any portion of the harvest on the leased land. Their liability is limited to paying labor rent to their landlords." Chen, ibid., 89.

[259] According to Chen, "The employee is called Ta-du, meaning side-dwellers, that is, not full-fledged members of the community. Unlike Tse-ba, Ko-ba, or La-da, they receive no land for their subsistence. Unlike Ko-ba or La-da they have no identified master to follow or to look to for protection. Ta-du are the poorest of the Sikang population…The household of Ta-du is never large; each usually has one or two elderly people who can no longer do any work. One or two members of each Ta-du family must hire out for miscellaneous daily work in order to provide food for the household. They are even more mobile than Ko-ba, and thus have no obligations of corvée requisitions' or rent payment. A very few of them lease in on a temporary basis a piece of land from some Tse-ba. The vast majority of them, when unable to find employment, flock to some religious ceremony, which usually lasts three or four days, and receive alms from the lamaseries or from their fellow villagers. The best of Ta-du, and they are a very small minority, do skilled work such as stone-carving for religious scripture, sewing, knitting and tailoring, and hide-preparing. In Kantze 144 households, or over 8 percent are Ta-du. They are evidently the forerunners of handicraft workers and hired field laborers." Chen, ibid., 88.

worker.[260] While this was certainly not the case across Kham, Chen's rendering of the relations in Kardze helps clarify the structure of the socio-economic relationships in a decentralized region: "The relationship between the chieftain and Tse-ba [khral pa], that between the landlord and Ko-ba [khol pa], that between the lamasery and La-da [lha sde], and that between the employer and Ta-du [mtha' dud], form the basic production relations of this society." These categories in the second group were not fixed and the individuals (or families) could shift their status upwards or downwards depending on wealth acquisition or loss.[261] While the type of ulak duty would vary, any of these groups within the second category could be required (or possibly paid) to do ulak.

The most commonly used term for the second group, that Chen calls the "producers", is *miser* (mi ser མི་སེར་). A term with a long history in Central Tibet, in Kham, miser stood as a general word for "the people" and not a specific socio-economic group. Not commonly referenced in contemporary Chinese research (such as Chen's) or in secondary literature on socio-economic structure in Kham, it nonetheless is a commonly employed term by the senders themselves in the Tibetan language petitions to mean largely "the common people."[262] Whereas

[260] This term is actually extremely complicated and would have exhibited the most fluidity across Tibetan regions. Literally mtha' meaning "side" and dud meaning smoke or sdod meaning reside, together it has the general meaning of "side dweller" which would imply that the person did not either own land or have their own home. For more variation on this type of category see Thargyal, ibid., on Dege and for Central Tibet see Kensaku Okawa, "A Study on Nang zan: On the Reality of the 'servant worker' in Traditional Tibetan Society", Revue d'études tibétaines, no. 36, 2016.

[261] "An insolvent Tse-ba whose laboring member of the family or field animal may have died, who may have exhausted his seed supply in the planting season, or whose harvest may have been wiped out by natural calamity, or whose indebtedness is so heavy he can no longer meet obligations of tribute, requisition or rent, often gives up the land allotted to him and involuntarily becomes a Ko-ba." Chen, ibid., 89.

[262] Studies on the *miser* are a particularly well-developed field for Central Tibet, for more see Jeanine Bischoff's extensive work on the subject, including Jeanine Bischoff, "Right There But Still Unnoticed: Information on dGa' ldan pho brang mi ser from Archival Material published in German(y)," in *Tibetans who escaped the Historian's Net*, 9-26. And Jeanine Bischoff, "Completely, Voluntarily and Unalterably?' – Values and Social Regulation among Central Tibetan mi ser during the dGa' ldan pho brang-period," in *Social Regulation: Case Studies from Tibetan History*, eds. J. Bischoff and S. Mullard (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 151-180. For Kham, there has been little

the taxpayer, or *khralpa*, is one of the most diverse groups in terms of wealth stratification.[263] The anthropologist Rigdzin Thargyal, explained that the taxpayers ranged from small farmers to well to do large land renters. The well-off taxpayers paid higher tax rates but could often hire people or families who were landless.[264] Across Kham one would find the taxpayers and landless people performing ulak. The ulak service was directly linked to land, rent, and dependent status, and a number of the bilingual petitions refer directly to a land component. For example, the people of Zhowo explained in their petition that in the past, they were only responsible for their home region, and that being sent to other regions was excessive.[265] Whereas another petition from Nyagchu (Tib. nyag chu ཉག་ཆུ Ch. 雅江), a day south of Zhowo village, stated that three

analysis on the meaning and use of this word. It is possible that it was part of a writing standard but not a spoken one.

[263] "The Tse-ba in Tehke [Dege] owe to their chieftain three items of payment. First, rent in kind for which a first-class household pays annually 3.5 tu of oats, a second-class household 2.5 tu, and a third-class household .5 tu. (One tu equals about 13 pounds). Second, several forms of annual tribute such as butter, hay, sheep, rough woolen cloth, gun-powder, and motley for printing holy scriptures of lamaism. As far as butter and hay are concerned, payments differ according to the three classes of households. Other tribute is assessed on a village basis, each, village reassessing in whatever way is feasible. Each village has had to donate thirty Tibetan silver dollars every year for the scripture expenditure. Third, the corvée, i.e. forced labor without compensation, chiefly in three forms: cultivating the chieftain's land or the land of other aristocrats, coolie work in transport or housework, and furnishing animal power whenever required." Chen, ibid., 88.

[264] For the Kingdom of Dege: "Theoretically, all the land in the kingdom was the property of the monarch. The land was not entirely non-revertible and was distributed among all the people in the country, except the dependents. The distribution of land divided the country into two rough divisions: The nobility, inclusive of the Poncha estates, who were not only endowed with large agricultural and pastoral estates, but who were also given dependents; and the lesser leaders and the taxpayers who were given variously sized pieces of land, but who did not own dependents. The rationale behind this difference was that people who had served the state well and who would keep on doing so were remunerated or rewarded." Thargyal, ibid., 50.

[265] Interestingly, in the Tibetan version one could read the text as saying that the people who were sent to do ulak in other regions were landless, implying that they were part of the kholpa or perhaps mda' dud groups. From the Tibetan: ང་སྨོ་བོ་ན་ཨེད་ཁིས་འཚུལ་དགོོས་རྒྱུ་ངང་སྨོ་བོ་ན་ཙཱ་བཞུས་ན་མཛོོགས་སྐང་ （བཏང་） དགོོས་ཤུང་། ཙཱ་བཞུས་དང་ཐང་སྐྱི་རེ་བྱག་གསུམ་རང་གནས་ཡོད། རང་གནས་དུ་ （སྡུ་） རང་གི་སྡང་རྒྱུ་བཏིན་ན་རྒྱང་ （བཀའ་དྲིན་ན་རྒྱང་ཞེས་པའི་དོོན） ། ང་རང་སྨོ་བོ་བ་རང་གནས་བང་སྨོ་དང་ན་རོ་སྐ་རེ་ཙཱ་ཇོོ་ཐོག་གསུམ་སྐང་ཡས། From the Chinese: "so please relieve us from doing the other people's wula and go back to (revert back to the Qing Dynasty system), the previous agreement where people were in charge of (?) their own areas." Sichuan Archives 024-01-0002.

regions had joined together to pay their ulak and taxes and that there were specific territories within which they were liable for such taxation.[266]

In Kham, the relationship between taxation in goods and ulak, taxation in labor or conscription of labor, was rather fluid. Thargyal explains that the predominance of labor as taxation in the region of Dege was due to not only to low population density but also the absence of a monetary system. Officials and ministers of the Dege king were endowed with land on a permanent basis as a type of salary and the dependents, who rented portions of the land, would then pay the rent in labor. In short, this system of land granting and renting established a dependent relationship based on land and manpower. According to Thargyal, those with land were just as dependent on those without.[267]

So what did the Chinese administration actually look like? Beginning with Zhao Erfeng's short-lived colonization of Kham, a two-layered administration began to emerge. The *baojia* 保甲 system, a traditional Chinese system of community-based organization, which was revived by the Nationalists in the 1930s, was overlaid onto the Kham social structure and existed in name only.[268] On a practical level, the differentiations of the baojia system never appropriately mapped onto the various Kham polities, and while it was confusing on paper, what occurred in practice

[266] Sichuan Archives 024-01-0001.

[267] Thargyal, ibid., 50-52.

[268] "A full-fledged two-strata system was established When the Pao-chia administration of Central China was introduced. The same set of people continues to be respectively Chei-tsong, O-ba, Tsong-nga, and O-u, and simultaneously becomes respectively Chu Chang 區 處 長, Hsiang Chang 鄉長, Chung Chang 種 中, Pao Chang 保長 and Chia Chang 家長. By way of comparison there is no doubt that the older system is in full operation while the new Pao-chia system is nominal and supernumerary. Pao-chai was introduced in Tehke and its nearby districts as late as 1938 but often the village headmen have been identified with the hereditary chieftains. In the district of Lihua (formerly known as Litang), directly west of Kongting (sic), there are two headmen for each village in many cases, both hereditary. Under them serve the lower headmen whose tenure of office is only one year. The order of the Chinese magistrate passes on to the lamasery first, then in turn to the hereditary headmen, and finally to the lower headmen for action. In Chanhua, a district directly north of Lihua, the higher headmen (called Tung-peng) have been appointed Chu Chang; and the lower headmen (called Tei-peng) Pao Chang." Chen, ibid., 84-85.

was a two layered administration with many Tibetan local leaders and their immediate subordinates cooperating with Chinese army and Chinese state while maintaining their prexisting power and privileges. As Chen Han-seng explains, "Generally speaking, the most powerful person in the present two-strata administration is, as he has always been, the local hereditary chieftain or the hereditary Chei-tsong [Tib. rje tshang རྗེ་ཚང]. As this two-strata system develops further down the official ladder, however, subordinate officers begin to usurp the power of the hereditary rulers." Importantly, Chen explains that this dual structure was created and strengthened by the transportation and communication needs, in other words, because of the Chinese need for ulak. In the end, this became an incredible burden on the common people.[269]

Having previously addressed the Tibetan and Chinese titles in translation for the upper socio-economic strata (such as the Tusi, Baozheng, Ponpo, and Sago Khanpo among others), this section focuses on the lower strata or the "producers" group, from those employed by the Chinese administration to the ulakpa (Tib. 'u lag pa ཨུ་ལག་པ་) and common people. While the local Tibetan administration had to manage the presence of the Chinese state, accommodating their taxation needs, military presence, and new administrative terminology, the Chinese faced an equally pressing issue of needing to operate in an unfamiliar environment. For the Chinese state, knowledge accumulation and tax accumulation were intricately linked. This was not a story of Chinese domination, militarily or politically, but one of mixed administration. The Chinese and Tibetan two-layered administration in Kham in effect created a mixed socio-economic structure that we see most clearly in the translations and transliterations of socio-economic titles and terminology.

[269] Chen, ibid., 84-85. This was not an uncommon story during the Nationalist period (see Duara), Kham was not unique in this particular aspect but suffice it to say that the majority of Nationalist ruled China didn't have the deeper linguistic and cultural (socio-economic in this case) differences to contend with.

Titles that have been translated, transliterated, historically appropriated or were new – all were embedded in an historically contingent realm of convenient and structural (mis)understandings which in turn created a translingual space with socioeconomic consequences. During this early colonial period, the negotiation of terminologies was critical to the building of a new socioeconomic structure. Within the Sichuan Archive documents there are a number of common Chinese titles that are used for Tibetan local leaders:

1. Cunzhang 村長 – village leader, below a tusi or baozheng (two titles that were often interchangeable), but still involved in arranging local labor.
2. toumu/touren 頭目/頭人 – village leader.

Within Tibetan documents there are a number of transliterated Chinese titles that Tibetans use in their own writing:

1. ཀླུས་ཀྲང་ klus krang or ཕྲི་ཀྲམ་ gli kram, 旅長 lüzhang, battalion commander, and the highest ranking Chinese military post represented in this archive.
2. དུས་ཁྲ་ཀྲམ་ dus khra kram or དུས་ཀྲང་ dus krang 督察長 du cha zhang, meaning inspector general or the censor, this comes up only a couple of times within the Sichuan Archive documents.
3. ཙོན་ཀྲམ་ tshon kram, 村長 Cunzhang (see above)

Whereas some Tibetan titles are translated loosely into Chinese:

1. རིན་པོཆེ Rinpoche, again used to refer to the Chinese Battalion Commander, is translated in Chinese as da ren, (大人) literally, great man.[270]

The most explanatory case is that of tuanzong 團總 (or tuanzhang 團長) and ཐང་ཙོང་ thang tsong, sometimes spelled ཐོན་ཀྲམ thon kram or ཐང་ཙོ་ཀྲམ་ thang tso kram. Tuanzong in Chinese means the leader of a "tuan" or military group similar to a militia (tuanlian 團練) usually organized to fight banditry. In Tibetan, thang tsong and thang tso kram are not only a direct transliteration of tuanzong or tuanzhang, but also conveniently similar to *thang tso*, with *thang* being "area" and *tso* meaning *tsowa*, a socioeconomic term used to designate community groupings. These terms are used interchangeably in the bilingual documents originating in Dartsedo.[271]

The clearest example of the common person present in the bilingual petitions is of the ulakpa (Tib. 'u lag pa), transliterated to wulawa (Ch. 烏拉娃) in Chinese. This term ulakpa includes ulak and pa, which is the typical Tibetan marker for person (or "doer"), in the Tibetan documents ulakpa is the catchall term for any person performing any type of ulak work. The words khral pa (Tib. khral pa) taxpayer, and miser (Tib. mi ser), common person, are frequently mentioned as well to imply a more general status.[272] There are many other Tibetan socio-

[270] Rinpoche and *daren* 大人. In the Chinese translations of some of the other documents "rinpoche" is always translated at *daren*. It is possible that the people in Kham or the villages did not differentiate between the leaders of one group and another and it is simply a sign of respect.

[271] The documents I refer to in this section are all from around the Dartsedo (Ch. Kangding) region which at the time was the Chinese stronghold in Kham. As previously mentioned, the documents in question range from 1932 to 1933 immediately following the conclusion of the Dargye Beri conflict. They point out the stress and scarcity and overall chaos of the post war period, and show how, being close to a Chinese stronghold, the Tibetan actors were well connected to the Chinese army and government network. As we will see below, a number of the Tibetan communications were written by tuanzong. Also, this term in Chinese started to be employed on a larger scale during the Zhao Erfeng period.

[272] *Mi ser* means regular people; *mi* people, *ser* yellow, for example, "རྒྱ་ནག་མི་སེར་". The term *miser* is used in almost all of these petitions and seems to be a social category and not a socioeconomic one. Miser is a term that has been

economic terms that are used in the documents and are never properly translated into Chinese. For example, villagers, (Tib. རྫོང་དོང) and similarly, small householders (Tib. དོང), nomads (Tib. འཇོག) among others. In Chinese wulawa (Ch. 烏拉娃) is used frequently and is a synonym for chaimin (Ch. 差民).[273] Although wula and chai by themselves are not always equivalent in Chinese communications, there does appear to be consistency in using these two terms for the people performing the labor or paying a tax. With that said, chaimin is used indiscriminately when discussing Tibetans of any lower social strata. In Chinese there is no equivalent for the Tibetan khral pa (which could possibly translate to chaimin) or miser, but the words baixing (Ch. 百姓), minzhong (Ch. 民眾), and gongmin (Ch. 公民) are used frequently and only occasionally reflect a proper translation of the Tibetan meaning.[274] Overall, what we see in the Chinese administrative mapping and translation is a form of simplification and standardization to increase governmental and bureaucratic efficiency. For the local Chinese state the "wulapa" was a catch-all phrase that linguistically standardized an economically un-standard practice.[275]

In Tibetan, "ulakpa" could refer to a wide range of people performing ulak labor. From his research in Kardze in early 1940s, Chen Han-seng reported that the dependants, or khol pa, an individual or family who rent land from taxpayers, worked at least thirty days in a year for their

discussed at great length elsewhere but I am still unclear as to what its use was in the Kham areas. In the Bilingual pamphlet page 1: "Point 1 "don thsan dang bo" To alleviate issues from before by building a new central transport system, to liberate people (mi ser) from the old tax (khral) and 'u lag, here we are (?) building a new horse load transport (rta khal) central system and clearing the road of the previous system." Sichuan Archives 137-01-3021.

[273] The Chinese are well aware that the "wa" or "pa" denotes a person or doer. For example *daofuwa* 道孚娃 or person from Da'u.

[274] *gongmin* 公民 lit means civilians but not sure if that should be literally translated at all, *baixing* is also used a lot and interchangeable with *gongmin*.

[275] For more on state's simplifying information for expediency see, Scott, ibid.

landlord but that some villages worked as much as 90 or 180 days in the year.[276] Furthermore, his research showed that the requisitions by the local Chinese government increased over the course of the 1930s. In 1935, (a few years after the majority of the bilingual petitions were written), the Kardze quota for ulak was 621 people, 927 horses, 1,652 yaks (dzo) but by 1940 this quota had increased to 2,384 horses and 1,974 yaks (dzo). According to Chen, these numbers represented 9.75 percent of the total population of Kardze, 71.2 percent of the yaks and as much as 82 percent of the horses.[277] Furthermore, by the early 1940s, the local government in Kardze set up an ulak central office managed by the Khangsar and Mashu (Tib. ma zur) chieftains to manage the basic organization of transportation the local government. Accounting for twenty-two different villages, the office was staffed by eight different village headmen with appointments in monthly rotation. So, for example, if the Chinese magistrate's office needed horses, their interpreter would take the order written in Chinese to the ulak office with the specifications as to the date and number of required horses, this order would then be filled by the headmen who had the authority to make the village and household requisitions.[278] After that, the taxpayer (khral pa) households who were notified would bring their horses to the courtyard of the Baozheng 保正, who could be the Tusi, the khanpo, or Ponpo, where all the additional ulak

[276] Chen calls the khol pa, Ko-pa. This is not a consistently definable social status around Kham. "Apart from field cultivation the Ko-ba works at least 30 days in the year for his lord. In the village of Se-si-ting the Ko-ba works 50 days, in the village of Shun-jo 60 days, in Jen-ku and Hsun-en 90 days, and in Teh-la as many as 180 days." Chen, ibid., 106.

[277] These numbers are apparently for 1935. Ibid., 121.

[278] Ibid., 121. Additionally, Chen explains, "The real burden of ula can easily be seen, however, from the use of horses alone. If as in Kantze one ordinary household furnishes the use of a horse 26 times in nine months, it would amount to something like 35 times in a year. Thus, the eleven villages of Kungse, with 358 house-holds subject to ula service, must have provided during 1940, 12,530 horse-days. Accordingly, as there were 2,382 horses in the entire district of Kantze, in 1940, the horse ula must have totaled more than 60,000 days in that year. Yet 1940 was a peaceful year. In years of military campaigns the horse ula is bound to be very much higher and its burden far more crushing." Ibid., 122.

payments of fodder, travel equipment, fuel (yak dung), etc. would be brought over the course of a day. It was then the job of the Baozheng to dispatch this horses and items to the army or to the magistrate's office, where they would remain for the decided upon number of days. The Baozheng's assistant would register the deliveries made by individual households in their ulak book. Chen provides a specific example of one of these books, as large as 8 by 25 inches (about the size of a large Tibetan pecha, a long rectangular style of printing books), which recorded the ulak payments by village and households.[279] A lengthy quote gives a thick description of the book:

> With the name of each household, different signs are entered to show how much and what kind of ula that household has already paid. An ula book for December 1940, for instance, has 14 different signs, of which five are letters and nine are signs. The five letters, pronounced in Tibetan, are go-ar meaning eggs, dro meaning leather bag, taba meaning rope, solo meaning scythe, and igo meaning grass beater. The nine signs stand for nine kinds of ula: 1) [a swastika] for mi-tha meaning labor; 2) X for da, meaning horse; 3) [the Tibetan letter ta] for zarlu, meaning sheep or goat; 4) [a letter that resembles the letter 2? Not sure which letter they mean, if its sha than its probably just that] for sha, meaning chicken or hen; 5) 0 for za-sha, meaning wild barley; 6) [zero with a strike through], for za-o, meaning fresh fodder grass; 7) [a letter or symbol that looks like the number 6] for gabosi, meaning dry wood fuel; 8) [seven vertical lines with a strike through] for sin, meaning twigs or cow dung [used as fuel]; and 9) [a symbol that looks like the letter T] for su-bo meaning cloth bag. One of the ordinary households during a nine-month period in 1940 gave the following as ula: ten days' labor, the use of a horse 26 times, one sheep, three chickens, 18 eggs, one-time use of a leather bag, one-time use of rope, one-time use of scythe, one-time use of grass beater, one-time use of a cloth bag, four loads of wild barley, 23 loads of dry wood fuel, 120 loads of twigs and cow dung, and 18 loads of fresh fodder grass.[280]

Most of the time, the owners (or their close relatives) of the horses and yaks would accompany them for the duration of the ulak requisition period. This was often for days at a time

[279] Ibid., 121.

[280] Ibid., 122.

and extremely difficult on the ulakpa. A large proportion of the people who made these deliveries and accompanied the animals were women, as there was little in the way of a strict division of labor among men and women in Kham; certainly a handful of the names of the ulakpa recorded in the bilingual petitions could have indicated women.[281]

Overall, Chen's survey of the Kardze region revealed that 12.2 percent of the Khral pa (taxpayer possibly landlord) households, 36.84 percent of the khol pa (lower status renters), 36.36 percent of the lha sde, monastic dependents (households renting a monasteries land) and 53.57 percent of the mtha' dud (individuals without land or a chieftain in charge of them) performed some type of ulak labor.[282]

While certainly not monetized to the degree Zhao Erfeng would have hoped for at the end of the Qing Dynasty, this work was, in many cases, expected to be compensated. From the previous chapter we learned that the Tibetan workers received compensation in the form of "gifts" largely amounting to food and small amounts of money which accords more directly to the traditional labor compensation methods in Kham. However, the petition sent by the Dpon sde and people of Zhowo village explained that the people of Zhowo had been taking on the transportation duties for the village of Thang spya (Tib. ཐང་སྤྱ) and were never compensated for it. Apparently, Thang spya had managed to bribe the local Chinese administration in Nyarong and tricked the Zhowo people into doing their ulak duty for them. By sending their petition to the

[281] Chen notes a specific type of ulak that he claims was fulfilled mostly by women, "there is the ula of fuel and cooking in all administrative offices, custom-houses, and inns where traveling officials and marching troops stop over. As there are no such categories of workers, as cooks or even house servants, all services which normally would be expected from them are requisitioned from all households. This form of ula is performed by women, usually of the poorest Tse-ba households. They purvey water from creeks in the canyon and fuel or cow dung from their own homes." Ibid., 119-120.

[282] Chen further notes that one sees a definite correlation between poverty and labor power; the degree of economic status and the availability of labor go hand in hand. Ibid., 127.

Chinese authorities, the people of the Zhowo village in Nyarong expected to be compensated (Tib. bda' dngul བདའ་དངུལ).[283] This was perhaps an abnormal situation but regular enough for them to expect the Chinese to enforce it.

Another example of compensation expectation was a bilingual petition from Se'urong (Tib. bsi'u rong བསིའུ་རོང Ch.色烏絨) about two days walk south of Dartsedo, which recounts the difficulties faced by two ulakpa, Tshul khrims (Tib. ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས) and Khangsar Rta Mgrin (Tib. ཁང་སར་ རྟ་མགྲིན) on their trip between Dartsedo and Da'u,[284] and is addressed to the Dartsedo Chi kyap (Tib. spyi khyab སྤྱི་ཁྱབ Ch. zong du 总督) Ponpo Lu Zhang (battalion commander Ch. lü zhang) Rinpoche. When the two ulakpa were performing the horse ulak (Tib. rta'u, literally "horse 'u") with six horses and mules, they gave the Da'u Podrentsang family the horses to take care of for three days. During this time however, not only did the Podrentsang family not take care of the animals properly, but during one of the nights two mules worth two hundred Tibetan silver coins (Tib. rgya ma རྒྱ་མ or rgya kram རྒྱ་ཀྲམ, Ch. 藏洋) were stolen by soldiers of the Chinese commander Luo (Tib. rgya dpon lo ming kram Ch. 羅營長) and even though another army unit was

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[283] From the Nyarong Document: … 米知事任内通消娃 與謝通事(interpreter Xie)合 唐營長 二人前 花費銀錢每年暫由 通消邦(should be the regular bang 帮)脚費不支烏拉叫 我們朱倭娃暫支数年可給脚費與我們如此哄言已支数年未邦(帮)脚費至後… Translation: During the county clerk's (zhi shi) period in office, the "tong xiao wa" (the people of tong xiao), gave money to (bribed or paid their way out of it) Interpreter Xie and Battalion Commander Tang these two, every year the people of Tongxiao temporarily helped with the jiao fei (the jiaofei is probably the "foot tax" or the loads carried by people) (the people of Tongxiao basically have money so they can pay off the Chinese, and the scam the Zhuwo people into doing it for them) but we could not bear/sustain the wula duty. The Tibetan: … "སྔོན་ཆེ་ཞ་འབབ་ཆེ་སོ་ཡོན་གི་དུས་སུ་རང་གནས་མ་ལྟོ་སྟང་(བཏང)མ་དགོས། བླ་དཔོན་མདོ་དག་རིག་གི་ཆོ་ལ། ལོ་ཆེ་ཤེས་སྲུང་དང་ཐང་སྤྲུ་བ་ལ་བདའ་དངུལ་སྤྲི་བཙུས་ཟེར་ནས་འགོ་སྐོར་བྱུང་ནས། ལོ་ཆ་ཤེ་དེ་དུས་སྟང་(བཏང)རྒྱུ་བྱུང་། སྲུང་དགོས་ཟེར་བྱུང་སུ་(དུ)ཐ་ཡིས་འགྲ་ལ་རྒྱུ་འགྲོ་བྱེ་ནས་ཡོས(ཡོད)། ནག་རོག་ས་སྔོ་ཕང་ཚ་མུག་མེད་དུ་ཞུ་ཙ་བྱུང་། བཀའ་ཐག་བཅས་ཁ་ང་མ་བྱུང་ནས། ཕང་ཚ་མུག་མར་དར་མདོ་ནང་ལ་ཐེས། ཡང་ས་སྔོ་གསར་པ་རྫེ་བྱུང་ནས། དེ་ཡིས་མདད་དུ་ཡང་ཞུ་བ་ཕུལ་ཡིན། ས་སྔོ་གི་རྩ་མ་ཆེ། སོ་བཙུས་མདའ་དཔོན་ཤག་ཐེས་བ་ཡོས། ཐང་སྤྲུ་བ་ལ་ཁ་སྲང་གི་བདའ་དངུལ་མ་སྤྲོ། ད་རིག་འདུ་གདོང་གི་བླ་དཔོན་ཕ་བ་དང་ནོ་དོ་སྐྱུ་ལ་གཟིགས་སྟབས་?རང་། ང་སྤྲོ་བོ་བ་དཔོན་སྤེ་གཉིས་སྟོང་ཤོག་བཞུ་དང་མི་འདྲ། ལྷ་སྤེ་ནང་མ་ཡིན། བླ་དཔོན་ཁོ་འདུས་ཐུགས་ལ་མངར། ཐང་སྤྲུ་དང་སོ་བཙུས་གཉིས་དཔོན་མེད་ཁྲེ་ཡིས་བྱ་བ་ལེ་ནས་ས་ཚོགས་བཅས་ཤེས་ཡིན། རང་ས་དང་མི་ས་ཡིས་མདོ་ཁྲིད་གི་སྐུ་གཙག་ཏུ་མི་བཏང་རོགས་ལ་དྲིན་མ་ཆུང་། རང་ས་མ་གཏོང་མི་ས་སྲུང་མི་ཐུགས་ཐག་ཆེ་ཡིན།(ཐག་ཆོད་ཡིན་ཟེར་གྱི་ཡོད) གལ་སྲིད་མི་ས་སྲུང་དགོས་བྱུང་ན། དཔོན་མེད་ས་མཐའ་འཁྱམ་ནི་མ་སྟོང་མི་ཆག་(ཆགས)ཐག་ཆེ་(ཐག་ཆོད་)རེ་ལགས། ཐང་སྤྲུ་བ་ལ་ལོངས་སྟང་གི་བདའ་དངུལ་དུས་ཆེ་བཅས་ཡིབ་ཏུ་བགྲིན་མ་ཆུང་།" Sichuan Archives 024-01-0002.

[284] It is unclear who could have written this petition, spelling mistakes are common so at the very least it is likely not a person of high education.

dispatched to chase the thieves, they were unable to get the animals back. The two ulakpa then kindly requested that they receive help and compensation (Tib. khyen phog ཁྱེན་ཕོག) for their lost animals.[285]

Not only does this petition provide a clear example of the difficult conditions faced by ulakpa as they carried out the ulak labor and provide the service of their animals but we also see the same confluences of Tibetan and Chinese terminology in transliteration that we saw in the Nyarong document earlier in this chapter.[286] Again, the address uses Tibetan vocabulary of high status to refer to the Chinese army leader, Chi kyap (governor general), Ponpo (leader), Rinpoche (precious one), but the terms "battalion commander" (Tib. gli kram གླི་ཀྲམ Ch. lü zhang) and army (Tib. thu'u ming ཐུའུ་མིང Ch. tu bing) are also present. The Chinese translation however, perhaps hastily composed, provides very little of the detail present in the Tibetan. The key points are present, but the Podrentsang family is identified as a Baozheng (in fact two families are identified as baozheng which seems confusing and potentially a misunderstanding on the

[285] Transcription of the Tibetan Original: དར་མདོ་སྤྱི་ཁྲབ་དཔོན་པོ་གླི་ཀྲམ་རིན་པོཆེའི་ཞལས་བྱང་དུ། ཞུ་བ། རྒན་བསིའུ་རོ(should be rong)་ཀུ་ལག་པ་རྒྱལ་ཁིམས་དང་ཚང་སར་ཀ་མཐིན་གཤེས་ནས་སྐབ་ཁུ་ཕུལ་པོན། དོན་རྣ། རྒན་གཤེས་ཀྱཱུ་ནང་ཀུ་ལག་ཀ་དེའུ་དུག (they are using the actual numbers)་སྐག་ནས་ཀྱ་ནང་འབྲོར་སྐབས་ ཀྱཱུ་སྒོ་དྲི་ནོ་ཚང་ནས་ཀ་དེའུ་བསྒོལ་བཤགས་(should be bgo bsha' or something closer to the Chinese meaning)རྒྱབ་ནས་ཀུ་ལག་པའི་ཉེན་ཁག་གསུམ་བགགས (should be first ka)་ནས་བཙང་རྒྱ་ཚན་བཞིན(should be sbyin)་རྒྱ་མ་ཐྲུང་། ཀ་རྒྱ་མཛ་०० རེན་པ་དང་དེའུ་stong.གཤེས ཁེས་རེན་པ་སྐགས་ལ་སྒོ་དྲི་ཁྱིས་རྒྱབ་པར རྒྱ་དཔོན་ཁ་ནས་ཁྱེ་ཤེང་ཀྱམ་ཁེས་ཐུའུ་ཡིང་ཀུའུ་བ་ནས་དགོང་མོ་འཛོག་ནས་ཁྲིད་སོང་བས ངེ འཛུལ་ཙོ་ཤེང(could be yang) ཀྱམ་མདུན་ཁུ་བར་རྒྱ་དམག་གཙོག དང་ཐུའུ (bing) ར་མདའ་བཀང་ཡོད་ཀྱང་མ་རག་ལགས་པའི་ཀ་དེའུ་ཁྲིད་མཁན་ཐུའུ་ཤེང(should be bang, bing/army)་ཅི་ཙོ་ཤེང་ཀྱམ་གིས་ཡིན་པའི དང་ནས་ (dau) ནང་ཁུ་ལག་འཛོ་ཤི་བའེ་ཐག་ཆོད་དང་ ཀྱཱུ་ཁུ་ལག་པ་ལ་ཀ་དེའུག་ཁེས ཀྱེན phog 'byung་ཚོགས (should be chogs)་པ་བཀའ་དྲིན་ཅེ་ཁུ་ཁུ་ཞུ ཐུན་བསིའུ་རོང་ཁུ་ལག་པ་རྒྱལ་ཁིམས་དང་ཀ་མཐིན་གཤེས་ནས། Sichuan Archive 240-01-0005.

[286] While it is not clear regarding their exact assignment, Chen provides two examples of ulak duties that might partially explain what was going on: "Third, there is the 'ula of police and guardsman, who are also used for collecting revenues, which is met by those who have some knowledge of the Chinese language. While performing this kind of ula the ula wa receive neither pay nor food. They are of course given the chance to requisition some of their needs from the common people, and also are exempt from all other kinds of ula. They become the watchmen of the magistrate's office, the convoy of official transport and travel, and the land-tax collectors' in some cases. A magistrate may have twenty to thirty such guardsmen, each of them serving one month or one year by rotation. Fourth, there is the ula of prison guards throughout the day and night. As the guardsmen of the magistrate's office serve by rotation, other Tsè-ba are required to perform the work of prison guards. Often women are drafted to meet this kind of ula." Chen, ibid., 199-120.

Chinese translator's part), and the request for compensation is not mentioned but perhaps implied.[287]

Lack of payment, relieving of obligation, and compensation were in fact the impetus for all of the Tibetan petitions. To be sure, despite Zhao Erfeng's early 20th century stipulations for paying set fees to ulakpa, it seems to have only sporadically occurred in practice. For all the labor, time, and goods utilized for ulak often only a small token payment was given and occasionally food would be provided.[288] For construction work, as seen in the bridge reconstruction project in Chapter Two, ulak laborers were paid small amounts in money, but most payment was made in kind in the form of food, grain, or tea. Compensation for losses on the other hand, appear to have been made, as the abundance of petitions would imply. Between ulak offices, simplified Chinese translations, and semi-standardized compensation practices, the Chinese presence in Kham simultaneously strained and entrenched the existing Tibetan socio-economic structures.

[287] The Official Chinese translation of the Se'urong Document: 呈為呈懇查究事竊 康定縣属第五區色烏絨 烏拉娃 此稱 孔撒登珍 二人 支應六匹騾馬至道孚被道孚各保正估擋分頭拉去在 孔撒保正園内 拴的馬一匹 價置藏洋二百元 騾子一價銀兩平 至三日水草未給是夜 被羅營長土兵二人拉去偷跑此土兵二人係道孚娃呈請羅營長跟即派人追緝未獲只得來部叩懇嚴查追償不然恐後不敢支往道孚伏乞 旅長大人鈞恩重[?]憐嚴查追究沾恩無重[?]矣. Sichuan Archive document 240-01-0004.

[288] "The ula wa have to equip the animals either for riding or for drafting purposes. They feed their own animals along the way, usually wheat and other cheap provision. A nominal fee is usually paid to the ula wa but this is so little that it repays merely a fraction of the cost to the household. All officials (Chinese) and troops are entitled to requisition such ula. Even merchants (again Chinese), who usually have connections with the administration may obtain this forced labor of animals…[one type of ulak] is performed by women, usually of the poorest Tse-ba households. They purvey water from creeks in the canyon and fuel or cow dung from their own homes. For this kind of ula they often receive a tiny fee, so small that the O-ba who supervise the work do not even bother to "squeeze", from it." Chen, ibid., 119-120.

Ulak and Taxation: Khral and Chai

The domination and entrenchment of the ulak labor system in Kham was reflected in the Chinese near wholesale adoption of the transliterated term *wula* in state communications and popular publications. *Wula* was not only the main word used to describe this complex Tibetan labor and taxation system, it was also a useful simplification of the situation in Kham and would eventually turn into a popular adage to explain everything "backward" about the socio-economic system in Kham.[289] Before dealing with this failure of Chinese knowledge, what does the use and translation of ulak entail? What was "wula" used to describe and what were the activities that its usage in Chinese obscured? Despite the fact that in Tibetan khral, tax, was a practice distinct from ulak, the Chinese words "wula" and chai (Ch. 差), roughly meaning "errand" or "service" were exclusively used to describe the multitude of socio-economic activities and taxation relationships. The limitations of Chinese knowledge, the simplification for bureaucratic practicality, was also linked to the notion of knowledge accumulation as it related to resource and tax accumulation, namely, the Chinese state needed to "understand" their colonized space in order to extract labor from it.[290]

The most basic differentiation between khral and ulak is that khral was a specific tax paid in silver or in kind (most often in kind) once or even twice a year on land and income. Ulak on the other hand, was a seasonal, sometimes occasional, labor that while tied to rent, was far more

[289] It seems that the earliest reference to *wula* 烏拉 in Chinese is from the late Qing Zhao Erfeng period and found in the *Qing Shi Gao* 清史稿, accessed on May 20, 2020. *Zhong yang yanjiu yuan Hanji dianzi wenxian.* *http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/ihpc/hanjiquery?@15^831561120^802^^^30202025@@1659790980#top*

[290] As far as I am aware, there are no other examples of the Chinese state using a transliterated foreign word to describe a labor or taxation system on the borderlands (or anywhere else). This points not only to the domination of this system but also to the inability of the Chinese state to find an equivalent word that could denote all the diverse functions of ulak.

fluid. Not every individual or household paid khral but almost everyone had to participate in a type of ulak labor. Furthermore, Tibetans refer to this service as a type of khral, or tax, using the phrase "khral rigs 'u lag", which roughly means "the ulak type of tax" where ulak is referring to a few different kinds of ulak from the animal carrying, "khal", to service done by people, "rkang".[291] Leaving room for a degree of regional differences and specification, the Chinese administration in Kham had a difficult time overlaying their own taxation system onto the Tibetans, and as Mark Frank and Joseph Lawson demonstrate in their studies of taxation in Xikang Province, the Chinese state had to adopt a multitude of tactics to tax the region, and overall their translation did not reflect the underlying diversity.[292] To be sure, deciphering the taxation and ulak system in Kham was no easy task, and even Chen Han-seng, despite his clear understanding of the land and labor system in the Kardze region, did not have an appreciation for the differences between khral and ulak. For Chen there was an ambiguity regarding ulak and the term khral does not even appear in his study (apart from designating the taxpayers, khralpa).[293]

The following passages lay out some of the issues of translation in the ulak petitions: they showcase the mixed structure that ulak took during this period, as well as the issues regarding the Chinese involvement in ulak, and their attempts to translate it into bureaucratic knowledge. Ulak was not a uniform term across Kham, the regional spellings and pronunciations differed slightly

[291] The khral rigs 'u lag is from this document: 民國22年2月 (around this date) Upper Minyak, Chinese title旅部，康定属第二区团总康将秧及各村保民众(?)等夷禀已意义，四张均同. Historically it is argued that ulak is compulsory or even forced service, ulak is mainly used for transportation and in the Qing imperial sense 'u lag is translated as chai which is also a very broad term, could also be for postal service, and ulak requirements would be determined at a fairly local level and be an agreement of sorts between the local people and the powers that be from monasteries to chieftains to kings and the Chinese visitors who come either in the form of military or official business exclusively. Sichuan Archive 024-01-0006.

[292] Frank, ibid.; Lawson, "Warlord Colonialism."

[293] Interestingly, this term "wula" would be used consistently in Chinese state and popular documents through at least the 1950s although by that time its "feudal" notion and "backwards" characteristics were set in stone and inextricable from them in Chinese discourse.

from region to region. According to Chen there were ten kinds of ulak, and according to a memoir, there were no less than eight.[294] But while these give texture to the variety of ulak labor activities they do not completely reflect the complexity of the various taxation structures present in Kham. However, if we just take ulak as an example, in these petitions alone there are multiple spellings and variations of ulak such as: ‘u lag, ‘ul, ‘ul lag and the many iterations of specificity denoted by “carrying” ulak, horse ulak, etc. Occasionally the situation was merely implied as seen in the petition from Zhowo village in Nyarong. The translator of the Nyarong petitions uses the term “wula”, “zhiying wula” (to levy ulak), and “wulawa”, when actually the term ulak doesn’t appear once in the Tibetan version. They use the more specific term bda’ dngul (བདའ་དངུལ) which mentioned above means something like a “fee for collecting” but could also be read as “drive-fee”, so it is not only specifying compensation or payment but also implying the type of work (transportation) which in Chinese is translated as jiaofei (Ch. 腳費) literally “foot-fee”. Overall, the word wula in Chinese is used to encapsulate this transaction.

When we compare Tibetan petitions to the Chinese translations, we see a further dissonance in the translation of the Tibetan word khral, usually translated as tax, and ulak. If not wula, the Chinese translations use the word chai 差 which means “errand” or even “service.”[295] This is distinct from “tax” although it can imply a levy.[296] The word tax, shui 稅, or equivalent

[294] This author however falls into the habit of explaining everything through the lens of how successful the Communist Party’s “liberation” of Tibet was. Yang Wushi, “Jiefang qian Kangding Wula Chaiyi Jishi,” in *Ganzi zhou zangzu zizhizhou Ganzi zhou wenshi ziliao xuanji di wu ji. Zhongguo Renmin Zhengzhi xieshang huiyi* (Sichuan sheng Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou weiyuanhui bian, 1986), 72-82.

[295] I have a strong suspicion that the words khral and chai share a linguistic history going back to the Tibetan Empire period but that is outside the scope of this study.

[296] Proponents of a “feudal” reading of Tibetan society would further claim that the Chinese translation was appropriate and adequate. I think the possibility here for an information feedback loop is concerning and one should be more critical of this thinking.

contemporary Chinese terms for tax is hardly mentioned in these files. “Chai” could be assigned or requested but the implication in the Chinese documents, at least when you consider the word itself, is that of doing forced unpaid work for the government.[297] However, as we well know from the petition from Zhowo in Nyarong, and others, there was a lot more going on than a coerced errand. Furthermore, the phrases, zhiying wula 支應烏拉 or zhichai支差, “zhi” and “zhiying” meaning to “levy”, are used seemingly interchangeably in the documents and occasionally these are the translations of the Tibetan term “phab,” roughly meaning to levy, but it is not used nearly as frequently.[298]

As mentioned in the Zhowo village’s petition, the bda’ dngul in Tibetan was translated as jiao fei 腳費in Chinese. However, there was another example of this from a Da’u petition of rkang rgya ‘ul lag, (རྐང་རྒྱའི་འུལ་ལག) [299] where the Chinese translation—for lack of understanding or brevity—did not include any mention of this word and instead merely focused on the information

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[297] If we go back and consider the meaning of the word *chai* 差 from the *zhiying chai* 支應差 or *wula* 烏拉 seen in *zhiying wula* 支應烏拉, *zhi* or *zhiying* has a meaning closely related to “dispatch” or to “levy” but as we will see below, there does not appear to be an equivalent Tibetan word in use. To further explain the diversity of choices of in Chinese terminology, let’s quickly look to the modern archival title given to these collections of documents: the phrase “交通運輸差徭”, (chaiyao, another word for 徭役 or “corvee labor” from the Song, Ming, Qing periods), 運輸, transportation, like 稅 , tax, is not actually used in a single document.

[298] Se’urong Petition: Transcription of the Tibetan Original: དར་མདོ་སྨྱི་ཁྲལ་དོར་ཡོད་པ་སྤེལ་ཀ་ཤེའི་ཞལས་བྱང་དུ། ཁུ་བ། ཐན་བསྡུའོ་རོ(should be rong)་ཁ་ལག་པ་ཚུལ་ཁིམས་དང་ལང་སར་ཀ་མཐིན་གཤིས་ནས་སྐན་ཁུ་ཏེ་ཐུ་ཐུག (they are using the actual numbers)་སྐག་ནས་ཀྱ་ནང་འཕྲོར་སྐབས་ ཀྱའུ་ཐོ་དྲིན་ཚང་ནས་ ཀ་དེའུ་བསྒོས་བཤགས(should be bgo bsha’ or something closer to the Chinese meaning)རྒྱབ་ནས་ཁུ་ལག་པའི་ཉེན་ཞག་གསུམ་བཏགས (should be first ka)་ནས་བཙང་ཆུ་ཚམ་བཞེན(should be sbyin)་རྒྱ་མ་བྱང་། ཀ་རྒྱ་མཛ་༡༠ རེན་པ་དང་དེའུ་stong.གཤེས ཡིས་རིན་པ་སྐལས་ལ་ཐོ་དྲིན་ཐྱིས་རྒྱབ་ར་ནང་བཀྲགས་པར རྒྱ་དགོན་ལོ་ཆེང་ཀྱས་གིས་ཐུའུ་ཡིང་ཁའུ་བ་ནས་དགོང་ཆོ་ཤོག་ནས་ཁྲིད་སོང་བས ད་ འཕྲལ་ལོ་ཆེང(could be yang) ཀྱས་མདུན་ཁུ་བར་རྒྱ་དཔལ་གཅིག ངང་ཐུའུ (bing) ར་མདའ་བཀངང་ཡོད་ཀྱངང་མ་རབ་ལགས་པའི ཀ་དེའུ་ཁྲིད་མཁན་ཐུའུ་ཆེང(should be bang, bing/army)་ནི་ལོ་ཆེང་ཀྱས་གིས་ཡིན་པའི ད་ནས་ (dau) ནང་ཁུ་ལག་འགྲོ་ཆེ་བའི་ཨ་ཚང་དང་ ཁྱའུ་ཁུ་ལག་པ་ལ་ཀ་དེའུགཤིས ཀྱེན phog ‘byung·ཚོགས (should be chogs)་པ་བཀའ་དེན་ཚེ་ཁུ་ཁུ། ཐན་བསྡུའོ་རོང་ཁུ་ལག་པ་ཚུལ་ཁིམས་དང་ཀ་མཐིན་གཤིས་ནས། Sichuan Archive document 240-01-0004. The Official Chinese translation of the Se’urong Document: 呈為呈懇查究事竊 康定縣属第五區色烏絨 烏拉娃 此稱 孔撒登珍 二人 支應六匹騾馬至道孚被道孚各保正估擋分頭拉去在 孔撒保正園内 拴的馬一匹 價置藏洋二百元 騾子一價銀兩平 至三日水草未給是夜 被羅營長土兵二人拉去偷跑此土兵二人係道孚娃呈請羅營長跟即派人追緝未獲只得來部叩懇嚴查追償不然恐後不敢支往道孚伏乞 旅長大人鈞恩重[?]憐嚴查追究沾恩無重[?]矣. Sichuan Archive document 240-01-0004.

[299] Rkang and dun was the basic unit of taxation under the Ganden Podrang.

about the dead pack animals.[300] This term also appears in the Dege petition which further includes a specific reference to problems with taxation. Essentially, when the Tibetan Government controlled the Dege region up to 1917, they had set an agreement stating that Dege would not be required to pay tax for ten years, because of this they explained, the Chinese government should have no power to tax them.[301] This document included the seal of the Dege King. The archive unfortunately did not provide a Chinese translation of this Tibetan document.

Apart from the "foot" ulak, there was also a very common reference to horse transport, or "rta khal".[302] This term is found throughout the Tibetan documents and does not have an obvious equivalent term in Chinese. This is also frequently seen as "rta khal ul lag" or "rta khal khral rigs" and is a commonly found phrase in the Tibetan documents, meaning horses laden with goods or pack animals, and part of the ulak and part of taxation.[303] This word appears frequently in other Tibetan documents but there is no Chinese equivalent apart from the mentioning of

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[300] Da'u petition ད་ལན་རྟ་བུ་ས་སློས་བཀའ་ཕེབས་མི་སེར་སྐྱི་ནས་དར་མདོར་ཞུ་འབུལ་དོན་དུ་མངགས་གཏོང་ཡོང་བའི་མི་གསུམ་ནས་ཞུ་དོན། རྐང་རྒྱུའི་ཨུལ་ལག་ Sichuan Archives 024-01-0005.

[301] Dege Petition Sichuan Archives 024-01-0003. "སྡེ་དྲུང་མང་པོ་མེད། ཕྱིན་བཞུད་ལ་རྟ་ཁལ་བཞོལ་འགོག་སོགས་བདེ་སྡུག་ཆེ་བའི་དགོན་ཡུལ་ནས་ཞུ་གསལ། དངོས་འབྲེལ་ཡིན་འདུག་ཐོག། སྔོན་དུ་ཁོ་རང་ཚོ་ལ་ཡོད་པའི་སྡེ་དྲུང་གྱི་མི་རྩ་རྣམས་ཛ་རྒྱུད། འདན་མ་འོག། འགོ་ལོག་བཅས་ལ་རང་མོས་ཀྱིས་སོང་ཏེ་འགྱུར་འཁོར་བྱུང་མང་རེ་ཡོད་འདུག་པས། ངེད་རང་གུས་མིང་ནས་ཛ་རྒྱུད་འདན་མའི་ས་འགོ་དང་གྲོས་མཐུན་གྱིས་ཕྱིར་བཀུག་གི་ཁྲལ་ས་རང་གནས་བཞག་ཆོག་པ་དང་ དེ་ཡང་ལོ་བཅུ་ཕན་འདེད་རྒྱུ་མེད་གསུངས་ཆོད་ཟེར་བ་འདི་བོད་སྡེ་བ་གཞུང་ནས་སྡེ་དགེའི་དཔོན་བྱེད་སྐབས་ཀྱི་ཆོད་མཚམས་ཡིན་པས་རྒྱ་དཔོན་སོགས་དེ་དབང་བཞག་དོན་མེད་བཞིནའགོ་ལོག་ཚུན་ཡོད་རིགས་རང་སྡེ་རང་བདག་སྐྱོང་དུ་བཅས་རྒྱ་གཞུང་གི་གཞུང་དོན་རྟ་ཁལ་ཁྲལ་རིགས་ལ་ཞབས་ཞུ་དང་ དུད་འཁྲོག་མི་སེར་ཁྲལ་རྐང་སྐྱུར་སྟོང་མི་འབྱུང་ཆེད་བཅས་ལ་བསམ་ནས་ཞུ་བ་ལས ཛ་རྒྱུད་དང་གད་འཁྲོག་གཉིས་ཀ་སྡེ་དགེའི་སྡེ་ཡིན་པས་དམར་ཟུང་དཀའ་ཆོད་དགོས་དོན་དང་བྱ་འོས་མ་ཆེ་བ་བཅས་དེ་འདྲའི་ཞུ་བ་མིན་པས་ཁྱེད་ས་སྒོ་ནས་ཐྲུས་གྲམ་དང་ མོན་གྲམ་ལ་སྙན་ཞུས་ཀྱི་དེ་འདྲ་ཆོག་པའི་བཀའ་ལན་ཐོབ་ཆེ་ཚང་མར་ངོས་ནས་ཟད་ཆ འབབ་སྟེ་གད་འཁྲོག་སྡེ་འཁོར་རང་ཡུལ་འགུགས་རྒྱུ་ཡིན་པས་དེ་ལྟར་བཀའ་དྲིན་མི་ཆུང་བ་ཞུ་ཞུ་ཞུ" This decision was made during the time of the Ganden Podrang or when the Ganden Podrang controlled the Dege King, this is the meaning of skabs). (Because the Tibetan central government controlled the Dege King at that time, they could make a law that said they didn't need to pay the tax for ten years). Because of that, it is not necessary for the Chinese leader to take our taxes up to and including Golok (rda khal khral rigs types of horse transport/carrying tax).

[302] For more on *rta khal* see Maurer, ibid., 24.

[303] One example from the Dege Petition: ཕྱིན་བཞུད་ལ་རྟ་ཁལ་བཞོལ་འགོག་སོགས་བདེ་སྡུག་ཆེ་བའི་དགོན་ཡུལ་ནས་ཞུ་གསལ. Sichuan Archives 024-01-0003.

horses.[304] In other words, Chinese just could not recognize Tibetan taxation (payment in services) as the equivalent of Chinese taxation (payment in coin).

Furthermore, the distance and time frame in which ulak was performed were frequently obscured or unspecified in the Chinese translations. The way ulak was typically performed was in a set locality, as a ulakpa you were conscripted for a specific task (transportation or otherwise) that would be performed in a specific location for a specific time and they would in most cases, always be able to return to their own home by nighttime. This characteristic of ulak derives from its history as a postal system, and remnants of this Mongolian Empire infrastructure still existed in the understanding of ulak in the Tibetan language (yet the Chinese seem to not address this aspect). For example, in the Zhowo petition from Nyarong, the ulak issue is concerned with the upkeep of a tai zhan 台站, which was essentially a postal or relay station.[305] Another example from Minyak, a region near Dartsedo, one finds the phrase, 'u lag ring tshugs thung tshugs, meaning roughly, "long distance or short distance 'u lag" or literally long station, and short station.[306] While "tshugs" can mean a lot of things, since 'u lag is usually carried out in pony express or yoyo like fashion, this is most likely the meaning.

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[304] Melvyn Goldstein explained to me that the "horse 'u" in central Tibet is specific to the postal and official transport system whereas 'u lag is more labor specific and never paid. Personal interview, March 2018. This requires more investigation as the etymology of the word ulak also has a specific meaning of "horse" in Turkic Uyghur.

[305] Relay station has another word which might be more specific and occurs even more frequently than *tai zhan*, *shao* 哨. While the system has obviously changed over the centuries and was being drastically refurbished by the KMT (probably earlier reorganized by Zhao Erfeng) but the Chinese postal and Tibetan postal systems are different, cause the Chinese postal system is always run by the military, during the Qing there would be *juntai* 軍台 or a rest place for military people on the borderlands, the people of course translating this document would use words that make sense in Chinese, likely this is actually a *taizhan*, might even have the connotation of a military station. These documents only sometimes discuss the use of ulak for postal relay stations, and the maintenance of these relay stations was a real problem for the Chinese.

[306] From four areas around Dartsedo including Upper Minyak, Lower Minyak, Upper Brog (འཇོག་སྨད་) , and Brog (འཇོག) which could be a place name or could simply mean "nomads". The Tibetan writing these documents have all been given the title, *tuanzong* 團綜 (tib. thang tso kram), so they are nominally part of the Chinese military system. སྡོན་དཔའ་འཕྲུགས་མགོ་བཙུགས་ནས་འཁ་ལག་རོང་ཚུགས་ཐུང་ཚུགས (should be ring)ཞེངས་མང་གང་ལ་འཕེལ་གཏིག་སྡོད་མེད་པ …ཇེ་ཕྱིད་ལ་ཡོ་གཅིག་སྡོད་ཐལ་སྐྱ་མེད་པ་ཤུགས་ནགས་ལ་དེ་ཕྱར་ཐྱང་ཡོད་ཀྱང་དུང་ཁལ་རེགས་འཁ་ལག་རིང་ཚུགས་ཐུང་ཚུགས་དང་མདོ་ཐང་བྱས་བཅས་ལ་ད་སྡོན་གིས་འཁྲིད་བཏང་མེད་པའི ད་ནས་མི་མེར་ཇེ་ཕྱིད་ཁལ་མཐལ་ཆེན་རྟ་ལལ་འཕར་འཇགས་ཤ་ལ་ཐ་སྐྱ་ སོམ་མེད་པའི་བདེན་མིན་

Finally, wartime conditions and the Nationalist's lack of funding set them apart from the effective (and brutal) colonial policies of Qing bannerman, Zhao Erfeng. The wartime conditions of the Qing Republican transition, the border wars between the Tibetan Government and the Sichuan warlords, the Dargye Beri conflict, and more, forced a weak Nationalist administration to rely on the ulak system and the Tibetan hierarchy already set in place. This created a strain on the population of Kham, as evident in many of their requests for ulak exemptions. This points to overbearing taxation practices, and extraction of labor that is unfulfillable by the population. I would like to emphasize the impact it had on the system itself, creating an entrenchment out of necessity. [307] Certainly there was an element of military force and authority but in thinking beyond those terms what we witness is the Chinese *need* for ulak.

This passage is from a Chinese translation of a Tibetan petition from the Dartsedo area:

> Compared to the number of animals in former years, this year is so few, and last year, every time when we need to dispatch the ulak, doing it once was the standard, if we encounter public emergency then twice a cycle (year? Er lun can just mean twice, two times) is the limit, but this year from the fourth month/April, every month according to the commands (feng ming) we sent four times, even making a lot of effort we cannot support this amount, please have kind benevolence and exempt us from the burden of ulak with boundless gratitude ... Now, according to the rules, we send ulak four times every month and this amount no matter how difficult it is, we don't dare to miss it even a little bit.[308]

ཐ་མ་དཔོན་ ཡ་ནས་ཐུག་ཚོགས་པ་དང་། "Before, at the start of the war/fight, from the beginning, we provided long term and short term 'u lag many times, the policies of the 'u lag, even those we never late/delayed…these days regarding the carrying kinds of 'u lag long term or short term (long distance short distance), we have never before sent a request letter to change the policy, from today because the village needs to pay the tax but many people don't have enough to eat so (please forget about the horse carrying tax or do a reduction of), whether this is true or not, dear leader (dpon po) if we stay here please give us great kindness, the policy was together (four villages areas) pay half of the tax, because of this famine many people have scattered/spread out to different places and there is no way, please have pity on us." Sichuan Archives 240-01-0006.

[307] Both Lawson, "Xikang," and Frank, ibid., discuss the taxation burden and the practice of alleviating the pressures by exemption. These examples (Chinese communications exclusively) are however all told through a rhetoric of state benevolence and therefore should be questioned.

[308] 昔年之牲畜比較令/会有之牛馬其數甚微上年每調烏拉僮一輪為準若遇公 緊二輪為限本年四月起每月奉調四輪力實難支... 恤懇仁恩賞免欠支烏拉現在歸 (should be gui, meaning guiding according to rules) 定之每月四輪烏拉數目（the 百 right after 數 in the same sentence might just be 目 or 自) 無論如何艱難不敢有誤 一毛.

The petition laid bare the effects of a post-war situation.[309] It appears to be a type of "emergency" situation, one that doesn't at first glance indicate a "taxation" relationship, and yet it was called upon more than the author could even remember. While wartime would have created the conditions necessarily to rely on ulak, perhaps the most indicative example of entrenchment that we have witnessed through nearly all the above petitions, is the policy of reimbursement and compensation for loss while performing ulak labor. For the Tibetans who wrote these petitions, the possibility for reimbursement or enforcement was very real and the culmination of these petitions and their requests (in addition to the Chinese local state's need for knowledge simplification) all led to the creation of a bilingual ulak regulations pamphlet in 1947.

The Codification of Ulak: The Bilingual Ulak Regulations Pamphlet of 1947

This section presents an official bilingual Ulak Regulations Pamphlet from 1947. Beyond the bureaucratic and regulatory information this pamphlet outlines, what it proves is the final codification and entrenchment of the ulak system (albeit simplified for Chinese consumption) in Kham. Throughout this chapter we have seen many examples of the Tibetan petitions and their Chinese translations with the purpose of exemption, as well as for compensation or reimbursement of lost animals, or payment promised. For example, the Nyarong document,

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Sichuan Archives 024-01-0001. This is a letter in Chinese from likely Tibetan village leaders, Tibetan stamps accompany the document but clearly they were able to, or had access to, Chinese speakers and scribes, four square stamps which seem to be the village heads, the most easily readable says, from left to right top to bottom, 阿太村長截記, under the four square stamps are 9 circular Tibetan stamps which are supposedly personal stamps and maybe represent the 百姓). The four, square stamps were likely issued recently, perhaps by the Minguo government.

[309] "In places where ula is unusually heavy, people have fled en masse. In 1939, for example, in a village called Ehr-pa, in the district of Chuan-hua [Zhanhua?], one-third of all the households migrated to a distant place in order to avoid the ula. It is significant, however, that the decrease in population only tends to increase the ula burden per household, as there is no reduction of requisition on the part of the administration." Chen, ibid., 124.

asking for enforcement of payment and compensation for their work on behalf of the other village. The Se'urong (Tib. བསེའུ་རོང Ch.色烏絨) petition regarding the difficulties faced by two ulakpa, Tshul khrims (Tib. ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས) and Khangsar Rta Mgrin (Tib. ཁང་སར་རྟ་མགྲིན) on their trip between Dartsedo and Da'u including the loss of two mules worth two hundred Tibetan silver coins (Tib. rgya ma or rgya kram, Ch. 藏洋).[310] Or a petition from Da'u requesting that the administration not take their remaining yaks and dzo (yak cow hybrid).[311] Despite the failure of the Chinese state to clearly overlay their administrative structure onto Kham, the creation of new titles and positions for the Kham elite and the village leaders (including the military-based tuanzong position) created a two strata system in Kham.

Published by the Xikang Provincial Government Department of Civil Affairs (Ch. 西康省政府民政廳 Tib. shis khams zhing chen gzhung mi ser srid las sgang nas par du bskrun pa) in 1947, exactly fifteen years after the majority of the above petitions, the "Pamphlet on Extinguishing the Taxation and Ulak System, Liberating the People from Suffering, and Building a New Center for Transportation" was more a set of guidelines rather than a plan to create a

[310] Transcription of the Tibetan Original: དར་མངོ་སྤྱི་ཁྲལ་དཔོན་ཡོ་སྒྲ་ཀྲམ་རིན་ཡོཆེའི་ཞལས་དྲང་དུ། ཞུ་བ། ཐན་བསིའུ་རོ(should be rong)་ཀུ་ལཱ་པ་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་དང་ཁང་སར་རྟ་མགྲིན་གཉིས་ནས་སྐྱན་ཞུ་ཕྱལ་དོན། དོན་རྩ། ཐན་གཉིས་ཀྱའུ་ནང་ཀུ་དེའུ་དྲག (they are using the actual numbers)་སྐག་ནས་ཀྱ་ནང་འཚོར་སྐབས་ ཀྱའུ་སྒོ་དྲེན་ཚང་ནས་ཀ་དེའུ་བསྐོལ་བཤགས་(should be bgo bsha' or something closer to the Chinese meaning)རྒྱབ་ནས་ཀུ་ལཱ་བའི་ཉེན་ཁེལ་གཤུམ་བཤགས (should be first ka)་ནས་བཙང་ཆུ་ཙཱམ་བཞིན(should be sbyin)་རྒྱ་མ་ཐྲུང་། ཀ་རྒྱ་མཉ་ཡོ་ stong.གཉིས ཁིས་རིན་པ་ཕྱགས་ལ་སྒོ་དྲེན་གྱིས་རྒྱབ་ར་ནང་བཀྲགས་པར རྒྱ་དོའོན་ལོ་མིང་ཀྱམ་ཁིས་ཐུའུ་ཡིང་ཀུའུ་བ་ནས་དགོང་མོ་འཛོགཔ་ནས་ཁྲིད་སོང་བས ངེ འཛལ་ཙོ་མིང(could be yang) ཀྱམ་མདུན་ཞུ་བར་རྒྱ་དཔལ་གཅིག (bing) ར་མདའ་བཀང་ཡོད་ཀྱང་མ་རག་ལགས་པའི་ཀ་དེའུ་ཁྲིད་མཁན་ཐུའུ་མིང(should be bang, bing/army)་རེ་ལོ་མིང་ཀྱམ་གིས་ཡིན་པའི ད་ནས་ (dau) ནང་ཞུ་ལཱ་འཚོ་མི་བདེ་ཐགས་ཆོད་དང་ ཀྱའུ་ཞུ་ལཱ་པ་ཀ་དེའུགཉིས ཆུན phog 'byung་ཆོགས (should be chogs)་པ་བགཤ་དྲེན་ཆེ་ཞུ་ཞུ་ཐུ ཐན་བསིའུ་རོང་ཞུ་ལཱ་པ་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་དང་ཀ་མཐིན་གཉིས་ནས། Sichuan Archive document 240-01-0004.

[311] Da'u Petition དྲེལ་ཅང་ མཚོཉ་ ་འཁྲོ ཐླང་འ ་བཅས་འགོར་བཙོམ་པ་ ཡོད་ནང་ དྲེལ་ ་མཚོ་ར་ ་འཁྲ་ བཅས་པ་ ཤེ་བ་དང་ ད་ཆ་ངོ་ཡོད་ཡོ་ ཆེས་འབྲལ་ [we have] 44 dril [mules], 41 mdzo [the mix breed between yak and cow], 6 ['bri female yak], 2 glang [bulls], and 29 died, now we really only have 66. Chinese Translation: 所有倒斃公牛伍拾徐頭(about fifty yaks)准予報請軍部核奪民等感德無極(thank you very much)惟另有倒斃三拾柒頭(37 yaks)早經具報(reported)縣署查核在案(be on the record)民等准免賠償(repay)其保 (an administrative unit)公牛陸拾陸(66 yaks)頭可否點交(hand over)縣署接收之處理令具懇. Sichuan Archives 024-01-0005.

centralized bureau. Printed with typeset, it appears that these handbooks were given to the regional transportation offices and likely given to each *sago* and *xianzhang* of Xikang.[312] While the content for both the Chinese and the Tibetan versions remained fairly consistent, there was some added information (small details) in the Tibetan version. Based on terminology, however, it is clear that the Chinese pamphlet was the original and the Tibetan version was a translation of the Chinese.[313]

I view the pamphlet as a distillation of what was and was not happening with ulak by the late 1940s. In 1947 the local government was still trying to alleviate the issues of the ulak transportation system, and they were still trying to establish reliable transport centers across Kham. They were concerned about people taking advantage of the system, and corruption continued to be a problem. Within the first page of the Tibetan version for example, "after having established the new transport center, no leaders are allowed to chase people for taxes or ulak in the traditional way. If there are special circumstances for say the military or for chasing bandits they will have to impose a different method."[314] The pamphlet even lists the possible punishments for corrupt leaders and for those taking advantage of the people.[315] Also, they had the same people running the system of requisitions as they did during the early 1930s (if not earlier), stating that even though "we are trying to get rid of the old system, the older generation has a lot of experience with this and they should still hold office."[316]

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[312] I found copies in two different archival files, which to me implies that it was widely distributed.

[313] Sichuan Archives 137-01-3021.

[314] #1 Point 3, Sichuan Archive documents 137-01-3021.

[315] It would be useful to compare various ulak regulations and codes, I think there is one extant one from the Zhao Erfeng period at least.

[316] The entire quote reads, "even though we are trying to get rid of this old system there are a lot of older people who have experience with this still who should join the new office, and if these people still have funds (ma tsa) they

There were also, however, some very notable developments, not the least of which was the development in translation practice and the creation of new terminology in Tibetan. While a full description of the new translations is outside the scope of this chapter, it is interesting to note that the Tibetan translation of the original Chinese pamphlet was far more detailed and specific with their labor terminology than the Tibetan to Chinese translations of petitions of the early 1930s.[317] With that said, the Chinese terminologies stayed mostly the same. Furthermore, there was present in the pamphlet a very complex system of bilingual receipts and protocol for using, requesting, and paying for ulak. This required, at least nominally, that anyone wishing to requisition ulak first had to know how many horses and people were in a specific area so as not to request too many; second, they had to be of official capacity (this included anyone being paid by the government, like school teachers, army, and officials); and third, they had to go through a long application process in order to obtain funds to use it. For example:

> Point 1, when you want to hire [Tib. la] the people and animals there is a receipt that you have to give to the sago [Ch. xianzhang] and send it to the transportation office. Then there is a salary you have to pay the people. For government transport you must give the receipt to the sago, the sago gives you a stamp, and then the sago gives you a market price salary. Point 2, the receipts require four parts, and need to be in Chinese and Tibetan, and these receipts need to be kept at the sago office.

should send them to the new office, but these funds cannot be spent however people like. If you want to withdraw funds you have to send an application (needs to be requested at/to the meeting or group?). Sichuan Archive documents 137-01-3021.

[317] "The system (thabs len byed lugs) of transportation and transport fee (rdal gla skyel 'dren) from the general people ('bangs) of each county (sa mgo) in the Kham land (khams khul) under the power of the government of Xikang." But in Chinese it is mostly the same terminology, chai, wula, etc. Sichuan Archive documents 137-01-3021.

For payment the procedure was supposed to be equally regulated: "for the horse transporter (rta khal), who are carrying mail along the standard route like Dartsedo to Da'u, they get paid a standard amount. We cannot make the payment more or less than this. The offices all have to accept this. Also, when providing payment paper money [shog mgor] must be used." While it does not indicate what type of paper money, it was likely an aspirational statement that they would be paid in the Chinese legal currency (法幣 fabi) which hardly circulated in Kham even as late as the 1940s.[318] At the very least, there was as aspiration for monetization and standardization of practices on the part of the Chinese officials. Perhaps in reaction to years of petitions and requests for reimbursement, the pamphlet lists official regulations for standardized reimbursement and compensation practices. For example, "You also have to pay for the food for the people and animals. If there is a death of an animal from disease, then the rdal pa [transporter] cannot request compensation, and can only get reimbursed if the animal dies during the trip. And then this has to be investigated. Also, you can't pay people in kind (specifically, salt, butter, or leather) and if you try to make a business out of it then you will be harshly punished." What one sees here, is that instead of reorganizing the system or shifting it to a monetized system legible to Chinese officials, they instead bureaucratized the system that already existed.

Conclusion: Ulak Endured

Over the course of the 1930s and 40s, between the ulak petitions and the ulak pamphlet, ulak practices were less transformed and more entrenched. Chinese powers in Tibet needed to be able to extract resources, but different people at different times had different solutions to this

[318] For more information see Chapter 5.

problem. For Zhao Erfeng, it was a further monetization of ulak; for Ren Naiqiang, it was its complete abolishment; and for the 1940s officials, it was a formalized ulak pamphlet. The complexity of ulak is not apparent in the Chinese translations of the ulak petitions. While Chen and others grasped a greater portion of the complexity, the Chinese state in its everyday transactions used the term *wula* to make legible a complex set of Tibetan taxation and labor practices. This simplification and misunderstanding on the part of the Chinese local government in essence codified the ulak system not for the Tibetans but for the Chinese themselves. However, throughout all of this, ulak remained the go-to system of extracting resources in the form of labor. It endured the strains of increased Chinese presence on the plateau, and the Tibetans who controlled it maintained their control. In the end, the translation of ulak manifested the governing practices of the Chinese colonial power—the Chinese officials only understood it enough to use it. And the fact that the Chinese did not have to understand it well in order to use it says more about the fluidity and flexibility of the system itself.

In closing, I would like to suggest that the problem of equivalence was one of translation *and* of value. Chinese writers, officials, and intellectuals in Kham were inadequate in understanding the problems of ulak not because of linguistic reasons but because of the incommensurability of cultural values embedded in these practices. From the Mongol Empire period to 1950, ulak was the most rational and feasible system to support an economy that could not pay for services in any other way. Governance had to rely on self-supporting local populations, to tap local resources while not overtaxing them lest people would flee or resist. It was only with the PRC that sufficient resources were redirected from the center to overcome this problem.

Chapter Three

Monasteries, Merchants, and International Trade: The Economic Power of Dargye Monastery in Northern Kham 1930 to 1949

The influx of people and goods into Kham in the first half of the 20th century had a direct impact on Tibetan monasteries, the main economic powerhouses. Trehor, a region of Kham, that was also the home of Kardze town, was especially important in this regard. Roughly the size of Connecticut, Trehor had around fifteen major monasteries that each housed on average five hundred monks. The biggest of these monasteries was Dargye Monastery (Tib. *dar rgyas dgon,* Ch. *dajin si* 大金寺), which played a significant geopolitical role in the Dargye-Beri Conflict.[319] Dargye Monastery was not merely a place of sacred learning; Chinese gazetteer from the period claimed that its "monastery merchants" (Tib. *tsong pon*, Ch. *simiao shang* 寺庙商) controlled 60 to 70 percent of commercial pursuits in the Kham area. And while this is clearly an inflated amount, it nevertheless points to the actual and perceived economic power of Dargye Monastery.[320] As such, Dargye, along with the other monasteries in the region, was able to take advantage of economic networks facilitated by new economic infrastructures, and by the 1940s it had already succeeded in stationing monastic merchants throughout Tibet, China, and India, forming a transnational monastic network.[321]

[319] For more on the Dargye Beri conflict see Chapter 2.

[320] According to the Kardze Prefecture Gazetteer (*Ganzi Zhou Zhi*), information regarding 1947. *Ganzi Zhou Zhi*. Di Yi Ban. Chengdu: Sichuan Renmin Chubanshe, 1998. Vol (1-3).

[321] Information regarding these "monastic merchants" is scarce, in some accounts they are ordained monks, in other examples they could be petty merchants contracted by the monastery.

This chapter offers a case study of Dargye Monastery and demonstrates the significance of monasteries in ordering economic life in Kham as well as the greater Tibetan areas and beyond. While I have earlier explored the early 1930s when the Sichuanese warlord Liu Wenhui's 24th Army and Sichuan Kham Frontier Defense Force arrived on the Tibetan plateau and came face-to-face with the monks and lamas of Dargye Monastery, this chapter investigates the aftermath of the Dargye-Beri Conflict. Throughout the 1940s, monasteries in the region, and especially Dargye, were so powerful in controlling Kham's economy that the Chinese forces had to come to terms with them in order to be able to penetrate Tibet.

In her compelling study on Tibetan monasticism, Berthe Jansen argued against the narrative of the monastery secluded from the political, economic, and secular communities by conclusively demonstrating their impact on lay society throughout the pre-modern world. She accomplished this through the study of monastic charters (*bca' yig*) that were issued throughout the lives of monasteries and governed all levels of monastic life from education curriculums and internal bureaucracies to engagement with patrons, dependents, and lay society at large.[322] In the process, she positioned Tibetan monasteries as policy makers, and even economic institutions, making her book the most comprehensive work on Tibetan monasteries to date. However, this chapter demonstrates that at least as far as Dargye Monastery and Kham is concerned, Jansen did not take her argument far enough. Dargye Monastery and many other monasteries in Kham did not simply engage with politics and the economy; they *were* the politics and the economy.

The first part of this chapter offers a historical account of Dargye Monastery, its founding and growth throughout the early twentieth century, and finally its involvement in the Dargye-

[322] Jansen, ibid.

Beri Conflict. In order to accomplish this, I rely on Tibetan manuscripts and historical documents and draw largely from a Tibetan language survey published in China in 1995 called *dKar mdzes khul gyi dgon sde so so'i lo rgyus gsal bar bshad pa* (A Clear History of Each Monastery of Kardze Prefecture), which I hereon refer to as *History of Kardze Monasteries*—a three-volume survey covering over one hundred monasteries in the first volume alone.[323] The second source is a Tibetan monastic history of Dargye Monastery published out of India in 1996 called *Tre hor bkra shis dar rgyas dgon pa'i lo rgyus nye 'kho kun 'dus* (Collection of Important Histories on Trehor Tashi Dargye Monastery), henceforth referred to as *History of Dargye Monastery*,[324] written by Geshe Thupten Nagwang who lived at Dargye Monastery from 1947 to 1956. All of these materials draw attention to Dargye Monastery's special relationship to the Tibetan Government and the 13th Dalai Lama Tupten Gyatso (1876-1933) which led to its religious, economic, and even military strength.

The second part of this chapter examines the 1940s into the early 1950s, and the incredible rise in Dargye's economic power following the 1930s conflict. In 1916, Chinese inland missions reported that Dargye Monastery had 450 monks, but by the 1940s their numbers had increased to over 2,500.[325] Using archival materials from Academia Historica in Taiwan, I focus on a 1938

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[323] *dKar mdzes khul gyi dgon sde so so'i lo rgyus gsal bar bshad pa*, vol. 1 (*History of Kardze Monasteries)* (Beijing: Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1995). This publication, while published in China under the PRC, was only produced in Tibetan and it was not for public consumption. It was exclusively produced for the reading purposes of governmental and academic groups who compiled and edited them. This project was organized by the Zhongguo Zangyan Zhongxin (China Tibetan Studies Center); other groups who were involved included Zhongguo Gaoji Foxue Yuan, and the Kardze Prefecture Zongjiao Ju (Religions Office) and the Fanyi Ju (Translation Office). The Dargye Monastery entry was compiled by Dukar Tsering (gdus dkar tshe ring), who wrote entries for at least eight other monasteries.

[324] Geshe Tupden Nagwang (dge bshes thup bstan ngag dbang). *Dri hor bkra shis dar rgyas dgon pa'i lo rgyus nye 'kho kun 'dus* [(Collection of Important History on Trehor Tashi Dargye Monastery) (called History of Dargye Monastery)] (India, 1996).

[325] Kobayashi, ibid.

treaty that was drawn up in culmination of the Dargye-Beri Conflict. One significant stipulation of this treaty was the rebuilding and financial support Dargye Monastery was to receive upon its signing. Entering the 1940s, Dargye had been rebuilt and was more powerful than ever. The rebirth of Dargye, I argue, owed a lot to its sophisticated bureaucracy as well as the business acumen of its high lamas. Examining how Dargye and other major land-holding monasteries managed *ulak*, and thus transportation and taxation, I show that in addition to managing land and movement, monasteries also provided loans, acted as banks at the local level, and even began printing their own paper currency that circulated through the region. Here I largely rely on the 1989 *Zang Chuan Fojiao Siyuan Ziliao Xuanbian* 藏傳佛教寺院資料選編 (A Selection of Compiled Material on Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries), referred to henceforth as the *Compiled Material on Monasteries*, which is a detailed report on all the major Tibetan monasteries located in modern-day Sichuan Province.[326] While these materials should be carefully scrutinized, they represent one of the most detailed sources available on the economic affairs of Tibetan monasteries in Kham.

[326] Nakane Chie, "New Trends in Tibetan Studies [in the PRC]: Towards an Elucidation of Tibetan Society," *Acta Asiatica* 76 (1999). 62. According to Nakane Chie's general overview of this and the larger state-led projects on Investigations of History and Society in China (*Shehui Lishi Diaocha)*, the surveys of Tibet were part of a policy adopted in 1950 by the Central Committee of the Communist Party and Chairman Mao, and put into effect upon the People's Liberation Army's arrival in Tibet. All of these reports were later re-edited and published after 1979.

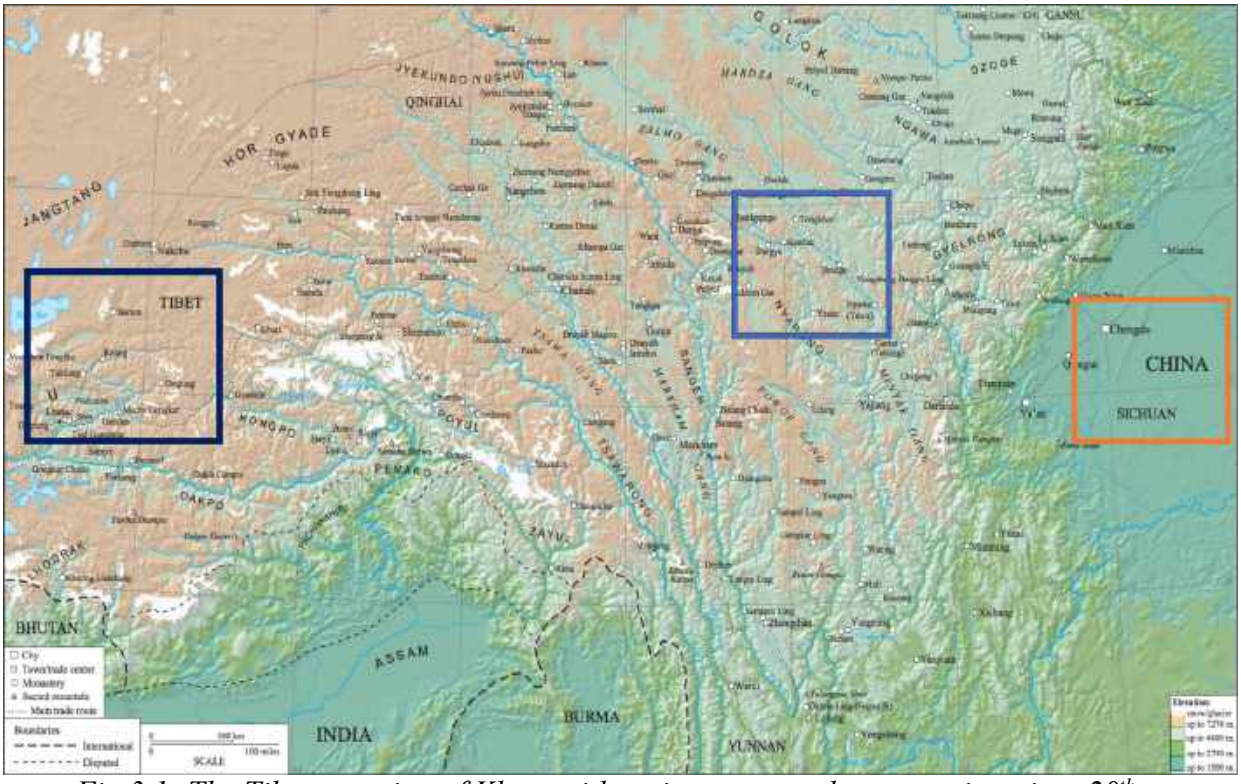

Fig 3.1: The Tibetan region of Kham with major towns and monasteries, circa 20th century. Dargye Monastery, Trehor, located within light blue box; Lhasa, Central Tibet, in dark blue box; Sichuan, China, in the orange box.[327]

This chapter ends with a brief overview of Dargye Monastery's activities in the 1950s, during the gradual consolidation of power in Kham by the People's Republic of China. War in Kham broke out in the winter of 1955 and was concentrated in the areas that could be reached by the new highways linking Chengdu to Dartsedo, Litang, Chamdo, and Lhasa. The trade centers of Dartsedo, Litang (where the Communists bombed the main monastery), and Batang were hit first.[328] Collectivization officially began at the same time in 1956, and during this political

[327] Map of Kham. https://treasuryoflives.org/place#7/31.000/98.000 20 Oct. 2018. Annotations made by author.

[328] Tsering Shakya, *The dragon in the land of snows: a history of modern Tibet since 1947* (London: Pimlico, 1999). 138-140.

upheaval, Dargye Monastery appeared to continue its economic activities, at least until around 1956.

Dargye Monastery in Kham: A History

It is not clear when Dargye Monastery was founded or even when it became an economic powerhouse. The founding of Dargye Monastery is famously attributed to a disciple of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682), Hor Choje Ngagwang Puntsok (b. 1668), who founded thirteen Geluk monasteries in Trehor in the late-17th century.[329] However, a close reading of a 1698 survey of all the Geluk monasteries in Kham conducted by the Fifth Dalai Lama's regent, Desi Sangye Gyatso, neither includes Dargye Monastery nor any other monasteries in the Trehor region. With that said, merely four decades later one begins to find firsthand accounts of large monasteries in Trehor. Furthermore, the Seventh Dalai Lama (1708-1757) is said to have given Dargye their first charter (*bca' yig*), placing Dargye's existence firmly within the early- to mid-18th century. There is further evidence to suggest that Dargye Monastery did not become a center—religious, economic, or otherwise—until the early 20th century. According to the *History of Kardze Monasteries*, Dargye did not have any monks with the rank of *khenpo* prior to the first decade of the 20th century, when the Thirteenth Dalai Lama instituted around seven. Furthermore, there were seven reincarnation lineages associated with Dargye but they were not as prominent or wealthy compared to major reincarnation lineages in the area.[330] Similar to other Geluk

[329] *History of Kardze Monasteries*, ibid., 40. It is important to note that the *History of Dargye* does not give a founding date for Dargye Monastery and instead places the birth date of Hor Choje Nagwang Puntsog at 1668. Based on a comparison between the two histories I would argue that the *History of Kardze Monasteries* is more convincing.

[330] *History of Kardze Monasteries*, ibid., 40.

monasteries in Kham, Dargye sent their monks to study in major Geluk monasteries in Central Tibet for three to five years and this practice created strong religious connections and networks between Central Tibet and Kham.[331] Their relationship to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama grew largely due to the large presence of Dargye monks in Lhasa, and during the early 20th century, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama issued them a new charter and guide to debating (*chos ra'i khrims*). This increased interest in Dargye Monastery by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in the early 20th century is made particularly evident by the issuing of a specialized permit (*phyag khyer*) exempting Dargye Monastery and its merchants from fees and commercial taxation normally owed to the Tibetan Government in all the Tibetan regions.[332]

Due to its close relationship to the Tibetan Government and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Dargye first became a military outpost of Lhasa before becoming a major economic and political center in Kham in the 1930s.[333] With the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1912, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama declared a de-facto independence for Tibet.[334] During the conflicts surrounding the final Qing military expedition to Tibet in 1910 and the expulsion of Qing's Sichuan-based army forces in 1912, three to four hundred monks from Dargye Monastery, who were studying in Lhasa at the time, joined the fight against the Chinese and supported the Dalai Lama. Their support gained them the Dalai Lama's praise and at a ceremony commemorating the monks, the Dalai

[331] I have not clarified which of the three main monasteries they studied in, Ganden, Sera, or Drepung.

[332] *History of Dargye Monastery*, ibid., 12. These documents were either lost or destroyed during the upheavals of the 1950s and 60s.

[333] Based on the available sources and Dargye's reference in Chinese and English language documents from the period, it would seem that Dargye's economic power outstripped the historically powerful monasteries of Derge, Batang, and Litang. This is not the same for its trulku or lineage power which was still secondary to these other monasteries.

[334] Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Vol. 1,* 59. For a deeper discussion of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's view on violence see Federica Venturi's article, "The Thirteenth Dalai Lama on Warfare, Weapons, and the Right to Self-Defense," *Revue d'Etudes Tibetaines* 31 (February, 2015).

Lama reportedly said, "from now on, Dargye Monastery is mine, whatever Dargye Monastery needs, Lhasa will support them."[335] This was a tacit acknowledgement to financially support Dargye for the years to come, and the Dalai Lama saw this as an opportunity to expand the Lhasa Government's influence in Kham. The Dalai Lama then organized the Dargye monks into a "monk army," based on the style of the Tibetan army, bestowing the role of military commander on one of Dargye's high lamas. At that time the Dalai Lama gave them five hundred English style guns and two hundred and fifty thousand bullet cartridges. With this, Dargye became the Tibetan Government's military stronghold in Kham.[336]

This relationship and support were reinvigorated during the Sino-Tibetan border dispute in 1917 and 1918, when the Tibetan army defeated the Chinese and established a de facto boundary along the upper Yangtze River.[337] During this conflict with China, Dargye supported Lhasa by sending supplies as well as troops from their monk army. In return, the Dalai Lama rewarded Dargye with grants of land and dependents (*'khor pa*) to farm the land and act as taxpayers and *ulak* workers.[338] By this time, Dargye had formed a strong monk militia with an armory of roughly four to five thousand guns and eight cannons, and was the main military force in northern Kham.[339]

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[335] Chinese translation says that "Lhasa will support them financially." *Compiled Materials on Monasteries*, 173. Unfortunately, I have not uncovered a Tibetan language account.

[336] More research is needed to uncover precisely what status these military monks held at Dargye Monastery.

[337] For more see, Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in North-west China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921).

[338] The Chinese term used to translate the Dalai Lama's grant is *nongnu* which means serf or slave. I have not used the English for this term as it is not clear that the relationship of these agricultural laborers was one of bondage. For more on serfs see Melvyn Goldstein's work. Also, *The Compiled Materials on Monasteries*, 172.

[339] Guo, ibid., 110.

The Dargye-Beri Conflict, as discussed in Chapter One, was the primary catalyst for the 1930s Sino-Tibetan border conflict and the reason for unprecedented Chinese presence in Kham. The conflict began in the summer of 1930, with a disagreement between the Dargye Monastery and the leader of Beri monastery, and quickly spiraled into a massive geopolitical event. The Lhasa army stationed in Chamdo arrived and joined Dargye in August; and Beri Monastery sent a request for help from the Chinese soon after. With the government in Lhasa deploying troops to support Dargye and the nearby Sichuan army garrison supporting Beri, armed clashes broke out. In January 1931, Dargye Monastery was joined by four thousand soldiers from the Lhasa army, and right after the Tibetan New Year, they suddenly attacked and forced the Chinese armies to retreat after a surprise attack. By March, the Tibetan army had taken over all areas up to Drango, and by June, they had reached almost as far as Dartsedo.[340]

According to the *History of Dargye Monastery*, the Lhasa army and Dargye monks fought the Chinese and "certainly had some great victories."[341] However, scholars who have dealt with the Dargye Monastery issue argue that "for the Tibetan government, losing control of such an important monastic foothold in Kham would mean losing both ecclesiastical and theocratic influence in the area, along with economic interests that were desperately [needed]… [Also] the Tibetans sought to acquire more territories with a possible borderline fixed far east of the upper Yangtze River."[342] Essentially, Lhasa could not afford to lose Dargye Monastery, and by proxy, their temporal power in Kham.

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[340] Ibid. 112.

[341] "*grwa rigs rnams kyis rgyal kha shugs che tsam thob yod par gdon mi za*" (*History of Dargye Monastery*, 11).

[342] Lin, ibid., 60.

Fig 3.2: Illustration of Dargye Monastery monks fighting Beri Monastery and a Chinese soldier running in to break up the fighting. From the Melong Tibetan Newspaper, vol. 6, no. 7, 1932 May 5.[343]

But Dargye and the Lhasa government could not maintain the upper hand for long. In early 1932, Liu Wenhui started driving back the Tibetan army. By July of the same year, Liu Wenhui's army reached Dargye, and the retreating Tibetan army set the monastery on fire in order to destroy the arsenal and grain storage so that Liu Wenhui's army could not take it over.

[343] [Cartoon]. In *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long.* Kālimpong: G. Tharchin. Volume 6: no. 7 (1932): page 52. Digital image. *Columbia University Libraries Electronic Books.* New York, N.Y. *Internet Archive*. Accessed May 15, 2020. https://archive.org/details/ldpd_6981643_000/page/52/mode/2up

The monastery burned for days and was utterly destroyed.[344] This left a major strain on the society and the economy of the Kardze region not only because the area had been forced to support the military, but also because the fighting had blocked the trade routes going through the region. Furthermore, roughly four to five thousand people under the control of Dargye Monastery were displaced, either fleeing further west to Chamdo with the Tibetan army or resorting to banditry and terrorizing the region.[345]

The 1938 Bilingual Treaty and the Reconstruction of Dargye Monastery

Peace negotiations began in 1932, continued in 1935, and were concluded in 1938 with a bilingual treaty drawn up between Tibetan and Chinese government representatives.[346] During this period Dargye Monastery and its monk population was in disarray as monks were homeless, wandering the region, and the monastery attempted to rebuild.[347] The negotiations paid special attention to Dargye Monastery, asserting not only its importance in the socio-economic makeup of northern Kham, but also setting the stage for Dargye's continued rise in economic power during the 1940s and 50s.

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[344] Guo, ibid., 114.

[345] Ibid., 119-120, and *History of Dargye Monastery*, ibid., 11.

[346] Lai Zuozhong, "Cong DaBai Shijian Dao Gangtuo Xieyi," in *Ganzi Zhou Wenshi Ziliao Jicui*, vol 1 (Ganzi: Zhongguo ren min zheng zhi xie shang hui yi Ganzi Zangzu Zizhizhou wei yuan hui, 2008), 174. Also, regarding the initial negotiations; the Kardze Chinese government, sent six stipulations requesting that Dargye hand over its guns, pay reparations, hand over the primary monk/lama responsible etc. Guo, ibid., 112. Overall, the transregional network of the Gelukpa monasteries also became a crucial matter during the Sino-Tibetan negotiations in the aftermath of the battles. Relyea, "Victorianizing Guangxu," 967-970. For further information on monastic networks between the Central Tibet and the other regions, see Jansen, ibid.

[347] This period is referenced only by those who were frustrated with Dargye's monks, who were apparently terrorizing the region. It would be interesting to find out if this period of aimlessness forced the monks to be more entrepreneurial in their survival. For more, see Geshe Tupden Nagwang (dge bshes thup bstan ngag dbang), *Dri hor bkra shis dar rgyas dgon pa'i lo rgyus nye 'kho kun 'dus* (Collection of Important History on Trehor Tashi Dargye Monastery). India, 1996. Accessed through BDRC on August 20, 2020 https://www-tbrc-org.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/#library_work_ViewInWIndow-W2DB15921%7CI1PD33404%7C1%7C1%7C1%7C31

The 1938 "treaty" raises some particularly difficult issues for the historian. First, the words used for "treaty" are different in the Chinese and Tibetan versions. The Chinese text refer to the document in the typical cadence of domestic affairs: "*guiyue* 規約" or "*banfa* 辦法" meaning "regulations", "measures", or "rules" instead of "*tiaoyue* 条约," the literal translation of a treaty, which implies two or more sovereign states. The Tibetan text, on the other hand, referred to this document as "*ching[s] yig,*" literally, treaty.[348] Furthermore, the Chinese text declared that this is "the negotiation between Xikang [province] and Tibet" (*Kang zang jiao she*)" implying that it was a discussion between the two local governments. In other words, the Lhasa government recognized this document as a bilateral treaty between the two countries, Tibet and China, whereas Liu Wenhui considered this agreement as an internal regulation under the Republic of China.

When read closely, the treaty points to a possible shift in power structures in Trehor; by this time, the Chinese had gained the upper hand in eastern Kham and despite strict terms on gun control, it appears that the treaty not only left Dargye Monastery's wealth intact, but also may have fostered conditions for Dargye's economic power to grow. The treaty can be read as a detailed ledger of financial obligations, costs, and reparations. Both the Chinese and Tibetan governments were obliged to make large donations, and "order the lower-rank civilian and military officials [in the local governments] as well as each merchant [in the area] to give donations. Furthermore, the workers who are to rebuild the monastery [will be hired]."[349] Also, for unclear reasons, all the property that was lost by Dargye during the conflict was returned to them and their relationships to lay groups were maintained:

[348] Ryosuke Kobayashi, "Translation and Analysis of the 1938 Treaty," Unpublished Paper, 2011.

[349] Ibid. This was by the order of the Governor of Kardze Prefecture, and overall, 150 laborers were hired and paid for by the Governor of Kardze Prefecture.

> All of the previous customs concerning that the origin of monks who come to the Dargye Monastery from different areas [in order to study Buddhism] should be maintained. [Besides this,] the kind of monastic estates that Dargye Monastery previously held, including two households of dependents in the Trehor area, twenty three households of servants in the Lingtsang area, and one household of servants in the Gonglung area, reaching a total of twenty six households… will be returned to the Dargye Monastery as before. All of the various types of taxation, such as the tax of crops, will have to be paid and given to [Dargye Monastery] as is the same with each monastery in Kham area.[350]

Furthermore, the treaty makes explicit reference to Dargye Monastery's armory stating:

> The Tibetan Government will take back the guns and ammunition that it [previously] provided to the Dargye Monastery. 30 guns … [and] 200 pieces of ammunition attached to each will be provided to Dargye Monastery so that they can take responsibility to protect long-distance traders from danger. The governor of Kanze prefecture will [issue] the permission and affix the seal on the [guns]. The guns' primary barrels and ammunitions will be given to the abbot (Tib. *mKhan po*, Chi. *Kanbu*) [of the Dargye Monastery], and [the abbot] will put [them] into the monastery, [and afterward] the governor of Kanze prefecture will affix the seal [on the gate]…If the monks of Dargye Monastery lack the guns when they go to trade, they have to ask for [them from] the Governor [of prefecture] through the abbot [of Dargye Monastery]. Receiving more than 10 rifles is not allowed. … When the monks of Dargye Monastery cross the Drichu River (Tib. *'Dri chu* / *'Bri chu*, Chin. *Jinshajiang*) to settle [in their monastery in Kanze prefecture], both the Chinese and Tibetan representatives will supervise [them] and make a list of all of the people and guns and ammunition. Hereafter, when the monks of Dargye Monastery go to trade, local officials will support them.[351]

Here we see an official attempt by the Chinese and the Tibetans to control gun ownership through the bureaucratization of gun access. And yet, the conciliatory tone of the treaty makes us question who actually had the monopoly on violence. And again, the reason guns were discussed in the first place had everything to do with Dargye Monastery's business endeavors, which will be discussed in greater detail below. However, this bureaucratization attempt apparently did not

[350] Ibid.

[351] Ibid, Article 4.

work. Chen Han-seng, a Chinese researcher conducting an investigation in Kardze in the 1940s, reported that the major monasteries still held a "virtual monopoly" on all aspects of long-distance trade including the organization of armed guards for caravan protection.[352] Despite the destruction of Dargye during the Dargye-Beri Conflict, the wording of this treaty emphasized the continued economic power of Daryge, and the Chinese and Tibetan powers' deference to it.

Monastic Economies, *Ulak* Transportation, and Dargye

So why was Dargye Monastery given such particular attention in the negotiations following the 1930s conflict? To answer this, we must examine the power of monasteries in Tibet and decisively place them within the socio-economic framework presented throughout this dissertation. The following pages will thus explore first the general power of monasteries in managing the economy with special focus on the *ulak* taxation and labor system, and then circle back to Dargye Monastery itself.

With the arrival of Nationalist troops and garrisons during the early 1930s, *ulak*, the Tibetan labor and transportation system, faced an unprecedented strain. As Nationalist leaders and Chinese academics attempted to understand and reform this non-unified system, they realized that they could never compete with the deeply entrenched socio-economic structures that governed *ulak*. There was a general understanding and acceptance that monasteries had to deal with the economy; at the very least, they needed to house and support their monks and engaged in alms giving and receiving.[353] But how did they accumulate wealth and what was their role in

[352] Chen, ibid., 86.

[353] Historians of Tibetan Buddhism have for the most part disregarded the economic activities of monasteries and monks, often citing the general rule that no monk or Lama should deal with money. However there has been some debate on this matter in the work of Schopen ibid., Benjamin Wood, "The Scrupulous Use of Gifts for the Sangha: Self-Ennoblement Through the Ledger in Tibetan Autobiography," *Revue d'Etude Tibetaines*, Number 26 (April

the economy beyond these basic activities? In one influential article, "The Circulation of Estates in Tibet," Melvyn Goldstein explains that due to a fixed supply of land, the government, the aristocratic families and the monasteries competed for land in a system that favored the greater accumulation of land in the hands of monasteries, or more specifically, reincarnated lamas.[354] Therefore, the estate of the reincarnated lama was passed down to the successive incarnations; this represented the wealth of a lama and was often linked directly to the wealth of a monastery. Wim van Spengen further draws attention to monasteries as major sites of wealth accumulation explaining that because monasteries were often important pilgrimage sites and housed hundreds, sometimes thousands, of monks, they became major central markets. Monasteries would even go a step further to facilitate travel and trade by providing shelter in the form of guesthouses, loans, start-up costs, and organizing trade caravans supported by a wide network of official *ulak* transport service.[355] Both scholars assert that Lhasa-based monasteries and merchants were the most powerful actors in the economic world of Tibet, and while this is true to a degree, they overlook the fact that Kham monasteries like Dargye also operated across long distances and were well established within the long-distance trading networks.[356] Furthermore, I would argue that monastery-merchant connections were far more institutionalized throughout the Geluk monastic networks than these scholars give them credit for. As will be discussed in more detail

2013), Melvyn Goldstein, "The Circulation of Estates in Tibet," in *The Tibetan History Reader*, 477; and most recently, Jansen, ibid.

[354] By 1917 it was calculated that monasteries held 42% of the land, the government held 37%, and aristocracy only 21%. Goldstein, "The Circulation of Estates in Tibet," 488.

[355] van Spengen, ibid., 77, 135-138.

[356] Ibid., 135-138.

below, Dargye Monastery, in particular, was able to adapt to the introduction of new economic norms and relations of power in the region.

While few scholars have engaged with the economic activity and infrastructure of monasteries, Paul Nietupski's *Labrang: A Tibetan Buddhist Community on the Inner Asian Borderlands, 1709-1958* provides a useful case study of a single powerful monastery on the Sino-Tibetan frontier.[357] Labrang, located in modern-day southern Gansu, was the social, political, and economic power in a region the size of Switzerland. In Labrang's region, "legal authority and economic rights were not in the hands of the local lords, but rather in those of monastery-appointed representatives. In communities where Labrang had economic interests but not legal authority or ownership, a monastery-appointed administrator was assigned to oversee monastery interests."[358] Also when describing Labrang's economic infrastructure Nietupski explains that the monastery's "corporate structure" interacted with the local social structures to manage their economic interests. In this way it is similar to the main system in Central Tibet, described by Goldstein, minus the presence of independent noble or aristocratic families. In Labrang the lamas had political authority, "accumulated the most wealth and represented the greater community in neighboring political centers."[359] Furthermore, like many other monasteries, Labrang collected taxes on their land and livestock holdings, usually collected in

[357] Other works that touch on monastery economy include Brenton Sullivan, "The Mother of All Monasteries: Gönlung Jampa Ling and the Rise of Mega Monasteries in Northeastern Tibet" (Phd. Dissertation: University of Virginia, 2013); Jansen, ibid.; and Mills, ibid.

[358] Nietupski, ibid., 58.

[359] Ibid., 64.

kind but by around the 20th century also in silver, and their dependents, from farmers to nomads, provided a set labor and *ulak* transportation service.[360]

Labrang's wealth, however, cannot be understood simply through land taxes and livestock holdings. A significant portion of its wealth came from lay patrons, and these donations are usually considered the primary source of funds for a monastery. In the case of Dargye Monastery, however, whose political and religious significance paled in comparison to Labrang, this was not necessarily true. Nietupski is able to trace actual donations to the monastery over time that indicate an incredible influx of wealth: for example, the head incarnation of the monastery around the late 18th century "conservatively received 55,150 silver taels (*srang*), 2,029 horses, 12,920 sheep, 5,300 head of other livestock (*rta nor*), and 271 camels"[361] among many other types of offerings. It is important to stress the importance of the patronage, ritual sponsorship, and gift trade between Lhasa, Labrang, and the Mongols and Manchus as far as Beijing. Labrang was a huge learning institute, had a printing press, and even a crafts institute.[362] It was a center of localized trade and was also connected to long distance trade networks, even though commerce was not its primary form of income. For monasteries that did not have such a rich or esteemed lay following or patron base, like Dargye, long distance trade may have seemed like the best method to accumulate wealth.

Furthermore, while contradictions between an austere monastic life and the economic vitality of a monastery were a constant concern for many lamas and monastic hierarchs, Martin Mills argues convincingly in his book *Identity, Ritual and State in Tibetan Buddhism* that the

[360] Ibid., 65.

[361] Ibid., 84.

[362] Ibid., 84-85.

institution of the monastery, as well as incarnate Lama estates, rather than the individual monk, were seen as "a legitimate focus of wealth accumulation".[363] Benjamin Woods, in his research on the autobiographical accounts (rang rnam) of a 19th century high lama of Zhalu Monastery in Central Tibet, explores the relationship between religion and economic activities through the daily ledgers of donations given and received. He found that through the meticulous recording of donations this particular lama rationalized his engagement with money and fostered a combined sense of religious and economic achievement. Projecting a sense of "scrupulousness" as Wood describes, the high lama managed to convince himself, his followers, and the monastery donors, that he and Zhalu Monastery were inherently trustworthy.[364] Lucia Galli has also begun investigating this question but through the autobiographical accounts of a 20th century Khampa *tsongpön* (chief merchant) who worked for the Sadhustang family (referenced below) and a network of monasteries. His self-identification as primarily a pilgrim positions him within the minds of his audience as a religious man, primarily concerned with Buddhism and secondarily with the economy. As Galli is just beginning to investigate however, this religious presentation (while very honest) was, like the high lama of Zhalu, intimately tied to trustworthiness and credit within his religious-social circles.[365] Monastic trade networks worked on a system of credit and trust similar in theory to the way in which we trust a bank to conduct long distance transactions or a state to print paper currency. In this case, Buddhism was not an inhibitor of economic activity but the foundation of trust, and the effects of this credit system however could be found throughout all aspects of economic transactions in Kham from trade, to rent, and to *ulak* service.

[363] Mills., 65.

[364] While keeping detailed financial records was likely a common practice (if perhaps unique in the form of autobiographical writing) there are extremely few examples of this still extant. Woods, ibid., 37.

[365] Galli, ibid., 317.

And while an in-depth investigation on the practical functioning of monastic credit is beyond the scope of this dissertation, I believe it would greatly aid our understanding of the economic elements of monastic networks.

Returning back to the mid 20th century in northern Kham, monasteries were one of, if not the most, significant economic actors. To start with, let us return to the 1938 Treaty for a moment to look at another striking difference between the Chinese and Tibetan versions of the document. As discussed in the previous chapter, *ulak* was a poorly understood concept by the Chinese authorities in Kham. Article One of the 1938 Treaty that deals with the reconstruction of Dargye Monastery, explains in Chinese that the monastery should be sent "*ren gong* 人工" which can be translated as "workers", whereas the same Tibetan section of the document calls them "people who do *ul*", *ul* being a common short hand for *ulak.* It was instructed that Dargye Monastery was to receive, for various construction projects, fifteen to thirty *ulak* laborers. Following the previous chapter, we are yet again reminded that there is a wide range of transport and labor translations for the term *ulak*. Same as the description in the treaty above, the *Compiled Materials on Monasteries* confirms that many monasteries used *ulak* to rebuild or renovate buildings and that it was more of a time-contract than a specific task and could encompass more than transportation at least in northern Kham. Overall, monastic control of *ulak* was incredibly ad-hoc: if you had a taxable relationship and/or were in debt to a monastery you could be asked to provide *ulak* and other labor services. Additionally, if you were a dependent of a local chieftain who was a patron or related to the monastery, you could be asked to provide *ulak* service for the monastery. Service was expected for a certain amount of days out of a year which varied from monastery to monastery but could range anywhere from one month to three months out of the year.

As implied in previous chapters and will be discussed in greater detail below, monasteries could act like private businesses and occasionally used *ulak* as an extension of this business-like power. For example, Pelpung Monastery frequently paid their *ulak* workers while on short- and long-term transportation trips.[366] The long-distance and short-distance trips were always specified ahead of time but could last from one day to several months of journey to Lhasa or towns in northern Tibet. These *ulak* workers, or dependents of the monastery and monastery patrons, could be used for all kinds of labor services while doing *ulak*. At least Dongkhor Monastery (a monastery roughly one-day walk from Dargye) required that their dependents perform a wide range of services while on *ulak* duty from farm work, to taking care of yaks and other livestock, as well as transportation of people or goods.[367]

Geshe Tupten Ngakwang, in his history of Dargye Monastery, noted that in the early 20th century, the links of the traditional system of *yon mchod*, the patron-priest system of support, grew weaker and weaker, which was why Daryge had to start relying predominantly on commerce to fund the monastery.[368] While he does not explain the reasons beyond this, it is clear that Dargye Monastery did not have sufficient benefactors to support its monks and their activities. The rest of this chapter seeks to explore the source of their wealth, to show how Dargye engaged in economic activities and to demonstrate the extent of its economic power.

[366] *Compiled Materials on Monasteries*, 130-131.

[367] Ibid., 204.

[368] *History of Dargye Monastery*, 53.

Similar to a merchant company, Dargye Monastery had networks in Central Tibet, and a direct relationship to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government.[369] Following the Dargye-Beri Incident and the subsequent treaty in 1938, Dargye Monastery continued its economic activities and even grew in power. The rebirth of Dargye owed a lot not only to its sophisticated bureaucracy and the business acumen of its high lamas, but also the long history of monastic economic management systems. As a Geluk monastery, Dargye was able to capitalize on its religious-cum-political connections. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama's interest in Dargye Monastery in the early 20th century is made particularly evident by the issuing of a specialized permit (Tib. *phyag khyer*) to the monastery and its merchants, waiving the payment of a commerce tax to the Tibetan Government in all the Tibetan regions.[370]

As the plateau experienced an influx of people and goods during the 1930s and 40s, many individuals and institutions took advantage of the vibrant commercial geography by engaging in local and long-distance trade. According to the Ganzi Gazetteer published in 1998, monasteries and high lamas had a considerable amount of wealth, and "according to the incomplete statistics gathered in the early 1950s, there were about 170 monasteries in Ganzi [modern-day Ganzi Zhou that Kardze town resides in] that were dealing in commerce." In the highest bracket was Dargye Monastery, Kardze Monastery, and Litang Choekhorling Monastery.[371] Essentially, powerful monasteries that controlled the land and livestock realized they could make profits by exporting

[369] Similar to other Geluk monasteries in Kham, Dargye sent their monks to study in Central Tibet at monasteries such as Ganden, Sera, and Drepung for three to five years and this practice created strong religious connections and networks between Central Tibet and Kham.

[370] *History of Dargye Monastery*, 12. These documents were either lost or destroyed during the upheavals of the 1950s and 60s.

[371] In the next bracket are monasteries including Drango Monastery (modern day Luhuo). The gazetteer ranks all the major monasteries by wealth, and I hope to research and compare all of them in my future research, *Ganzi Zhou Zhi*, 339.

their local products. Monasteries such as Dargye, however, went beyond merely trading local products, and instead they engaged in long-distance trade of goods not produced or obtained in their own region. Along with the "monastery merchants" of Dargye Monastery were wealthy Tibetan trading families who imported, exported, and transported goods from India and China to and through Tibet.

Overall, with the power and economic demand that these monasteries generated, Tibetan merchants and monastic merchants took advantage of their proximity to the economic networks that reached into China, Nepal, and British India.[372] Particularly in the first half of the 20th century, amidst the major political upheavals, wars, and border conflicts, monasteries such as Dargye maintained their economic power in their particular region and exploited the demand for goods likely created by the wartime economy. Even though the foundation of the Tibetan economy included a mixture of agro-pastoralism and sedentary farming, monastic institutions and their monastic merchants were intimately connected to the twentieth-century industrial and colonial world.

Monasteries and International Trade during the 20th Century

Given these properties and the economic conditions of the mid-20th century, it should not come as a surprise that monasteries and their monastery merchants were among the primary participants in international trade. Dargye Monastery functioned not only as a bank, providing

[372] And even the United States: in 1950 Tibet exported 4,333,612 pounds of wool to the US while lesser quantities were exported to other foreign countries. Melvyn Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Volume 2: The Calm Before the Storm* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007) 263. Also, direct reference to business with Nepal IOR-L-PS-12-4208 (197).

startup capital for long distance expeditions, but also as a corporation with trade agents across the plateau and as far as Kalimpong and Calcutta in India.

Dargye Monastery was located along one of the most significant arteries of trade and communications between India, Tibet, and China. In the 1940s the major stops along the route, traveling from west to east, were Calcutta, Kalimpong in North-Eastern India, Gyantse, Shigatse and Lhasa in Central Tibet, Chamdo and Dartsedo in Eastern Tibet, Chongqing (the wartime capital of KMT China), Lijiang and Kunming in Yunnan. [373] The most significant commodities to cross the Tibetan plateau were wool and tea. Wool was the number one export, and tea the primary import. The ebb and flow of these two commodities and the shifting geography of their transport routes were perhaps the most significant factors in regional economic developments in Tibet. While both commodities have a much longer history, following the Qing Empire's consolidation of power in Sichuan and Eastern Tibetan regions in the early 1700s, tea became not only the most significant and lucrative import good, but also a stable commodity that could be stored, stockpiled, and even used as a type of currency for payment and small-scale trading.[374]

However, during the 20th century, unrest on the borderlands coupled with lack of state control reoriented the tea trade route and shifted the source of tea production from Sichuan to Yunnan.[375] The increase of the tea trade from Yunnan into Tibet strengthened the ties between these regions, and as C. Patterson Giersch has demonstrated, Yunnan merchants, mostly Han Chinese, expanded their business rapidly from the fall of the Qing into the WWII period. This

[373] For more on these routes, see Bischoff and Travers, ibid.

[374] Bertsch, *Tea as Currency*. For more on tea in Tibet see Booz "Tea, Trade and Transport in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands."

[375] More Southern Sichuan and Yunnan. Booz, "Tea, Trade and Transport in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands," 28.

shift in routes enabled Dargye Monastery to make handsome revenues by tapping into long-distance tea trade.

Wool on the other hand, was most prominent in northern Tibet where it was traded between Tibetan nomads and Hui Muslims across Qinghai and Gansu, and then shipped out to the international market through ports in Tianjin until the fall of the Qing.[376] However, following the collapse of the empire, this market shifted drastically, reorienting completely to Central Tibet and India. James Millward explains that the reason behind the collapse of the wool trade to Chinese port cities was because the "profitability of the wool trade also varied with the cost of getting wool to market. Initially attractive because the raw product could be shipped to treaty ports free of local and provincial taxes, wool export became less profitable as the decline of effective central power in the second decade of the twentieth century put an end to this privilege".[377] However, the international demand did not decrease and merchants found it more cost effective to ship wool south through Lhasa and India.[378]

The redirection of trade routes, as Tina Harris presents in her book *Geographical Diversions*, had drastic effects not only on economic prosperity but also on who could take advantage of these networks and who were capable of amassing wealth.[379] In the case of tea and wool trade, this vibrant period from the 18th to early-20th centuries allowed monasteries, local kings, and chieftains to capitalize on building economic infrastructures and labor networks to amass wealth. The ascendancy of Dargye Monastery can indeed be traced to this period; it was

[376] James Millward, "The Chinese Border Wool Trade of 1880-1937," available at: https://sites.google.com/a/georgetown.edu/james-a-millward/other- publications (accessed online on July 24, 2020).

[377] Ibid, 9.

[378] Travers, ibid., 165.

[379] Harris, ibid.

specifically these pre-20th century shifts that created the necessary economic foundation for the monastery to become a major power in the Tibetan import-export trade by the 1940s.[380]

Dargye Monastery's ascendance was taking place not only within shifting trade routes but also geopolitical alliances. During WWII, despite its desire to maintain official neutrality, the Tibetan Government in Lhasa faced increased pressure from the Chinese KMT, the United States, and Great Britain to open up the pack routes through Lhasa into eastern Tibet for the flood of wartime aid to China. Especially following the official closing of the Burma Road in 1942, stockpiles of wartime goods from the Lend-Lease agreement with the United States were filling up the storage facilities of Northern India.[381] As part of wartime logistics, from the 1940s through the end of the war, motorways were built all the way to the edge of the Tibet Plateau and mountainous regions of Northern India and Burma. However, the geographic barrier prevented any concerted effort at the development of navigable motorways, and transport could only be conducted along the Plateau in the form of pack animal or human carriers. Pack-routes were a technically different affair from a standard motorway, offering a different set of logistical problems, such as arranging fodder for animals versus sourcing gasoline or ethanol. Transport was slow but low maintenance, compared to motorways that were fast but high maintenance. Furthermore, the capital investment necessary for a paved or even dirt roadway through the

[380] The Zhao Erfeng period (1906-1911) represents the most concerted state effort to regulate trade, transport, and local industry, setting up short-lived tea companies, and even a small number of factories. While Zhao Erfeng's policies would serve as inspiration to the KMT government, the state would never fully achieve the same vision of total control, relying in part, on the Tibetan political and economic elite to achieve their state-building goals.

[381] Judd Kinzley, "The Power of the 'Stockpile': American aid and China's wartime everyday," *Journal of Modern Chinese History* 13 (2019), 169-170.

mountains of eastern Tibet was too prohibitively expensive and labor intensive and could not be sponsored by any local or state authority until after the establishment of the PRC.[382]

The opening of the Trans-Tibet pack route brought an influx of capital to the Tibetan plateau, from the West, and from the east, as eastern Tibet had been partially incorporated into the new province of Xikang, and with that came the rise of a new state power and financial and economic institutions. These included state-run transport companies[383], banks, and even a Chamber of Commerce in the Xikang capital, Dartsedo.[384]

Historically, the functions filled by these new banking institutions in north-eastern India and eastern Tibet would have been filled by monasteries, yet despite this new competition, monasteries did not drop out of the picture. Instead they adapted to this new environment, continuing the practice of financing their own trade, using their stores of capital (often in the form of tea), to independently fund their economic activities. Furthermore, I hypothesize that monasteries filled the niche of providing loans to smaller businesses and merchants, offering them backing and taking on the "insurance" or risk involved with long distance trade. Dargye Monastery, in short, was in the midst of these greater transformations, and it was able to capitalize on these changes and use them for its own financial benefit. While Dargye Monastery engaged primarily in the import-export shipping business, their economic activities and business

[382] Having a transportation network within Tibet was crucial. In the end, it was the monasteries and local elite who had the buildings and storage facilities, access to fodder and new animals, to sustain an up to six-month journey.

[383] For more information see Chapter 4 of this dissertation. The Pangdatsang family comprised one of the key components of the powerful *Kang Zang Maoyi Gongsi* (Kham Tibet Trading Company) which included Khampa businessmen, local leaders, and high lamas. One genuine indicator of economic influence of the Nationalist government in the Tibetan areas was their connection to this trading company, and in 1943 the group formally gave Chiang Kaishek their "allegiance." Lin, ibid., 129.

[384] For a more in-depth discussion of these topics, see Chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation.

transactions represent the broad diversity of economic interactions across the Tibetan Plateau during this period.[385]

Sacred Banks and Secular Networks: The Economic Bureaucracy of Dargye Monastery in the 1940s and 1950s

Dargye Monastery's general income came from donations, agriculture,[386] rent,[387] and interest on loans.[388] According to one report, from the early 1950s, Dargye Monastery had roughly 500,000 yuan revenue from loan interests and performing religious ceremonies alone.[389] And this did not even include its wealth generated directly from commerce, which was significantly more. In fact, Dargye Monastery was considered one of the richest and most economically powerful monasteries in Kham. In the following I draw attention to the bureaucratic organization of Dargye and show how each office engaged in economic activities.

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[386] For more information on the agricultural practices of Dargye Monastery see the *Compile Materials on Monasteries*, 173.

[387] Land and rent were important sources of income for monasteries and this topic deserves greater attention, "In many places La-da have to pay a portion of the harvest, and are also subject to corvée and other requisitions. In some places that portion of harvest is halved or entirely exempted, but La-da still have to meet corvée and requisitions. In other cases the reverse is true, i.e. corvee and requisitions are exempted but not rent in kind (which is really a form of tribute). Again, in a few cases, both are exempted. These variations have come from the different origins of the lamasery lands. Some land was granted by the chieftain to the lamasery in the remote past, and some land was granted recently under new conditions. Some was shifted to the lamasery by Tse-ba, and some was taken over by the lamasery by sheer force. In some instances where the locality did not have the necessary number of Tse-ba to shoulder the tax or requisition assessment, the lamasery ordered its La-da to pay tribute as Tse-ba. In principle, however, La-da are exempted from paying corvée, requisitions and any portion of the harvest. Generally speaking they are economically slightly better off than Tse-ba. Whereas Tse-ba are completely at the mercy of the chieftain, La-da often have the protection of the lamasery against the oppression and injustice which may come from the chieftain. In Kantze, out of the 1,744 households of 37 villages, 138 households, or nearly 8 percent are La-da. The percentage of La-da is about the same as that of Ko-ba." Chen, ibid., 90.

[388] *Compiled Materials*, 174.

[389] Additionally, selling reliquaries (and other religious paraphernalia) could cost anywhere from tens to hundreds of yuan. The text is not explicit but it seems to imply annually or near annually. Ibid., 174.

Furthermore, I demonstrate the scope of Dargye's economic activity across international lines as well as the sophistication of its economic endeavors.

According to the *History of Kardze Monasteries*, there were seven offices that were each given a range of economic objectives.[390] They were; the General Management Office (*spyi so khang*),[391] the Donations Office (*mgon gnyer khang*), the Debate Hall Management Office (*chos ra gnyer khang*), the Grain Management Office (*'bru gnyer khang*), the Maintenance Office (*khang gnyer khang*), the Local Representatives Office (*phyogs gnyer khang*), and the Treasure Keeper Office (*dkon gnyer khang*).

The General Management Office was a specialized office for finance, business, and commerce. There were six members; one stayed at the monastery and organized the activities, one stationed in Lhasa, one in Chamdo, one in Jyekundo, one in Darstedo, and the last one had the responsibility of communication and transportation coordination.[392] While those may have been the main bases of operation, the various sources list business activities throughout a far greater geographic zone. The *History of Kardze Monasteries* also says that they could be stationed in Chengdu, and other places,[393] the *Compiled Materials on Monasteries* claims that their presence extended, "to foreign countries, internally [in China] they also reach Shanghai,

[390] *The History of Dargye Monastery* describes the offices a little differently saying that there are only five major offices instead of seven: the 'gyed gnyer, the spyi so, the chos ra'i gnyer pa, the khang gnyer, and the 'bru gnyer. *The History of Dargye Monastery*, 53.

[391] There was also the *gso gnas khang* which dealt with the financial operations and was in charge of managing the money, essentially the accounting office, and it held the financial documents (*mar rtsa'i yig cha*) while the *spyi so* actually held the money. *The History of Dargye Monastery*, 10. Also, most of the funds are placed with the *spyi so* and the *chos ra'i gnyer pa*, these two had to submit financial reports twice a year. Ibid., 53.

[392] *History of Kardze Monasteries*, 48.

[393] Ibid., 42.

Chongqing, and other areas."[394] While the History of Dargye Monastery says, "their profits [*khe skyed*] relied on business in India, Lhasa, Shigatse, Chamdo, and other Tibetan areas in Amdo and Kham [*stod smad khag*], up to Dartsedo."[395] Furthermore, they had to represent the monastery when forming relationships with powerful people and places including, "the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama, the Patrul Rinpoche, China, and Mongolia… They had to meet them and establish relationships as much as possible".[396]

While details on the precise nature and locations of these "company offices" is hard to come by (and possibly exaggerated by the Chinese surveyors) we do know that Dargye maintained a strong presence in Dartsedo, the economic gateway between Tibet and China and home to the Achak Khapa (Ch. *guozhuang* 鍋莊) trading house institution. These trading houses, which also acted as inns and storage facilities, were run by aristocratic families of the Dartsedo region and often managed by a matriarch of each family.[397] Dartsedo was the center of all trade going in and out of Tibet; and all the major Tibetan merchant firms, Chinese companies, state entities, and banks had offices in this town. One of these was a Yunnanese trading company called the Chen Ho Industrial Corporation who teamed up with one of the most prominent Tibetan merchant families named the Pangdatsangs (Tib. spang mda' tshang Ch. *Bangdachang* 邦達昌) to transport tea and cotton goods across the plateau. In 1943, they were trying to get the lay of the land and asked their newly opened Dartsedo office to send them a report on the most prominent business ventures in the town. Their report listed "the Sadhutshangs, the

[394] *Compiled Materials on Monasteries,* 173.

[395] *History of Dargye Monastery,* 53.

[396] Ibid., 10.

[397] For more see Tsomu, "Guozhuang Trading Houses."

Pangdatsangs…Kardze's Dargye Monastery, and the Tibet Kham Trading Company."[398] While the Pangdatsangs and their cooperation with the Chen Ho Industrial Corporation will be the subject of the following chapter, it is worthy of mention that the Sadhutshangs were not only their own trading firm but also the patrons of Dargye Monastery.

In his autobiographical account, Rinchen Sadhutshang recalls leaving Trehor as a child during the Dargye-Beri Conflict in the early 1930s. In fact, Rinchen's uncle Ngarak Trulku was the head of Ngarak Monastery, the branch monastery at the epicenter of the disagreement between Dargye Monastery and the Beri Chieftain. When the Beri Chieftain attempted to exert control over the monastery Ngarak Trulku went to Dargye Monastery, claiming that because the Sadutshangs were patrons of Dargye, and he was a Sadhutshang, he was entitled to their help. Dargye Monastery immediately came forward, fully supporting Ngarak Trulku and fighting broke out between Dargye and Beri. While Rinchen unfortunately does not elaborate further on the Sadhutshang relationship to Dargye Monastery, it is clear that the relationship was strong and extended beyond the immediate monastic surroundings. Furthermore, while the Sadhutshang merchant company's base would soon shift to Lhasa, they maintained their Khampa networks and familial base in Trehor.

Back however to the Chen Ho Corporation's report, they continued with each company's address and their representative in Dartsedo. Dargye Monastery had one representative (Ch. huishou 會首)[399] who could be found at either the Mujia or Baijia Trading Houses (Tib. achak

[398] "大商家計有三都昌，幫達昌，村義昌[Duiyichang? XXtsang]，虫桑昌，[Chongsangchang?] 甘孜大金寺，康藏貿易公司" Chongqing Archives 023000030000330000188000.

[399] Because I am quoting a Chinese source the only confirmed word for this is *huishou*. However, the typical Tibetan word for this is *Tsong pön*, see work by Galli, ibid. Additionally, Patrick Booz locates another word for this, Sagengo (Tib. Sa skas mgo) through interviews in Dartsedo, see Booz, "Tea Trade, Tibet and Transport in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands," 60. This is likely the proper regional term for the monastic merchant in Tibetan.

khapa Ch. guozhuang 鍋莊) in Dartsedo.[400] It is however possible that Dargye patronized more than two of these trading houses, as Yudru Tsomu in her brilliant article on the Dartsedo trading house explains: "when the Gyarongsé achak khapa was completely destroyed by fire…the family could not afford to rebuild the *guozhuang*. Traders from Dargyé Monastery who regularly stayed at the *guozhuang* are said to have donated a great amount of money and to have rebuilt the entire *guozhuang*, without payment. The owner of Gyarongsé spontaneously exempted these traders from any commission for three years."[401] These trading houses therefore acted as de-facto offices for Dargye Monastery, their representatives, and their merchants.

Furthermore, we know from sporadic references that Dargye worked directly with Nepalese traders based in Lhasa. A Yatung Trade Report from 1945 stated that one of the leading Nepalese traders of Kalimpong, who had a branch shop in Lhasa, had already shipped about 200 loads of cloth to Dargye Monastery.[402] Dargye Monastery was contracting out work to Nepalese traders, meaning that even if they didn't have an actual representative in Lhasa, they certainly had a strong network, and one that crossed national boundaries.

While the sources are inconclusive, one of these General Managers might have been stationed in Dartsedo, and these positions in the General Management Office were traditionally held for three years. Upon appointment, each person was given funds (*ma rtsa*) totaling 1,000,000 *sgor* and after three years the funds (*ma dngul*) and the revenue (*'phar dgnul*) all had

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[400] Chongqing Archives 02300003000330000188000 "甘孜大金寺有會首一人住康定木家及白家鍋莊." This trading house has a couple alternate spellings.

[401] Tsomu, "Guozhuang Trading Houses," 93.

[402] IOR-L-PS-12-4208 (197) Spelled Dharkay.

to be given back to the monastery. If there was a lot of revenue, some of it could be taken by the individual, but most of it had to be distributed to the group. On the occasion that the person made a lot of money, they would distribute money to all the monks in the monastery or give each monk a brick of tea. If business was not good and they lost all the money then they had to pay it back personally, but this did not happen too often.[403]

The Tibetan Government in Lhasa also continued to ensure Dargye Monastery's special position even after the death of the 13th Dalai Lama in 1933. One account from *The History of Dargye Monastery* states, "in 1947, Phurbu Gyabo[404] was on his way back to Dargye from Lhasa with a lot of silk and many other goods. When he reached the Iron Bridge[405] (Tib. *sog lcags zam*) he showed the Tibetan Government District Commissioner (Tib. *rdzong dpon*) a permit that had a large red stamp,[406] the District Commissioner [looked at the document and] was surprised saying that the Tibetan Government must look highly upon Dargye Monastery."[407] Dargye Monastery was indeed in a privileged position. Apart from its exemption from commercial tax (*tshong khral*), it was also allowed by Lhasa to make use of the *ulak* services run by the Tibetan Government. In 1952, Dargye Monastery "bought 40,000 *bao* of tea to Dartsedo, each of these *bao* cost ten *dayang* [high quality silver coins]. When transporting and selling these *bao* of tea in Lhasa the price increases to 100 *dayang* per *bao*. When going to Lhasa this monastery's transactions were duty free and this was sanctioned by the Dalai Lama, and they could use the

[403] *History of Kardze Monasteries*, 48.

[404] He was the author's benefactor (*sbyin bdag*) who was in the *khang gner* office. *History of Dargye Monastery*, 12.

[405] It is unclear exactly which bridge this is but most likely it is the one on the border between Central Tibet and Kham, near Chamdo.

[406] The author believes that it was the stamp of the 13th Dalai Lama.

[407] *History of Dargye Monastery*, 12.

ulak transportation throughout the journey, therefore, the profits made from this business were not merely 100% but 200-300%."[408] However, even if this report was exaggerated by the Chinese researchers, given the transportation costs, the decreased supply, and increased demand as one approached Lhasa, the price of goods would increase. For example, a late 19th century report on the tea trade calculated that "a [tea] brick, averaging nearly five pounds in weight (2.25 kg) cost 12 annas 6 paise [Indian currency] at Dartsedo, R[upee]. 1 at Batang, Rs. 1.5 to 2 on the highroad, and Rs. 2–2.5 in Lhasa."[409] It is further suggested in the *Compiled Materials on Monasteries* that the monks who were appointed to these positions, especially the positions within the General Management Office, were not only powerful in the monastery, but also had connections to Lhasa. This may have been related to the tradition of monks spending three to five years studying in Central Tibet.

Overall, monastic business was highly organized and institutionalized, where the managing offices had direct business connections through long distance connections. One topic that the Tibetan sources do not mention, but that is discussed at great length by the Chinese, is the relationship of economic growth to the economic rise of British India and the British Empire in the early 20th century. In boilerplate language, *Compiled Material on Monasteries* notes the significance of British-traded goods:

> The development of this monastery's commercial capital is related to the economic invasion of English imperialism. When starting to manage commercial activities [before the British economic invasion], capital was low, and the scope was small, but following the British imperialist invasion their influence deepened and British Indian foreign goods flooded the Tibetan markets. This monastery traded goods that were made in India by the British, and [the monastery] did the buying and selling and they transported British Indian goods to the interior. These included British Indian goods mainly from England, India, Nepal, Bhutan, and other countries' woolen goods, woolen cloth, watches, even

[408] *Compiled Materials on Monasteries*, 173-174.

[409] Booz, "Tea, Trade and Transport on the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands," 194.

> dealing in guns, ammunition, and other daily necessities…British Indian currency that also flooded the Tibetan market starting as early as the late 19th century. These are all transported back to Tibetan areas and sold [put into the market].[410]

This report also included a description of the potentially darker side of Dargye Monastery's commercial activities, as monasteries were "even coercing people to buy [the goods]. Even when the monastery pays without cash, buying goods through collateral exchange or loans, they still mark up the price and their returns more than double. Furthermore, these merchants obtain goods using all sorts of insidious measures and plunder the special local goods, like sheep skin, medicinal goods, and others. Mostly these go to the foreign countries but sometimes also enter the Han areas where they are exchanged for everyday items. Regarding the capital of the monastery there aren't any authentic statistics. According to estimates, the lowest possible amount is one million yuan but also it could be as much as four million yuan. In reality it cannot possibly be this low. After Liberation [1949], this monastery continuously engaged in that trade of illicit British Indian goods and evaded taxes".[411] While I am suspicious of this report, it is still possible that illicit activities were occurring.[412] In fact, the author of the *History of Dargye Monastery* makes a point to say that Dargye Monastery's commercial activities were completely legal.[413]

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[410] *Compiled Materials on Monasteries*, 173.

[411] Ibid., 173.

[412] I am drafting an article on a Dargye Monastery opium dealing lawsuit from 1947. This single legal case explains how Dargye Monastery joined with merchants from Lijiang, Yunnan, to trade crude opium through Sichuan. This shows in part, Dargye Monastery's willingness to deal in all lucrative commodities and respond to market pressures and opportunities.

[413] *History of Dargye Monastery*, 53. Tib. *khrims mthun tshong las kyi khe 'bab*.

Apart from the General Management Office (*spyi so khang*), other offices also dealt with commerce to some extent. First, the Donations Office (*mgon gnyer khang*)[414] was mainly in charge of the donations (*'bul ba*) to the monastery. The *History of Dargye Monastery* also explains that this office had to deal with the Tibetan Government and the Chinese, receive them when they arrived and pay for a representative to go to and fro to meet people, probably for patronage reasons.[415] This office also sold offering objects *('bul ba'i dngos po*) and engaged in some small business selling necessary goods like butter, dishes, and similar types of goods in order to supplement the General Management Office. They were allotted around 200,000 *dgnul* and they could use the revenue, as well as use the roughly 1,000,000 *sgor* of permanent capital of the monastery, in order to give out high interest loans which brought in a lot of revenue.[416] Regarding loans, the Ganzi Prefecture Gazetteer describes the renting or loaning process as being able to be paid in kind, but then the people would owe the monastery 50% of their earnings. Also, according to the gazetteer there were three kinds of loans that monasteries and high lamas or monks would give out, black debt (ch. *hei zhai* 黑债), multicolor debt (ch. *hua zhai* 花债) and a white debt (ch. *bai zhai* 白债). The black debt was the highest, a 2 to 3 ratio, the multicolored debt was a 3 to 4 ratio, while the white debt was a 4 to 5 ratio, usually on the timeline of "borrow in the spring, return in the fall."[417]

[414] Also called *'gye gnyer*.

[415] *History of Dargye Monastery*, 54.

[416] Based on this source the interest on these loans was *zla skyed lnga 'phar gyi skyed lci'i bu lon* which means that the loans had to be paid off at five times the amount after one month. *History of Kardze Monasteries*, 48-49.

[417] *Ganzi Zhou Zhi*, 338-339.

Next, the Grain Management Office *('bru gnyer khang*) mainly dealt with managing the farmlands. Dargye held about 1100 mu (tib. *mu'u* ch. mu 亩)[418], which was granted to Dargye by the Tibetan Government and by the local landowners (*sa 'dzin*). The land was mainly worked on by about 30 dependent families. The office was also in charge of food distribution to all the monks.[419] According to the History of Dargye Monastery, in 1945 the representative of the Tibetan government stayed in Rongbatsa and other villages near Dargye, so the monastery offered a salary to him every month and this salary was paid by the Grain Management Office. This office also took care of all the villages under their control, and to guide the farming, and collect grain.[420] The Debate Hall Management Office (*chos ra gnyer khang*) mainly had to manage the funds related to religious activities. This office was also partially in charge of printing the paper money which will be discussed in greater depth below. After that, the Maintenance Office (*khang gnyer khang*) was mainly responsible for the rebuilding and maintenance of the monastery and temples. When there was a project, they were also responsible for hiring and paying workers and collecting the necessary building materials. They were allotted about 200,000 *sgor* and if these funds were not sufficient they would also engage in business and rely on the revenue in order to make ends meet.[421] The Local Representatives Office (*phyogs gnyer khang*) included representatives from the local villages as well as monks among their members. In terms of economic activity this group also engaged in small business and gave out high interest loans. This group could use the money they made for their own purposes and did

[418] One mu equals 0.1647 acres.

[419] *History of Kardze Monasteries*, 49.

[420] *History of Dargye Monastery*, 55.

[421] Ibid., 49.

not have to give their revenue to the General Management Office.[422] Finally, the Treasure Keeper Office (*dkon gnyer*) mainly had to take care of the religious objects; he was given a fixed amount of funds but did not engage in business.[423]

Printing Paper Money at Dargye Monastery and New Economic Infrastructures in Kham

In the early 1940s,[424] as multiple currencies circulated in Kham from Chinese, to Tibetan, and British Indian Rupees, Dargye Monastery began printing its own "paper money" (*shog dngul*) that was designed after the model of currency of the Tibetan Government in Lhasa.[425] By the 1950s, Dargye was famous for being the only monastery in the region to produce paper money.[426] In this section I will give a general overview of the history of paper money printed by the Tibetan Government, and argue that Dargye Monastery's paper currency reflects not only a change in the landscape of economic systems in Kham but also a synthesis of practices related to the production of money from Central Tibet to China.

Across time and place, historians have paid attention to the "liberating effect" of money on trade and other large transactions compared to typical barter systems.[427] Gurung Kalsang Norbu in his study on the use of Tibetan money in the 19th century explains how payments for

[422] Ibid., 49-50.

[423] Ibid., 50.

[424] According to Bertsch it is possible that printing of paper money started in the 1930s, but based on Bertsch's analysis and on the monastery's history during the 1930s, I think that they began printing them in the early 1940s. Bertsch, *The Paper Currency of Tibet*.

[425] Bertsch, ibid., 166.

[426] Litang Monastery was famous for marking silver coins, stamping the ones that they deemed suitable for circulation. *Compiled Materials on Monasteries*, 268-71.

[427] Gurung, ibid., 197.

anything from labor services, tribute and religious offerings, to import and export trade, were made via barter or by use of foreign minted gold or silver "tokens" which were not proper coins,[428] but units of weight similar to the Chinese system of "taels."[429] As explained in Chapter One, although foreign coins had circulated in Tibet and payments in weights of gold and silver had been made for centuries, there was no standardized monetary system in Tibet until the 18th century.[430] Yet it wasn't until 1912 that paper money was introduced in Central Tibet, and even then it did not have a wide circulation.[431]

Stunningly beautiful in their design (see Image #5 and #6), Tibetan paper currency drew from Tibetan Buddhist iconography traditions. Originally using woodblock printing, a technique common for the mass printing of books, paper charms, amulets, and prayer flags, by 1926 the Tibetan government had imported metal printing technology and began printing, more intricate (and harder to forge), multicolored notes.[432]

[428] Since Tibet did not have a currency at that time, nor used any proper coinage apart from Nepalese coins, these "*gser srang*" and "*dngul srang*" were not in fact proper coins.

[429] For more on taels, see Zelin ibid., and Von Glahn, ibid.

[430] Gurung, ibid., 226.

[431] There is some indication that Chinese or other paper monies reached Tibet but not that they were used with any significance. Bertsch, *The Paper Currency of Tibet*, 1.

[432] The multicolored notes were printed in Lhasa between 1926 and 1932 using metal blocks or metal sheets mounted on woodblocks on printing presses driven by water wheels. The ink used for the notes was imported from India, except possibly the black ink, and the paper was made in Tibet. This paper had a long history of production in Tibet but according to Bertsch was different from the paper used to print books. Bertsch, *The Paper Currency of Tibet*, 17.

Fig 3.3: Tibetan 25 srang note, obverse and reverse[433]

[433] Author's personal collection.

The ornamentation of the 25 srang note includes the Buddhist eternal knot, five snow mountains, the sun, the moon and stars, with a pair of lions holding a Dharma wheel and imagery apparently drawn from the life of the Buddha. To a Tibetan or Tibetan Buddhist, these would have been immediately recognizable images, ones that would have covered the murals in monasteries, and decorated homes and ceremonial clothing. While circulation of the larger denomination notes was very limited, circulation of the smaller notes, such as twenty-five, five, or ten srang, could have circulated at a higher volume. While the scope of circulation is difficult to determine, Wolfgang Bertsch explains that prior to the death of the 13th Dalai Lama in 1933, the issuing of notes was strictly controlled and to a certain extent had the backing of gold reserves. However, after his death the Tibetan government lack centralized and effective leadership and paper money issued in ever increasing numbers as the government looked for means to cover their deficits. This, unsurprisingly, led to severe inflation between the 1930s and 1950s.[434] Overall, there appears to have been widespread use of the paper money in Lhasa and the surrounding regions by merchants but perhaps most predominantly for government expenditures and tax payments.

The *History of Kardze Monasteries* explains that the paper money of Dargye Monastery was the so-called stipend money of the debating hall (*chos ra'i phogs dngul*). There were one *sgor*[435] bills and half *sgor* bills and a monk would receive half a paper bill (*shog sgor*) for taking part in the evening debates, but if they were passing a particular level of tests, they would usually receive 1 to 12 bricks of tea. It was apparently because the monks' needs exceeded the amount of

[434] Bertsch, *The Paper Currency of Tibet*, 88. Additionally, forgeries were a serious issue, "100 srang notes were mainly forged in Nepal and India and brought to Tibet by traders where these notes circulated primarily in remote areas among nomads…The late Gelong Losang Dhonden whom I interviewed in 1998 informed me that forged notes came to Tibet from India via Nepal." Ibid., 125. Bertsch then includes seven bibliographic references to forgery and forgery cases. Much more work is needed on this subject.

[435] Ibid., 168. Sgor here means a Sichuan Rupee, a Sichuan produced silver coin.

funds allocated for the distribution to monks that the monastery started printing the paper money. Furthermore, *History of Kardze Monasteries* suggests that this helped standardize the monastery funds in general, making it easier to give the stipends (*phogs dngul*) to the monks and to buy and sell in the local and outer markets. Even though the money was not supposed to be used outside of the monastery, the paper money spread naturally into the surrounding markets. Also, it says that the monastery administration (or perhaps the survey compilers) did not know how much was in circulation. For ten paper money you could get a box/brick of tea,[436] so if this money was being used outside the monastery, it is likely that anyone including monks could go to the monastery store and exchange this paper money for tea.[437] The paper money was created and managed by the Debate Hall Management Office; it was made from a woodblock printing process and the one yuan bill was blue while the half yuan bill was red with the back in blue.[438] It was given to monks participating in the debating activities, which may be why that particular office had to sign off on the paper money. On the face of the money there was the seal of both the Debate Hall Management Office and the abbot of the monastery; it was not valid if they did not have the seals.[439] In keeping with the slightly contradictory nature of the sources analyzed, the *Compiled Materials on Monasteries* adds that the paper money had, "the mark of the *Suonai* [Office] on the front and the *nie ba* (tib. *nyer pa*) office stamp on the back, and the *nie ba* [office] is in charge of the printing process… [Because] the money circulates longer than the typical three-year tenure of the *nie ba* position, one can usually see more than two different *nie ba*'s

[436] *History of Dargye Monastery*, ibid., 54.

[437] *Compiled Materials on Monasteries*, ibid., 170.

[438] Ibid., 174.

[439] *History of Kardze Monasteries*, ibid., 50.

stamps on a bill".[440] As one can see in the image, these bills frequently were imprinted with seals from other offices or with personal stamps when they exchanged hands.[441] This would have added to the trustworthiness of the bill and would have given Dargye Monastery a way to trace back the ownership of the bills as they moved around the local market.[442]

Fig 3.4: Paper Currency of Dargye Monastery: 1 sgor mo bill, obverse and reverse[443]

[440] *Compiled Materials on Monasteries*, 174.

[441] Bertsch, *The Paper Currency of Tibet*, 168.

[442] Bertsch was unable to definitively identify the seals, the red is likely the seal of Dargye Monastery, while the others are mostly probably the seals of the treasury or personal seals used by important lamas of the monastery, perhaps those who supervised the debates. Bertsch, 165-166.

[443] Image from Wolfgang Bertsch, *The Paper Currency of Tibet*, 170.

Fig 3.5: Paper Currency of Dargye Monastery: half sgor mo bill, obverse and reverse[444]

The Dargye notes pictured above were most likely printed by hand from woodblocks, in Dargye's own printing workshop.[445] The obverse (front) of the bill depicts a snow lion holding a silk ball in its mouth with mountains in the background,[446] while on the reverse (back) contains

[444] Images # are all from Bertsch, ibid., 170-171.

[445] However, their printing capacities were quite limited compared to other monasteries with well-established printing houses like Payul and Derge.

[446] Ibid., 165-166. Bertsch says it's a silk ball but I think it could possibly be a fruit or a jewel.

the eight spoked wheel of law (the Wheel of the Dharma) with the three jewels (*dkon mchog gsum*) above.[447] The obverse design of the lion and mountain was clearly inspired by that of the official Tibetan 5 srang note which was issued between 1942 and 1945. Based on this conspicuous similarity, one can conclude that the designer of the Dargye Monastery notes not only had knowledge of the Tibetan government notes (possibly from their time in Lhasa, through the monastery network, or via merchants) but also that it could not have been issued before 1942.[448] Interestingly however, despite the design and aesthetic inspiration coming directly from the Tibetan Government in Lhasa, the denominations of the bills (one and half bills) and the accounting terminology (*sgor mo* as opposed to *tam* or *srang*) was drawing directly from the model of the zangyang silver coin minted by Chinese authorities in Dartsedo.[449] Through the Dargye notes we therefore witness a rare example of a hybrid monetary ideology, one that in many ways demonstrates Dargye Monastery's synthesis and innovations as an economic institution in the Sino-Tibetan borderlands.

[447] The three jewels are the Buddha, the Sangha and the Dharma, i.e. the Buddha, the community of monks and the law or Buddhist teachings.

[448] Ibid., 166.

[449] Ibid., 165. "Geshe Lharam Sonam confirmed that *sgor* refers to the Sichuan rupee which circulated in the area where Tashi Dargyas is located." Ibid., 168.

Fig 3.6: Close-up of the Snow lion design in the 5 srang note printed by the Tibetan Government[450]

The leading numismatic scholar of Tibet and the author of the book *The Paper Currency of Tibet*, Wolfgang Bertsch also took notice of Dargye's paper money and translates the inscription on the note as "salary money" or "salary silver" (*phog dngul*), which he takes to mean as "gift voucher".[451] According to Bertsch's research, "the notes were issued to those monks who daily participated in the religious debates… For every session each participating monk received one note to the value of ½ rupee. For twenty ½ rupee notes the monks could purchase one brick of tea of the best quality from the monastery's store rooms… Anybody could exchange the notes for high quality tea bricks in the monastery." These notes were apparently in such high demand that some people were said to offer up to double the face value.[452] The reason most likely was due to the high quality of the monastery's tea stores. By the 1940s high quality tea was difficult

[450] Bertsch, ibid., 155.

[451] Ibid., 166.

[452] Ibid., 168. Interestingly this report also confirmed that the Dargye notes were not accepted by any other monasteries, if one were to change out the word "monastery" for "bank" in this context, this would be exactly the same as how nonnetworked banks and bank notes would function. Also, these notes were issued multiple times, and according to one source every three years.

to find, and it is possible that Dargye's tea stores increased in value, making their paper currency comparatively more valuable. As far as the economic administration of Dargye Monastery was concerned, providing a standard paper bill for circulation among the monks and the monastery dependents would have resulted in more efficient collection of taxes and repayment of services rendered; acting as the bank, the organizer of labor, and the center of food storage and trade, Dargye had a great deal of incentive to issue their own paper notes, bills, or currency. Even though Bertsch uses terms like salary money, I am not yet convinced that "salary" is an appropriate term to describe the function and use of the paper money.[453] Overall, the paper currency of Dargye Monastery represented a unique mixture of monetary norms from the local, to Central Tibet, to China. The accounting terminology of *sgor mo* and the denominations of one and half were drawn from Kham and standards set by the 20th century Chinese monetary system, whereas the design and aesthetics originated from the Tibetan Buddhist center of Lhasa. This element of design elicited a sense of trust, and as we will see in Chapter Six, even Chinese bank notes in Kham would employ the use of Tibetan Buddhist and Central Tibetan iconography and imagery.

What is striking here about Dargye Monastery is its sophisticated organization regarding economic activities. While these bills clearly did not circulate too far, they demonstrate that Dargye was in some way cognizant of the changing economic systems enough to copy the use of paper currency and put it to use. Most monasteries were not monetized and the "money" paid to monks took the form of food items.[454] This provides extra evidence that the economic power of

[453] Nevertheless, this information was based on interviews he conducted with a Geshe in India who had lived at Dargye Monastery for seven years during the 1940s and 50s, further solidifying the information in the written sources.

[454] At a monastery in Central Tibet called Dwags po bshad grub gling, where the gnyer tshang (*nie kang* or some variety of that word which means management office), "was responsible for providing a 'salary' (tib. phogs) directly to the monks." Lawrence Epstein and Richard F. Sherburne eds., *Reflections on Tibetan culture: essays in memory*

Dargye was strong enough for lay people to use its "tea-backed" currency.[455] Overall, by analyzing the economic aspects of a single monastery we can better understand the dynamic economic activities and multiple economic actors present on the Tibetan Plateau through the 1950s.

Conclusion: An Exception or the Norm?

The general scholarly assumption is that monasteries and the lamas who ran them were intransigent in the face of economic change. While this may have been true for some, many adapted to the changing economic climate, and Dargye Monastery serves as a prime example. It is further important to point out that monasteries *still* act as major economic institutions in Tibet. The history told in these pages continues to live on.[456]

As this chapter has demonstrated, a variety of Tibetan economic actors and institutions interacted directly with and thrived through the 1940s, a period of increased Chinese and international presence. As the next chapter will further illustrate, there was a broad diversity of economic activity during this period—from the Tibetan merchant families like the Pangdatsangs and Sadhutshangs business along the trans-Tibet trade route, their dealings with the Yunnanese Chen Ho Industrial corporation, to Dargye Monastery's long-distance trade and financial

of Turrell V. Wylie, (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1990), 250. In the mid 20th century these monks were given a remuneration in the form of barley and Tibetan breads, the past, they would have given out more food items such as tea and soup. For additional uses, forms, and translations of the word "phog" see Brenton Sullivan's dissertation, "The Mother of All Monasteries: Gonlung Jampa Ling and the Rise of Mega Monasteries in Northeastern Tibet" (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2013) 167, 276.

[455] It is important to realize that if the tea brick quality was decreasing during the 1940s as Booz suggests, then it would make sense that the Dargye store of high quality tea bricks would have increased in value during this time making the Dargye bills also of high value.

[456] For more, see Epilogue.

activities.[457] Furthermore, Dargye Monastery was not the only monastery in Tibet to issue token money. Starting in the 1920s copper tokens were issued by Labrang Monastery in northern Tibet, which could be used to purchase items in the market.[458] In addition, Litang Monastery, now in western Sichuan, countermarked their own Sichuan Rupee coins supposedly to mark low quality currency circulating in the Litang area, where it would only be used in the local market, presumably because this low-quality currency couldn't be used in long distance trading where high quality silver coins were necessary.[459] Therefore, while it appears that some monasteries utilized "currency", it was not common, and monastic paper money seems to be unique to Dargye. Economic change and adaptation is a familiar story to most, if not in Tibet then in China, or elsewhere in the world where colonial governments were established. While these ties point to the presence of a tightly-knit economic elite able to control, direct, and change economic flows, the specific nature of the relationship between these "secular" companies and the "sacred" banks is still hard to unravel. The position of monasteries and their economic power should not be underestimated, as many of the Tibetan merchant families came directly out of an economic (and political and religious) relationship to major monasteries in Eastern Tibet and some from Dargye Monastery itself. With their development of economic bureaucracies, landed wealth, and bank-like functions, in terms of scale, monasteries were primed to capitalize on the changing economic tides of the 20th century. Furthermore, the dominance of the political and economic position of Buddhism in the Tibetan world has remained significant through the Communist

[457] While there is significant regional difference between Eastern Tibet and Central Tibet, for the purposes of this paper I will be considering the two within their shared context of the overland transportation route and specifically the economic activities and Tibetan companies that linked these two distinct regions during the 1940s.

[458] Wolfgang Bertsch, "Tibetan Monastic Token Currency," The Tibet journal (Volume 26, Issue 2) 43.

[459] Ibid. 43.

period and into the present day. Understanding this connection is therefore key to understanding the framework of the Tibetan economy writ large.

Chapter Four

Tibet Inc.: The Pangdatsang Merchant Company, 1934 – 1949

The Pangdatsangs (Tib. spang mda' tshang Ch. *bang da chang* 邦達昌),[460] hailing from eastern Tibet, were both a family and a merchant company who conducted business in British India, with the United Kingdom and United States, and across Tibet, and China. Their deep political ties with both the Tibetan and Chinese governments facilitated the expansion of their economic network during the first half of the 20th century, making them one of the richest merchant companies in Tibetan history. Their origins in a region of Kham called Chamdo (Tib. chab mdo Ch. 昌都) gave the Pangdatsangs access to both the Chinese and Tibetan economic worlds, and their position within this middle ground was critical in the creation of a transnational business network. While Central Tibet was far more economically linked with India until the closing of the border in the 1950s, with over 70% of its foreign trade directly with India and only 20% with China, the eastern Tibetan Khampa merchants were oriented in both directions. [461]

By the turn of the 20th century, Pangdatsang Nyigyel (d. 1921) the Pangdatsang merchant company's progenitor, had already made a name for himself as a successful monastery merchant in Eastern Tibet. With the political and economic ties he was able to muster across the plateau, he moved to Lhasa around 1900, where he was granted a temporary monopoly over the

[460] There are alternative spellings in Tibetan and Chinese, such as Pomdatsang (Tib. spom mda' tshang).

[461] Shakya, ibid., 115. Shakya further shows how the Communists managed to buy up all the wool in the early 1950s, effectively controlling all the import export of Tibet. While there is significant regional difference between Eastern Tibet and Central Tibet, when it comes to the Pangdatsangs, I consider the two within their shared context of the overland transportation route and specifically the economic activities and Tibetan companies that linked these two distinct regions during the 1940s. This is not something that has been done apart from simply saying that these merchants were *Khampas*.

lucrative wool trade by the 13th Dalai Lama.[462] Occupying this position was critical in the growth of Pangdatsang family business in the following decades. The most active agents of the family were the three brothers, Yampel, Rapga, and Tobgye, who were all involved in different aspects of trade across the Tibetan plateau. They were part of what Alice Travers and Lucia Galli have called the new international Tibetan middle class,[463] as the Pangdatsang brothers and many of their representatives were well-traveled, spoke either English or Chinese, and could simultaneously interface with the British, American, and Chinese traders and authorities. By the 1940s, Pangdatsang Yampel was serving as the Trade Agent of the Tibetan Government in Lhasa; Rapga was based in the vibrant trading town of Kalimpong in northeastern India; and Tobgye conducted long-distance transport-trade, expanding his firm across Tibet and India. All three remained closely tied to their extensive land holdings in Markham in eastern Tibet, and both Rapga and Tobgye worked closely with the Chinese Nationalist government (Ch. guomindang 國民黨). Both were deeply integrated into the political and military networks of the time, and while nation-based alliances fluctuated over time, they managed to work within both the Chinese and Tibetan governments and use their political power and connections to their economic benefits.

It is difficult to classify the Pangdatsangs neatly into a specific institutional category like "company."[464] They were not a legally bound entity. In fact, Tibet did not have an institutional

[462] Carole McGranahan, "Nyigel Pangdatsang," Treasury of Lives, https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Nyigyel-Pangdatsang/TBRC_P1KT2 accessed May 2020.

[463] Bischoff and Travers, ibid.; and Galli, ibid.

[464] At no point do the sources refer to the Pangdatsangs as a company. One of the goals of this chapter therefore, is to show that it functioned as a company and to layout the scope of the company's business. Also, when reading the Yunnanese Chen Ho Industrial Corporation's communications in English and Chinese, one will frequently see the company referred to simply as the "Pangdatsangs" indicating the company as a whole rather than a specific individual.

body that could affirm a corporate status/legal corporation.[465] Corporate entities organized in part by the Chinese Nationalists did exist and Pangda Tobgye was involved in them.[466] In this sense, he would have known about this form of organization but perhaps did not find any use for it in his own business dealings.[467] The point of having the liability and shareholders is mutual accountability that is based on codified law. I have not found any indication that the Pangdatsangs engaged in business in this way. Instead, the Pangdatsangs called themselves a "family" or a *tshang* (Tib. tshang), as indicated by the last syllable attached to their name, Pangda*tsang*. In the absence of scholarship on *tshang*, it is difficult to make generalized assumptions, but the meaning of *tshang* encompasses the English terms house or royal house, family/household (khyim tshang), collection or group, and business, and literally means "place of birth." In Chinese the term is often translated as *bangpai* (Ch. 幫派) meaning "gang," "political faction," and was also used to describe Chinese business groups from a particular local. Certainly "political faction" was an important factor as tshang often indicated political and military power. Tshang was, and continues to be, a common marker for socio-economic status in Kham, giving an air of prestige. For example, sometimes lamas' names will end in tshang, or modern-day companies will use it for added respect.[468] This was a common practice, and some

[465] One could argue however that the reincarnation institution (the trulku system) was a legal entity and could create legal entities, this however is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

[466] Pat Giersch in his book *Corporate Conquests,* argues that it was innovations in book keeping and accounting techniques that allowed the Yunnanese merchants from Heshun and Tengchong to expand their transnational business. He locates this shift in the late 19th century but explains that the first four decades of the 20th century was the critical period of development. He also posits that the Yunnanese merchants learned these techniques, adding their own variations, from the Shanxi banks and merchants. Not discounting the Pangdatsang's relationship to monastic business strategies (those of which we have only begun to define) it is highly likely that the Pangdatsangs learned a lot from their partners and associates in the Yunnanese merchant community.

[467] They could have potentially gained legal status in the eyes of the Chinese government through one of their "offices" in Chengdu or even Shanghai but I have not seen any indication of this.

[468] Personal conversation with a friend from Kardze, May 2020.

of the more famous Khampa families with the name tshang include, Sadhutshang, Andrugtsang, Retingtsang (usually referred to as the Reting labrang) and Jiangtsatsang who was a business associate of the Pangdatsangs.[469] In certain ways, the Pangdatsang prominence points to the political anarchy of the 1930s and 1940s, and the lack of a strong state power allowed the Pangdatsangs higher levels of autonomy – indeed, they maintained their own private military, their own fleet of mules, yaks, and hundreds of employees.[470] This was less about "avoiding the state" à la James Scott, and more about operating within an essentially stateless or multistate society.[471] With that said, they managed their alliances with various state powers such as the Nationalist government, the Sichuanese warlords, the British Indian regime, and the Tibetan Government in Lhasa to their advantage, making them a high functioning international merchant company that could be compared to many other international companies of their time.

While much attention is paid to the Pangdatsangs during the 1950s and beyond, the 1930s and 40s are critical for understanding that their success was equally, if not predominantly, founded on their connections to the Chinese state and Chinese merchants. While drawing from Carole McGrananhan's thorough work on the Pangdatsang family, my research directs focus to the Pangdatsang company formation during the 1930s and 40s, specifically paying attention to their economic, political, and military relationships to Tibetan, western, and Chinese states and

[469] I plan to eventually compile a list in order to triangulate a comprehensive meaning of the word.

[470] The sources do not help elucidate the exact nature of the Pangdatsang merchant company's workers or employees. I have not heard of or seen any set contract between an "employee" and the Pangdatsangs but given the extent of their business records of this nature must have existed. The Chinese materials from the 1940s use the words "representative" or words related to an associate and never refer to the lower level worker or employee. Secondary materials often simply use the word "people" as in people in their company, or even *yong ren* 傭人, i.e., servant or serviceman.

[471] James Scott, *The Art of Not being Governed: An Anarchist History of upland Southeast Asia.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

companies.[472] These connections, in addition to their links to the Tibetan Government, enabled them to conduct business on a transnational scale.[473]

The Pangdatsang Family's Rise to Economic Power

Pangdatsang Nyigyel (Tib. nyi ma rgyal mtshan) (1865?-1921) was born to a family of traders, in a region of Chamdo called Dzawa Pomda (Tib. rdza ba spom mda'), and around the turn of the twentieth century Nyigyel moved to Lhasa to follow possible business opportunities.[474] Similar to the Sadhutsang merchant family's relationship with Dargye

[472] See Melvyn Goldstein *A History of Modern Tibet Vol.1*; Shakya, ibid.; Yudru Tsomu "Traders as Cultural Brokers;" and especially Carole McGranahan, "Arrested Histories: Between Empire and Exile in 20th Century Tibet," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2001). See also George Patterson, *Tibetan Journey* (London: Readers Book Club, 1956) and Geoffrey T. Bull, *When Iron Gates Yield* (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.) for firsthand accounts of Pangda Tobgye in the 1940s. Coleman's dissertation also touches on Tobgye during the early to mid 1930s. Also found in the *Ganzi zhouzhi*, vol. 3, 2093; *Kangshu Zangzu shangceng renwu jieshao*, 69b-73a.

[473] Another work I engage with is by Mönlam Tsondru (Tib. smon lam brtson 'grus Ch. *meilang zongzhen* 美郎宗貞) who is especially attentive to the Pangdatsang connections to China, but here my goal is not to overemphasize their relationship to China, but to paint a more balanced picture of the Pangdatsang's transnational network and economic transactions. There is in fact a striking bifurcation of scholarship in Chinese and English regarding the Pangdatsang family. In English there is more focus on the section of the Pangdatsang family living in exile in India and the west as well as a stronger focus on their Tibetan nationalism. Whereas Chinese literature focuses on the family and associates living in China and Chamdo and specifically Pangda Tobgye who remained in China and held communist titles. They also emphasize the Pangdatsang's role in integrating Tibet and China especially during WWII. When discussing the 1930s and 1940s period, Mönlam's work appears to be the most reliable. Meilang Zongzhen, *Bangda Duoji de Zhengzhi shengya yu shangye li cheng* (Lasa: Xizang Renmin Chubanshe, 2008). A biography of Mönlam Tsondru available at: https://m.sohu.com/a/275405530_523159 (accessed online on March 12th, 2020). According to the *wenshi ziliao* volume (Materials on History and Culture) dedicated to the Pangdatsang, all of the Pangdatsang's business records were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution and they cannot accurately say how much the Pangdatsangs transported during WWII. The author of the *wenshi ziliao* volume is Edong Wala 俄东瓦拉, also known as Jia Ruiqing 贾瑞青. Edong Wala, edited by Xizang Zizhiqu Zhengxie Wenshi Ziliao Xuexi Weiyuanhui, *Bangdacang Shiliao*. Xizang Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji, Di 30 ji (Beijing: Zhongguo Zangxue Chubanshe, 2014), 7-8. Further research on their history that can only be corroborated through looking at more Ganden Podrang documents or any remaining documents from the Chamdo area.

[474] Dzawa Pomda was also called Dzawa Gang (rdza ba sgang) or Dzawa Pasho Dzong (rdza ba dpa' shod rdzong). His mother, was a daughter of the Sakya Khon ('khon) family, one of the most historically powerful families in Tibet that controlled the Sakya Tibetan Buddhist sect and the Sakya monasteries, which continue to be powerful across the plateau even today: "The Sakya post in Markham was one of the eighteen hereditary chieftain (Tib. dpon) posts called the Gyakek Pon (Tib. rgya skeg dpon). Nyima Gyeltsen's father's marriage secured for him the Sakya post in Markham, an important district south of Chamdo. The district included the nomad area of Jindok and the mixed farming-nomadic area of Gushod, as well as Gyakek Monastery (Tib. rgya skeg dgon) and village. The Pomdatsang family now ruled the area called Pangda (spang mda'), one which paid taxes to Sakya but from which the Lhasa government could levy work or collect a separate tax. They took its name for themselves, changing the

Monastery discussed in Chapter Four, their relationship to the powerful Kham-based Sakya Khon family and the network of Sakya monasteries proved to be an important base for the economic growth of the family. Specifically, these prominent families from the Sadhutsangs to the Pangdatsangs came out of an already established hierarchy. And while it appears that they had long established power in Kham, their pan-Tibet trading enterprise greatly expanded during the height of the 13th Dalai Lama's reign (1895-1933).

Arriving in Lhasa near the turn of the 20th century, Pangda Nyigyel was a shrewd businessman who made early connections (and donations) to not only the Tibetan Government but to the powerful monasteries of Central Tibet—Sera (Tib. se ra), Drepung (Tib. sbras sprung) and Ganden (Tib. dga ldan). By 1909, Nyigyal was one of three merchants given the monopoly on the wool and yak tail trade. From there, the Pangdatsang economic power began to grow and when the 13th Dalai Lama returned to Tibet in 1912 after the fall of the Qing Dynasty, he made Nyigyel the Tibetan Government's official trade agent and provided him with major trade concessions.[475] Pangda Nyigyel's appointment was connected to the 13th Dalai Lama's state building endeavors, and to his plan of turning Tibet into a modern nation-state with a managed economy.[476] As the trade agent, a position which would grow in importance overtime, Nyigyel was permitted to buy wool directly from producers at half the normal price as well as use

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family name from Pomdatsang to Pangdatsang. Because the name change was relatively recent, both Pomda (spom mda') and Pangda (spang mda') are still used to refer to the family although the family themselves prefer Pangda. The new position in Markham provided the financial means for expansion of the family trading business." McGranahan, "Nyigyel Pangdatsang," Treasury of Lives https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Nyigyel-Pangdatsang/TBRC_P1KT2 (accessed online on May 2020). This was a Sakya controlled region meaning that the monasteries were mostly of the Sakya sect and the Pangdatsangs were connected to the Sakya sect.

[475] It is not clear what the monopolies allowed. They sound quite similar to how the monasteries managed their own trade. Remaining questions include, what was the 13th Dalai Lama's role in the promotion of Pangdatsang? What was their relationship and what did it mean? What did this monopoly actually entail and how did it affect the economy of Tibet? What is the significance of the Pangdatsangs being from Kham?

[476] Goldstein, ibid. 86-87.

subsidized transport. He soon became a "favorite" (Tib. spyan gsal) of the 13th Dalai Lama, which gave him a certain political privilege among the government officials and aristocracy. Nyigyel continued to receive monopolies over the wool trade and by 1920 Pangda Nyigyel was the most prominent Tibetan trader with a network spanning India to China.[477]

The rapid rise to political and economic prominence brought with it many enemies, and in 1921, Pangda Nyigyel was shot and murdered at a family picnic. The case was never solved.[478] In response, the 13th Dalai Lama bestowed Nyigyel's oldest son Pangda Nyima with the hereditary title of Letsenpa (Tib. las tshan pa), and inducted him into government service.[479] This was an unprecedented event in Tibetan history as no other family apart from the Dalai Lama's family had ever been given aristocratic status.[480] By the late 1920s the wealth of the Pangdatsangs had grown so large that on December 1929, the 13th Dalai Lama again granted the Pangdatsangs a monopoly over the wool trade during a period of severe monetary inflation. This was due to an influx of counterfeit copper coins which people could use to exchange for high quality silver-based coins thereby draining the Tibetan government of their silver currency.[481] In return for their near-complete control over the wool trade, the Pangdatsangs provided the Tibetan

[477] McGranahan, "Nyigyel Pangdatsang," Treasury of Lives https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Nyigyel-Pangdatsang/13519 (accessed on May 2020).

[478] For a complete analysis of the event and its lasting ramifications in the history and memory of the Pangdatsang family see Carole McGranahan, "Sa sPang mda' gNam sPang mda': Murder, History, and Social Politics in 1920s Lhasa," in *Khams pa Histories*, ed. Lawrence Epstein (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

[479] The *wenshi ziliao* states that he was the fifth rank. Wala, ibid., 133-34. The *wenshi ziliao* also states information such as Tobgye's Rebellion was in 1932 so one should be rather careful about trusting the precise information provided in this source.

[480] This new aristocratic status, and redefining of the meaning behind aristocratic status shows that they were not only a new type of rising middle class (bourgeoisie even) as Galli and others suggest, but they were enmeshed in the state apparatus. This is important when trying to understand the breadth of their network.

[481] At least for printing of currency, monetary strain didn't occur until after the death of the 13th Dalai Lama. It is unclear how intense this "monetary crisis" was with the influx of copper coins.

government with the necessary funds and silver backing to manage this crisis.[482] This, however, was highly contested in and outside of Tibet. According to the British, this monopoly violated the trade agreement laid out in the Tibet Trade Treaty of 1914, but the Dalai Lama himself upheld the arrangement, stating that because the Pangdatsangs were government officials, they were working on behalf of the Tibetan government and therefore the monopoly was valid.[483] The monopoly remained in place for roughly three years until prices for wool and transportation fell lower than ever before, and it was canceled in February 1933.[484] Following the cancelation of the monopoly, Nyima's titles were passed down to his brother Pangdatsang Lobzang Yampel (Tib. blo bzang yar 'phel spang mda' tshang) (1900?-1972/3) who continued to grow the family's political and economic power in Central Tibet, thus ushering in a new era of the Pangdatsang company. [485]

Although the wool trade is not the primary focus of this chapter, it is important to understand that wool was the number one commodity that impacted the economic rise of the Pangdatsang company. Wool exports represented 80% of Tibet's total trade with India in the

[482] While this period is somewhat outside the scope of this chapter, more work needs to be done on contextualizing the 13th Dalai Lama's economic policies and the role that families like the Pangdatsangs played. From McGranahan's Treasury of Lives entry on "Nyigyel Pangdatsang," ibid.: "The British protested that the monopoly violated anti-monopoly Article 6 of the Tibet Trade Treaty of 1914, but the Dalai Lama insisted that the monopoly was not given to a private individual but to a government official and was therefore legal."

[483] McGranahan, "Arrested Histories," 153-54.

[484] Alice Travers, "Wool Trade on the Himalayan Border and Social Mobility in Central Tibet (1907-1947)," in *Commerce and Communities*. McGranahan also discusses this topic and that prices of wool were influenced by the Pangdatsang monopolies: "they noted with alarm every time the Tibetan Government made trade decisions that went against British notions of a fair and open market that underlay the various trade treaties between the governments of India and Tibet." McGranahan, ibid., 132.

[485] Nyima spent the rest of his life in religious practice, and passed away in the early 1940s. McGranahan, "Nyima Pangdatsang," Treasury of Lives, https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Nyima/TBRC_P1TD6 (accessed on May 2020).

1920s and up to 90% of the trade in the 1940s.[486] This demand had stemmed mainly from the carpet industry in the west, particularly in the United States, for manufacturing automobile rugs.[487] Alice Travers, who conducted the first quantitative analysis of the wool trade in Tibet during the 20th century shows that there was a great increase in the volume of the wool trade during the mid-1930s, following a dramatic decrease in volume between 1940 and 1944 during WWII, followed by a post-war increase.[488] The Pangdatsangs' rise to economic prominence during the 1930s was directly linked to the global wool trade, and it is possible that with the decline of the wool trade during WWII, they were forced to look to other commodities or business ventures forming partnerships with other Tibetan, Chinese, Yunnanese, and British companies.

During the 1920s and early 30s, both Pangdatsang Rapga (rab dga' bstan 'dzin lhun 'grub spang mda' tshang) (1902-1976) and Pangdatsang Tobgye (Tib. stobs rgyal, Ch. duoji 多吉) (1904-1972/3) were based in Markham in western Kham. A Christian missionary traveling with the two brothers during the 1930s described them as having strikingly different personalities.

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[486] Travers, ibid., 167. "A dramatic increase in the wool trade occurred in the years from 1933 to 1939. The abolition of the Pangdatsang's monopoly marked the start of the most significant increase of this whole period, with the export volume reaching its highest figures, including the maximum ever reached at 162,304 maunds in 1939-1940, or around five times the volume exported at the beginning of the period under scrutiny (1907-1908)." Travers, 175. "The price offered for the wool rose along the route from Central Tibet to the Indian border because of the cost of transport. The modes of transportation were yaks, mules or men who carried the wool on their backs. According to British observers, many people on the route made money either by selling the wool or only by transporting the wool without selling it, and thus benefited in some measure from the general increase of this activity." Travers, ibid., 180-81 The volumes of wool are given in a unit called "maund" (which amounts to around 37 kg). Travers, ibid., 168.

[487] Millward, ibid., 52.

[488] Travers, ibid., 168. British records and other secondary sources describe an interruption of Tibetan wool exports due to the Second World War. After October 1940, the Tibetan government apparently started to levy a tax of 1 rupee per load, but this was certainly not the cause. In the records for the year 1943-1944, the British noted as the reason that there was no demand in the United States and India. Another factor could be that there were restrictions on British exports of manufactured cloth, which were imported to Tibet via India until 1945. Consequently, this might have reduced the sale of wool, since we have seen that the two sides of the trade were directly related. Travers, ibid., 176.

Tobgye was "humorous, buoyant, candid and mischievous, besides having an almost frightening ability to penetrate and understand character, was, for all his great mansion and fabulous wealth, a man in close touch with the people. He was a gifted military leader and was never more in his element than when out riding in the mountains on his magnificent mule, with a crowd of his trusty warriors around him." Rapga, on the other hand was described as "ponderous but whimsical, was a philosopher gifted with astute judgment. In decision, I felt, he would be upheld by principle, whereas Dopgyay [Tobgye] was more open to expediency. He was also something of a recluse, giving himself constantly to study. In fifteen years he had gained a fine understanding of intellectual English, while in his grasp of Buddhist teaching and the Tibetan classical language, he still outstripped the local lamas. Although so isolated from the west, he had nevertheless made it his business to procure and ponder an exhaustive treatise by Marx, on "Dialectical Materialism"! By one means and another he had managed to carry on research into different political systems and to form his own judgment. He was surprisingly abreast of international affairs, even on the roof of the world."[489]

Rapga was not central to the Pangdatsang business, as he would later become a politician and intellectual helping with Nationalist government business connections. But the youngest of the brothers, Pangdatsang Tobgye, was integral to the functioning of the Pangdatsang company.[490] As the heir to the Pangdatsang estate in Kham he took the post of Gyakek Pon (*rgya skeg dpon*) (the chieftain of the family lands in Kham).[491] He was later appointed a captain (*ru*

[489] Geoffrey Bull, *When Iron Gates Yield* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1955), 24-25.

[490] Rabga was adopted out to an extended relative in Chamdo making him technically not eligible to inherit the Pangdatsang family wealth and name. This did not seem to affect him or his relationship to his brothers but it does provide an interesting reason for why he was not as involved in the family business.

[491] "The Pangdatsang family joined forces in the 1910s with the Jangling family (*byang gling*), a family of traders from Lhasa. Yampel and Tobgyal married two Jangling sisters Sonam (*bsod nams*) and Tsedon (*tse sgron*); to tie the families together more closely, the husbands also married each other's wives and the two families lived together as

dpon) in the Tibetan army by the 13th Dalai Lama. Tobgye, along with some of the offspring of Khampa aristocrats and powerful merchant families (贵族少爷、大商人子弟) formed the "Zhongzha Army" (仲扎部队). Here, Pangda Tobgye managed to impress the 13th Dalai Lama who appointed him as head of his own militia of men recruited from the Kham area in 1931.[492] While not stated outright, Pangda Tobgye's promotion to military commander of a militia in Kham was a strategic military maneuver by 13th Dalai Lama. Tobgye was given this position during the Dargye Beri Conflict, exemplifying the 13th Dalai Lama's expansionist plans for Kham. Specifically, Tobgye's military network and connections to both the Ganden Podrang Tibetan Government and the Nationalist Government greatly facilitated the growth of his business in the 1940s. [493]

It is important to understand Pangda Topgyal's involvement in Kham events and his political networks during the 1930s in order to better understand his business structure during the 1940s. The sources I have access to, while skewed to portray Tobgye as dedicated to China, are nonetheless valuable references. They are too often couched in terms of propaganda laden concepts of "ethnic unity" and "fighting the Japanese incursion," both of which may have factored into Tobgye's thinking but were certainly not the all-encompassing factors of his business operations, especially considering that the majority of the regions he traded through were not in Chinese dominated territory. Furthermore, as the following section demonstrates,

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one. From the union of the two sets of parents, only one child was born, a daughter named Pema Chokyi (pad ma chos kyi)." McGranahan, ibid., 134. Additionally, the "rgya" in the title could have indicated that this region was governed by Chinese authorities.

[492] However, Mönlam implies that they did not have much direct oversight and this was not exactly a smooth appointment (which makes sense considering he rebelled afterwards), but he was part of the Ganden Podrang military apparatus (as was Dargye Monastery). Zongzhen, ibid., 27.

[493] McGranahan, "Tobgyal Pangdatsang," Treasury of Lives https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Tobgyal-Pangdatsang/13522 (accessed on May 2020). It was therefore, Pangdatsang Tobgye, who in the early 1940s formed the joint business venture with the Yunnanese Chen Ho Industrial Corporation, the subject of Chapter 5.

neither Rapga nor Tobgye's ethnic or political alliances were particularly well defined and indeed shifted over the decades.

Tobgye's Rebellion and the Pangdatsang Company in the 1930s

While 1949 and the rise of the People's Republic of China is seen by many as the penultimate turning point in modern Tibetan history, an equally important but less-discussed turning point was the death of the 13th Dalai Lama in 1933. His death created a significant power vacuum in Central and Eastern Tibet catalyzing an internal power struggle that would have ripple effects for the decades to come. The 13th Dalai Lama had been building his power base in Kham through the militarization of monasteries like Dargye Monastery, and by promoting the ecclesiastical and aristocratic connections between Kham and Central Tibet. This included the Pangdatsang family as demonstrated by the bestowing of titles and military power. After his death these relationships went into a period of often violent reorganization. Because of the Pangdatsangs' close relationship to the Dalai Lama and the Dalai Lama's "favorite," Kunpel (*kun 'phel,* 1905-1963), who represented one of the power-seeking contingents and was arrested following the Dalai Lama's death, the Pangdatsangs were placed in a precarious political position. In 1934, partly in reaction to his dissatisfaction with the Tibetan Government and under the false assumption that his brother Yampel had been incarcerated, Pangda Tobgye launched a rebellion in Kham later known as Tobgye's Revolt.

Using his already established military platform and political power in the Chamdo area, Tobgye gathered five hundred of his troops and attacked the Tibetan Government's base in Markham, Chamdo. He and Rapga managed to take over the stationed regiment of one hundred soldiers and commandeer their armory. The Tibetan Government retaliated by threatening to

send further regiments convincing the Pangdatsangs to retreat and set up a base in Batang. From there, Tobgye waged small scale battles against forces of the Tibetan Government, the Sichuan armies, and even the Communists. While the exact purpose of the rebellion is difficult to say, it appears to have been a combination of Tobgye's general dissatisfaction with the state of the Tibetan Government, his desire to assert authority in Kham within this power vacuum (some even suggesting this may have even been a push to form a separate Khampa state) as well as a retaliation for Kunpel's arrest. Pangda Yampel, who was still back in Lhasa, was eventually held financially responsible for the damages of the revolt including replacement of the guns and ammunition that Tobgye had commandeered, but he was not punished any further.[494] According to McGranahan, Pangda Yampel, had in fact sent Tobgye and Rapga money, arms and ammunition via Kham-based traders leading one to seriously question Yampel's allegiances.[495]

This rebellion was not some small affair. At the very least, Tobgye was deeply dissatisfied with the Kashag, Yampel's relationship to them was not as smooth as it was made out to be in McGranahan's rendering. Tobgyel was working with Liu Wenhui to some degree, and it is possible that the Kashag saw this as an opportunity to confiscate the wealth that had been bestowed on the Pangdatsangs by the 13th Dalai Lama via the wool monopoly.[496]

The larger outcomes of this rebellion were two-fold. One, Tobgye asserted himself as a power to be taken seriously, militarily, politically, and economically; and two, this marked the moment of not only Tobgye's firm establishment of the Pangdatsang name and company in Kham, but also through his military organization he built for himself a foundational network in

[494] McGranahan, ibid.

[495] Rapga fled to India in 1935, and according to McGranahan, Tobgye later joined him in India before returning to Tibet again in the early 1940s. This does not completely match up to the timeline provided by Mönlam Tsondru.

[496] Zongzhen, ibid. In particular see Chapter 3 for a discussion of the decree.

Kham, Qinghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan. Mönlam additionally argues that the military coordination that went into developing this rebellion was key to the development of the Pangdatsang business network. While he doesn't expand in detail, essentially Tobgye established connections to the people who might have been able to aid his military operation. And while there was no clear victor in this revolt, Tobgye must have impressed a lot of the right people. During this period Tobgye may have even developed a particular communication method for fast and confidential messages which further helped him develop his cross-Tibet and -China network.[497] Tobgye maintained his military position acquired before the death of the Dalai Lama, and used it to propel himself to a position of power in Kham after the Dalai Lama's death.

By the mid- to late-1930s, Tobgye was not only working with other Khampa elite, but also with Liu Wenhui and the Chinese government in Kham.[498] Liu Wenhui paid special attention to Tobgye, recognizing that his support for Tobgye would not only stabilize Kham but also be mutually beneficial to them both. This sparked a series of political and military appointments for Tobgye, and by 1937, Pangda Tobgye was a member of the Xikang Provincial Committee, Commander in Chief of Cavalry Regiment of Xikang (Ch. *mintuan fu zhihui jian qibing da duizhang* 民团副指挥兼骑兵大队长). In 1939, he was reappointed as Commander in Chief of Cavalry Regiment of Xikang District 5. Finally, Liu Wenhui appointed Pangda Tobgye as captain of the Cavalry Brigade of the General Command of the Sichuan Kham Frontier Defense Force (Ch. *chuan kang bianfang jun zong zhihui bu qibing dadui* duizhang 川康边防军总指挥

[497] Uniting and developing together, Pangda Tobgye adopted a strategy of combining secret communication and publicity to support the Dalai Lama's agenda, expand his influence, and step up contact with Tibetan leaders in Xikang and Yunnan to garner support. " 团结一致发展，邦达•多吉采取了秘密联络 与 公开 宣传 相结合的策略，以拥护 达赖喇嘛的口号，扩大影响力，并加紧与西康和云南的藏族各界头人进行联系，争取各方面的大力支持。Zongzhen, ibid., 29-31.

[498] He may have even supported the Red Army for a short while. Ibid., 56.

部骑兵大队队长) which, as discussed in Chapters One and Two, was the same army in charge of dealing with *ulak* related petitions. So, what we must understand here is that Tobgye was a high ranking officer in the same military apparatus that was colonizing Kham.[499]

However, it wasn't merely commercial and military power that Tobgye and the Pangdatsang family wielded in Kham. Already a locally powerful family at the turn of the 20th century, the Pangdatsangs maintained not only their commercial wealth but their agricultural land base as well. In Markham, the family itself maintained "more than 2,000 ke [Tib. *khal*] of agricultural land, with sixty-two households, eighteen children, five groundskeepers, two housekeepers, seventeen 'jueben' [meaning 排长 platoon leader, Tib. *Cu dpon* leader of ten]. They had two grazing ranges that held four hundred and forty yaks, six hundred and ninety-five sheep and eighty-nine horses. Most of the land was leased to farmers and regardless of the harvest, the Pangdatsangs received half of the grain produced by the rented land, and at least 4,000 ke of barley was collected every year. Before the liberation, their funds reached 2787.13 million dayang [临解放前其资金达 2,787.13 万块大洋]."[500] It is unclear whether these funds are from the local agricultural production or the "in total" amount of funds the company wielded. Either way, apart from their business dealings, the family property and agricultural production was significant as well.

[499] 邦达•多吉是刘文辉不得不要考虑的势力派人物，只要安抚好邦达•多吉，刘文辉便可进一步稳定康南局势。于是刘文辉委任邦达•多吉为川康边防军总指挥部骑兵大队队长，在康定设办事处 Ibid., 58-59.

[500] "邦达昌"家族在昌都有 2000 余"克"种子的土地，主要分布在小邦达及然推等地（均在芒康一带乂有佃户 62 户，18 个娃子，5 个合头（俗称外管家），2 个内管家，17 个"觉本"（译为排长）。另有牧场两处，牦牛 440 头、羊 695 只、骡马 89 匹，其土地大部分租给农户，不管收成如何一律对半收取租粮，每年至少收 4000 余"克"青稞，临解放前其资金达 2,787.13 万块大洋。Ibid., 85-86.

When it came to the Pangdatsang business, Liu Wenhui was quick to recognize its importance and asked the Pangdatsangs to set up their military regiment near Dartsedo so that Tobgye could continue managing both the regiment and the company at the same time.[501] When there was a need for commerce and transportation, the army unit was used to escort and secure the caravans. When there was no cargo to transport, they spent their time around Tagong (in the grasslands). But the funding for this army unit came mostly from Pangda Tobgye and the Pangdatsang company.[502] In short, Tobgye ran his own personal army based in Batang until 1936 when he relocated to Dartsedo. He had the direct support of Liu Wenhui and was encouraged to take control in many ways. In 1937, Tobgye further established his economic and military power base by negotiating the purchase of Pomi township in Chamdo from local county magistrate.[503] According to Mönlam's research, Tobgye placed more than 200 Chaya (Ch. zaya?) soldiers there and started creating whole villages, opening up unused land, building houses, purchasing yaks, sheep, horses, and developing agriculture and animal husbandry. For the people who lived there Tobgye apparently helped them pay their debts owed to the "temple merchants" to the tune of nearly 30,000 silver dollars, presumably to clear their debts, making them free to work for him alone.[504]

During this same period Tobgye was not only intensifying his relationship to the Sichuan authorities but was also rebuilding his relationship with the Tibetan Government. Likely with the goal of strengthening economic ties, Pangda Yampel and others negotiated on Tobgye's behalf,

[501] It is important to include that these soldiers were recruited by Tobgye and led by Tobgye himself.

[502] Ibid., 59-60.

[503] Ibid., 78.

[504] Ibid., 60-61.

and eventually agreed that Tobgye would compensate the Tibetan army for the losses received not only during the revolt but in the successive skirmishes over the following years. Additionally, the Kashag (Tibetan government governing council) also requested that the Pangdatsangs buy 10,000 guns from the British on behalf of the Tibetan Government.[505] With this renewed relationship, the Kashag allowed the British to sell 238 guns to the Pangdatsang company, plus 20,000 bullets required for various weapons. This was seen as the restoration of a normal relationship between the Tibetan Government and the Pangdatsangs, and after the Reting Regent (d. 1947) established control over the Tibetan government in 1939, he reinstated the practice of borrowing of money and goods from government vaults or warehouses for personal use by officials.[506] This new policy allowed people to take out loans and borrow money from the government again and Tobgye seized this opportunity to donate a large amount of gold and silver dollars to the Regent and the three major temples.[507] The most important outcome of the newly established relationship however was that Tobgye obtained the right to conduct unimpeded international trade between China, Tibet, and India during WWII.[508]

Mönlam argues that it was not only the international negotiations that opened up the trans-Tibet trade but also a deal specifically with the Pangdatsangs and possibly other elite merchants. And while obviously negotiations were going on at the international level before and after the

[505] Furthermore, in 1939, Pangda Tobgye apparently purchased a tobacco farm in Lijiang and even purchased a large amount of gold and silver dollars in Dartsedo and donated all of it to the Kashag, which was used to fund monks during the Dafa conference (大法). Ibid., 60-61.

[506] This had previously been forbidden by the 13th Dalai Lama because many aristocrats apparently borrowed and did not repay. Ibid., 60-61.

[507] This is the same tactic taken by his father in the early 20th century. While I have extremely minimal details regarding these specific instances, it would be highly fruitful to investigate the method by which one becomes a "major donor" and what liberties or powers that bestows.

[508] Zongzhen, ibid., 62.

Reting Regency, a large influx of capital to the Tibetan Government would have certainly created the optimal political conditions for the Pangdatsangs and smoothed their way into easy trade agreements.[509] When dealing with the Tibetan Government however, Pangda Yampel was the number one representative of the Pangdatsangs interests. With that said, Mönlam's focus on Tobgye is a proper corrective to the focus on Yampel in British Indian sources and English language scholarship, but still, we should not understate Yampel's role in all dealings on the Tibet-India side. Both Tobgye and Yampel were critical in developing the family business, and overall, Yampel (and his older brother Nyima) carried the business for the 1920s and early 1930s. Tobgye, on the other hand, was running the branch in Kham and managing the relationships between the Chinese merchants (from Yunnan and elsewhere) and the Chinese state (Liu Wenhui and the Guomindang). In trying to concretize the scope of the Pangdatsang's economic power Yampel's role was critical. As McGranahan notes, when Yampel was given the additional rank of Rimshi (Tib. rim bzhi), fourth rank (he was previously in the sixth rank) in the Tibetan government in November 1940, "there were rumors in the streets and parlors of Lhasa that Lobzang Yampel obtained this rank through the back door (*ltag sgo*), with liberal donations of gold to members of the Kashag, the National Assembly and the Foreign Ministers." This appointment included the post of Tibetan Trade Agent in Yatung, and the title of Dromo Chikyab (Tib. spyi khyab), or Governor of the Chumbi valley, giving him unprecedented control over the trade between India and Tibet. In this post he had the power to collect and levy taxes, create or lift trade restrictions, thereby controlling all "legal" trade in the region.[510] Furthermore, Yampel

[509] For more, see Alastair Lamb, *Tibet, China and India 1914-1950* (Hertingforbury: Roxford Books, 1989).

[510] McGranahan, "Lobzang Yampel Pangdatsang", Treasury of Lives https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Lobzang-Yampel-/TBRC_P1TD7 (accessed in May 2020). For a more detailed summary of Pangdatsang Yampel's political dealings, see McGranahan work. For British accounts of Yampel in 1942-43 see IOR-L-PS-12-4208. Also, from McGranahan, "Like his father Nyigyel, Lobzang Yampel kept up close relations with the Sakya Khon ('khon) family, to which his mother was a member. He took

could speak English (and a little Chinese) so made the perfect international face of the Pangdatsang company.[511]

As for Rapga, he was not a major contributor in the family business during WWII and instead during this period he was working for multiple political causes. Following the 1934 revolt he met with Chiang Kai-shek in Nanjing and became employed by the Tibetan and Mongolian Affairs Commission. He was closely associated with Chiang Kai-shek throughout the late 30s and into the 1940s. In 1939 Rapga founded the Tibet Improvement Party in Kalimpong, putting him at odds with the Tibetan as well as the British Indian governments.[512]

Overall, neither Tobgye nor Rapga had clear alliances to either the Tibetan Ganden Podrang or the Nationalist Government, especially after the death of the 13th Dalai Lama. In many ways, each was their own agent, they were strategic businessmen (especially later in life) who worked with all possible options and aligned themselves with those who would best serve their interests at any given time.[513]

The role of Pangda Yampel is also surprisingly elusive when discussing business related to the Pangdatsang company. As Trade Agent during the 1940s his place in the Government and his relationship to the British Indian government would have impacted his dealings with the business in direct ways. Chinese business communications from the 1940s regarding the

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responsibility for the general upkeep of Sakya Monastery (sa skya dgon) and undertook restorations of the monastery. In 1945, Hugh Richardson (1905-2000) noted that Lobzang Yampel's name was suggested as a possible candidate for the post of Tibetan Representative to India, a post that was never created." McGranahan, ibid.

[511] Wala, ibid., 133-134.

[512] Ibid., 133-134.

[513] Mönlam's work makes the rebellion seem a bit too "anti-Tibetan government." Certainly, Tobgye was committed to a Kham separate from the Ganden Podrang, but it does not make much sense that he would be as progressive as the Chinese research makes him out to be. Monlam also stresses the Kham for Khampas rhetoric (to emphasize Tobgye's disillusionment with the Ganden Podrang) which I cannot be sure was Tobgye's position for more than a short period of time. Furthermore, there seems to be a real back-and-forth with the Tobgye's relationship to the Ganden Podrang.

Pangdatsang business however do not directly reference Yampel at all, and instead if a personal name is used in these documents it is referring to Tobgye. With that said, the use of the word Pangdatsang does, based on context, appear to be referring to the Pangdatsang company as a whole just as often as it refers directly to Tobgye. Furthermore, much of the work done with the Chen Ho corporation was done through representatives of the Pangdatsangs of which many are mentioned in the communications. Given the high profile of these cotton shipments, paid for by the Chinese Government through their Lend-Lease agreement with the United States during WWII, I would have expected more reference to Yampel. We can say for certain however that he was a major facilitator of the business, as an English speaker was the international (Indian, UK, and US) face of the business, and his connections to the Tibetan government including the 14th Dalai Lama (b. 1935) is what helped propel the success of the business into the mid 1950s. Yet again what we are seeing in the secondary (and primary) literature is a separation of the Lhasa and Kham regions and business sectors.

Overall, we know that the Pangdatsang's early 20th century rise to power was controversial, as demonstrated by the 1921 murder of Pangdatsang Nyigyel, but his murder did not deter their growth nor, in the end, did Tobgye and Rapga's rebellion. Following the conclusion of the rebellion, Yampel, who had already been the main economic power holder in the family company for over a decade, was given back most of his power and status. This is well established in the general narrative of the Pangdatsang rise to prominence, but what deserves even more scrutiny is the proximity between Tobgye and Rapga on the one hand, and the Sichuan warlord Liu Wenhui and the Guomindang powers on the other. The 1930s witnessed the solidification of the Pangdatsang merchant company as each brother navigated their rise to power in geographically diverse political and military arenas. The three Pangdatsang brothers,

Yampel, Rapga, and Tobgye each represented their own geographic region and business network that, along with their associates, partners, and representatives, allowed them the full scope of transport and trade across the Tibetan Plateau. This was of direct importance to the growth of the Pangdatsang business in Kham and their later ability to capitalize on the WWII import export business.

WWII and the Trans-Tibet Transportation Route

As discussed in Chapter Four, global attention was directed towards Tibet after the closure of the Burma Road, China's #1 supply line. Very quickly, stockpiles of wartime goods from the Lend-Lease agreement between China and the United States were filling up and overflowing the storage facilities in Calcutta and Kalimpong. [514] This represented a dire need for new transportation routes through Eurasia, a few of which were through northeastern India and Tibet. Despite its desire to maintain official neutrality, the Tibetan Government in Lhasa was faced with increased pressure from the Chinese KMT, the United States, and Great Britain to open up the pack routes through Lhasa into eastern Tibet for the flood of wartime aid to China.[515] This overland pack route through Tibet was historically one of the most significant arteries of trade and communications between India, Tibet, and China from at least the 17th to 20th centuries. In the 1940s, the major stops along this route, traveling from west to east, were

[514] Kinzley, ibid.

[515] The Tibetan Government did not support the opening of this transportation route. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet Vol. 1,* W.D Shakapa, *Tibet, a Political History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); Alastair Lamb, *Tibet, China & India 1914-1950: a history of Imperial diplomacy* (Hertingfordbury: Roxford Books, 1989). These authors have discussed the Tibetan government's view on the transport route but having read much of the British archives on the matter I do not believe the Tibetan government is given enough credit for their actions. It is not as simple as they were acting conservatively. They certainly did not want the increased presence of the Chinese nor the economic control by the British. Furthermore, we do not know positions of the Pangdatsangs and other families within the Tibetan government who saw to gain economically from this trade route.

Calcutta (the then capital of the British Empire in India), Kalimpong,[516] Gyantse, Shigatse and Lhasa in Central Tibet, Chamdo and Dartsedo in Eastern Tibet, and finally, Chongqing (the wartime capital of Guomindang China), Lijiang and Kunming in Yunnan.[517] One source from July 8th 1943, reported an estimation for traveling time along the route as follows:

Kalimpong/Lhasa 21/22 days

Lhasa/Chamdo 40/45 days

Chamdo/Kantze [Kardze] 35 days

Kantze/Kanting [Dartsedo] 18 days

The average mileage as covered by the mules was 20/25 miles per day.[518]

[516] "By the mid-twentieth century, Kalimpong had become one of the most important towns in the region for the exchange of commodities; in particular, it was the main center for the sorting and processing of Tibetan wool. The wool was brought to Lhasa from Ngari or Changthang in western and northern Tibet by nomads or middlemen, where it would then be baled for transport and loaded on mule caravans, led almost exclusively by Tibetan or Newar (a Buddhist ethnic group from Kathmandu) men." Travers, ibid., 167.

[517] As discussed previously, the most significant commodities to cross the Tibetan plateau along these routes were wool and tea. Wool was the number one export, and tea the primary import. The ebb and flow of these two commodities and the shifting geography of their transport routes, were perhaps the most significant factors in regional economic developments in Tibet.

[518] Chongqing Archives 02300002003030000158000.

Fig 4.1: Map of the Trans-Tibet Route (made by the author)

After Dartsedo, there were motor navigable roadways and transport duration was much shorter. From the 1940s through the end of the war, motorways were built all the way to the edge of the Tibetan Plateau and mountainous regions of Northern India and Burma.[519] However, the geographic barrier prevented any concerted effort at the development of navigable motorways, and transport could only be conducted along the plateau in the form of pack animal or human carriers. Pack-routes were a technically different affair from a standard motorway, offering a different set of logistical problems, such as arranging fodder for animals versus sourcing gasoline or ethanol. Transport was slow but required low maintenance, compared to motorways that were fast but required high maintenance. Furthermore, the capital investment necessary for a paved or even dirt roadway through the mountains of eastern Tibet was too prohibitively expensive and

[519] An exception with Amdo and the Gansu corridor where roads were built earlier.

labor intensive and could not be sponsored by any local or state authority until after the establishment of the PRC.[520]

Hugh Richardson, British diplomat and Tibetologist, commented on the route's capacity saying: "I have from the start assessed the capacity of the Kalimpong-Likiang [Lijiang] Route at about 500 tons per annum with a possible rise to 750 tons if the high prices attract muleteers from other quarters…There is, on the other hand, the possibility that the capacity may be reduced by the requisitioning of mules by military authorities both in India and China… There are many competitors for the available animals for carrying not only cotton yarn but also tea, cigarettes, and other luxuries."[521] According to another estimation however, if the Sino-Indian transportation through the Tibetan station could run smoothly, it could transport 2,000 tons of goods every year.[522] For comparison purposes, the famous Hump airlift over the Himalayas, which became more efficient overtime, managed to deliver 61,151 tons of equipment to China during 1943, but reached 35,131 tons in October 1944 alone.[523] Likely referring to the Pangdatsang merchant company, one communication indicated that, "we are trying to arrange a tripartite agreement between the Chinese Government, the Government of India, and a Tibetan transport firm for the carriage of goods by pack transport across Tibet to China. The expenditure on transport charges which it is hoped eventually to meet from the 50,000,000 [pounds] credit,

[520] Having a transportation network within Tibet was crucial. In the end, it was the monasteries and local elite who had the buildings and storage facilities, access to fodder and new animals, to sustain an up to six-month journey.

[521] IOR-L-E-8-3559 (122-180). British assessments concluded that this route can only sustain roughly 500 tons annually but it is unclear if they meant that as a wartime or state-lead transport business or in general (this is also talked about at length in the discussions regarding whether or not to open this route at all). The Chen Ho Industrial Corporation was apparently the dominant international company on this route specifically.

[522] *Minguo shiqi Xizang ji cang qu jingji kaifa jianshe dang'an xuanbian: Zhongguo Zang xue yan jiu zhong xin, Zhongguo di er li shi dang an guan he bian* (Beijing: Zhongguo Zang xue chu ban she, 2005) 422-424.

[523] Kinzley, ibid., 185.

will be about 225,000 [pounds] per annum, the majority of this expenditure having to be met in Tibetan currency."[524] While this amount was likely not achieved, it does give us a sense of how much the Pangdatsangs and other Tibetan merchant companies were transporting and trading during this period and how much they stood to gain.

Although it is difficult to determine to what extent the Pangdatsangs controlled this trans-Tibet route, it is clear that the Pangdatsangs' partnership with the Yunnanese Chen Ho Corporation (subject of Chapter Six) was conducting the bulk of the sanctioned trans-Tibet shipments of cotton yarn and possibly other war-time materials. Furthermore, the calculations posited by British reports likely could not calculate the extent of trade beyond these routes. With that said, one should not overestimate the capacity of these routes. They did not support nearly as much commercial traffic as, for example, the Burma Road or non-wartime sea routes.[525] Even so, the opening of the Trans-Tibet pack route brought an influx of capital to the Tibetan plateau, catalyzing new business ventures and opening up dialog from the local to national level.

In Kham, eastern Tibet had been partially incorporated into the new province of Xikang, and with that came the rise of a new state power and financial and economic institutions all of which sought to conduct new war-time business. These included state-run transport companies, banks, and even a Chamber of Commerce in the Xikang capital, Dartsedo, many of which the Pangdatsangs dealt with in the expansion of their business network.[526]

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[524] IOR-L-PS-12-4205 (6). This did not come to fruition and it does not appear that the amounts ever reached this much.

[525] In large terms, I do not believe the Pangdatsang had a lot of competition. That doesn't however mean that there weren't many other economic actors participating in the trade. Dargye Monastery and the Sadhutsangs mentioned in the previous chapter were certainly competitors as well as many Tibetan, Indian, Ladhaki, Newari, Yunnanese, Shaanxi, etc. merchants trading during this period. For more see Galli, ibid.; Tsomu, "Traders as Cultural Brokers;" and Abdul Wahid Radhu, *Islam in Tibet* (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 1997).

[526] The Pangdatsang family comprised one of the key components of the powerful *Kang Zang Maoyi Gongsi* (Kham Tibet Trading Company) which included Khampa businessmen, local leaders, and high lamas. One genuine

The Pangdatsang Network and Infrastructure in the Mid-20th Century

By the start of the 1940s, the Pangdatsangs were exceptionally well positioned to take advantage of the increasing trade demands of WWII. This section outlines not only the Pangdatsang company networks in China, but also their business infrastructure and offices across India, Tibet, and China. One of its most significant political-*cum*-business relationships was with the Kham Tibet Trading Company (Ch. Kangzang maoyi gongsi). The Kham Tibet Trading Company was the first standardized joint-stock company in Kham and Pangda Tobgye was one of the many shareholders. Its two main shareholders were brothers Kesang Tsering and Kesang Yeshi (Tib. བསྐལ་བཟང་ཡེ་ཤེས་ Ch. 格桑悦希)[527]: Kesang Tsering was particularly famous in the Kham area. As a Nationalist Party member and a revolutionary who once led the Kham for Khampas movement in the early 1930s, he was also a member of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission of the Nationalist Government (Ch. meng zang weiyuanhui 蒙藏委員會). A list of the other shareholders of the Kham Tibet Trading Company represents a microcosm of power holders in Kham and Central Tibet. These names included a broad cross section of Tibetan elites from Tibetan merchant companies, prominent families, monasteries, Kham local rulers (mostly Ponpo or gyalpo), and Lhasa officials.[528]

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indicator of economic influence of the Nationalist government in the Tibetan areas was their connection to this trading company, and in 1943 the group formally gave Chiang Kaishek their "allegiance." Lin, ibid., 129.

[527] I believe this is the same Kesang Yeshi who is mentioned in a number of Chen Ho Industrial Corporation communications.

[528] This list while not exhaustive included, Kardze Gyapontsang Dengzhu Langjie and his brother (Tib. དཀར་མཛེས་རྒྱ་དཔོན་དོན་གྲུབ་རྣལ་རྒྱལ་ Ch. 甘孜甲本仓邓珠朗杰), the Governor of Xikang Province Liu Wenhui, the Sandutsangs, Rinchen Lazang (Tib. རྣམ་རྒྱལ་ Ch. 热振拉章), Xiakedaodeng (Ch. 夏克刀登 ཐུབ་རྟོན་སྡེང་ཐེན།), Kangsartsang Ma Fanweng (Tib. ཁང་གསར་ཚང་ Ch. 孔莎仓麻烦翁), the Litang Mulajiaduocang family (Ch. 理塘木 拉甲多仓), Lhasa's Surkhang (Tib. ཟུར་ཁང་ Ch. 拉萨贵族索康), Shakapa (Tib. ཞྭ་སྐད་པ་ Ch. 夏格巴), Dargye Monastery, Litang Monastery, and Batang Monastery, among others. Wala, ibid., 9.

Officially backed by the Nationalists and with the founding purpose of supporting trade between Tibet and China, their main office was located in Dartsedo, with branches in Lhasa and Calcutta.[529] The company largely engaged in the operation, purchase, and sale of Tibetan local products from medicinal herbs to wool, and increasingly managed the state sanction trade in Sichuanese tea and war-time goods such as everyday items and machinery. Like the Pangdatsang merchant company, they managed their own fleet of horses and yaks stations across Tibet, had their own personal army (security force) and due to their locally powerful group of shareholders, managed to supplement these transportation needs with private and locally procured labor.[530] The Kham Tibet Transportation Company (kang zang tuoyun gufen youyin gongsi 康藏馱運股份有限公司) was also deeply involved in the financial and economic planning of Xikang Province. [531] Effectively engaging in the same business as the Pangdatsangs (and any of the other merchant companies who could be shareholders in these various companies), it does not appear that they represented any form of competition, rather that business was traded between them. If anything, the Pangdatsangs had more to gain from their association with the Kham Tibet Trading Company than vice versa. This conglomerate structure appears to have impeded the smooth functioning of the Trading Company while providing the Pangdatsangs official recognition by association, without cumbersome state directives. As mentioned above, the state presence in

[529] While the narrative surrounding the Kham Tibet Trading Company is far too politically charged, the group did formally give Chiang Kaishek their "allegiance" in 1943. Lin, ibid., 129.

[530] However, these "state" led companies like the Kham Tibet Trading Company were apparently unable to compete with the Tibetan trading families and Yunnanese transportation companies. This is altogether problematic as it is near impossible to separate out the business of the individual shareholders from the business of the Trading Company. Also, it is very unclear whether or not Cao meant to imply ulak labor. Cao Bihong. "Kang Ri zhan shiqi de Kangzang Maoyi Gongsi," in *Zhongguo Zangxue* (di 3 qi, zong di 75 qi, 2006). 85.

[531] Ibid., 85.

Kham, even after the founding of Xikang Province in the late 1930s, was fairly weak and severely underfunded, and WWII would present even greater issues to state management on the borderlands. The first official request to help directly with the war effort came in 1939, when General Song Xizhen (Ch.宋希濂) of the 31st Army of the KMT, contacted Pangda Tobgye in hopes that the Pangdatsang company would aid the government's transportation needs.[532] The Pangdatsangs had clearly demonstrated their usefulness as they had already been asked by Liu Wenhui to carry out most of the transportation needs in Kham after the failure of the Kham Tibet Transportation Company,[533] and by April 1941 Tobgye had joined the management of the above-mentioned Kham Tibet Trading Company.[534] Tobgye had by this time fully established the Pangdatsang business in Dartsedo, giving him the geographic proximity and ability to dominate the flow of trade and capitalize on his political connections. [535] Overall, Pangda Tobgye's robust connections to all private and state-led Chinese enterprises working in and out of Dartsedo made him one of the most politically and economically well-connected individuals in Kham.[536]

As for the company infrastructure, when one compiles all of the data on where the Pangdatsangs had offices, permanent or mobile, one comes up with a very long list. While many of these offices (mobile or stationary) may have changed over time—and they might have simply

[532] This is exactly what the Chen Ho documents show as well but it is interesting that Mönlam gives credit to General Song Xizhen https://www.sohu.com/a/281812243_644485 accessed May 2020.

[533] This company had been co-founded by Liu Wenhui and Kham Tibet Trading Company. The latter of which had been formed in the late 1930s by the Mongolian Tibetan Affairs Commission (*mengzang weiyuan hui*) mentioned earlier.

[534] Zongzhen, ibid., 64.

[535] The *wenshi ziliao* makes it seem like Pangda Tobgye and the Kangzang Maoyi Gongsi's business was intertwined. This very well might be true but the complexities of the relationship are still unclear.

[536] While neither Mönlam nor the *wenshi ziliao* (Materials on History and Culture) mentions them, is highly likely that it was around 1941 or 1942 that Pangda Topye and the Yunnanese Chen Ho Industrial Corporation started working together.

comprised a single agent or a loose associate or contact—sources reflecting on the scope of the company include all of the following locations. The Pangdatsangs had either permanent offices or mobile station (Ch. 商号 or 站) in Calcutta and Kalimpong in India, Yadong (Shigatse), Lhasa, Pali, Nagchu, Yushu, Chamdo, Markham, Kardze, Batang, Yidun (义敦), Litang, Dartsedo, Ya'an, Chengdu, Chongqing, and in Yunnan, Kunming, Lijiang, Zhongdian, and then other locations included Xining, Lanzhou, Shanghai, Chengdu, and Nanjing.[537] "Pangda Tobgye's caravans lifted the flags of the cavalry brigade, from Tianquan, Yingjing, Ya'an in the east, and to Yadong and Kalimpong in the west, to Yunnan and Lijiang in the south."[538] One should be somewhat critical of reading too much into the scope of the Pangdatsang business, and more attention still needs to be paid to exactly which locations were open during what years, which ones were consistent and which were ones that had only one person at one time making a single business deal.

[537] Zongzhen, ibid., 80. Another associate recalled that the permanent firms (not sure if they means a building) of the Pangdatsangs was located in Kalimpong, Yadong, Pali, Gyangze, Shigatse, Shannan, Lhasa, Nagqu, Chamdo, Batang, and Litang, whereas the mobile firms was set up in Zhongdian, Lijiang, Dartsedo, Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Calcutta among other places, Wala, ibid., 108.

[538] Zongzhen, ibid., 80-81.

Fig 4.2: Map of Pangdatsang Offices (made by author)

In Dartsedo, the Pangdatsang's office was located outside the southern gate.[539] It was managed (Ch. 主待人: could this be 主持人？) by Silang Jamtso (Ch. 四郎降澤)[540], and while this was the only reported office in 1943, in just a few years' time the Pangdatsangs were purportedly renting more than fifty houses in Dartsedo, with twenty supervisors (or managers), more than 1,200 caravan transport teams, and more than 130 employees (service workers 傭人).

[539] Chongqing Archives 02300003000330000188000. For more on the array of merchants located in Dartsedo, see work by Booz, ibid., and Tsomu, ibid.

[540] From the economic report by Chen Ho: "Pangda Tobgye lives mainly between Batang and Litang in a place called Bami (Bamei?), Pangda Tobgye is the calvalry general of the Sichuan Kham Frontier defense force is the main Pangdatsang brother in Kham and Silang Jamtso is Panda Tobgye's representative and is advising all the commercial activities in Dartsedo." Chongqing Archives, September 10th 1943. 02300003000330000206000.

While the second set of figures is likely exaggerated, it also seems likely that their business expanded over the course of WWII and in its aftermath. [541] In Litang, the Pangdatsangs ran a seasonal enterprise, whereas in Batang their office was a large two-story building.[542] Also in the late 1940s, Pangda Rapga was not only helping the business in Kalimpong, India, but also facilitating trade from Nanjing and Shanghai, and while it was not stated directly, it seems likely that Rapga was responsible for the Nanjing and Shanghai "offices" mentioned in the Chinese language memoirs.[543]

When traveling across the Tibetan Plateau, the Pangdatsang company had more than 2,000 horses of its own that could cover thousands of miles.[544] Each of these offices had its own mule caravan team that included about 200 horses, a designated inspector (Ch. 督管) armed with a Tibetan sword and rifle who was said to have looked rather majestic in style. The inspector (head of the caravan?) usually received a complementary payment at the end of each expedition.[545] While the ownership of these horses and the identities of the individuals manning the horses and caravans raises a lot of questions, one thing that seems clear is that they were not using local ulak, conscript labor, services in the way a monastery or official would. With that said, much

[541] Zongzhen, ibid., 80-81.

[542] Bull was asking for the Pangdatsang agency in Batang: "The horsemen arrived and we went straight into the courtyard of a two-story building. The agent, a somewhat lean-faced but friendly Tibetan, took me up into a big room, which I shared with the horsemen for the next three days." Bull, ibid., 49. This agency also acted like an inn similar to the *guozhuang* style.

[543] Wala, ibid., 133-134. Rabga left for Kalimpong in the early 1950s. For an in depth look at Rapga and his life in India after the Communist takeover of Tibet see McGranahan, *Arrested Histories*.

[544] Here it is called the Pangdatsang "brigade transport team" which to me seems a little too patriotic for what it probably was. Zongzhen, ibid., 70-71.

[545] Ibid., 80-81.

more work needs to be done on the precise arrangements made by the Pangdatsangs and their associates. For now, these numbers raise more questions than give answers.

One of the Pangdatsang's most important associates was the Jangtsatsang family (Tib. unknown, Ch. 將薩昌) who traded and transported goods across the plateau. The Jangtsatsangs were another Khampa merchant family who worked with the Pangdatsangs starting in the 1930s, perhaps even earlier. Although they are mentioned frequently in Chinese and English language archival documents surrounding Tibetan trade, very few of those sources discuss them directly and I have not yet conclusively identified them. With that said, we do know from the British Trade Agency at Gyantse that in 1937, "Pangda-tshang and Jangtse-tsang have monopolized import of Chinese tea through India" and that in 1938, the "Pangdatsang and Jangtsetsang continue to import Chinese tea through India".[546] From a Chinese report on Tibetan economic presence in Kalimpong, the Jangtsatsangs were described as having "considerable power in Xikang Province [eastern Kham], and trading in wool and miscellaneous goods."[547] One Yunnanese company reported in 1943 that the Jangtsatsangs had an office in Dartsedo but that they had not been there in a long time and perhaps their office had closed.[548] One possible

[546] IOR-L-PS-12-4166. Lamb mentions them but he is only citing the British IOR documents, also he mentions that they worked with the Sadhutsangs.

[547] 降萨昌——主人在西康颇有势力，亦营羊毛、杂货。 Numbers three and four on this list were: (3) The Sadhutsangs —— Originally from Xikang, there are five brothers and four are based in Kham and Tibet. They are quite powerful and full of national ideas. They are engaged in cloth, sugar, and general products. 桑都昌——主人原居西康，弟兄五人，四人在康藏一带 声势颇大，富有国家思想，经营布匹、糖、杂货等. (4) The Reting Tsang family – who specialize in miscellaneous goods and wool 热真昌——专营杂货、羊毛。华侨除对藏贸易之商家外，复有加尔各答之广利隆经营杂货、赤金;及三益号，经营赤金. *Minguo shiqi Xizang ji*, ibid., 422-424.

[548] Regarding Jangtsatsang's situation, according to Silang Jiangze (Jamtso) he had a very good reputation and credibility in Kham in the past, but because he has not come to Dartsedo for three or four years, he currently has no representative in Dartsedo. 降薩昌情形前 據四郎降澤云其過去在康之 資格 及 信譽 確甚老好惟 今已三四年不來康定貿易矣故並無駐康代表. Chongqing Archives, 023000030003300002060000. September 10th 1943.

identity of the Jangtsatsang family can be found in Carole McGranahan's research on the Pangdatsang family. Following the murder of Pangda Nyigyal in 1921, the number one suspect was a man who was associated with a competitor of the Pangdatsangs, a Khampa merchant family from Litang called the Dzangtsatsangs. The Dzangtsatsang were later proven innocent of the murder and given their name similarity and convenient location, it is not outside the realm of possibility that these could be the Jangtsatsangs.[549] With that said, there is one Chinese document of the Yunnanese Chen Ho corporation that states that the transliteration of Jangtsatsang is actually closer to "Longgongzha" (Ch. 龍共扎), so the above is inconclusive.[550]

As for the Pangdatsang company infrastructure on the Tibet-India side, Pangda Yampel was said to have owned six trucks for local transport use in Lhasa, and was co-running a 500-worker wool processing factory in Kalimpong where wool for export was graded and repackaged.[551] On the subject of wool, Mönlam notes that the Pangdatsangs had a number of buying and selling locations with agents at each site; ten people in Lhasa, four to five people in Shigatse, and five or six in Kalimpong. Their designated wool collection sites included Chamdo and other places in northern Tibet.[552] According to a Chinese report in 1943, the Pangdatsangs office manager in Kalimpong, was a man named Luo Shaoting (Ch. 主人罗绍亭), presumably a Tibetan with a Chinese name, who was also a Tibetan government local official (Ch. 西藏驻土

[549] McGrananhan, "Arrested Histories: Between Empire and Exile in 20th century Tibet", 142-143.

[550] Chongqing Archives 02300003000330000152000.

[551] 在葛伦堡 邦达养璧与热振和萨多共同拥有一座500名职工的羊毛 加工厂，出口羊毛在这里分等级和重新打包。Wala, ibid., 134-135.

[552] Zongzhen, ibid., 84.

木长官?), and the office specialized in trading wool and general products.[553] By the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Pangdatsang company had "more than 1,000 employees, thirteen secretaries (clerical and accounting) and sixteen managers in Lhasa. Among the Pangdatsang company associates was the secretary of Pangda Yampel, Dorje Jiebu (Tib. Gyab? Ch.多吉杰布) who after the Communist takeover taught at the Central University for Nationalities (中央民族大学) and Pangda Tobgye's secretary Tashi Langjie (Ch. 扎西朗杰) who died in Chamdo during the Cultural Revolution (or earlier 平叛时期). These employees were paid their salaries once every six months, while the secretaries and supervisors received 200 items/goods (as a type of payment) plus two sets of Tibetan clothes a year which was a typical Tibetan practice for servants or in this case employees. Ordinary employees received 50 items/goods at a time, plus a set of Tibetan clothes for one year."[554] While it is unclear whether or not this was a significant amount of salary, the Pangdatsangs clearly operated a large and well-functioning company with offices across the plateau.[555]

By the 1940s, the extent of the Pangdatsang merchant company in political connections and the geographic scope was unparalleled in the Tibetan world. Capitalizing on Tobgye's military background and political connections in Kham and Sichuan, and Yampel's political connections in Lhasa, it is far from surprising that by the 1940s the Pangdatsang company had

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[553] 邦达昌——主人罗绍亭，为西藏驻土木长官，专营羊毛、杂货. Ministry of Foreign Affairs dispatches Military Commission to Check Tibetan-Chinese Relations and the British interests in Tibet and report, Economic Department August 10, 1943. This is a very thorough report on the routes through Tibet and the negotiations of the development of such routes. It more interestingly however provides a list of the most important overseas Chinese companies conducting trade with Tibet (in next chapter) and the Tibetan merchants as well. *Minguo shiqi Xizang ji* , ibid., 422-424.

[554] Zongzhen, ibid., 86-87.

[555] Similar to the operations in Dartsedo, it might be possible to triangulate more data on business from other sources.

been transformed into an orderly and well developed network of manned military caravans, government positions, and permanent and mobile offices, all of which were sanctioned and supported by the respective governments in China and Tibet.[556] In the following sections, we turn to the financial infrastructure, including banks and trade in foreign currency exchange, as well as the commercial networks that allowed for the operation of the Pangdatsang business.

Wealth, Profits, and the Extent of the Pangdatsang Business

Although exact measures of the Pangdatsang company's wealth are not available in extant sources, it is clear that contemporaries and the popular imagination viewed them as staggeringly rich. When attempting to locate references one further discovers that many sources simply make generalized statements about the amount of capital the Pangdatsangs had accumulated without any reliable information. Because of the vague nature of this data, I have in the following constructed as best as possible a representative array of numbers for a period spanning from 1920 to 1953. All these numbers were reported after the fact. By all indications, the Pangdatsang wealth steadily if not rapidly increased during this period, and while the numbers below should be taken with a grain of salt and their reported dates are only accurate to a certain extent, one could still get a sense for how extensive their business was during this mid-20th century period.

One early factor in the development of the Pangdatsang business, was that trade in and out of Tibet was not taxed. During the Huang Musong Mission in 1934 organized by the Nationalist Government following the death of the 13th Dalai Lama, many concerns regarding the status of Tibet were discussed. This included supporting the development of trade between Tibet and China by reducing or exempting taxes on Tibetan goods. This proposal was accepted by the

[556] I believe that it was this use of armed caravans that would make the Pangdatsangs one of the most powerful and reliable companies in Tibet. Zongzhen, ibid., 79-80.

Minister of Finance Kong Xiangxi and the document "Ministry of Finance for the Tax Reduction and Exemption of Trade between Tibet and the Mainland Provinces" (Ch. 财政部为西藏与内地各省通商减免税收)[557] was presented to the Executive Committee. The conclusion of this policy was that goods being traded between Tibet and China were exempted from import and export fees (would be duty-free). This did not mean that merchants were exempt from local government levies and this was only between Central Tibet and China, not the Kham region of Xikang Province. Even so, this had the effect of enticing merchants from China to go set up business in Tibet.[558]

Through political networks, military power, and tax alleviations, the Pangdatsangs company thrived during the 1940s. According to Mönlam, the Pangdatsang import and export of goods from Kalimpong through Yadong (Tibetan trade mart) to central Tibet, reached 6000 packs (Ch. 余駄 could this mean more than 6000 yaks?) each year, worth 8,250,000 of Tibetan silver dollars (Ch. 藏银).[559] Another report indicates that in 1941, Pangda Yampel's working capital in Lhasa alone amounted to 709,100 Tibetan silver dollars.[560] But by 1953, the Pangdatsangs apparently had more than 1.5 million Tibetan silver dollars of commercial funds in Lhasa.[561] According to one Pangdatsang associate's memory, over the course of the five years

[557] I have not yet located this agreement.

[558] Zongzhen, ibid., 77-79. For more on Chinese or Yunnanese merchants in Tibet, see C. Patterson Giersch's work, namely his recent book *Corporate Conquests*.

[559] 相比之下，"邦达昌"每年由印度噶伦堡经亚东进人西藏的商品有 6000 余駄，值 8,250,000 两藏银。 进口商品中主要有布匹、毛织品、西药、皮革、香烟、 红白糖、糖果、日用百货、五金交电等。这些商品均 由英、美、印、日、荷、比、澳、意、捷克等国所产， 质优价廉，很受老百姓喜爱。Zongzhen, ibid., 85-86.

[560] 1941年，邦达养 璧仅在拉萨的流动资金达70. 91万两藏银。Wala, ibid., 133-134.

[561] Here Tibetan silver dollars, *zangyin*, probably means *srang*. I however have never seen that explained clearly and they use the same word to mean *zangyang*, the Sichuanese silver currency minted for Tibet. Zongzhen, ibid., 86-87.

that he worked in Chongqing (roughly 1943-1947), the Pangdatsangs' foreign trade reached about 10,000,000 Indian rupees.[562] At its core, the Pangdatsang were an import-export company, and for imports, the Pangdatsang company purchased from Yunnan "sugar, woodware, copper pots, pots, basins, plates, buckets, scoops, water tanks, locks, tiles, horse pots, ham, bacon, etc.," every year for a total amount of 90,000 dayang (Ch. 大洋), i.e., Chinese minted silver coins. For exports, the Pangdatsang company dealt in Tibetan local products, including wool, table salt, borax, leather, woolen serge, Tibetan blankets, musk, antlers, and medicinal materials, among others, to sell in China and abroad. However, it should be noted that shipment to China accounted for only 4% of the total exports, with the rest exported abroad through India.[563] The important point is that even though the majority of exports were going through India and abroad,[564] Tibetan merchants in Kham were working more closely with Chinese merchants and Chinese state enterprises than with Indian or western ones.[565]

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[562] Reported by Kesang Tashi. Wala, ibid., 8-9.

[563] According to various surveys, the total value of the local products exported by Tibet (by various companies?) before 1949 was five million *dayang* (Ch. 大洋). Within that quote only 200,000 *dayang* of the trade was being shipped to China, accounting for only 4% of the total exports, whereas about 4.8 million *dayang* were exported abroad through India accounting for 96%".（引自《西藏商业情况》第 11 页，中 共西藏工委财经委员会编，1955 年 9 月）。Might want to add this later, "邦达昌" 每年在阿里收购约 18000 包至 20000 包羊毛，藏北约 35000 包，日喀则约 20000 包，昌都地区约 8000 包， 共约 83000 包，计 480 万斤。Zongzhen, ibid., 83.

[564] It is very interesting to me that all of these figures are recorded in various kinds of Tibetan silver coins or rupees. I do not know exactly what this means, but not being recorded in *fabi* or the Chinese currency could point to its instability during this period or to the fact that most of the goods (beside the wartime products) were not going to China. As mentioned above, the expenditure on transport charges which it is hoped eventually to meet from the [pounds] 50,000,000 credit, will be about [pounds]225,000 per annum, the majority of this expenditure having to be met in Tibetan currency." IOR-L-PS-12-4205 (6).

[565] The extent to which this is the case is hard to say, and more comparison between Kham and Central Tibet is required. Either way, more attention needs to be paid to the Pangdatsang company's relationship with Chinese merchants and the Nationalist government as this was likely far more significant in Kham. "Each year, more than 6,000 commodities from India's Kalimpong pass through Yadong, Tibet, worth 8.25 million Tibetan silver. Each year, more than 140,000 kilograms of wool are purchased from Qamdo and northern Tibet, and the purchase price is 0.16 yuan per kilogram. All of them are exported through Yadong, and the gross profit is about 565,600 silver dollars." Wala, ibid., 135.

Tea was another major trade item for the Pangdatsang company. Especially by the early 1940s, the Pangdatsang company had obtained enough renown among the Dartsedo tea merchants that in 1942, Pangda Tobgye was invited to join the Kham Tibet Tea Industry Co., Ltd. (Ch. Kangzang chaye gongsi 康藏茶业股份有限公司) co-founded by Kesang Yeshi (one of the key founders of the Kham Tibet Trading Company, need to find his Tibetan name), and Liu Wenhui, the governor of Xikang Province.[566] Then, in 1946, Pangda Tobgye effectively bought out the Kham Tibet Tea Company when he offered an infusion of 1,000,000 yuan of dayang silver dollars (Ch. 大洋) to company, effectively buying the company's majority shares. This was ten times more than the tea company's initial startup fund of 100,000 yuan of dayang. Furthermore, because the Kham Tibet Tea company was backed by the Nationalist government and co-owned by Liu Wenhui, the Pangdatsangs could buy all tea from the Sichuan and Yunnanese producers tax free.[567] By the end of the 1940s, the Pangdatsangs partially, if not completely, owned many of the tea companies in Dartsedo or at the very least had a type of credit relationship with them to the extent that at one point during the 1940s Tobgye bailed out all the petty business owners in the tea industry. According to oral reports, during WWII, when inflation was seriously impacting the tea market, Pangda Tobgye met with many of the tea sellers in Dartsedo and decided to "negotiate an emergency rescue, selling the cheap tea in Pangdatsang

[566] While Chapter 5 discusses the Pangdatsang's cotton yarn shipments specifically, the other major goods they traded included bulk goods such as wool, tea, dyes, leather, borax, hog bristles, tobacco and cloth, specialty items from medicines, cigarettes, paper, as well as musk, Cordyceps, Kashmir safflower, Fritillaria, yak tails, bear bile, and leopard bone to every-day-use items like sugar, woodware, copper pots, basins, plates, scoops, water tanks, locks, tiles, and pork. Zongzhen, ibid., 80-83.

[567] Zongzhen, ibid., 80-81.

warehouse wholesale to small merchants and hawkers", Tobgye even supported the transportation of the tea from Ya'an to Dartsedo, thereby solving the crisis.[568]

Trade in cotton and silk yarn was also one of Pangdatsang's major business endeavors. As an essential wartime good, the cotton yarn and cloth trade was supported by the Nationalist government and with the closing of the Burma Road in 1942 they reached out to Chinese and Tibetan companies to help ship goods across the Tibetan plateau. While Chapter Six explores those transactions in greater detail, the Pangdatsangs also worked with the Kham Tibet Trading Company (which Tobgye was a shareholder in) to also conduct trade in cotton yarn. One of the Kham Tibet Trading Company shareholders, Rinchen Lazang, even explained one deal that never materialized: during the war, the Pangdatsangs and Kham Tibet Trading Company negotiated with the Central Cloth Control Bureau (Ch. 中央花纱布管制局) to carry 10,000 loads of cotton yarn at a price of Rs 1,200 per load over the course of two years sent from Calcutta to Chengdu.[569] After the conditions were negotiated, Pangda Tobgye used the Chongqing Taiyu Bank (Ch. 重慶泰裕银行) to make a deposit of 5 million yuan in order to facilitate transactions. Presumably, this bank was part of a network that allowed the Pangdatsangs to transfer money across long distances. However, due to the improvement of other transportation routes, this deal was continuously delayed and after the conclusion of WWII the five-million-yuan check deposit could not be collected. In the end, Pangda Tobgye filed a

[568] 一面召集各家茶号协商紧急 救市，一面将邦达仓的库存茶叶平价批发给小商小贩， 让他们早日离开康定。为了帮助各家茶号解决茶叶运量不足的难题，邦达多吉决定赞助资金，直接帮助茶号从 雅安运茶，运费各自承担一半。这一善举非常有效，很快就帮助本地批发商解决了供货不足的难题，获得批发 商和康藏商贩的交口称赞。Wala, ibid., 111.

[569] This may or may not have been the same deal that the Yunnanese Chen Ho Industrial Corporation was a part of, for more information see Chapter 5.

lawsuit with the Cloth Bureau and they compensated some of his losses.[570] Not only does this show one example of a multistep transaction but also gives us a sense for some of the things that could go wrong during these large scale, long distance, transactions.

This issue of payment during long term transactions was likely not the only logistical issue faced by the Pangdatsang company during the 1940s. One other example of this concern in dealing with Chinese authorities came in 1945 when Pangda Yampel sent a telegram to the Director of Chinese Resident Office in Lhasa, Lhasa Tibet regarding an intended purchase of silk yarn:

> I beg most respectfully to state that I applied last year to the Executive Yuan, National government of China, Chungking, China, for purchase of SILK YARN. A copy of my application I forwarded to the Commission on Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs and another copy of it to yourself. A copy of the reply I have received is enclosed herewith for your kind information. It will be apparent from the enclosed copy of reply that the Chinese Government have been kind enough to pass orders to deliver me the Silk Yarn: but, I have been informed by my man that there is not any hope of my being able to get the required Silk Yarn. I badly need to purchase at least two hundred Konthans of Silk Yarn, if not more, as a SPECIAL CASE. The Silk Yarn is not for me alone but my son-in-law Mr. Samdrup Podrang and others will take shares out of the above quantity. I have reserved two hundred million Dollars in Chungking and additional money is being remitted to Chungking (being proceeds of my selling cloth in Kangting) in great expectation to purchase the Silk Yarn. My above money is lying in Chunking and I have not been able to purchase any Silk Yarn at all due to which I have been suffering heavy loss…the Silk Yarn may very kindly be delivered to my man in Chungking, Kesang Tashi (重慶民族路湖北旅館邦達昌駐諭/渝桂/珪理 格桑扎西) .[571]

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[570] The Pangdatsang and Kham Tibet Trading Co., Ltd. negotiated with the Central Cloth Control Bureau (中央花纱布管制局协商) to carry 10,000 tens of tens of cotton yarn at a price of Rs 1,200 per load. The shipping period was two years, delivery in Calcutta and acceptance in Chengdu. The India export procedures and all taxes in Tibet were handled by the carrier, and Ya'an customs duties are handled by the Administrator. After the conditions were negotiated, Pangdatsang used the Chongqing Taisu Bank (重庆泰裕银行) and deposited a deposit of RMB 5 million in the bank. However, due to the improvement of the fighting situation of the Myanmar Allied Forces, the Bureau hoped that it would be transported through the China-India highway, so it was delayed again and again, and he refused to sign the contract until the end of WWII. The bank's 5 million yuan (check, 500万) deposit could not be collected. And as a last resort, Pangdatsang hired a lawyer to settle a lawsuit with the Control Bureau, and the Bureau compensated some of the losses. Wala., ibid., 11.

[571] It is possible that this letter was written in English by Pangda Yampel himself, given to British Indian associates in Kalimpong and then sent to the Chinese Resident Office in Lhasa to then be translated into Chinese and relayed to Chongqing. *Meng Zang weiyuanhui zhu Zang banshichu dang'an xuanbian.* Bian ji zhe Meng Zang wei yuan hui bian yi shi. (Taibei Shi: Meng Zang wei yuan hui, 2005). Volume 6.

This communication, signed by Yampel, points to a number of steps Yampel had to deal with when conducting trade though China. In this case, something had gone wrong, namely not being able to obtain the requisite amount of silk yarn from Chongqing. He had likely already arranged to sell this silk yarn in either Tibet or India and suffering heavy losses could be referring to the purchasers pulling out of the arrangement due to the delay. In order to fix this problem, he had to work with the Executive Yuan, one of the main governing branches of the Nationalist Government, and the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, the governing body of the KMT which Pangda Rapga had been a member of. While the conclusion of this issue is not known, Yampel was managing arrangements from the highest levels of the Chinese government to the local business in Chongqing through associates (Kesang Tashi, who will be the subject the next section) on behalf of purchasers or other members of the Pangdatsang merchant company (his son-in-law). And similar to Tobgye's case above with the Cloth Bureau, Yampel had money (here an absurdly large amount due to inflation) lying and waiting to be used, presumably again through a bank network, ready to purchase the goods.

Beyond issues of canceled deals and difficulties managing long distance trades over multiple counties, the company faced quite a lot of risk. From an English language contract drawn up for the Pangdatsangs and Jangtsetsangs by the Yunnanese Chen Ho Industrial Corporation we can better understand the central role, and incredible risk, taken on by the Tibetan merchant companies in trans-Tibet trade. In a draft contract from 1943 detailing the shipment of "Grey Cotton Yarn" for the China Woolen and Worsted Ltd., in Chongqing, from India, through Tibet, to Chongqing, we learn that the Tibetan merchants "will then be solely responsible for any theft, loss, moisture, damage en route or in storage while in transit and agree

to pay to the Owners at destination for such damage etc., at full value and refund the proportionate mule hire already advanced by the Owners subject to Force Majeure or act of God."[572] Furthermore, "In case of political change and goods being not allowed to pass through a certain station en route, the Carriers will be solely responsible for the safe storage of the Owners' goods free of charges," and in the case that the Tibetan merchants deliver the goods later than the agreed upon arrival date, Chen Ho has, "the right to deduct Rs. 10/- per mule load per month or par 'Pro rata' per part month so delayed." Essentially, the Pangdatsangs and Jangtsatsangs were fully responsible for anything that occurred between Kalimpong and Dartsedo. Even though it was stated that "insurance was covered by the Central Trust of China", it appears to only cover possible losses faced by Chen Ho and not the Tibetan merchants. Insurance and risk issues aside, all costs were paid by Chen Ho (with funds through the Stabilization Board of China) upfront. Chen Ho agreed "to advance 90% of the mule hire, i.e. Rs. 315/- per mule load, when goods are despatched from Kalimpong, and the balance of 10%, i.e. Rs. 35/- per mule load, is payable immediately upon receipt of telegraphic advice from the Owners' Kanting [Dartsedo] Agent of the safe delivery of the goods… [and] to advance taxes payable en route at Rs. 20/- per mule load. Carriers will settle with Owners on the arrival of goods at Kanting [Dartsedo], producing authentic vouchers. Any deficit will be paid up and excess refunded."[573]

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[572] This document is for the accounting purposes of the China Woolen and Worsted Ltd., in Chongqing. While I do not know what the Chinese name for this company is, this is the recipient company in China. The agreement is for transport of "cargo consisting of 420 mule loads of Grey Cotton Yarn (each mule load consists of 2 packages, each package consists of seven bundles, therefore total 840 packages or 5880 bundles, each bundle weighs 10 lbs.) from Kalimpong, India, to Kanting (Tachienlu), China, at the rate of Rs. 350/- per mule load." Chongqing Archives July 8th 1943, 02300002003030000158000.

[573] It appears that smuggling was sometimes an issue as the contract's final stipulation was that, "The Carriers shall not carry prohibited goods along with or smuggled in Owners' goods, and the Carriers are solely responsible for any fine imposed by authorities or damage sustained by the Owners, when, upon examination, such contraband goods

Altogether these assorted experiences of the Pangdatsang merchant company's dealings across India, Tibet, and China, points to the government and local networks they engaged in, to the issues they faced in conducting these trade arrangements, and the breadth of goods they dealt in, in order to draw a more complete picture of the scope of the Pangdatsang business. The following section looks at some examples of their foreign exchange transactions.

Pangdatsang Management of Currency and Foreign Exchange

Zhongmai Kesang Tashi was by all accounts the Pangdatsang company's right-hand man.[574] An amiable individual of many talents, Kesang Tashi had been educated in a foreign mission school (presumably in northern India), was a centurion or "commander of a hundred" in Tobgye's private army, and acted as a steward for all of the Pangdatsang land holdings in the Lhadun area of Chamdo (Ch. *ren chang du diqu zhengxie fu mishuzhang* 任昌都地区政协副秘书长).[575] At the same time, he worked as a trader for the Pangdatsangs transporting western medicine, leather, wool, cloth, and cotton yarn from India to Chengdu, eventually becoming the

are found among the packages." This contract was signed in May 1943 in Kalimpong and the "Guarantor for Carriers Sd/ Hongikyi" Chongqing Archives July 8th 1943, 02300002003030000158000.

[574] He wrote in 1988 a short memoir of the "Kang-Tibet Business Circle's Witnesses in Support of Japan's Salvation," but I have not been able to locate this publication. Wala., ibid., 7-8. He was interviewed for both the *wenshi ziliao* publication as well as Mönlam's research. His narrative is the most dominant of personal narratives but the Geoffrey Bull reference from the 1940s does seem to confirm his central role in the business.

[575] According to an account by the missionary Geoffrey Bull, "Gezang Drashi [Kezang Tashi] was a "commander of a hundred" in Dopgyay [Tobgye]'s private army and also a trader and steward of Dopgyay's lands and goods." Also, Bull's own reflection: "Gezang Drashi during these days was a very welcome visitor. He was, apparently, handling some of Pangda Tsang's property and lands at Hla Dun. He was a man of about 38 and we had a good time together." Another reflection, "I did not think it necessary to inform him that Gezang Drashi had been educated in a foreign Mission School, was a centurion of Pangda Dopgyay's private army and had handled, at one time, a major share of Pangda Dopgyay's trading in China and India. Further that he was steward of all Pangda Tsang's land and property in the Hla Dun area." Bull, ibid., 94, 128.

Pangdatsang's main manager in Chongqing.[576] His talents were apparently not wasted and in the years following the rise of the PRC, Kesang Tashi became the deputy Secretary General of the Chamdo CPPCC.[577]

In 1943, under the direction of both Yampel and Tobgye, Kesang Tashi relocated to Chongqing in order to better deal with large scale financial transfers and trade in foreign exchange (Ch. *chang shi wai hui mai mai yewu* 尝试外汇买卖 业务) for the Pangdatsang company. Foreign exchange, aka foreign currencies, was necessary for the business operation of the Pangdatsang company: US Federal Savings Bonds, public debt, British pounds, Indian rupees, and gold were some of the most common and most useful for dealing with trade between India, Tibet, and China. This was especially true during the war, when western credits and funds such as the Lend-Lease program were being used in China to purchase wartime goods. In order to remit funds outside of China, the Pangdatsang company usually transferred money from their locations in Dartsedo, Chengdu, or Lijiang to Chongqing. However, at the time, Chongqing did not have a proper or open foreign exchange market, and if one wanted to trade for foreign exchange one had to create an informal network. Paraphrasing Kesang Tashi's account, one had to "wine-and-dine" important people, network, and backchannel in order to make these business deals happen at all. Only after establishing this network was he able to start buying, selling, and trading foreign exchange.[578] According to the *Materials on History and Culture* (Ch. wenshi

[576] In Chinese he is often referred to as a "secretary" (Ch. mishu 秘書) but I do not know what the proper word for his position would have been.

[577] 只能根据邦达多吉的秘书、后来担任昌 都政协副秘书长的仲麦•格桑扎西 A business secretary of Pangda Tobgye (also relative?) 写于1988年的回忆 文章《康藏商业界对抗日救亡支援亲历记》，作出一个 大概的评估。Wala, ibid., 7-8.

[578] Wala, ibid., 109-112.

ziliao 文史資料), between 1943 and 1946, the amount of remittances to the Pangdatsang company in India (probably Kalimpong) totaled more than 10 million rupees, and from Chongqing, Chengdu, Kunming, and Lijiang they purchased 10,000 liang of gold; more than 300,000 yuan in silver and more than 33,000 liang of silver ingots.[579] All of which they could use for foreign exchange.

Kesang Tashi reflected that the Chongqing foreign exchange market—an unofficial, black market that was similar to Shanghai's stock exchange—made it easy to make fast trades.[580] Despite the relative ease, or lack of regulation that came with an official market, Kesang Tashi seems to have had a somewhat difficult time managing the foreign exchange and obtaining the required amount of funds. He explains that during the mid-1940s, the Sadhutsang family and Dargye Monastery's business managers learned that the Pangdatsangs were in possession of foreign exchange (stocks?) and sent their representatives to Chongqing to buy them from Kesang Tashi. Yet, Kesang Tashi was "very distressed" because he could only sell them a very small portion of his overall holdings.[581] This anecdote, while not explained in full, implies a variety of circumstances. Did Kesang Tashi and the Pangdatsangs not want to share their corner of the Chinese foreign exchange market? Or were they actually not capable of obtaining enough foreign exchange during this financially precarious wartime period?

During this time, there was severe inflation of the Nationalist government's newly established legal currency, the *fabi* (Ch. 法幣) and prices skyrocketed, causing investment in and

[579] Ibid., 133-134.

[580] Specifically it was said that, "buying short and selling short had no profit or loss so business was much easier to do (买空卖空，盈亏皆不见物，这样的生意做起来轻松多了).

[581] Ibid., 110.

demand for gold, silver, diamonds, jade and foreign exchanges to increase dramatically. This would in part explain why the majority of quotes on the Pangdatsang wealth were recorded in Tibetan silver, rupees, or other silver currencies. The bullion-based currencies which were in majority use in Tibet were more reliable during this time. To further the point, another method explored by the Pangdtsangs was through the diamond trade. They discovered that the price of diamonds in Chongqing was lower than in India, so the Pangdatsangs purchased diamonds from Chongqing and brought them to India, selling them to British and American embassies and overseas Chinese at high prices, thereby obtaining foreign exchange.[582]

The numbers and amounts of profits and goods appear staggering at first glance. While the vast majority of the statistics or numbers can't be verified, it might be possible to reconstruct a reliable earnings data through a broad survey of the Chongqing, Sichuan, Taiwan, and British archives, but even then one would have to look at state reported earnings or piecemeal local level data for specific locations like Dartsedo.[583] Another issue in locating precise data on the Pangdatsang wealth is that it was connected to most other companies and businesses in Kham (not to mention the Tibetan and Chinese governments). Even so, a reconstruction of their wealth from a variety of sources might give us insight into the functioning of their business and the scope of their trade. One goal in presenting all this data is to attempt to step beyond its only function: to signpost how extensively wealthy the Pangdatsangs were.

At every point the Pangdatsang were making political choices, adapting, and engaging with states, institutions, and companies; they leveraged their political connections in one realm to

[582] It was also mentioned that, they purchased pre-sale(?) gold coupons Siming Bank (四明银行) which were purchased (on behalf of?) Jardine & Matheson, half through foreign exchange and half with legal tender. Ibid., 110.

[583] Alice Travers does a fantastic restructuring of the wool trade during the 20th century and Paddy Booz reconstructs the tea market in Kham to some extent as well. Putting these two regions together using reliable numbers however would be extremely difficult.

make money in another realm. Within finance, the Pangdatsangs chose to send Kesang Tashi to Chongqing in order to buy foreign exchange so that they could conduct their transactions. By this time in the mid 1940s, the Chinese national currency, the fabi, was experiencing severe inflation, therefore, to do business in and with China, the Pangdatsangs engaged in the foreign currency exchange, and also bought into the diamond and gold market. The Pangdatsangs and Kesang Tashi were the ones making this long-distance trade across India, Tibet, and China happen and they participated in and took advantage of new, local and global financial networks that were being built around them.

Conclusion: A *Tibetan* Merchant Company?

The primary goal of this chapter was to draw attention to the vast business network of the Pangdatsangs which existed through local and transnational connections. Pangdatsang Yampel, Tobgye, and Rapga and their political, military, and business dealings represented a new form of Tibetan business, a *Tibetan* merchant company. And through them we can gain a better understanding of Tibetan economic interactions and the changes that occurred in Tibetan economic practice during the 20th century.

The second goal of this chapter was to establish a foundation for discussing what a Tibetan merchant company was, as opposed to a Chinese one discussed by Madeleine Zelin, or even a Yunnanese one as described by C. Patterson Giersch. The Pangdatsangs worked alongside Chinese, Yunnanese, Shanxi, British, and American companies, and they certainly were learning from this assortment of merchants, absorbing their accounting technologies and communication styles and tapping into the same banking and global financial networks. Yet what sets them apart as a distinctly Tibetan company? This chapter has merely established a point at which we can

begin the conversation. Surely the Pangdatsang involvement with monasteries and monastic networks, their status as elites in their home region, and connections to the Tibetan government through monastic donations point to a distinctly Tibetan mode of business operation—similar to the family lineage corporations found in China. With that said, the Chinese corporation existed in a society with external establishments such as a state or the judicial courts, that could legally codify business practices and transactions. In Tibet, however, there was no centralized state, making any legal definition difficult to articulate. Still, the Kham-based socio-economic structures (such as the implications of the word "tsang") and the relationships between monasteries and Khampa merchant families allow us to see Tibetan companies in motion. Indeed, once we treat the monasteries as de facto governments, we may begin to articulate the essence of a distinctly Tibetan organization of capital and economic practice. Monastery business and business structure, in other words, inform what we see in these new Tibetan merchant corporations, many of which would have gotten their "start-up" capital from monasteries. In sum, the economic history of Kham does not demonstrate Chinese economic encroachment on the plateau, despite the increased presence and newly emerging economic hierarchies.

Chapter 5

Commercial Collaborations: Financial Institutions and Trans-Tibet Trade, 1942-1945

This chapter takes the Chen Ho Industrial Corporation (Ch. Chenghe Qiye Gongsi 澄和企业公司), and specifically their business in India and Dartsedo, the economic center of eastern Tibet, as a case study to introduce global financial networks from banks to global and national currency employed by Tibetan and Chinese companies conducting business on the Tibetan plateau. As discussed in Chapter Five, the Pangdatsangs were one of Tibet's most powerful merchant-cum-politician families and their business networks spanned across northern India, Tibet, and China. The three brothers, Pangda Yampel, Pangda Rapga, and Pangda Tobgye, ran the family company together with Yampel as an official of the Tibetan Government in Lhasa (and the Trade Agent between Tibet and India), Rapga as a "duel agent" who was simultaneously part of the Nationalist Government and organizer of his own political party in India, and Tobgye as a military general and preeminent businessman of Kham in Eastern Tibet. One of their most significant business partners in the 1940s was the Yunnanese Chen Ho Industrial Corporation's Calcutta office manager Z.T. Tsang (Ch. Zhang Ruizhi 張瑞芝). Founded in early 1942 by the famous Yunnanese entrepreneur Dong Dengnong (Ch. 董登農), Chen Ho had already established branches in Tibet, India, and China by the end of that same year. Detailing the day-to-day business and financial practice of the Pangdatsangs and Chen Ho Industrial Corporation, this chapter provides a glimpse into a Tibetan and Chinese company's engagement with foreign currency exchange and newly established transnational banking networks, thereby explaining the financial infrastructures that linked Tibet to a global economy.

Primarily, this chapter investigates the development of war-time finance, the new inflows of capital into China and Tibet, and the Sino-British rivalry for commercial control of the Tibetan routes. Within this context this chapter not only addresses the formation of competing/concurrent currency-regulatory-taxing regimes on the Tibetan plateau but also the practical challenges of trade across Tibet and the need for cooperation between India, China and Tibet.

The catalyst for the cooperation between the Pangdatsangs and Chen Ho was the fall of the Burma Road in early 1942. As described in the previous chapter, the Burma Road connected Rangoon to Chongqing via Yunnan, and it was China's number one supply line after the Japanese forces invaded eastern China. The closing of the road thus created a dire need for alternative transportation routes. Immediately following the Japanese attack on Burma, Chinese Lend-Lease supplies started to be rerouted to Calcutta and northeastern India, but due to the absence of an alternative supply route, they were piling up and left to waste.[584] In order to remedy the situation, a new route was proposed through Tibet. The Tibetan Government, however, was unwilling to cooperate, fearing that a new transportation route passing through Tibet in the middle of a war could threaten its territorial integrity. After drawn out negotiations between the Tibetan Government and China, as well as some economic pressure exerted by the British, the Tibetan Government eventually agreed to allow the transportation of non-military goods across the plateau. The Chen Ho Corporation and the Pangdatsangs, given their

[584] "In early February, T. V. Soong sent a telegram to Chinese ambassador to Great Britain Wellington Koo, in which he urged that the center of gravity for Chinese Lend-Lease supplies be shifted from Rangoon to India, writing that it was 'vitally important [to] convert India depot for war supplies for China's war effort as part of United Nations stand on Asiatic mainland". The road from Rangoon was definitively cut in April, and Japanese forces occupied the northern border region including the Burma rail hubs at Lashio and Myitkyina that May.'" Kinzley, ibid., 177.

connections with the British, American, and Chinese officials, were some of the first to organize the transport of these stockpiles, mostly in the form of cotton goods, to China.[585]

Fig 5.1: Geography of the Overland Route (made by author)

This "Overland Route" was a pack route through Tibet and was one of the most significant arteries of trade and communications between India, Tibet, and China from at least the 17th to 20th centuries.[586] In the 1940s the major stops along this route, traveling from west to east, were Calcutta (the then capital of the British Empire in India), Kalimpong, Gyantse, Shigatse and Lhasa in Central Tibet, Chamdo and Dartsedo in Eastern Tibet, and finally, either to Chongqing (the wartime capital of Guomindang China) or via Lijiang to Kunming in Yunnan.

[585] Kinzley, ibid.

[586] For more on this route see Harris, ibid., and Booz, "'To Control Tibet, First Pacify Kham': Trade Routes and 'Official Routes' (Guandao) in Easternmost Kham." Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review E-Journal No. 19 (June 2016). (http://cross-currents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-19)

WWII and the closing of the Burma Road redirected not only stockpiles of wartime aid, but also the flow of capital. This chapter shows how Tibet and Chinese economic actors dealt with this unexpected increase in goods and capital through the Tibetan plateau. By this time, Eastern Tibet had been partially incorporated into the new Chinese province of Xikang, which brought with it increased Chinese state power and new financial and economic institutions. These included state-run transportation companies, banks, and even a Chamber of Commerce in Dartsedo, the then capital of Xikang.[587] The Pangdatsangs and other Tibetan and Chinese companies and merchant families quickly capitalized on these new institutions, making use of the banking remittance facilities and joining a number of the state-led transportation companies.

The Chen Ho communications, now housed in the Chongqing Municipal Archives, provide us with a more grounded understanding of how the Tibetan economy functioned at the local and transnational level during the wartime era. By tracing issues of global finance from currency exchange to banking, this chapter questions the notion of a continuous or smooth financial incorporation of Eastern Tibet into the Chinese economy. The process instead involved a continuous negotiation that rested on global financial networks as much as Chinese ones. The Chen Ho Industrial Corporation was not unique in and of itself, but their documents offer rare descriptions of Tibetan and Chinese business cooperation on the Tibetan plateau and the complex financial world they inhabited, along with the limitations that Chinese and global capital faced while entering Tibet.

[587] The Pangdatsang family comprised one of the key components of the powerful *Kang Zang Maoyi Gongsi* (Kham Tibet Trading Company), which included Khampa businessmen, local leaders, and high lamas. One genuine indicator of economic influence of the Nationalist government in the Tibetan areas was their connection to this trading company, and in 1943 the group formally gave Chiang Kaishek their "allegiance." Lin., ibid., 129.

Currency and Banking during the WWII Era

With the increased Chinese and international capital flooding the plateau came a certain degree of capital interconnectedness from commodity purchases, wartime aid, and state and private financial regulations.[588] Even so, the Tibetan regions' ability to shelter themselves from the wartime economic uncertainties was due to its silver and tea-based currency system which during WWII was just as linked to the Indian rupee as it was to the Chinese national currency.[589] The multiple economic systems that Tibet was simultaneously part of, in other words, significantly helped the Tibetan economy. Yet, the financial infrastructures in and along the edges of Tibet did have an impact on Kham's trade with India and China, hence the proliferation of transnational companies that connected India, Tibet, and China during this period.

The most important financial infrastructure came with the establishment of transnational banks. In 1937, around the start of the war against Japan, the Bank of China opened a branch in Calcutta. Soon after, it opened another in Kalimpong and by 1942 it had branches in Dartsedo and Batang and negotiations for a branch in Lhasa were underway.[590] Loathe to be left behind, the British wanted to open a bank in Lhasa as well, stating that their presence would be important for Britain's future economic interests in Tibet. Those in favor of a bank branch in Lhasa argued that the expenditure on transport for the route from India to Sichuan which would meet the 50,000,000 pounds of wartime credit provided by the British, would have to be paid in Tibetan

[588] While more research needs to be done on the precise effects of the Chinese national currency's inflation during WWII on the economy of the Tibetan Plateau, it is generally believed that vacillations of the wartime economy did not have a significant effect on Tibet west of Dartsedo, and that Tibet was mostly insulated from the worst of the effects. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Vol. 1*, and Lin, ibid.

[589] The narrative of the Tibetan Government is not well articulated in any of the extant sources.

[590] "This spring, Bank of China has established a Kalimpong office for the convenience of overseas Chinese businessmen." *Minguo shiqi xizang*, ibid., 422-424.

currency.[591] Therefore, a bank that could process foreign exchange would be very useful, especially since one could only obtain foreign currency on the black market, as discussed in the previous chapter.[592] In the end, nothing became of these plans to open branches in Lhasa and the financial needs were handled by Chinese and British bank branches in Darjeeling and Kalimpong.

Following the Northern Expedition and the consolidation of Nationalist power by Chiang Kai-shek in 1927, the Nationalist party began to slowly consolidate control over the private banking system that had come to characterize the early Republican period.[593] The Nationalist government took measures to establish a centralized banking system, backed and controlled by the central government.[594] The first step was creating the Central Bank of China (Ch. 中央銀行) in 1928, which served as a fiscal agent for the government while gradually taking on more functions to regulate currency, and by 1933, the Nationalist Government abolished the diverse

[591] IOR-L-PS-12-4205 (6) This did not come to fruition and I do not believe the expenditures ever reached this much.

[592] "However, the general shipments have not been organized by merchants hidden in our country. They have their own policies. After the goods arrive at the country, they are sold freely. The national currency obtained is purchased at the black market for foreign exchange. After only the Chenghe Enterprise company negotiated with the government for the goods to arrive at the country, they learned that they should be handed over to the Goods Bureau (物资局), give legal profits, buy them at the official price, and sell the users directly." *Minguo shiqi zizang*, ibid., 422-424. A black market is only designated as such by a government that wants to regulate that trade. By establishing state sanctioned bank branches with "legal" methods to obtain foreign currency the state could not only control the trade but make a profit from it.

[593] "Ministry of Finance (Ch. 財政部) was established in May 1927. In November 1928, it was placed under the administrative aegis of the Executive Yuan. The ministry's main functions were to manage the national treasury, levy taxes, regulate issuance of public bonds, and supervise and direct local finance." William Kirby et al. (eds.), *State and Economy in Republican China: A Handbook for Scholars* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 65 (check). For more, see Brett Sheehan, *Trust in Troubled Times: Money, Banks, and State-Society Relations in Republican Tianjin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

[594] Major financial institutions of the Republican period includes the Central Bank of China (*zhongyang yinhang* 中央銀行 founded in 1928), Bank of China (*zhongguo yinhang* 中國銀行 founded in 1912), Bank of Communications (*jiaotong yinhang* 交通銀行 founded in 1908), Farmer's Bank of China (*zhongguo nongmin yinhang* 中國農民銀行 founded in 1933), and even the Fuxing Commercial Company (*fuxing shangye gongsi* 復興商業公司 1936-46). Kirby, ibid., 67.

banking system nationwide and implemented an advanced silver dollar system (mostly in the form of *dayang* silver currency).[595] As the wartime state grew in size and scope, these policies eventually consolidated into the Joint Board of the Four Banks (Ch. 四聯總處) which existed from 1937 to 1948, with the four banks being the Bank of China, the Central Bank of China, the Bank of Communications, and the Farmers' Bank of China. Promoting the mutual financial and political support, the Nationalist government established a co-dependent relationship with these banks.[596] It was these banks that were given the sole right to print Nationalist China's new currency, the *fabi* (Ch. 法幣) or "legal tender". Despite China's historic silver standard, the *fabi*, which I will refer to as the national currency from here onward, was not backed by silver nor linked to either the dollar or to UK sterling.[597]

The creation of this fiat currency (not backed by a physical commodity like gold or silver and based solely on the trust of the state) was intricately linked to American domestic and international economic policies. Arthur Young, a former financial advisor to China from 1929 to 1947, who wrote a series of highly influential books on Chinese finance and banking during the wartime period, explained that following the Great Depression (1929-1933) the United States began buying silver stocks from across the world as part of the "New Deal" policies in order to artificially inflate the silver prices.[598] The 1933 "Silver Purchase Law" and 1934 "Silver Act"

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[595] Arthur Young, *China and the Helping Hand* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963) 7.

[596] "The KMT "big four" banks took over larger and larger pieces of the economy, and many regional and private banks felt the pinch or became de facto fiscal agents of the KMT financial apparatus. Other banks managed to do well by benefiting from "easy credit" flowing from Chongqing, but things became harder once inflation increased." Personal conversation with Matthew Lowenstein, May 2020.

[597] The US continued to buy Chinese silver after the currency reform and subsidiary nickel and copper coins were still being minted by China for small local purchases.

[598] Young, ibid., 61.

instigated a rapid purchase of Chinese silver.[599] This drained much of China's silver reserves, causing the remaining silver coins to be overvalued to the extent that it forced China to give up the silver standard.[600] The national currency was instead "maintained by the Central Bank at about US$0.30 and 14.5 pence…with no controls of exchange or trade."[601] With China's entry into WWII, difficulties in managing the new currency came hand-in-hand with major issues in financing the war. While receiving aid in the form of loans and credit from the US and other countries in the first four years of the war, China was included in the United States Lend-Lease program starting in 1941, ushering in a period of unprecedented loans to China.[602] The Chinese government and the US quickly arranged the purchase of essential and military goods but the issue in the end was getting the goods to China.[603] As explained in the previous chapter, logistical difficulties only increased with the loss of the Burma Road to Japanese forces in 1942, which forced the Allied powers to look for alternative transportation routes, one of which was

[599] Wang Chengzhi, "Zang bi juan," in *Ganzi zhou wen shi zi liao ji cui* (Ganzi Zhou: Zhongguo ren min zheng zhi xie shang hui yi Ganzi Zangzu Zizhizhou wei yuan hui, 2008), 296-312. These silver purchases were shipped from China to the US on boats.

[600] Young, ibid., 6. Furthermore, "At the time of the first American purchases of China's silver in 1935-36, it was agreed that the proceeds were to be used exclusively for currency stabilization, to ensure that the transactions were purely financial and not for such purposes as to buy ammunition. The Treasury also helped China by *not* insisting upon two other former requirements: that China hold 25 per cent reserves of silver against note issue, which was somewhat on the lines of what the United States was trying to do under legislation of 1934; and that China issue silver coins." Young, ibid., 61.

[601] Ibid., 6.

[602] See Arthur Young's Appendix II for a detailed breakdown of the amounts from various countries. "The only sizable foreign governmental credits [pre WWII] were American loans of 1931 and 1933, totaling US $26 million (utilized), to buy wheat and cotton for flood relief and other uses." Young, ibid., 4. Furthermore, Lend-Lease "authorized the provision of US$7 billion for military and nonmilitary aid to various countries fighting the Axis powers, including China. Drawing on the Lend-Lease Act and the various loan agreements authorized in the years leading up to Lend-Lease, the Chinese government made efforts to purchase massive amounts of American military supplies, industrial equipment needed to run China's munitions factories, and various essential commodities. The problem, however, was in coordinating the negotiations for and purchase of these goods in the United States. Kinzley, ibid., 173.

[603] Young, ibid., 207. Also, even though a total of US$539.5 million was authorized as aid to China from 1937-1941, less than two-thirds of it was actually utilized, this was in nearly all part due to transportation issues.

the trans-Tibet route.[604] This is when Tibet's geopolitical importance came under renewed focus and scrutiny.

After losing the Burma Road, a portion of aid offered through the Lend-Lease program was redirected to India and Tibet and allocated to Chinese companies like Chen Ho. The sudden emergence and continued presence of Chinese banks across Southeast Asia and India was a product of these redirected funds.[605] One of the financial agencies that would eventually be in charge of managing this influx of aid was the Stabilization Board (*pingzhun jijin weiyuanhui* 平准基金委员会) which governed much of the funds utilized by the Pangdatsangs and the Chen Ho Industrial Corporation.[606] The direct link between currency stabilization and aid was that in order to stabilize the currency, one had to manage (and stabilize) the prices of necessary goods.[607] For example, the cotton yarn that was transported by Chen Ho and the Pangdatsangs was considered a necessary good and therefore fell under the purview of the Stabilization Board.[608] Furthermore, the merchants who dealt in these goods had access to specifically

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[604] Many alternatives were explored and executed, through Xinjiang and the famous trans-Himalayan expedition, and technological feat, flying in goods over the "Hump."

[605] This is described in the Indian Office Records, IOR-L-E-8-1906 (1940-41) "Assistance to China: Proposed India Trade Mission to Chongqing," and in IOR-L-E-8-3705.

[606] In 1940, prior to the start of Lend-Lease, a credit of US$50 million was provided to China for monetary protection and management, instituting a "Stabilization Board, with a Chinese chairman and two other Chinese [members], plus an American and a British member appointed by China on nomination by the respective governments. The Board's assets, included the existing Sino-British funds and a Chinese contribution, would be nearly US$ 100 million," and the funds were to be used, "exclusively for the purpose of stabilizing the value of the Chinese yuan with respect to the United States dollar and other foreign currencies." Young, ibid., 181.

[607] Arthur Young further explained the situation saying, "to operate the controls, the Treasury announced that it was licensing 14 well known Chinese and foreign banks as 'appointed banks,' and shortly increased the number to 26. These banks were to apply to the Stabilization Board for exchange to cover 'legitimate imports' by their clients, and the Board would notify them whether it approved… Merchants receiving exchange from these banks were required to sell to them at official rates the proceeds of their exports, or set them off." Young, ibid., 196.

[608] One interesting note from Young was from an excerpt from the magazine(?) *Finance and Commerce*: "If the stabilization fund is to be used on the basis of providing official allotments of exchange under permit, it will merely have the effect of establishing a one-way traffic. Merchants, and others with legitimate claims, will apply for exchange at the official rates, but all exchange which has to be sold will naturally be sold on the "black" market,

licensed banks, and the transactions had to be set at official rates. This became a serious issue, however, when inflation of the national currency skyrocketed by the mid 1940s.[609]

Changes in China's financial management, currency policies, and their relationship to global financial networks set the stage for the Chen Ho Corporation and the Pangdatsangs' state-funded trade of wartime goods. Yet the trade, currency, and new regulatory bodies needs to be examined to see how they operated on the ground in order to gain a full appreciation for what Tibetan and Chinese economic cooperation actually entailed.

The Chen Ho Industrial Corporation and Z.T. Tsang

The Chen Ho Industrial Corporation was part of the rise of Yunnan-based international companies of the mid-20th century that coincided with the rise of Yunnanese tea trade.[610] After the fall of the Qing Empire, unrest on the borderlands coupled with lack of state control reoriented the tea trade and shifted the source of tea production from Sichuan to Yunnan. The increased tea trade from Yunnan into Tibet strengthened the ties between these regions, and by the WWII period, Yunnanese merchants, mostly Han Chinese, expanded their businesses rapidly.

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which will continue as before. The stabilization fund will feed and to a certain extent encourage the import trade, but it will do so (if it is active at the cost of a gradual depletion of resources." Young, ibid., 190.

[609] China famously experienced runaway inflation and price fluctuation during WWII. Young provides an exceptional summary of the inflation as it unfolded: "At first the American finance officers sold dollar draft to the Central Bank at the official rate to get the national currency they needed. From August 18, 1941, that rate at parity was C$18.82 per US$1. As of July 10, 1942, the rate was changed to 20-1, where it stayed all through the war. But as the printing presses rolled, prices in China soared. The overvaluation of national currency became extreme. At 20-1 the exchange value of China's money was a sixth of the prewar figure of about C$3.36 per US$1. But, approximately, at average prices in Free China, national currency at the end of 1941 had only about a 20th of its prewar value; at the end of 1942, about a 66th; at the end of 1943, about a 228th; at the end of 1944, about a 755th; and at the war's end in August 1945, about a 2500th." Young, ibid., 257.

[610] Besides the Pangdatsangs, Chen Ho's most common transactions were with China Wool Processing Factory (*zhongguo mao fangzhichang* 中國毛紡织廠) and frequent communications were with the Central Trust Bureau (*zhongyang xintuo ju* 中央信託局), the Manufactured Product Insurance Office(*chanwu baoxian chu* 產物保險處) and the India China Central Bank (*yin zhongyang yinhang* 印中央銀行).

The Chen Ho Industrial Corporation, founded by Yunnanese business tycoon Dong Dengnong 董登農, with their main office in Kunming, was part of this greater growth of the Yunnan trading economy and was one of the many firms to deal in the shipping of Yunnanese tea to Tibet via the sea route to India and then India into Central Tibet in the first half of the 20th century.[611]

Chen Ho was founded in 1942, late in Dong Dengnong's entrepreneurial career. As an import-export trader and industrial magnate who dealt in goods from marble to tungsten, Dong founded many industrial plants and companies.[612] Likely established in order to engage in WWII transportation business, Chen Ho may have been created with the specific purpose of transporting cotton yarn. Its main investors were the founder Dong Dengnong, the above-mentioned Z.T. Tsang, and Zhang Junguang 張軍光.[613] Despite being the founder, it seems that Dong was less engaged with the Chen Ho business, delegating most of the management to the head of the Kunming office, Dong Dengchu. The documents analyzed in this chapter are exclusively communications from the Dartsedo Office director, Dong Junding, to various other

[611] For more on Yunnanese merchant trade see C. Patterson Giersch's books, *Asian Borderlands*, and *Corporate Conquests*.

[612] Pat Giersch, in his book *Corporate Conquests*, discusses the Xizhou merchants including Dong Dengnong, "One of Xizhou's most successful entrepreneurs, Dong Dengnong, also combined Minjia and European architecture when building a new house in 1942. By this time, Dong had more or less seen it all. As a boy, he had lost his father but was able to enter his uncle's firm as an apprentice. Later he accumulated enough capital to start his own firm. He became involved in a wide range of commercial ventures, including exporting marble via Haiphong and trading opium. Still later, after a stint in jail related to a business failure, Dong hit the jackpot with wolfram and tungsten mining. Back in his home town, Dong built a French-inspired villa that was linked to his Minjia-designed courtyard house." Geirsch, *Corporate Conquests,* 76. Also for an online biography see: https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%91%A3%E6%BE%84%E5%86%9C accessed May, 2020.

[613] Academia Sinica (Jinshisuo Dang'an 近史所檔案館) file number 18-23-01-25-21-009 in the Jingji bu, shangye bu, shangye si, gongsi deng ji juan, Yunnan, yunshuye, Chenghe qiye gongsi (經濟部，商業司，公司登記卷，雲南，運輸業，澄和企業公司) I have not yet been able to access this document. It seems likely that Zhang Jungang was a relative of Z.T. Tsang (Zhang Ruizhi).

Chen Ho branches.[614] In 1942 these offices and branches included Kunming, Lijiang, Chongqing, Chengdu, Ya'an, Dartsedo, and Calcutta, and by 1945 they had added small offices in Kalimpong and Lhasa. According to Chen Ho records, the main Kunming office had between eight and nine employees while the smaller offices had anywhere from one to four employees.[615] Their main office in Kunming as well as their office in Chongqing employed a secretary (Ch. 文書) to deal with the English language communications with American and British Indian companies and governments. Very quickly, Chen Ho managed to assert itself as the primary Chinese company transporting goods between India, Tibet, and China.[616]

Zhang Ruizhi, referred to as Z.T. Tsang in English, was one of the main investors and shareholders of the Chen Ho Industrial Corporation, manager of Chen Ho's Calcutta office, and the most important individual when it came to business with the Pangdatsangs.[617] Z.T. Tsang started managing the Calcutta office soon after the company was founded and had been previously based in India for quite some time.[618] His work for the Chen Ho corporation had him frequently traveling between Calcutta and Kalimpong, and he had already established himself within the British Indian business community by the time of the first cotton yarn transaction. Z.T. Tsang had relationships with not only the British Indian officials but also with many of the major Chinese, British, and American companies based in India. This included Steel Brothers &

[614] I do not know if these Dongs were related.

[615] I do not know the exact date that these offices were opened and Chongqing Archival records of the company end in 1946. Chongqing Archive Document 02300003000320000241000.

[616] *Minguo shiqi Xizang*, ibid., 422-424.

[617] Referred to as Manager Zhang (Ch. Zhang Jingli 張經理) in the Chinese communications.

[618] From British officials in India, "Mr. Z.T. Tsang, owner of the Chun Ho Transportation Company with whom we have had intimate relations for many years, is also a partner in and Calcutta manager of another firm styled the Chen Ho Industrial Corporation. IOR-L-E-8-3559 (122-180).

Co., the Fuxing Company, Jardine Skinner and Co., Jardine Matheson, and the Peking Syndicate.[619] His standing in the community is best summarized in a comment from the British Commercial Councilor explaining that Jardine Matheson & Co. are "well aware that the moving spirit in both the Chen Ho Industrial Corporation and the Chun Ho Transportation Company is Z.T. Tsang (Chang Jui'chin), but they state that they have had intimate relations with him for many years, and so far as I know he is a man of excellent business standing and personal reputation." British communications indicate that they would rather work with Z.T. Tsang directly than deal with larger Chinese corporations, as this would better suit British business interests. As a 1944 British Report on "Overland Transportation" from India through Tibet to China stated:

> "We know the firms (Tibetan merchants) like Pongda Tsang [sic]… they are all reliable, and we would suggest that you approach their agent in Calcutta Mr. Z.T. Tsang, formerly manager of Chun Ho Transportation Co. You will be able to make a more adequate arrangement. Their rate is 7/-/- per kilo delivered Chengtu, losses guaranteed. Perhaps we can get still cheaper with bigger shipments. Please reply as when you get back to Calcutta, and when you have met Mr. Chang [Tsang], and found out the details in making such arrangement, we would require them to put up securities against the goods we put to their hands, and as to payment of freight, it will be made at different intervals as the goods arrive at different places along the Overland route."[620]

While still working with Chen Ho, Z.T. Tsang began branching out into his own business, styled the Chun Ho Transportation Company, as early as September 1943.[621] This is particularly interesting as it shows Z.T. Tsang's desire to branch out with the Pangdatsangs and work directly

[619] IOR-L-E-8-3559 (122-180) July-Sept 1943. There are many other companies mentioned in the Chen Ho communications, these are just some of the more frequently mentioned companies.

[620] FO 371/41680.

[621] IOR-L-E-8-3559 (122-180) July- Sept 1943.

with exporters and transportation companies like the Pangdatsangs. With that said, I found no reference to this in the Chen Ho communications and Z.T. Tsang appears to have continued working for Chen Ho until at least 1945.[622] It is very possible however that Tsang had multiple businesses and his hand in many pots in this rather dynamic and fluid business environment of WWII.

The first known business transaction between Chen Ho, Z.T. Tsang, and the Pangdatsangs was a series of cotton yarn shipments from India to Chengdu from May to October of 1943. Due to the Japanese take-over of the eastern seaboard, China's cotton factories moved inland. And even though many of these factories were operational, the delay in production and the inability to import cotton from Burma (a major cotton exporting country) increased the demand for cotton and cotton products.[623] However, the immediate rationale behind the cotton shipments through Tibet was to bolster the supply and lower the prices of cotton products in China.[624] In a communication between Chen Ho and the Mongolian Tibetan Affairs Commission, the situation was explained in the following words:

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[622] While we have no record of Pangdatsang and Z.T. Tsang discussing this, it does seem rather apparent that a discussion occurred and that the British businesses were happy to jump on the opportunity having watched a successful transaction take place. It is important to mention however, that I did not find mention of this separate transportation company run by Z.T. Tsang in the Chen Ho company communications. With that said, it makes sense that from the British India perspective that he would be running a separate business venture and working directly with the Pangdatsangs through it.

[623] IOR-L-E-8-3559 (137-150). A long report on Cotton Production in China during wartime, 1943. For an in-depth history of cotton and its impact on the global economy see Sven Beckert's *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014). For specifics on China and Southeast Asia during the 20th century see "Chapter 13: The Return of the Global South."

[624] In July 1943, The Commerce Department of India and the Secretary of State for India confirmed that, "we have received application from Steel Bros. for export of 110 tons of cotton per year to Chen Ho Industrial Corporation China via Kalimpong and Tibet during quarter July-September and for about 36 tons monthly thereafter. Yarn is stated to be for purpose of breaking prices in Western China at request of the Chinese Government." IOR-L-E-8-3559 (122-180) July- Sept 1943.

> Our company was established in Kunming and specializes in importing textiles. Due to the blockage of the Yunnan-Burma Road transportation route, domestic materials are scarce due to scarce resources and the prices are rising, especially for textiles. In view of this, the company's general manager Zhang Ruizhi [Z.T. Tsang] … ordered cotton yarns from the foreign firm of Shizhen [Steels and Co.], and prepared the shipment of the Indian textiles from India, through Tibet, to China. The transaction took ten months of determined preparation, the funds were sluggish, and the losses were heavy. However, General Manager Zhang overcame all of these difficulties with a spirit of perseverance. The first batch of 200 bales of cotton yarn cleared through Kalimpong, India in last June and is now on its way through Tibet to Kham. Given the success of this shipment, the company believes that although the transportation route is difficult, it still has a lot of value.[625]

From the China side, the Mongolian Tibet Affairs Commission (which by this time Pangdatsang Rapga was a member of) was involved in this cotton shipment deal as were many Chinese institutions such banks and the Stabilization Board. Backing up this assertion, the British officials based in India and Chongqing further explained that, "There is little doubt but that the Chinese Government are prepared to give considerable support to this trade via Tibet owing to the urgent need in China for cotton yarn."[626] Furthermore, Z.T. Tsang was explicit in stating his desire to help the Chinese government bring down the now highly inflated prices of essential commodities.[627]

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[625] "Mongolian-Tibetan Commission sends Chenghe company to discuss business with India Representative office in Beijing" 蒙藏委员会为澄和企业公司 拟派员 赴 藏商洽开通 印藏货运事 致 西藏 驻 京办事处代电 1943年9月4日. Minguo shiqi Xizang, ibid., 306.

[626] IOR-L-E-8-3559 (122-180) July- Sept 1943.

[627] "To the China Relations Office in Calcutta, From the Steel Brothers and Company Ltd…Mr. Z.T. Tsang wishes to lay stress on the fact that his Corporation in co-operating with the Chinese Government in an attempt to bring down the prices of certain primary commodities in Yunnan where, owing to the cutting off of supplies, prices have reached an extremely high level. Stock holders there are inclined to hold on to what they have against a further rise in prices and to break this vicious circle the Chinese Government are encouraging firms of standing to import supplies via the hazardous Tibet route." Chongqing archives, 023000030003400000059000 October 30th 1942.

The Chen Ho Industrial Corporation in India

Hugh Richardson, the famous British agent and Tibetologist, commented in September 1943 that:

> "There is no doubt that Chinese traders are finding their way into Tibet in increasing numbers. Even if obstacles are imposed at the Indian end there seems little difficulty for a trader to come in from China…The chaotic state of Chinese currency is driving Chinese to put more and more capital into Tibet…The danger that the Chinese will be left in control of the trans-Tibet trade after the war seems very real and ominous."[628]

The British concern over their place in the trans-Tibet trade, dramatically summarized by Hugh Richardson, was fueled by their sense of competition and geopolitical security vis-à-vis China.[629] While the British concerns were not unfounded, the partnerships between Chinese companies like Chen Ho and the Tibetan merchant firms like the Pangdatsangs demonstrate that the Chinese merchants were not commercially taking over the Tibetan trade routes. Looking at a list compiled by the KMT's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ch. 外交部) we see that Chen Ho, while being the most significant in scope, was not the only Chinese enterprise doing business

[628] IOR-L-E-8-3559 (121) July- Sept 1943.

[629] There is already a great deal written about the British interests in Tibet. Namely work by Lin, ibid., and Lamb, ibid. The British saw Chen Ho as a possible source of revenue: "The inter-relations, in any business which may eventuate, between Steel Brothers, Jardine Matheson & Co., the Chen Ho Industrial Corporation, the Chun Ho Transportation Company, and Mr. Z.T. Tsang (owner of the Chun Ho, and partner and manager of the Chen Ho), seem likely to be somewhat complicated, but that after all is their own affair and… that from the point of view of British trade interests, and of giving assistance to China, it would be desirable to do what may be possible to facilitate the issue of export licenses enabling them to transport cotton yarn by this route into China. My own predilection, would be in favour of supporting, if there is any inevitable choice, Jardine Matheson & Co. and the Chun Ho Transportation Company, because I feel that their participation in this trade would result probably in the more extended support of British (and, in particular, United Kingdom) commercial interests in China: it would for instance offer a means by which they might be able to bring in not only Indian cotton yarn but also pharmaceuticals and other diverse British goods of high value and small bulk for which they have long held agencies." IOR-L-E-8-3559 (122-180) July- Sept 1943.

between India and Tibet. The list of "most successful businesses in 1943" produced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, focused on Chen Ho but also included the following:[630]

1. Hong Sheng Company (Ch. 洪盛公司) — the owner Dong Jingcheng, came to India more than 30 years ago, specializing in buying and selling Chinese tea to Tibet.[631]
2. Xingji (Ch. 兴记) — the owner Liang Zizhi, specializing in Beiping [Beijing] porcelain and silken textiles. Tibetans are very interested in these kinds of products, and people from all walks of life use Chinese porcelains and silks [as silk offering scarves][632]
3. The Wan Yinchen General Store (Ch. 万银臣杂货店) — the owner Wan Jun, originally a Sichuan trumpeter [in the army?], he has been dealing in general goods and antiques for at least thirty years.[633]
4. The Dadong Store (Ch. 大东商店) — the owner is Zhang Shaoqing, who has specialized in silks, seafood, and general goods for over ten years.[634]
5. The Hengsheng Company (Ch. 恒盛公司) — The owner is Zhang Xiangcheng, he studied in Japan and is a good person, he deals in general goods and the company has been operating for over twenty years.[635]

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[630] Ministry of Foreign Affairs dispatches Military Commission to Check Tibetan-Chinese Relations and the British interests in Tibet and report, Economic Department August 10, 1943. This is a very thorough report on the routes through Tibet and the negotiations of the development of such routes. It more interestingly however provides a list of the most important overseas Chinese companies conducting trade with Tibet. *Minguo shiqi Xizang,* ibid., 422-424.

[631] 洪盛公司——主人董景程，三十余年前来印，专营中国茶叶运藏销售。

[632] 兴记——主人梁子质,专营北平磁器、绸缎。藏人对疋类商品，极为欢迎，官绅各界无不以用我国磁器、绸锻为荣。

[633] 万银臣杂货店——主人万君，原系四川号兵，经营杂货及做古董已有卅余年之历史。

[634] 大东商店---主人张少卿，专营绸缎、海味、杂货，亦有十余年历史.

[635] 恒盛公司——主人张相诚，闻曾在日本读书，为人尚佳，专卖杂货，有二十余年历史。

6. Zhu Ji (Ch. 铸记) — the owner is Ma Zhucai, he specializes in general goods, and has been operating for more than 20 years.[636]
7. Ma Fugui (Ch. 马富贵) — he specializes in general goods and fabrics, and has been in the area for more than 20 years.[637]
8. Jimei Store (Ch. 集美号) — the owner is Chen Tianxi, who is from the Singaporean diaspora, specializing in cloth and his business scope is a little smaller.[638]

As the above descriptions indicate, Chinese presence on the plateau was rather limited and, to borrow Pat Giersch's title, they were a real motley crew. Not backed by the Chinese government, these were small businesses, some of which were owned by members of the Chinese diaspora and had been in Kalimpong for multiple decades. The fact that Chen Ho, a new comer to the Kalimpong stage, was considered the largest company doing trade between China and Tibet speaks to the small scale of these other traders.[639] Furthermore, their business was oriented directly towards the Tibetan market as opposed to transnational shipment.

Many of these companies (or general stores in most cases) appear to have been operated for over a decade, some around thirty years, and were well established in the community. Chen Ho was in fact an outlier having only been operating for a few years. The Nationalist Government was very attentive of the trans-Tibet trade issue and, just like the British, was

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[636] 铸记---主人马铸才，专营杂货，有二十余年历史。

[637] 马富贵——专营杂货、布匹，有二十余年历史。

[638] 集美号——主人陈天锡，为新嘉坡 撤退侨民，专营布疋，规莫较小。

[639] A further investigation into these companies would prove very interesting as I suspect the larger corporations like Chen Ho rapidly pushed out the "mom and pop" shops in Kalimpong by the end of the 1940s. By the 1950s however, this route between northeastern India and Tibet became far more precarious due to the closing of the borders.

looking not only to make inroads on this possibly lucrative business, but also to shore up its geopolitical interests. In the many communications, British and Chinese, one sees a plethora of Chinese government organizations from the Central Trust Bureau (Ch. 中央信托局), to the Stabilization Board, the Mongolia Tibet Affairs Commission, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which were all involved in supporting the trade of necessary goods through funding and insurance.

As also seen within the British communications, there was certainly an air of national self-interest, and within this same report on Chinese business in Kalimpong, India, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs directly mentioned trade negotiation difficulties, suggesting even that the British were jealous of the Chinese merchants' ability to conduct trade with the Tibetans. With that said, we should not assume that the Chinese had an easy time doing business in Tibet, as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also complained that the Chinese merchants were required to work with Tibetan proxies and that Kalimpong was not the most hospitable business environment for the Chinese. One point is clear, whether Chinese or British, a company absolutely needed to be within the good graces of Tibetan politicians and businessmen in order to be successful.[640] Z.T. Tsang was not only acknowledged by the British, and other international companies in India, as one of the main Chinese (Yunnanese) individuals doing business out of Kalimpong, but he also clearly knew how to network with the Tibetans.[641]

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[640] *Minguo shiqi Xizang*, 423-424.

[641] There were a number of other British, American, and Chinese companies present in Calcutta expressing interest in the trans-Tibet trade. It is unclear to what extent these companies managed to involve themselves or if they did so through funding or through proxies. Other company names that surfaced throughout these communications also included the Peking Syndicate which was financing certain activities in India (which I still don't totally understand). For example, in this case the handling of machinery: "…all of your [Woolen and Worsted] stocks in India under Lend-Lease terms and air transport India/China of same were to be handled by the Pekin Syndicate and our services in these connections were just to supervise and get into contact with the Pekin Syndicate on your behalf…As the Pekin Syndicate is designated by the British Government to handle storage and transport of Lend-Lease goods to China in India…because having Governmental authorization they have such facilities in India which are denied to a

From 1942 to 1943 most of Chen Ho's trans-Tibet shipments were being funded by the Stabilization Board. Chen Ho would apply for funds from the Stabilization Board, giving them a thorough breakdown of costs ahead of time. However, given the long-term nature of the trans-Tibet shipments, Chen Ho frequently had to request more funds to support the increasing prices of transport or unanticipated costs. [642] These transactions were conducted exclusively in Indian rupees (including refunding any extra funds to the Stabilization Board in Chongqing), and managed through the Bank of China's Calcutta office.[643] By February, after some confusion regarding the price of mule transport, they had finalized the costs of the first series of shipments.[644]

Overall, beyond the individual profits the merchants were making through government spending and WWII international loans, the significance of these financial flows and establishment of new institutions was that they were providing merchants with new mechanisms for long distance trade and more outlets for finding credit and loans. But these were not the first "banks" to arrive on the Tibetan plateau. Prior to the arrival of these foreign banks, monasteries served as de facto banks, as well as storing grain, tea, and as discussed in Chapter Three, even printing their own paper currency. The establishment and expansion of Chinese banks allowed not only long-distance remittance of funds, but they were also directly involved with the management of the Chinese economy at the local and national level. The Pangdatsangs and Chen

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private firm like ourselves [Chen Ho] under all the war control orders as imposed by the Government of India." Chongqing Archives 02300002003030000158000.

[642] Chongqing archives, 02300003000320000068000, February 24th, 1943.

[643] Chongqing Archives, 02300003000330000271000, February 24th, 1943.

[644] This came with the stipulation from the Stabilization Board that, "as soon as the goods reach their destination, acceptable original documents in support of such items must be submitted to the Board and the balance, if any, after deducting the actual costs from Kalimpong to Tachienlu [Dartsedo], must be refunded to the Board in rupees." Chongqing Archives 02300003000330000271000.

Ho made use of these banks such as Bank of China for remittance purposes and for purchasing foreign exchange during this wartime period. The geographic spread and uses of which will be discussed in greater detail below, allowed the Chinese and Tibetan economies greater access into the precarious world of macroeconomics and global capitalism.

The Chen Ho Industrial Corporation in Tibet

What went into a trans-Tibet shipment of cotton yarn? What details did merchants and managers pay attention to when developing and carrying out these transactions? The Chen Ho reports and communications offer a rare look into the mundane management of shipment across the plateau. The "how-to guide" written by Dong Junding, manager of the Chen Ho Dartsedo office, paid close attention elements of life in Dartsedo, the life-style of Tibetans, and what it took to be an adequate transporter of goods across the Tibetan Plateau.[645]

> Explaining the journey between Dartsedo and Kardze: the route is extremely difficult, namely the only transportation methods are mules and horses so one needs to be a good horseback rider. From Dartsedo to Kardze it takes twenty days, and the only food available is some rice and dried food. The trip is very harsh; you have to bring the food with you, you must also hire a cook as well as one person as a translator. Outside the pass [west of Dartsedo] Tibetans only eat tsampa, known as *qingke* (Ch. 青稞) grain, which is grinded and mixed with butter[646] before being consumed. Tibetans also eat fresh and dried yak meat and butter tea. Every day they need about twenty to thirty cups of butter tea. This is made by boiling brick tea, adding butter, and then churning it in a wooden barrel. Many people prepare this and bring it with them. Silang Jamtso spends all his days eating these kinds of foods and never eats rice. Outside the pass people typically use Tibetan silver [Ch. zangyin 藏銀] and do not use the national currency [Ch. guobi 國幣]. Dartsedo is the only place one can exchange their money for Tibetan coins [Ch. zangyang

[645] The report was also concerned with the livability of Dartsedo for their office managers and the report covered the "Most Recent Price List of Goods in Dartsedo." Short summary of the report was that rice was extremely expensive and the list consisted of mostly of food products and daily necessities. For more on rice in Kham see Frank, ibid.

[646] Butter was written both as *suyou* 酥油 and as "butter", in English, in the Chinese communications, possibly because some of the Chen Ho office managers wouldn't know what *suyou* 酥油 was.

> 藏洋] and outside of Dartsedo one cannot use the national currency. It is also important that one brings about seven or eight, or even ten, pack loads of brick tea, specifically Jingguang tea (Ch. 金光) to use on the way for exchanging for Tibetan silver, because it is used as common currency.[647]

Essentially, Dong Junding had come to understand while living in Dartsedo that there was an autonomy to Tibetan economic practices, and that the Chinese economy and currencies did not overlap with the Tibetan reality. Here he emphasized to the others at Chen Ho that one needed to understand the transportation and business situation before they could think to do anything in Kham. For a Chinese merchant there were difficulties not only in organizing transport and knowing which currencies to use, but there were incompatibilities with food and language. As the reader may recall, these tensions were just as present in the early 1930s as they were a decade later in the 1940s.

In Dartsedo, Chen Ho had a small office located at Number 9 Minque Alley (Ch. 民榷巷九號)[648] with two employees: one manager, Dong Junding (Ch. 董君鼎) and an accountant by the name of Liu Shisheng (Ch. 劉詩聖).[649] To get a better understanding of the situation in Kham, Chen Ho requested a detailed report on the economic conditions in Dartsedo. This report was conducted by Dong Junding, manager of the Chen Ho Dartsedo office and in reading this report one gains a vibrant picture of the Dartsedo economy and economic institutions during the summer of 1943 as well as gain an appreciation for the concerns of a newly founded company

[647] Chongqing Archives, September 10th 1943. 02300003000330000206000.

[648] Chongqing Archives 02300003000330000188000. This street's name loosely translates to the People's Monopoly, 榷 meaning monopoly or exclusive possession of trade on some commodity.

[649] Chongqing Archives 02300003000320000241000. Liu Shisheng does come up in some of these communications.

looking to do business in Tibet.[650] From this report and other communications one can essentially construct a how-to guide for Chinese companies hoping to conduct business in Tibet. In this section I lay out some of the major concerns of the report as well as provide accounts from some of Chen Ho's early trans-Tibet cotton shipments.[651]

The first order of business in Chen Ho's report on the economic conditions of Dartsedo was to identify all the major Tibetan businesses operating in and out of Dartsedo. This was not just for general knowledge purposes, but was also because Chen Ho wanted to know which companies they could do business with in the future. Dargye Monastery and its associates at the Baojia Guozhuang (Tib. phag phrug tshang A lchags kha pa) made the list,[652] as did the Pangdatsangs and their representative Silang Jamtso (Ch. 四郎降澤 Tib. Tsering Gyatso?), as well as the famous Sadhutsang family from Kardze who by many accounts equaled the Pangdatsangs in their economic clout.[653] Special attention was also paid to the Kham Tibet Trading Company (the Tibetan merchant-cum-KMT-run trading firm discussed in the previous chapter). This company apparently had representatives in Shanghai and Wuxi, Jiangsu, and in Dartsedo had about twelve or thirteen representatives from all the various Tibetan merchant families. The next priority was to discern whether or not there was a market for cotton in

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[650] Chongqing Archives 02300003000330000188000. The author is Dong Junding 董君鼎 or Dong Shizhang 董事長, who refers to himself as Junding 君鼎 in the communications. We know this because of the small stamp that accompanies the Kangding Office stamp on each of the documents. This is a nine paged document from Kangding to *zongli* 總理 which I think has to be in either Chongqing or Kunming.

[651] The documents found in the Chongqing archives include communications between all the offices and many different shipments of varying goods. I have merely selected the ones that have to do with trans-Tibet trade.

[652] As mentioned in Chapter Three, the Chen Ho documents list the *Baojia Guozhuang* as the trading house for Dargye Monastery, Yudru Tsomu's research however indicates that it was the *Baijia Guozhuang* that Dargye worked with. There is a *Baojia Guozhuang* that Kardze Monastery worked with so perhaps there was a mistake or Dargye worked with each at different times. Tsomu, "Guozhuang Trading Houses," 326-327.

[653] Rinchen Sadhutshang, *A Life Unforeseen: A Memoir of Service to Tibet* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2016)

Dartsedo and if any of the companies there already traded in it. In short, there was no market for cotton and there had only been a handful of shipments of it from India by that time only amounting to roughly seven to nine thousand yuan worth of goods. However, there was a big market for wool, and business was quite lucrative. For cotton and other textiles the major company doing import and export trade was the Kham Tibet Trading Company. Beyond that there are a handful of smaller Chinese-run businesses that deal in cotton textiles.

The next order of business was the state of financial institutions in Dartsedo. In 1943 Dartsedo was home to a plethora of newly established Chinese banks, the Central Bank of China (*Zhongyang yinhang* 中央銀行), the Bank of China (*zhongguo yinhang* 中國銀行), the Farmers Bank (*nongmin yinhang* 農民銀行), Chongqing Bank (*Chongqing yinhang* 重慶銀行), and the Xikang Provincial Bank (*xikang yinhang* 西康銀行) among others.[654] Yet, despite these numerous Chinese banks, their reach was limited. Therefore, Chen Ho needed to not simply know which banks were available to them, but also which ones would best suit Chen Ho's needs:

> What is the situation regarding local banking practice? In the past, any foreign commodities and local exports of local products can all be invested (or you can say purchased as an investment) but since March this year (1943), the Ministry of Finance has sent bank inspectors everywhere. Thereafter, any fiduciary loans and investments above 50,000 yuan must be approved by the inspector before it can be implemented. In fact, the Ministry of Finance aimed to prohibit the practice of hoarding. As a result, each bank in Dartsedo only offers bank savings, loans, and currency exchanges now[655]… How much is the interest rate on the bank loans, and is there a time-limited loan?[656] The

[654] This list includes the Central Bank, the Bank of China, Agriculture/Farmers Bank, Chongqing Bank, the Xikang Provincial Bank, they used shorthand, but I am pretty sure that the other banks were *chuankang pingmin shangye yinhang* 川康平民商業銀行 and *hecheng yinhang* 和成銀行, the one they call *ji* 濟 I could not identify. Chongqing Archives 02300003000330000188000 from August 1943.

[655] In Ma Wei [not sure where this is], however, there are still commodity purchase investment operations, but not on behalf of a bank [meaning that another party, either a private group or another entity, acted as the main investor/creditor]. Chongqing Archives 02300003000330000188000 from August 1943.

[656] *Biqi* 比期 loan and *wubiqi* 無比期 loan are two different types of loans.

> interest rate of the [non time-limited] loan is about five to six fen per month and the [interest rate] for time-limited loan is much less; the storage is only limited to half a month and the interest rate is about three and a half fen per month.[657]

The Chen Ho report explained (for the consumption of their other offices across India and China) that the Nationalist Government was in the process of regulating these banks. Their functions were being reformed as the report was taking place and therefore Chen Ho needed to be cautious. Then on a practical front, Chen Ho needed to know the loan situation, which would be necessary for conducting business (purchasing and storing goods) in Dartsedo. While the Bank of China dealt with their China to India transactions, the Chen Ho Office in Dartsedo used the Farmer's Bank of China (Ch. 中國農民銀行) and the Sichuan Kham Bank (Ch. 川康銀行) to remit money and funds between it and the main office in Kunming. At times they even asked to have the remittance fees reduced, and as we will see in below, likely for the same reasons they wanted their taxes reduced.[658]

Despite the large number of banks, there were actually very few ways to exchange currency between Kalimpong and Dartsedo, and the issues facing local currency exchange versus large scale transfers were very different. Chen Ho's Dartsedo office frequently warned the offices in Kunming and Calcutta that converting currencies between Lhasa and Dartsedo was near to impossible and that they needed to provide their carriers with adequate funding in Tibetan currencies, namely silver coins or tea bricks, as Tibetans did not accept the *fabi* national currency (Ch. 國幣, 法幣). For long distance transfers, Chen Ho had offices or representatives in

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[657] 銀行放款利息若干有無比期放款[in text question mark]放款利息月約五六 分比期甚少存入祇限半月約月息三 分半。Chongqing Archives 02300003000330000188000, August 1943.

[658] Chongqing archives, 02300003000320000006000, September 28, 1943.

India, Chongqing, and Kunming which could deal with the transfers either in Indian rupees or *fabi* whereas in Dartsedo and Lhasa (at least as late as September 1943) Chen Ho had to rely on the Kham Tibet Trading Company to exchange currency.[659] It is unclear based on the communications what the exact role of the Kham Tibet Trading Company in relation to Chen Ho was during this time and it is also unclear exactly when the Pangdatsangs took a larger role in the Chen Ho business. It is possible that Chen Ho was introduced to Pangda Tobgye through the Kham Tibet Trading Company (which Tobgye was an important member of) or that they met through Pangda Yampel in Kalimpong.

Logistics were also a major concern. For example, Dong Junding reported that there were many wireless telegraph stations between Lhasa and Dartsedo making it fairly easy for the Tibetan merchants to contact Chen Ho with updates along the way. Stations were located in Lhasa, Litang, Batang, Sershul, Derge, Kardze, and Ta'u, linking the northern and southern routes but surprisingly not through Chamdo. Additionally, this area's telegraph office service was run by a certain Wu Xuchu, who had been in Kham for about five years, and his spouse, who was a Tibetan of high rank. He was assigned to the Kardze telegraph office with the hope that in the future he could help develop the Chen Ho company there.[660]

They were also concerned about transportation, and while by the 1940s there were motor ways connecting Chongqing to Chengdu to Ya'an, only foot carriage and animal transport was available from Ya'an to Lhasa. But Dong Junding reported that transport from Dartsedo to Lhasa was very easy, usually one went up the northern route through Kardze to Sershul and then down

[659] Chongqing Archives, 02300003000330000206000, September 10, 1943.

[660] Chongqing Archives, 02300003000330000206000, September 10, 1943.

to Lhasa.[661] The best time to ship goods was from July to September and after that things got very difficult and dangerous due to snowfall and spring flooding.[662] And there were some other difficulties, too. For example, it was not easy to arrange *ulak* transport across the Yangtze River, and the cost, between four and six thousand yuan, was different depending on which direction you were traveling.[663] A one-time back and forth trip between Dartsedo and Kardze could cost between 2 and 5 thousand yuan or more. At one point there was a person whom Dong Junding knew, who did this without enough money, and he eventually could not pay for it.[664]

> From Dartsedo to Ya'an there are horse carts, pack animals as well as motor cars one can use for transportation and the government has 19 motor cars at their disposal [Ch. 騾車十九為糧政局之運糧車]. The Tibetan groups also run caravans to Ya'an [Ch. 馱馬為藏邦放空馬], as well as the tea porters [Ch. 馱茶者]. The motor cars can run on the Qinghai Kham Highway. China Woolen and Worsted Company [Ch. 中國毛紡公司??] had a situation where their transporters were carrying wool to Ya'an and they lost some of the wool along the way, they tried to argue for leniency but ended up having to pay a lot of fees. For this reason, we think that our goods should be transported along the motor way. Every month, about five to six cars travel back and forth and this is definitely the safest way to travel.[665]

Essentially, from the 1940s through the end of the war, motorways were built all the way to the edge of the Tibet Plateau and mountainous regions of Northern India and Burma,[666] but with the geographic barrier, made more difficult by Tibetan Government blocades, the

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[661] Or alternatively through a place called Geyin 蓋因 in southern Kardze Prefecture.

[662] Chongqing Archives, 02300003000330000206000, September 10, 1943.

[663] 來之回程 馱馬也其運脚不一定視回程之事件為何而定價約每 馱币(this is not actually written as *bi* but is a shorthand character that means *guobi* 國幣, I have transcribed it as *bi* 币 the few times it appears) 四千至六千元 但藏人不軟收國幣大都以茶磚折價（在關外各處交易十九以茶易貨）.

[664] Chongqing Archives, 02300003000330000206000, September 10th 1943.

[665] Chongqing Archives, 02300003000330000206000, September 10th 1943.

[666] An exception with Amdo and the Gansu corridor.

development of navigable motorways became untenable and transport switched to pack animal or human transport. Pack-routes were a technically different affair from a standard motorway: fodder for animals versus gasoline or ethanol, slow but low maintenance versus fast but high maintenance, not to mention that the capital investment necessary for a paved or even dirt roadway through the mountains of eastern Tibet was not a possibility realized until after the establishment of the PRC.

The next concern was regarding possible customs duties and taxes specifically for cotton yarn along the route between Lhasa and Dartsedo. For Chen Ho, a relatively new corporation with limited funds from the Stabilization Board, this was considered a serious problem. According to Chen Ho's market research, there was no direct tax bureau in Kham, nor a business tax bureau, nor a *jing* (Ch. 經?) tax bureau, or an anti-smuggling department, but there were many miscellaneous taxes. First, the Sichuan Kham Frontier Defense Force collected transportation station fees of 2% to 5% of the total value of the goods. Then there was Xikang province's Police Headquarters (*jingcha ju* 警察局) which required a fee of two to five yuan per pack animal.[667] Then one had to also pay the police's (*jingbei bu* 警備部) pack animal tax, which was also two yuan to 5 yuan per pack animal. Then the Relay and Transport Management Office of the Transportation Bureau required a fee of two yuan for every pack animal as well as a fee for the draft animal license. Then there was a 25 to 50 yuan fee for the "escort" (*tuobang zongzhao fei* 馱幫総照費), an administration fee for the porters (*jiaoli* 脚力) which was 4%, and

[667] Before Xikang Province was established, the National Government decided in 1934 to form the Xikang Province Committee and appointed Liu Wenhui as its chairman. On July 22, 1935, the Xikang Provincial Committee was established in Ya'an. On September 15, 1936, Liu Wenhui was ordered to move the Xikang Provincial Committee to Kangding. Xikang was formally established on the first of January 1939 and ceased to exist in November 1955.

finally the Dartsedo County Government pack animal additional tax (*fujia juan* 附加捐) of 20 yuan per animal.[668]

So if we imagine a merchant is coming through Kham with 100 pack animals with goods that value 50,000 yuan, by these above tax stipulations the merchant would have to have given first, roughly 3% (on average) which equals 1,500 yuan, and then for the jing police (jing cha ju 警察局), an average of 3 yuan for every pack on the pack animal, which can be one or two packs, equaling 300 to 600 yuan, and then the jing bei bu (Ch. 警被捕) (another regulatory office) would have to be given the same amount, and then the Relay and Transport Office took 2 yuan per pack animal, which would be 200 yuan, then the transport license and the escort (*bang* 幫) fee of between 25 and 50 yuan. Beyond this there was the administration fee for providing workers, which they took a 4% cut on, but we are not provided with this particular cost amount, and finally the 20 yuan per pack animal for the Dartsedo County Government which would amount to 2,000 yuan. This imaginary merchant and his goods would in total have to pay, at least, between 4,000 and 4,500 yuan, not to mention the time it would have taken to execute these transactions, which would possibly lead to delays. While perhaps not prohibitive, this was still a significant amount during a time when a jin of pork cost 50 yuan, a jin of beef was 45 yuan, and a jin of salt was 55 yuan.[669] Furthermore, these were merely the costs once one entered into the territory governed by the Sichuan Kham Frontier Defense Force. But at the same time, one shouldn't forget that Pangda Tobgye was part of the Sichuan Kham Frontier Defense Force

[668] Chongqing Archives 02300003000330000206000.

[669] Chongqing Archives 02300003000330000188000.

and might have had some leeway in paying those taxes. As we see in subsequent communications, these fees were considered exorbitant by the Chen Ho Dartsedo Office.

In general, these communications mention a lot of different taxes across different regions: "this transportation tax in some ways is similar to the consumption tax in Yunnan or the provision tax in Guangxi. In Kham the transportation tax is not fixed and therefore it is often confused with bribery, and it takes 2% to 5% of the goods (or cost of the goods), everything is chaos and there are no regulations, and corruption is abundant. You need a person who is in high respect and holds a certain status in order to transport the goods and deal with all of this. For ordinary merchants the trouble is experienced ten-fold and they cannot possibly deal with all of this. If the Xikang and Central Governments can decide on a proper regulation for tax rates, then that would really help."[670] For Chen Ho, the persons of high respect were the Pangdatsangs: "the extortion of taxes by the Tibetan officials is extremely high, but the Pangdatsangs are reliable and stand in high regard, this power allows them to conduct trade."[671]

Due to all these difficulties, Chen Ho further wanted to involve the Chinese authorities: "I [Dong Junding] sent a letter to the main office asking the Financial Bureau and the Stabilization Board to ask them to help our company, we need protection and assurance as cotton yarn is an essential necessary good for China. I am asking authorities for help and they will hopefully give us a satisfactory outcome."[672] The communication further explains that there were official prices for necessary goods that were set by Xikang Province and the Nationalist government, which

[670] Chongqing Archives, 02300003000330000206000, September 10th 1943.

[671] 藏境官方 之需索甚大 (the extortion, taxes, of the Tibetan officials is really high) 然以邦達昌方信用 (but Pangdatsang reliability, the standing/there place, and power allows them to conduct trade)，地住 及 勢力在 藏境. Chongqing Archives, 02300003000330000206000, September 10th 1943.

[672] Chongqing Archives, 02300003000330000206000, September 10th 1943.

should have been above market price so that they could buy up the stock (merchants were compelled to sell the goods to them so they got better profits) instead of letting it get to the regular (black) market. Additionally, there was the issue of the transportation fee, and similar to the issues listed above, the fee was inconsistent and changed all the time. "We need to figure out what specifically the fee will be for cotton yarn and we really need to ask the Finance Bureau and the Stabilization Board to make the Xikang Government and the Sichuan Kham Frontier Defense Office (Ch. 川康邊防総指揮部) follow their orders." Essentially, they needed the Central Finance Bureau or the Stabilization Board to waive the fees from transporting goods, as these taxes were, according to the Dartsedo office, usually arbitrary and incredibly high. They wanted to negotiate a smaller amount for the fees.[673] Continuing with the transportation issues, after the goods were transferred by motorcar from Dartsedo to Ya'an, they then went to Chengdu, where they were expected to pay customs duties again, which Dong Junding implored the Kunming Office to fix on their behalf.[674] The cost of this final leg of the trip between Dartsedo, Ya'an, and Chengdu was also quite expensive: "Every month there are 15 cars that go back and forth between Dartsedo, Ya'an, and Chengdu. And this morning we went to talk to the manager of the Qinghai Kham Highway and they gave the OK. The transportation fees are according to the regulations of the Ministry of Transportation (Ch. 交通部). Between Dartsedo and Ya'an it costs 91 yuan per gongli, so for 226 gongli it will cost 20,566 yuan."[675]

More information is needed in order to truly understand the extent to which these fees were "exorbitant." One example of a total amount issued to Chen Ho for multiple shipments of

[673] Chongqing Archives, 02300003000320000006000, September 28th, 1943.

[674] Ibid.

[675] Ibid.

cotton yarn from the Stabilization Board (Ch. 平准基金委员会) in September 1943 indicated that they approved of a foreign exchange of 840,000 rupees (Ch. 八十四万罗比).[676] The first shipment of goods was approved at 210,000 rupees, where the cost of transport was 150,000 rupees, making a total of 360,000 rupees which was remitted to India by the Bank of China in Kunming (Ch. 经昆明中国银行汇印在案).[677] Overall, the government and regulatory issues official and unofficial posed a serious concern for companies conducting trade across the Tibetan plateau.

In addition to the above fees and regulatory issues, a lack of standard currency conversion rates and an ever-inflating Chinese national currency required a creative approach to dealing with foreign exchange. This points to a larger issue of currency exchange through markets with emerging monetary systems. We can understand that there were no fixed exchange rates between the various Indian, Tibetan, and Chinese currencies because the *fabi* was just starting to circulate. This period between the 1930s and 40s witnessed the process of building the exchange system, and this exchange was further based on amounts of trade as well as the volumes and diversity of transactions. What we are also witnessing here is the formation of prices. And the Pangdatsangs and Chen Ho were especially concerned about this. Given that there are very limited formalized exchange rates in periodicals and other business publications, it is very hard to establish a comparable value for the reader.[678] Even the formal examples are not enough to determine prices

[676] It is unclear whether this is the total.

[677] Minguo shiqi Xizang, ibid., 423-424.

[678] In Sichuan one finds them for specific years in periodicals for *fabi* to other currencies like the USD. There are some extant price lists from Dartsedo during the 1940s and non-official price lists by Chinese and westerners visiting the regions. In India, in the Tibetan language newspaper, The Tibet Mirror, one finds price lists in rupees and the British publish price lists in rupees on a highly regular basis. What one does not find however are fabi to Tibetan srang (coin or paper) conversions, or even fabi to rupee let alone rupee to the Kham zangyang (Tibetan silver coins).

and exchange rates because there were differences between regional exchange rates as well as a difference between an official (planned economy) version of the rate versus that of the daily local rate.[679] There certainly was a practical understanding of the exchange rate but it was haphazard.[680] Finding reliable conversion rates in 1943 for Indian rupees to Chinese national currency, let alone Tibetan silver coins to Chinese national currency, therefore poses a serious issue during this era that saw the creation of a formalized monetary system.[681]

Miscommunication and Danger on the Plateau

Early transactions proved difficult and there was a considerable learning curve for the Yunnanese merchants dealing with trans-Tibet shipments and coordinating with Tibetans and the Nationalist Government. Below are two examples that show the range of issues one could face when conducting business in Tibet.

In September 1943, Dong Junding reported to the Chen Ho office in Kunming that they were having some serious miscommunication issues regarding the location and arrival of their

[679] For an example of conversion issues on the ground, the rates for the Chinese national currency to the US dollar, are explained by Arthur Young: "At first the American finance officers sold dollar drafts to the Central Bank at the official rate to get the national currency they needed. From August 18, 1941, that rate at parity was C[hinese]$18.82 per US$1. As of July 10, 1942, the rate was changed to 20-1, where it stayed all through the war. But as the printing presses rolled, prices in China soared. The overvaluation of national currency became extreme. At 20-1 the exchange value of China's money was a sixth of the prewar figure of about C$3.36 per US$1. But, approximately, at average prices in Free China, national currency at the end of 1941 had only about a 20th of its prewar value; at the end of 1942, about a 66th; at the end of 1943, about a 228th; at the end of 1944, about a 755th; and at the war's end in August 1945, about a 2500th. At Kunming, the main American base, inflation was worse than the average, and the comparison was more extreme." Young, ibid., 257.

[680] With that said, creating a big data price breakdown from all the shreds of sporadic detail would make a very interesting big data project.

[681] Finding reliable conversion rates for the rupee before 1947 has been surprisingly difficult. The rupee went through major reforms during this period and up to 1947. From what I understand, the Indian currency system was rather similar to the Chinese one prior to the 1930s. A footnote from Travers: "The low exchange rate of the rupee adversely affects wool traders", Lhasa Letter for the week ending 4 July 1943 (IOR/L/P&S/12/4201) and "It has been noticed that the exchange rate of rupee usually goes down when the price of wool goes up and vice- versa". Cf. Annual report of the British Trade Agent in Yatung, A report on the trade of Tibet for the year ending the 31 March 1946. IOR-L-P&S-l2-4209.

shipments. Pangda Tobgye and Silang Jamtso, the Pangdatsang company's representatives and advisors to commercial activities in Dartsedo, reported that at least one shipment arrived in Bamei (Ch. 八美), a town south of Litang, and that a lot of goods, over 100 packages, had arrived in Litang. Pangdatsang Tobgye did not however specify to Silang Jamtso if these goods were for Chen Ho or another buyer. The Pangdatsangs were also partnered with another merchant named Luo Mou from Jiangxi who mostly did business in leather goods and general products. Stressed out by this turn of events, Dong Junding relayed to the Kunming office his two guesses about what might have happened: one, the goods could have crossed the river in Chamdo and went through Dege and Kardze where the various military units could have given them a lot of trouble, or two, they could have gone straight to Litang where Pangda Tobgye has a lot of power and sway. Essentially, he reports, they had no idea what was going on.[682]

Despite miscommunication being quite stressful for any business, this issue was eventually resolved. Other shipments were not nearly as lucky and as the following example proves, the risks of trans-Tibet trade could be quite high. The below report sent on October 1st 1944, recounts a year-long issue that had serious life-threatening consequences.

A young man named Lobsang Dawa (*luosang dawa* 洛桑大哇), and his brothers, Zebajia 擇巴押 (Tib. Tseba Gyal?) and Azha 阿扎 (Tib.?) were transporting 400 packs of goods for Chen Ho between India and Dartsedo in the summer of 1943.[683] They started in Gaxika (Tib. ga(?) gzhis ka Ch. 呷溪卡), a place in Central Tibet where they paid the required amount of Tibetan Government taxes of 30 liang (Ch. 兩) of Tibetan silver (Ch. 藏銀). They sent 39 out of

[682] Chongqing Archives, 02300003000330000206000, September 10th 1943.

[683] Lobsang Dawa and his brothers were, based on context, members of the Jangtsatsang family who were associates of the Pangdatsangs. Likely they were contracted through the Pangdatsangs to transport goods for Chen Ho.

the 400 packs with a separate caravan to Dartsedo and continued to prepare the shipment of the remaining packs in Central Tibet. Zebajia soon took the remaining packages and arrived in Riwoche, a town five hundred li (Ch. 里) from Chamdo. However, in Riwoche he was stopped by the Yunnanese Lai family who lived in Chamdo. Zebajia tried many times to pass through but the Lai family refused.[684] Zebajia and Lobsang Dawa sent many telegrams to the Chen Ho office asking what to do, suggesting either they could stick to the original plan and send the packs to Dartsedo (waiting for the Lai family to let them go) or they could send the packs straight to Yunnan which would cost them more money in transportation fees. The Lai family was pressuring them to send the goods to Yunnan, likely because this would have meant profits for the Lai family, but also the roads from Riwoche to Yunnan were considered dangerous. When the Lai family still would not let them pass, they sent someone back to Central Tibet to discuss the situation with Azha and together they decided to find a different way to get the goods to Dartsedo. By that time, they had been stuck in Riwoche for eight months and all the yaks were dying from hunger. Zebajia was extremely worried by all of this, telling Lobsang Dawa that if he died from sickness there would be no one to take care of the dying yaks. At this point they started negotiating with a Tibetan official in Riwoche named Shakepa (Ch. 藏官夏戈巴), who, with the help of a bribe, eventually let them pass. Then using their own money and gold, the brothers hired more transporters and went to a town in Dege called Kasiduo (Tib.?? Ch. 卡斯多) where a Tibetan official stopped them again. Inspecting their tax documents he informed them that the documents had expired and that they would have to pay the taxes all over again. At the same time, other companies, including the Jiaben family (Tib. Gyabum?? Ch. 甲本家), the

[684] Here it is unclear whether the Lai family wanted to confirm that they were carrying goods for the Jangtsatsangs and Chen Ho.

Kham Tibet Trading Company, and the Jiazha family (Tib. ?? Ch. 甲扎家) obstructed them from returning to Chamdo (presumably because they would benefit from their taxes?), and they weren't allowed to leave unless they paid two hundred and forty silver coins in taxes. Therefore, they had no alternative but to pay the money and, in the end, they lost all their savings and were completely broke. The final paragraph of the letter was a plea, "we are still here with forty packs but we need 14,000 yuan of Indian Rupees to get to Dartsedo. This will not only cover the 240 silver for the taxes but should also cover the costs of transporting the goods to Dartsedo. We sincerely request to receive payment for losses and damages. Please have mercy and investigate this situation. I am losing my sleep and appetite with worry over this. We do not have any money to hire more transporters and we do not know what time the goods will arrive. Please help us."[685]

This letter was sent to the Central Ministry of Finance's Department manager (Ch.中央財政部 部長) from the Chen Ho Office in Kunming on behalf of Lobsang Dawa (signed and sealed, 印鑑) on October 1st, 1944.

The Conclusion of Initial Shipments and the Continuation of Business

These above communications paint a picture of trans-Tibet trade as difficult to navigate, literally and metaphorically. Transportation in Tibet was not regularized, and taxes, fees, bribes, or costs along the way were subject to wild fluctuations. However, despite all these issues, the

[685] Chongqing Archives, 02300003000330000152000, October 1st, 1944.

initial sets of shipments of grey cotton yarn for the China Woolen and Worsted Company[686] did eventually arrive in Dartsedo on October 27th 1943.[687]

These documents additionally demonstrate that business in Kham was done through representatives and associates. We have reference to Jangtsatsang's representatives, which shows that these transactions were through their larger company network. Also, while Pangda Tobgye was the number one actor of the Pangdatsang family on the Tibet-China border, he was also working with Pangda Yampel who was situated on the Tibet-India side. The Chen Ho company undoubtedly worked with both Yampel and Tobgye, though I have yet to see any direct reference to Yampel by name.[688] Without rapid communication or monetary transfers, trusted individuals (from managers, to associates, representatives, or otherwise) to oversee the business at every step of the way were critical to conducting a successful business venture. These alliances however were prone to shift, as the Pangdatsang brothers, Z.T. Tsang, and others, were allied first and foremost to their own interests.

The main concern regarding banks had to do not only with access to funds, loans, transfers, and exchange, but also with access at all. What we see in these communications was at times prohibitive costs and lack of access. In Chapter 4 we saw that the Pangdatsang company went to extreme lengths to obtain the proper currencies for their transnational trades, dealing with official and unofficial channels and with multiple banks. The question I continue to ask

[686] I am not sure exactly who the China Woolens and Worsted Ltd Company represented but they would have been affiliated with the Chinese government and based in Chongqing.

[687] A letter to China Woolen and Worsted, Ltd, Chongqing from the Chen Ho Calcutta Office including updates on the transport of goods: "At the beginning of June last, we despatched a caravan convoy of 600 mules from Kalimpong loading Grey Cotton Yarn. Part of the convoy, 150 mules, arrived at Kangting on Oct. 27th, taking about 5 months to transit. According to our Kangting office's report, the yarn is found in good condition." Chongqing Archives 02300002003030000230000, December 3rd, 1943.

[688] Oftentimes when the communications write "Pangdatsang" they often mean a specific brother or even an office.

however, is to what extent is this a political issue versus a practical one? For the British, who felt compelled to control all elements of long-distance commerce, it was deeply frustrating to them that Chinese banks were not only monopolizing the market in China, but also expanding into Southeast Asia and South Asia.[689] This concern very likely extended to various Tibetan and Yunnanese companies, and while it is difficult to uncover this in specific documents, the overall picture one gets is that banks were financial institutions looking to turn a profit as well as political entities of the Nationalist government.

Currency and Bank Notes in Kham

The existence of competing currencies across the India-Tibet-China trade route during the 20th century illustrates not only the multilayered economic environment, but also the subtle and not so subtle power struggles between many local and state groups who were simultaneously negotiating their future position within a rapidly developing and changing set of economies. As we saw in the Chen Ho transactions above, the trans-Tibet shipments required multiple currencies.[690] When reading the above documents, the general orientation on the day to day basis

[689] "British banks are now experiencing difficulties in opening here, which would never have arisen if they had opened in Free China before they lost all their interests in Occupied China. These difficulties do not exist in British territories and from here it seems to sow lack of foresight to allow the Chinese to build up a monopolistic position on existing and projected trade routes between India and China which will make yet more difficult future developments of British banking in China itself." IOR-L-PS-12-4205 (2).

[690] As discussed in Chapter One, there was a multiplicity of not only silver coins, but also a variety in names for the silver coins making it extremely difficult to discern exactly which coin was being used or referred to at any given point. One thing I have noticed in all the Chen Ho documents is the predominance of the word "Tibetan silver" or *zangyin* (Ch. 藏銀) this always appears to mean *zangyang* (Ch. 藏洋), the silver coins minted by the Sichuan and Xikang governments for use in eastern Tibet, and they often use the words interchangeably. Overall the sources and even secondary materials are fairly vague with their treatment of the currency situation. Of the currencies listed in the Chen Ho documents we see national currency or *fabi* (Ch. 法幣), usually written as *guobi* (Ch. 國幣), and *zangyin* (Ch. 藏銀) and *zangyang* (Ch. 藏洋). There are also the words like *bi* (Ch. 幣) which seems to just mean "money", and "yuan" (Ch. 元) (dollar, unit of account), as well as 匝 but with a closed box, which was a short hand for guobi 國幣. Furthermore, Indian rupees are used frequently in Chen Ho English language documents from the Indian offices, yet I have not found any references to rupees in the Chinese language communications (specifically regarding transfers of money for the Dartsedo office).

is one of practicality rather than competition. While the Pangdatsangs and Chen Ho made great use of foreign exchange bank transfers, the issues while in northern India, Central Tibet, and Eastern Tibet continued to function on largely exchangeable hard metal currencies. From Indian rupees to the variety of Tibetan silver coins (Central Tibet-minted, eastern Tibet-minted, and Sichuan-minted),[691] the governing bodies that minted these currencies were aspirational territorial currencies at best.[692] By the early 1940s Kham had been partially incorporated into the new province of Xikang, and with the rise of a new state power came new economic institutions. And yet the Chinese national currency *fabi*, despite having been instituted in 1935, made negligible inroads to the Tibetan economy. Some form of economic integration was under way, but at least during the 1940s, currency was still not a part of that integration. While some scholars have seen the issuing of silver currency and paper money over the course of the 20th century as evidence for increased Chinese (state or market) control over the Tibetan regions[693], one certain inroad for control over the Tibetan economy came in the form of Tibetan bank notes. The Tibetan bank notes issued by the Xikang Provincial Bank in Dartsedo offer a compelling case study for understanding the nature of Chinese financial institution expansion on the Tibetan Plateau. [694]

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[691] See Chapter One for more detail. Wang Chengzhi, "Zangbi juan," in *Ganzizhou wenshi ziliao jicui* (Kangding: Zhongguo Renmin Zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou, 2004), 296-310.

[692] By the early 1940s, along the eastern portion of the trade route from Tibet to China, there were three major types of currencies circulating, "the first type was legal currency, i.e., the paper money of the Central Bank of China, Bank of Communications and Farmers Bank of China issued by the central government: the second type was *Zangyang* [also called zangyuan] i.e., the silver coins issued by Xikang provincial governmental mint; and the third type was *Tongyang*, i.e., the copper coins issued by Yunnan province," Luan, ibid., 134. He cites the *Xikang Jingji Jikan* from 1940.

[693] For more see Lin, ibid., Relyea, "Gazing at the Tibetan Plateau."

[694] I follow Wolfgang Bertsch in his use of the term "bank note" to describe the *zangbi juan* (Ch. 藏币卷) instead of "currency coupon" or other possible translations. This however, was not the first bank note issued in Kham. As early as 1921, the *Chuanbian zhenshou* 川边镇守 made Chen Xialing conscript local militias and in the process they

The Bank of Xikang opened in Dartsedo, the capital of Xikang Province, on August 1st 1937 with a capital of 500,000 yuan.[695] It soon opened up branches in Ya'an, Xichang, Kardze, Litang, and Tianquan and later opened up offices in Chengdu, Chongqing, Kunming, and Leshan. In addition to keeping stores of foreign exchange, the bank also acted as an agent for public treasury, issued Tibetan currency bonds and local financial bonds to aid commerce.[696] The Tibetan bank notes issued by the Bank of Xikang during WWII were approved by the Ministry of Finance of the National Government.[697] They were printed in Chinese and Tibetan languages and after the implementation of the national currency in 1935, it was the only bank note issued by a provincial-level bank. These notes came in the denominations of a half yuan, 1 yuan, and 5 yuan. These circulated alongside the national currency for nine years from 1939 until August 19, 1948, enough time to establish market exchange rates, and mainly circulated east of Dartsedo (in Luding and Ya'an) but also saw a small amount of circulation in the more Tibetan dominated areas of Kardze, Batang, Litang.[698]

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issued 300,000 Tibetan currency coupons in Dartsedo. These were equivalent to 120,000 yuan of zangyang and was the first official banknote issued in Kham. The coupons were 1 yuan each, which was 1 yuan against the Sichuan zangyang. Wang, ibid., 298. Note that these bank notes were not directly mentioned in the Chen Ho communications.

[695] It was established in August 1936 by the Xikang Provincial Committee (xikang jian sheng weiyuanhui 西康建省委员会), approved by the Ministry of Finance in March 1937. Wang Chengzhi, ibid., 297.

[696] The bank of Xikang was taken over by the Communist government on March 26th 1950. Wang Chengzhi, ibid., 297.

[697] More research is required here as the Xikang Bank may have been owned by the provincial government and not necessarily the nationalist government. Additionally, there is another *Wenshi Ziliao* article about the Bank of China in Dartsedo. Subsidiary paper currencies (*fubi*) were printed very occasionally, for copper and silver currencies, after the institution of the fabi. This was particularly true in places where the Nationalist Government was particularly weak. In some ways this was a holdover from the imperial system where printing private bank notes was commonplace. For more information see Matt Lowenstein's upcoming dissertation.

[698] Wang, ibid., 312. Tibetan bank notes were the only formally approved by the central government during the Anti-Japanese War and issued by local banks. They were printed in minority languages and were used in Xikang Province. They were circulated with legal currency for 9 years. The issuance and circulation of Tibetan bank notes provided a historical attempt and reference for the unification of the currency system in the Kangzang region from coinage to banknotes.

Officially, the plan was to "modify Xikang's local finance, develop the economy, promote the use of fiat currency, and unify the monetary policy." This plan was to be carried out through the printing of local paper currency, specifically bank notes, printed by the Xikang Provincial Bank. Those depositing Tibetan *zangyang* (silver currency) would receive the bank notes (which could further be exchanged for national currency) allowing the bank to recover the Tibetan silver coins in circulation.[699] With this plan in mind, the Ministry of Finance approved the issuance of 2 million bank notes by the Bank of Xikang in July 1938.[700]

While the official purpose of the bank notes was to establish a testing ground for fiat currency in the area, it had the unofficial intent to not only draw out Tibetan coins from circulation, thereby making more room for the Chinese currency, but more importantly to draw in Tibetan silver to bolster the Chinese stores of silver. This was an especially urgent enterprise considering the financial instability in China brought on by the lack of silver reserves and an unpegged currency. Collecting silver was therefore of national state interest, not to mention that the bank itself stood to gain income from holding silver instead of a rapidly devaluing currency such as the *fabi*. Bringing it back to Kham however, it is possible to rethink Dargye Monastery's "bank notes", which were being printed just two years after the start of the Xikang bank note circulation, within this context of increased monetization and the development of emerging monetary markets.

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[699] 调整西康地方金融，发展经济及推行法币、统一币政.

[700] Wang Chengzhi, ibid., 299.

The Material Culture of Territorial Currencies

As Eric Helleiner explains in his influential work on currency, national or territorial currencies had the potential to cultivate nationality and that the everyday use of these currencies carried with it symbolic messages. The incorporation of Buddhist imagery or historical landmarks could engender a sense of Chinese national belonging among the Tibetans as well and prompt a sense of trust in the Chinese banking institutions.[701]

The common feature among all three denominations of the Tibetan bank notes are the words "Bank of Xikang Province" (Ch. 西康省银行) which are printed in Chinese from right to left above the middle.

[701] Eric Helleiner, "Historicizing territorial currencies: monetary space and the nation-state in North America," *Political Geography* 18 (1999) 309–339.

Fig 5.2 A half-rupee note, obverse and reverse.[702]

The half yuan note, pictured above is a reddish pink in color printed in Chengdu on what is likely Sichuan-produced paper and is 110 by 62mm in size. The cartouche on the left side of the obverse (front) shows a view of Dartsedo with a monastery in the foreground (likely Nanwu Monastery in the southern areas of Dartsedo- Ch. 南无寺). The Tibetan inscription on the reverse (back) of the note, from top to bottom is as follows: 1. *Khams gzhung zhing chen gyi dngul mdzod khang* (Bank of Kham Province). 2. *Sgor mo phyed* ("half rupee": this inscription is also placed in the upper right and lower left corners on both sides of the note). 3. *Krung yang tshas grang pu bka' gnang* (by order of the *Zhongyang Cai Zheng bu*, the China Central Ministry of Finance). The choice of Tibetan translation is notable. First, the use of the word "sgor mo" was a historical and contemporary currency unit marker, similar to yuan (Ch. 元) in Chinese. Wang Chengzhi notes that "sgor mo" is a denomination used to describe the 20th century silver coinage, specifically the Indian rupee, and if so, then it is clearly a Kham denomination rather

[702] "Half Rupee Note of the Provincial Bank of Xikang," Bertsch, *The Paper Currency of Tibet*, 179-180.

than a Central Tibetan monetary denomination such as *srang* or *tamka*.[703] Second, there is a transliteration of the Chinese "*zhongyang cai zheng bu*" (Ch. 中央財政部) or the China Central Ministry of Finance" as literally "by the order of" (Tib. *bka' gnang*) and then the transliteration "*Krung yang tshas grang pu*" which, having no meaning beyond the sound, would have meant nothing to a non-Chinese speaking Khampa. Third, the Tibetan inscription uses the term "Kham Province" (*khams gzhung*) instead of a transliteration of Xikang, possibly making a Tibetan person from Kham feel more at ease with the ambiguous meaning without introducing an alien term into Tibetan like "Xikang". Overall, the choices of translation are not consistent but unsurprising given the relative novelty of paper currency and Xikang province.

The four lines of Chinese script on the obverse (front) are as follows: 1. *Xikang sheng yin hang* (Ch.西康省銀行) (Bank of Xikang Province). 2. *Zhong Hua Min guo ershi ba nian yin* (Ch. 中華民國二十八年印) (Printed in the 28th year of the Chinese Republic aka 1939). 3. *Cai zheng bu he zhun* (Ch. 財政部核准) (Authorized by the minister of Finance). 4. *Cai zheng bu cheng du yin shua shui yin* (Ch. 財政部成都印刷水印) (printed by the Chengdu Printing Press of the Finance Ministry). Next to the large Chinese characters in the center of the cartouche to the right, which indicate the denomination "half yuan" (Ch. 半圓), two smaller characters can be read as *zang bi* (Ch. 藏幣), Tibetan money. The denomination is also inscribed in Chinese in the upper left and lower right corner of the reverse and the syllables *zang bi* appear on either side of the central cartouche.[704]

[703] "I presume that the domination "yuan" and "sgor mo" as it appears on the three notes issued by the Provincial Bank of Xikang is a reference to the early Sichuan rupees which were of reasonably good silver content." Wang Chengzhi, ibid., 303.

[704] For more, see Bertsch, ibid.; and Wang Chengzhi, ibid.

Fig 5.3 The one rupee note, obverse and reverse

The one yuan note was blue and green in color and 125x68mm in size (slightly larger than the half yuan note). The obverse (front) of the bank note had an image of the Potala Palace in Lhasa, indicative of the Nationalist government's perceived (or aspiring) sovereignty over Central Tibet. This would have been a readily understood image by the local Khampa Tibetans and was also perhaps a means to convince them of the bank's trustworthiness. The Tibetan inscriptions on the one yuan note were identical to those on the half rupee note, apart from the

denomination of the note which was "*sgor mo gcig*" or one yuan. The same applied to the Chinese legends.[705]

Fig 5.4 The five rupee note, obverse and reverse

The five yuan bank note was light brown and red and is 143x73mm in size. The obverse (front) of the note displays a Buddhist stupa (Tib. mchod rten) with Xilatu Temple in the background.[706] The Tibetan and Chinese legends were identical to the others, apart from the

[705] Bertsch, ibid., 181-182.

[706] I have been unable to identify this temple conclusively.

denomination of "sgor mo lnga" five yuan/dollars inscribed three times in obverse and twice on reverse.[707]

The Tibetan Bank Notes in Circulation: their Value and Impact

Apart from slowly introducing paper currencies to the Kham economy, the bank notes gave the provincial government a type of seigniorage benefit and allowed it to draw in silver currencies for their own reserves. Given the financially precarious state of the newly established Xikang provincial bank (and likely the Xikang government), this was potentially a very effective means of financing its own expenditures. In the process of issuing the bank notes the provincial government released an "Amendment to the Measures for the Issuance of Tibetan Bank Notes in Xikang Province" (Ch. 西康省发行藏币券办法修正案), which offers a better understanding of the intent and function of the bank notes:[708]

> *Number One:* "The total issuance of Tibetan bank notes is 2 million yuan. Every 1 yuan Tibetan bank notes is discounted to 0.448 yuan of national currency, which is a total of 896,000 yuan of national currency. The basis for this conversion is: 1 yuan of Sichuan *zangyang* [Tibetan silver coins] can be exchanged for 1 yuan of Tibetan bank notes, and 1 silver yuan [very likely the dayang 大洋 coin,] can be exchanged for 1 yuan of national currency."[709]

[707] Ibid., 184.

[708] The "Amendment to the Measures for the Issuance of Tibetan Bank Notes in Xikang Province" (Ch. *xikang sheng faxing zangbi juan banfa xiu zheng an* 西康省发行藏币券办法修正案) from Wang Chengzhi, ibid., 301.

[709] Wang Chengzhi, ibid., 301.

What we see here is the difficulty of multiple silver coins being in circulation. Every yuan of the Tibetan bank notes has a value that was officially set at slightly below half a yuan of national currency. And we know that one yuan of the Tibetan silver coin (zangyang) could be exchanged for one yuan of Tibetan bank notes while the other silver coin (very likely the dayang coin) could be exchanged for one yuan of national currency. This simply implies that the Tibetan silver coin is valued at almost half of the other, likely dayang, silver coin. Despite the official directive, the Tibetan bank notes were issued three times in slightly different amounts: the first issue was of 800,000 yuan in August 1939, the second 300,000 yuan in January 1940, and the third 1 million yuan in August 1940.[710] This was 100,000 yuan more than the officially stated amount, giving the bank an off-book profit of roughly 50,000 yuan in silver.[711] Also, despite the official conversion being one bank note to .448 yuan of national currency, in practice one yuan of Tibetan silver currency (*zangbi*, or *zangyang*) was exchanged for 5 *jiao* (Ch. 角) of national currency (one yuan equals ten *jiao*); and one yuan of Tibetan bank notes could also be exchanged for one yuan of Tibetan silver currency or five *jiao* of national currency.[712] This being greater than the official rate of .448 actually indicated an appreciation of the bank note in terms of the national currency. Theoretically, this would be better for the Tibetans going to exchange their

[710] And the amounts of each denomination are the following: "Amendment to the Measures for the Issuance of Tibetan Bank Notes in Xikang Province"西康省发行藏币券办法修正案 Number Five: "The denominations of Tibetan currency coupons are 3 types: the half yuan (600,000), 1 yuan (700,000), and 5 yuan (200,000)." Wang Chengzhi, ibid., 301.

[711] Ibid., 304.

[712] Wang makes this point: "The one yuan note was equivalent to 4 Jiao, 4 Fen and 8 Li of the Fa-bi yuan (fa-bi = legal currency), hence its value was less than half when compared to the yuan notes which were used in the rest of China (Wu Chouzhong and Wu Zhongying, 1995, p. 40). Since the Fa-bi yuan (as paper currency unit) had a lower value than the silver yuan in Kangding, one can calculate that the one yuan notes of the Provincial Bank were only worth one third of a silver yuan, i.e. about the same as the early Sichuan rupees." Ibid., 305.

bank notes for national currency (except for the obvious caveat that the national currency had terrible inflation rates).[713] In a follow up to the notice of the official rate of .448, Liu Wenhui, the Governor of Xikang Province, issued a notification that, "one yuan of the Tibetan *zangyang* can be exchanged for 5 jiao of national currency; and one yuan of the Tibetan bank notes should be exercised at this price parity" making it clear that a one yuan of the Tibetan bank note would be more practically exchanged for half a yuan of the national currency. And according to Wang, the bank's 1940 balance sheet reflected that they were exchanged at this rate despite the official conversion rate.[714]

> *Number Two:* "The use period of Tibetan bank notes is set at 3 years, and after being issued, they will circulate alongside legal currency. After the expiration of their term, the bank notes will be recovered and destroyed by the Bank of Xikang [these banknotes had a three-year maturity period, after which they would be recovered]."[715]

Presumably to encourage the exchange of silver coins for bank notes and national currency (or with concern of the bank notes physical deterioration or even through taxes), these bank notes were officially expected to be recovered. And while the Tibetan bank notes were set to expire in 1943, it was not until 1944 that the Xikang Provincial Bank issued a recovery notice,

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[713] However, I do not know what the transaction rates or costs would have been and if that would have subsumed the 10% appreciation of the bank notes.

[714] Ibid., 304. Wang provides a great deal more information regarding the conversion rates between the Tibetan bank note and the fabi national currency, main point being that these exchange rates seemed to have generated a lot of revenue for the Bank of Xikang.

[715] Ibid., 308.

and their subsequent recovery was very limited. As of December 28, 1944, the bank only recovered 136,350.50 yuan in Tibetan bank notes, with a recovery rate of only 6.49%.[716]

> *Number Three*: "The reserve for the issuance of Tibetan bank notes is: 60% of cash reserve to cover the current possession of foreign deposits; 40% of the guarantee reserve, to be filled with agricultural products, shall be fully deposited with the central bank or a bank designated by the central bank for safekeeping [guaranteed by agricultural products, like grain]. Each time a set[?] is issued, it is limited to 1 million yuan [每次领用券以100万元为限]. The reserve for the first note can be deposited during the second note collection [其第一次领 用券之准备金，得于第二次领券时缴存]."[717]

Essentially, issuing bank notes requires a certain percentage of reserve (in silver usually but in this case grain or agricultural products) to be held by the issuing bank. This allows the bank to earn revenue or use some of the deposits for investments.[718] For the second issuance of the bank notes, they actually supplemented the bank note backing by 13 temporary receipts of the Kham Tibet Tea Company, Ltd. (each 20,000 yuan) with a total share capital of 260,000 yuan (保证准备则以康藏茶业股份公司临时股款收 据13张（每张2万元）共计股本26万元

[716] Ibid., 308.

[717] Ibid., 301.

[718] On the grounds that it would not be able to collect all the Tibetan *zangyang* for a while, the Bank of Xikang allowed the agricultural reserve to be low. This low reserve was also related to the scarcity of goods during WWII and to the increased populations in Xikang province after the takeover of the eastern seaboard. Because of this scarcity they decided to prepare 60% cash reserves and 40% in securities as the reserve backing these bank notes (from what I understand, the securities took the form of 300,000 yuan and the local financial bonds from Xikang Province). Later, Xikang local financial public debt of 300,000 yuan in the Republic of China was used to offset the above receipts (后来，又以 30 万元民国 廿九年西康省地方金融公债抵回上述股款收据). The issue of reserves is fairly confusing and just to use as a comparison, from 1945 to 1949 the Bank of Xikang held only 25% reserve for their circulation of fabi national currency. Ibid., 306.

充之), and later would include national currency in the reserves as well. Overall this established a rather eclectic array of goods to act as reserves, which could have indicated war-time scarcity of silver and the creative ways to combat this issue.

Regardless of the Chinese state's or Xikang Provincial Bank's intentions, these notes did not have the intended effect of transitioning the Kham economy to a fiat-based currency system, nor did it unify the market under the control of the Chinese state and banks. The Tibetan *zangyang* not only continued to circulate but even continued to be minted until 1942. From 1939 to the end of 1942, 2.8 to 3.4 million yuan Tibetan silver coins (Ch. *zangyang*) were minted at the Dartsedo Mint.[719] This is the main piece of evidence for Wang Chengzhi to conclude that the purpose behind printing the Tibetan bank notes was to acquire Tibetan silver coins for the bank and state's own use.[720] This is highly convincing especially considering the rapid depreciation of the Chinese national currency beginning in the early 1940s. The Tibetan silver coins were exchanged for Tibetan bank notes and the national currency, and those holding the national currency suffered heavy losses.

On the one hand, these bank notes, a form of paper currency, facilitated trade and business, supporting companies such as the Pangdatsangs and Chen Ho; on the other hand, the

[719] "On the one hand, the Xikang Provincial Government issued a notice in 1939, strictly ordering those who held the Sichuan Tibetan zangyang to "conceal, or manipulate, discriminate against, in addition to confiscating Tibetan currency and destroying the currency, For the crime of disorderly finances, never allow leniency." Forcibly raided the Tibetan zangyang in people's hands by administrative means. However, at the same time, the Kangding Mint, which was directly under the jurisdiction of the Finance Department of Xikang Province, was still casting the Sichuan-Tibet zangyang until the end of 1942. From 1939 to the end of 1942, the factory minted 2.8 to 3.4 million yuan of Tibetan zangyang." Ibid., 310.

[720] Another rationale by the Provincial governor Liu Wenhui was that they didn't have enough materials for minting coins. But this was untrue. Liu Wenhui issued the "Xikang Provincial Government's Issuance of Tibetan Banknotes" (Ch. 西康省政府发行藏币券布告). Wang further draws attention to the corrupt nature of the Xikang Provincial Bank arguing that, "when the bank was established, it claimed to have a capital of 500,000 yuan when in fact, it did not have even 1 yuan. It was actually a local government-run short bank (Ch. 空头银行)…In the short period of three years from 1939 when Tibetan currency bonds were issued to the end of 1941, according to public figures, the bank made a profit of 1,327,266.30 yuan." Ibid., 310.

Xikang Provincial Bank was relatively unregulated and used the fluctuating price of currency to make profits.[721] According to Wang, "the bank's funds for the acquisition of fur, medicinal materials, gold, salt, and tea amounted to 3.87 million yuan in 1941," and with a Chamber of Commerce[722] located in Dartsedo these institutions were in the right location to reap a lot of profits from commerce taxes.[723] As we saw above in the Chen Ho communications about costs and difficulties trading through Kham, these profits had the potential to be huge.[724] To be sure, the Chinese state was attempting to usher in a new era of monetary unity and despite the possible benefits to Tibetan merchants this was political as well. From the eyes of the state, currency therefore became part of the strategy to incorporate eastern Tibet into the larger Chinese republic. When comparing the Dargye Monastery notes and the Xikang Tibetan bank notes, the monastery example appears to be rooted in the local economic and political conditions while Xikang bank notes appear to be an imposition from an external power attempting to take over the region. Both introduced paper money and in some ways represent two separate political entities negotiating their place in the changing economic environment. Importantly, the Xikang Tibet bank note did not achieve its intended effect of creating of monetary revolution and economically incorporating Kham into China; that would not occur until consolidation of power by the Communist Party in the late 1950s.

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[721] Minor note that the revenue generated from these bank notes clearly helped support the functioning of the Bank of Xikang which in turn allowed it to support the economy and local finances.

[722] Lin, ibid., 59.

[723] For an in-depth discussion of Dartsedo's business environment see Booz, "Tea, Trade and Transport on the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands," specifically Chapter 6 "Dartsedo: Centre of the Tea Trade."

[724] "Due to the bank's illegal business order, in 1942, the Bank of Xikang set up a special "Likang Commercial Bank" special department. At the end of the year, it made a profit of 4.08 million yuan. In addition to the 2.5 million yuan reserved for the bank's funds, it was submitted to the Xikang Bank as gain. Therefore, the bank's capital increased to 3.5 million yuan in 1943. It can be seen that after the issuance of Tibetan bank notes, the Bank of Xikang actually used the Tibetan bank notes and fiat currency to redeem the Sichuan zangyang while also using the sharp appreciation of the silver zangyang to engage in speculative profits." Wang Chengzhi, ibid., 310.

Conclusion: The Local and the Global

This chapter examined the new financial practices that came to the Tibetan plateau during the war and stayed thereafter. These practices, even if led by Chinese merchants and companies, had to rely on Tibetan actors in Tibet in order to navigate the Tibetan economic world. Through the experience of the Chen Ho Industrial Corporation and their dealings with the Pangdatsang merchant company, we gain a unique view into how new business organizations enabled cooperation between Tibetan, Chinese, and global actors.

The closing of the Burma road shifted the gaze of all concerned states to the wartime benefits integrating Tibet for logistics and economy. While both the British and the Chinese saw this as a competition for dominance over national sovereignty in the Himalayas, they recognized the inevitability of employing Tibetan institutions and actors in their dealings. The new flows of capital initiated by global wartime conditions, in other words, created new avenues for Tibetan merchants and new opportunities for establishing transnational business networks. An important component of this transformation was the establishment of transnational Chinese banks that expanded across China, Southeast Asia, and India. And one immediate outcome was the emergence of more unified and formal monetary markets that diverged from earlier, highly localized monetary systems.

The Xikang Provincial Bank and its particular use of bank notes exemplifies the emerging monetary market, for primary function of bank notes was to erase the older competing currencies.

With the forging of this new monetary system also came new ways to determine equivalence between Tibetan and Chinese economies. The 1940s thus witnessed a gradual

convergence of economic values mediated not only by financial infrastructures governed by the Chinese, but also and more importantly by the Tibetan institutions and actors themselves. The incommensurability between the two systems, which I have explored in the first two chapters, was by then leaving its place to a newly emergent economic regime that paved the way for Tibet's incorporation into both the global and the Chinese economies. And that regime, with all its transnational complexity, remained there long after the war ended.

Epilogue:

Tibet in the People's Republic of China

In 1949, the Communist Party and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) took control of China's eastern seaboard, pushing back the Nationalist to Taiwan and consolidating power in the mainland. This had immediate consequences for businesses, international and regional alike. Those operating on the ground had to immediately reevaluate their political ties, and if they were not already torn between the two sides, they became so by the end of 1949. As the Communists approached the Tibetan Plateau in 1950, they either forcefully converted or rebranded financial and business operations formally run by the Nationalists while at the same time bringing an influx of PLA soldiers and cash in a scale never before seen on the plateau.[725]

What set apart the Communists from the Nationalists in their consolidation of control in Tibet was military and financial power. The image which brings all this to light, for either an "invasion" or a "liberation," was the construction of the first major highway on the Tibetan Plateau. Unlike the bridge building project in Kardze at the beginning of the 1930s, this 1950s project was a monumental affair. Begun in earnest after the takeover of Chamdo (home of the Pangdatsangs) in May 1951, the Kardze to Chamdo section was complete one year later.[726] The highway construction project brought with it an incredible influx of people, goods, and silver coins; and Tibetan monasteries, merchants, made a fortune supplying yaks, fuel, food, and

[725] In 1950, some branches of the Bank of China joined the bank headquarters in Beijing while others remained with the Nationalists in Taiwan. Calcutta was one of the branches to transfer over to Beijing and remained the most significant foreign based branch for commerce with Tibet. Having previously made inroads into Kham and Northeastern India (see Chapter 5), the CCP established the first branch of the People's Bank of China in Lhasa on February 22nd 1952. Bank branches were opened throughout Central Tibet in Gyantse, Shigatse, Chamdo, Nachu, Gyantse, Dengqen in Chamdo Prefecture, Bomi in Nyingchi Prefecture, Yadong County in Shigatse, and Gartok. Caidan, ibid., 60-61.

[726] Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet Vol. 2*, 414.

construction materials to the Tibetan and Chinese PLA soldiers.[727] This fortune came in the form of newly minted silver coins, a recast of the early 20th century's Yuan Shikai silver dollar, as Tibet, which was still on a silver and tea standard, would not accept any Chinese paper or fiat currencies.[728] Therefore, when the PLA soldiers arrived in Central Tibet in 1951, they brought with them hundreds of yaks carrying boxes of silver coins so that they could engage directly in the Tibetan currency system.[729] As much a symbolic affair as a feat of human strength (and death), this highway not only shifted the labor regimes but reoriented the direction of Tibetan trade from India and the world to China, and China alone.

Initially, the Communists arrival in Tibet was good for business. One Ladaki merchant living in Lhasa in the early 1950s recounts:

> [The PLA's] attitude remained proper: they were polite, and scrupulously paid merchants for what they bought. My uncles did excellent business with them in their shop…A certain euphoria spread through quite a few circles in Lhasa…My relatives congratulated themselves because their business had never been so lively and they pursued fruitful transactions with the Chinese. One of them brought in two lakhs (200,000 rupees), a considerable sum for the Tibetan market. This was advanced to them for the import of

[727] Throughout the 1950s, the PLA depended on the cooperation (largely through monetary payments) of the Tibetan government and elites from aristocrats, chieftains, to kings to mobilize labor. Even after 1954, when most of the major road projects had been finished, they still made use of the ulak system to ease the strain on the motor transportation system and especially when traveling into the more rural areas. Shakya 134 Although the PLA was strictly forbidden from appropriating the tax system and ulak labor of the Tibetan, it appears that they did pay aristocrats to give them the access to ulak labor, and did so often. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet Vol. 2*, 182.

[728] "Between 1951 and 1959 the Yuan Shikai dollar which was restruck in Chengdu for exclusive use in Tibet, gained a certain popularity among Tibetans owing to its high silver content. Between 1953 and 1954 the last coins were struck under Tibetan authority and in 1959 the Tibetan government issued the last banknotes of 100 Srang." Bertsch, *The Paper Currency of Tibet*, 109.

[729] Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet Vol. 2,* 248.

medicines and construction supplies. Their Chinese partners paid them punctually leaving them with a large profit.[730]

In this early coexistence, the state-run entities including People's Union Stores (*renmin lianhe shangdian* 人民联合商店) accounted for roughly 40% of the overall business, while private business reportedly accounted for nearly 60%.[731] The benefits were even greater however for those Tibetan businessmen who had risen to prominence over the course of the 1930s and 40s. For the Pangdatsang brothers, the arrival of the Communists likely brought high levels of trepidation, yet at least the following few years were quite good for the brothers' political status and business enterprise. While Rapga (who had been a Guomindang agent) soon left for India never to return, Yampel and Tobgye stayed and worked within this new uncertain world, Yampel in Lhasa, and Tobgye in Kham.[732] Throughout the 1950s both brothers would be labeled by the Tibetan Government as Communist sympathizers, but their activities were no different from their previous decades of playing various political parties off one another.

In Lhasa, in 1952, Yampel was appointed as the General Office of Commerce and Head of Yadong Business in Kalimpong in India (*yindu klunbao shangwu zongban qian yadong shangwu zongguan* 印度噶伦堡商务总办兼亚东商务总管), where he was in charge of buying gasoline from India to supply the PLA troops in Tibet. In 1953, he served as the head of the Tibet Industrial and Commercial Delegation and attended the nation-wide meetings of the National Federation of Industry and Commerce (*xizang gongshang daibiaotuan tuanzhang chuxi*

[730] Radhu, ibid., 248-249.

[731] Trading companies accounted for 30.11%, People's Union Stores accounted for 11.23%, private businesses Accounted for 58.66%. Zongzhen, ibid., 112.

[732] For a detailed account of Rapga's life after 1949, see Carole McGrananhan, "In Rapga's Library: the Texts and Times of a Rebel Tibetan Intellectual," in *Cahiers d'Extreme-Asie, Vol. 15, Conception et Ciculation des textes Tibetain* (2005): 253-274.

quanguo gongshang lianhehui 西藏工商代表团团长出席全国工商联合会). Whereas in the summer of 1954, he resigned from these two positions and was appointed by the Autonomous Region Preparatory Committee as a commercial agent in Kalimpong.[733]

In Kham, Tobgye balanced his involvement with the new Communist power and his allegiance to protecting local interests in Kham. Publicly, he worked alongside the Chinese leaders in eastern Tibet as the Deputy Director of the Chamdo Liberation Committee (*changduo jiefang weiyuanhui fuzhuren zhiwu* 昌都解放委员会副主任职务), and played a central role in trade relations as chairman of the new, state-backed, trading companies.[734] These companies were founded on the same body of managers (mostly local Kham political figures and businessmen) as the Kham Tibet Trading Company and relied on the same Tibetan elite network as the Nationalists.[735] These would be one of the many "companies" designed to meet the needs of the Communist Party in Tibet. At the same time however, Tobgye was secretly meeting with Kham resistance leaders in the area and kept his ties to the old Nationalist networks.[736]

Similar to Tobgye in Kham, Dargye Monastery's trade also continued to flourish for a short while. The Communists issued extensive canvasing of all the major monasteries in Kham which were conducted throughout the early 1950s, and it is through these surveys that we know roughly the extent of Dargye Monastery's economic power. There were roughly 170 monasteries conducting trade during the early 1950s, and Dargye Monastery was in the top three.[737] These

[733] Wala, ibid., 135-136.

[734] Wala, ibid., 135.

[735] Zongzhen, 111.

[736] McGranahan, "Tobgyal Pangdatsang." *Treasury of Lives,* https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Tobgyal-Pangdatsang/13522 (accessed on May 2020).

[737] *Ganzi Zhou Zhi*, 339.

surveys, the *Shehui Lishi Diaocha* (Investigations into History and Culture) were part of a policy adopted in 1950 by the Central Committee of the Communist Party and Chairman Mao, and put into effect upon the People's Liberation Army's arrival in Tibet.[738] Overall, these documents represent a state-led academic endeavor conducted by and edited by a large variety of academic and state actors and reflected the Communists concern over their economic and political strength. Politically, various monasteries and lamas were directly aiding and hosting Communist leaders, some voluntarily and others under duress.[739] Dargye Monastery, like the Pangdatsang business (now tied up more than ever in the broiling political and military body of the Communist presence) nominally benefited from the increased presence and cash flow of the Communist Party in Kham and Tibet. In this climate, Kham continued to be the political, economic, and military gateway between China and Tibet.

The early years of the Communists' financial stability began to wane in the mid 1950s as the negative effects of the Five-Year Plan (1953-1957) started to be felt, as they set off a chain of decreased spending. The initial effects were felt in 1955 but even more so in 1957. The salaries of those running the economic development projects in Central Tibet were cut and the PLA was made to operate on a lower budget. Shakya explains that by 1955 the Chinese started to cut salaries and people were encouraged to work for free for the "motherland".[740] Also, once the roads were built, the CCP started to highly regulate traffic and trade between China and India, effectively cutting off commerce for those merchants who had been making fortunes during the

[738] Furthermore, the initiatives to investigate Tibetans preceded the 1956 larger initiative to conduct surveys of all minorities. All of these reports were later re-edited and published after the Cultural Revolution, after 1979. Chie, ibid., 62.

[739] For example, Labrang Monastery as well as Beri Monastery (from the Dargye Beri conflict). Personal conversation, September 2nd, 2020.

[740] Shakya, ibid., 121.

first half of the 1950s.[741] The Tibet Work Conference, held in Beijing on March 5th 1957, signaled the end of loose spending in Tibet. Among the points of the meeting were how to deal with the rising inflation in Tibet and a general tightening of fiscal expenditures which included cutting the funding to the Tibetan government.[742]

Furthermore, starting in 1956, Kham went to war with the Communist forces. The resistance army, the Chushi Gangdruk (Tib. *chu bzhi sgang drug*), represented the combined forces of many Tibetan Khampa elites and monasteries, including Dargye Monastery, and Kham became, yet again, the site of intense warfare as it did in the early 1930s. In the process, tens of thousands, of Khampas fled to Lhasa and India, while many of Dargye Monastery's lamas and monks would make their way to India by the end of the 1960s. The Pangdatsang brothers did not fare any better, while Rapga would continue the Tibetan resistance from his base in India, Tobgye remained in Kham, later being placed under house arrest in Lhasa. Yampel eventually returned to China and died in Lhasa with Tobgye during the Cultural Revolution.

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From *ulak* labor to monetary practices to monastic powers, this dissertation demonstrated the main institutions of Tibetan economic practices. These institutions were tightly tied to one another. *Ulak* was central in the making of monetary regimes; and it was also critical to Dargye Monastery's monastic network and its own engagement in the monetary market—as will be recalled, the Dargye Monastery printed its own paper currency for local circulation. As I have further demonstrated, these Tibetan economic institutions all came together in the rise of the Pangdatsang business enterprise. Politically, militarily, and economically powerful, this family

[741] For more, see Harris, ibid.

[742] Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet Vol. 3: The Storm Clouds Descend, 1955-1957* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014) 446-447.

negotiated its relationship with states, parties, and local powers to leverage its position along the trans-Tibet trade route. All of these interconnected yet separate threads allow us the opportunity to understand the functioning of the Tibetan economy from the perspective of the Tibetans themselves.

Kham, in the Sino-Tibetan borderlands, provides us with the best possible vantage point to understand the nature of the Sino-Tibetan interface. Kham was and continues to be a liminal space where multiple states engaged in state-building attempts, generating constant conflicts and negotiations of authority between the Chinese and Tibetan sides. A study of Kham as an economic space illuminates the processes by which Kham and Tibet expressed their own economic power and forged their own center of economic practice. Within the greater history of borderlands, Kham was not certainly not alone, and future economic histories of borderlands will enrich our understanding of the interface between indigenous institutions and state actors. What deserves attention, I believe, is the practice of *translation* that inevitably took place in this liminal zone, for it was through those practices of translation that economies in the borderlands were understood and transformed. And it is through a similar process of translation that we bring that liminal zone to our own scholarly world.

The economic and political cooperation between the Chinese forces and the Tibetan institutions and actors that this dissertation has explored from the 1910s onward came to a temporary halt in the 1950s. But despite the horrific effects of the 1960s and 70s, the Tibetan economic institutions and actors described throughout this dissertation continued to not only exist, but even began to thrive after the lifting of restrictions in the 1980s. The monasteries and elites are still negotiating their relationship with China and now the world.

While conducting my field work in Kham from 2013 to 2018, I paid attention to how Kham has transformed over the last half century. Even as part of the PRC, Kham is still home to powerful economic institutions and liminal economic practices. The reverberations of a previous economic order can still be witnessed in the socio-economic activities and the political positions of monasteries and the old Tibetan elite. Monasteries like Kardze Monastery and Dargye Monastery remain some of the main centers of wealth in the Kardze region. The Khangsar name (from the Khangsar Tusi) is still used. On these "fringes" of the People's Republic of China one can find not only remnants but continuous existence of these institutions and practices. Monasteries in the Tibetan areas of today's PRC are still powerful religious and economic centers. Much of the ethnic rights activism, as well as nonpolitical activism emanates from many of the same monasteries that were powerful during the pre-1959 period. The Chinese government still has to contend with the power and authority of monasteries in Tibet. Monasteries continue to be connected to transnational religious, political, and economic networks, emphasized in large part by the Tibetan community in exile and the late 20th century increased interest in Tibetan Buddhism from non-Tibetans (especially Westerners and Chinese). Overall, the question of the status of Tibetan monasteries still looms large in the Tibetan regions of China today, though there is nothing like the autonomy seen in the case of Dargye Monastery in the early 20th century.

New economic power, emanating from Beijing, takes on many new forms from state investment in local construction projects to Buddhist patrons hailing from China's eastern seaboard, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.[743] As part of a reemergence of the imperial patron-priest relationship and the emergence of the tourism industry, we are witnessing the commodification

[743] For more, see Dan Smyer Yu, *The Spread of Tibetan Buddhism in China: Charisma, Money, Enlightenment* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

of Tibetan culture along with other ethnic minority cultures. Tibetan actors, however, have adapted and work with the new economic conditions. For example, monasteries have opened hotels, bookstores, and restaurants while the main commercial centers and the major towns in Kham all center around large, historically and economically powerful, monasteries. Monasteries are still lending money to local people and the form of their bureaucracy remains largely the same. Many powerful Tibetan families such as the Khangsars maintained their local power in the Kardze region while decedents of the Pangdatsang brothers still hold government positions in Chamdo. While the trade has shifted from tea and wool to tourism and construction, Tibetan monasteries and merchants still find fruitful connections between monasteries and the government. One could even argue that their relationships are closer than ever, mutually reinforcing the presence of the Chinese which, despite the Tibetan institutional power, is the overarching presence turning Kham into a liminal zone within the PRC and not one between China, Tibet, and the world. The power of Tibetan economic institutions is still a relevant question today, for they continue to set the stage for the incorporation of Tibet into China in the 21st century.

Appendix

夷稟

鄧旅長大人鈞 前今有瞻化縣属 朱倭鄉保正 及民衆等為呈

The people and the baozheng of Zhuwo Village[744] of Zhanhua county (Nyagrong) presently request of you, Deng Lvzhang Great Man (Rinpoche in Tibetan)

具夷禀懇邀查免台站 烏拉事

竊因我们朱倭人民無地派支 梭租台站烏拉實 有不公因 梭租台站 合通消支日三處 係 是在他們自已應支地界所有, 我們 朱倭娃 應支地界

This barbarian's petition/report earnestly solicit to investigate/examine (the affairs relating to) the exemption (or alleviation, not sure how much of a legal issue this is in reality, relieve us from this burden) from station-wula duties. Our reason is that we Zhuwo people don't have our own land (wu di?) and were dispatched to the Suozu Station to do wula (on behalf of) these three areas, Suozu (station), Tongxiao, and Geri

不美 麻日 格日奪三處之 烏拉是本差向無絲毫違悞（should be wu with a yan speaking radical 誤) 自應各支各地烏拉 請免另支他地台站烏拉從前欽差 (from the Qing period?) 時代都是各支各地至於

(Also?) These three places (three chu, three areas) the areas where we Zhuwo people should be dispatched (zhiying) we not once neglected our duty/burden of wula (we each respond to our

[744] These villages are all referenced in the 四川藏傳佛教寺廟歷史調查, 12. I couldn't find direct references to any other place names mentioned in these documents so far.

share of duty), so please relieve us from doing the other people's wula and go back to (revert back to the Qing Dynasty system), the previous agreement where people were in charge of (?) their own areas.

米知事任内通消娃 與謝通事(interpreter Xie)[745]合 唐營長 二人前 花費銀錢每年暫由 通消邦(should be the regular bang 帮)脚費不支烏拉叫 我們朱倭娃暫支数年可給脚費與我們如此哄言已支数年未邦(帮)脚費至後

During the county clerk's (zhi shi) period in office, the "tong xiao wa" (the people of tong xiao), gave money to (bribed or paid their way out of it) Interpreter Xie and Battalion Commander Tang these two, every year the people of Tongxiao temporarily helped with the jiao fei (the jiaofei is probably the "foot tax" or the loads carried by people) (the people of Tongxiao basically have money so they can pay off the Chinese, and the scam the Zhuwo people into doing it for them) but we could not bear/sustain the wula duty.

王參謀長上任我們已呈請查核未久(久）在任,不日王参謀長已到鈩城後又呈請新任知事未得查實之先梭租台站之頭人定本已病故未便查辨不知新任知事呈报 旅部 否三月有餘朱奉批諭關係 台站重要所有, 通消娃数年脚費 未 給 分文並同梭租娃撤站不支懇請

The Tongxiao people asked us Zhuwo wa to temporarily dispatch the foot tax (jiaofei) on their behalf saying that they would do it for us (at some later point?) this way they deceived us, and we have been dispatching wula for them for years without stopping but have not received anything in return (so maybe they weren't paying them off?) so we submitted a request to Wang

[745] This is the only reference to a translator I found in the entire archive file.

Chief of Staff/Military Staff Officer to request an investigation, but he was not on the position for a long time, shortly after we submitted the petition he was reposted to Lucheng (Dartsedo/Dajianlu), the newly appointed zhishi has not yet investigated this matter, the previous chieftain (touren) of Suozu Taizhan (just the leader of Suozu?) passed away (the wording is unclear but its likely that he died, otherwise he would have been able to help them) we are now unsure if the newly appointed zhishi has submitted this report to the brigade headquarters (lv bu).We have not received your esteemed instructions. It concerns everything important about the taizhan and the tongxiaowa because for many years we have not been given a single cent and also the Suozu wa (who are also bad?) the Tong xiao wa had not given us a single cent of the "foot service" fee for many years so people (wa) left their post at the Taizhan and we cannot bear it, we earnestly send this petition…[746]

派員調查 台站 地界 應規(gui should be return, belong to gui, 归） 何方支應

現不得已只往來鈉(Luhuo or Dajianlu) 邀懇鈞座恩施憐恤我們朱倭娃 自古以來是漢方之恭順良民與他們各不相似並懇追 通消娃 所欠数年脚費再邀免支應

…to request that (you) appoint an official to investigate this matter of station land/distance boundaries and (make people?) comply with the rules, and investigate which areas should bear the burden (investigate who needs to be responsible for the wula of this station). Now we have no choice but to go back and forth to Lucheng to earnestly request to your honorable seat to grant us people of Zhuwo with kindness, pity, and sympathy. Since ancient times we have been good,

[746] Suozu originally had one station (taizhan) but that was abolished(?), and no longer need to dispatch for work? The Zhuwo wa are criticizing the Tongxiao wa, and they are also mad at the Suozu wa who were maybe ganging up with the Tongxiao wa, and stop helping the wula for Suozu Taizhan. These guys are not only owing the Zhuwo wa money but are also allowing the taizhan to fall into disarray.

respectful and submissive people of the Han areas (fang? To the Han side, they are definitely asking a Han official for help, and are differentiating themselves from the other villages) and we are nothing like them and ask that you earnestly/strictly chase after the Tongxiao wa and ask them for the foot tax that they have owed us for years and then we request to be released from this burden/duty of dispatching wula for other people/stations.

他人台站之烏拉如不分各支各站我們朱倭娃 弱小良有流離朱所之苦所邀 懇上項各情伏乞

If you don't separate the work out (make people do the work that is assigned to them) then we innocent and weak people of Zhuwo are running the risk of becoming homeless (become scattered and homeless) and of suffering greatly so we entreat you to help us.

旅長父母大人慈愛 照准所請飭遵並賜批諭交來差手代回為要則沾公德無暨矣

Requested to the Lvzhang who is like a mother and father to us, a great man of love and devotion,

瞻化縣属朱倭保正竹他合民眾等同呈

The Baozheng Zhuta of Zhuwo Village and the common people etc. (villagers) of Zhanhua County present this petition

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