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Article *in* Twentieth-Century China · October 2015

DOI: 10.1179/1521538515Z.00000000065

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Twentieth-Century China, 40. 3, 181–200, October 2015

CONCEIVING THE "WEST": EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY VISIONS OF KHAM

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As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the Tibetan plateau in the eyes of the gentry and officials of Sichuan Province was little more than a defensive fence bolting the back door of the empire. Although a stone stele erected in 1727 proclaimed much of the Kham region of ethnographic Tibet to be under Sichuan's jurisdiction, its invested rulers were administered by a "loose rein" policy, leaving its polities effectively independent of Chinese authority, the borderland and its inhabitants being of little interest to the Qing state. Yet the turn of the nineteenth century marked the reenvisioning of the once-barren borderland as a resource-rich terrain worthy of industrial development and inhabited by a population in need of cultural transformation. This article examines the convergence of local and regional dangers and opportunities with the influence of absolutist notions of two newly globalizing norms, territoriality and sovereignty, a convergence that fostered this new vision of Kham as integral to the burgeoning Chinese state and nation. The ramifications of this transformation in perceptions of the former imperial frontier as "West" would resonate across China's western interior throughout the twentieth century.

Keywords: *Qing China, borderlands, sovereignty, state-building, Tibet, Kham*

> If Tibet were the hair of Sichuan-Yunnan, then Kham would be its skin. If Tibet were the lips of Sichuan-Yunnan, then Kham would be its teeth, nay the throat of Sichuan-Yunnan. Moreover, if Tibet were the fence, is not Kham then the gateway? Though the government and gentry of Sichuan and Yunnan can ill afford to ignore Tibet, Kham must never for a moment be forgotten.
>
> 譬之藏爲川滇之毛，康爲川滇之皮，藏为川滇之唇，康为川滇之齒，且爲川滇之咽喉也。豈第藏爲藩籬而康爲門戶已哉。政府及川滇人士於藏固不可，忽於康念念不忘。
>
> Fu Songmu, 1912[1]

[1] Fu Songmu, *Xikang jiansheng ji* (Record of province building in Xikang) (1912; repr., Beijing: Zhongguo Zangxue chubanshe, 1988), 2a.

 DOI 10.1179/1521538515Z.00000000065

Stretching across an expansive series of high mountains and narrow river valleys west of Kangding (康定), known in the early twentieth century as Dajianlu (打箭爐; Dartsedo དར་རྩེ་མདོ་),[2] the Kham (ཁམས་) region of ethnographic Tibet is situated between central Tibet and Sichuan Province. In 1727, the region was divided by a stele erected at a pass high in the Ningjing Mountains (寧靜山), west of the Jinsha River (金沙江), which proclaimed the lands to its east belonged to Sichuan, those to its south belonged to Yunnan Province, and those to its west belonged to the "land of burning incense," ruled by the Dalai Lama.[3] Rather than incorporated into Sichuan's territorial bureaucracy, the diverse polities of Kham situated east of the stele were administered indirectly through a centuries-old frontier policy of imperial investiture. The entire Tibetan plateau was thus seen as little more than an inert, two-dimensional fence bolting the back door of the Chinese empire, and Kham was perceived as but a barren terrain traversed only by brick-tea caravans and imperial messengers, a conduit tethering Lhasa to Chengdu.[4] Yet local, regional, and global influences converged at the turn of the nineteenth century to transform these visions. The plateau came to be viewed as a region of bounty and opportunity, and Kham in particular as a resource-rich land inhabited by potential subjects and citizens. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Kham thus became a crucible for the late Qing state-building project and an essential part of the subsequent territorial claim to multiethnic statehood of the nascent Republic of China (ROC).

This article examines the internal, external, and intellectual stimuli effecting this transformation in visions of Kham among Sichuanese officials and gentry, as well as the evolution of a different vision among central government officials during both the Qing and early Republican eras. Absolutist notions of two newly globalizing norms—territoriality and sovereignty—induced an intellectual shift that both reacted to new local and regional pressures and established a new local reality. As Sichuanese reacted to Lhasa's renewed efforts to exert temporal authority in Kham, to perceptions of the extension of the "Great Game" between the Russian and British empires onto the Tibetan plateau, and to the European and American discovery of its presumed mineral bounty, they came to perceive Kham as a land integral to the province and thus worthy of active engagement and industrial development. This new reality not only transformed the relationship between the Qing and Republican Chinese governments and the rulers and resources of Kham but also initiated a parallel—though more gradual—shift in Sichuanese perceptions of the Khampas from uncivilized natives to be ignored to a people in need of cultural

[2] As this article focuses on the evolution of Chinese visions of Kham in the early twentieth century, the transliteration for regional locations current in Chinese writings of the time, such as Dajianlu, will subsequently appear in the text accompanied by reference to the location's contemporary name in both Chinese, when different, and Tibetan, romanized according to the "THL Simplified Phonetic Transcription of Standard Tibetan" by David Germano and Nicolas Tournadre, accessed March 11, 2015, http://www.thlib.org/reference/transliteration/.

[3] Chen Guanxun, ed., *Xizang zhi* (Annals of Xizang) (ca. 1700s; repr., Chengdu: Bashu Press, 1986), 125.

[4] Although today Kham encompasses parts of three provinces and the Tibet Autonomous Region, following Chinese conceptions in the early twentieth century and unless otherwise noted, in this paper Kham will refer to that part of the ethnographic region directly east and west of the stele and of greatest interest to Sichuanese officials. See note 58.

development. Sichuanese officials and gentry advocated policies intended to reinvigorate the border marked by the stele and thereby sever Lhasa's spiritual authority via local monasteries, thus binding the land more tightly to the province and freeing the Khampas to become Chinese. Inflected with territoriality and sovereignty, perceptions of Kham in the first two decades of the twentieth century shifted from a two-dimensional fence protecting Sichuan and the empire to a dynamic, three-dimensional territory with clearly defined, inviolable borders encircling resources and a population over which the Qing and later ROC governments claimed exclusive authority. This new vision of Kham presaged the reconceptualization throughout the twentieth century of China's inner borderlands as "West," the realization within successive Chinese governments that incorporating these frontier regions was integral to China's state and nation—and developing them was vital to its sovereignty.

Bolting the Back Door

Though it appears earliest in a passage of the *Shiji* (史記) discussing buffer states during the Warring States era, the lips and teeth metaphor was first deployed for Kham by Chen Qichang (陳其昌 dates unknown) in an 1898 commentary for *Shuxuebao* (蜀學報), among Sichuan's first periodicals. Warning fellow gentry of looming danger from the west, he wrote, "The lands of Sichuan and Tibet are like lips and teeth. Teeth without lips will shiver; Sichuan without Tibet will tremble."[5] More than a decade later, Kham, which had often been conflated with Tibet in perceptions of Sichuan's defensive fence, was distinguished in the use of the metaphor by Fu Songmu (傅嵩炑 1869–1929) in the preface to his 1912 book proposing the region's conversion into a province.[6] This distinction and Fu's adaptation of the metaphor simultaneously evoke centuries-old imperial frontier policies manifest in the instability of Qing authority in a neglected borderland and demonstrate their transformation, marked by an evolving perception of the value of its land and people.

Despite the stele's presumed demarcation of a new provincial "border" along the Ningjing range, effecting the inclusion of much of Kham within Sichuan territory on both Qing and foreign maps printed after 1727 (see Figure 1), only Dajianlu, the gateway to the Tibetan plateau, was incorporated that year into the Qing territorial bureaucracy as a subprefecture. The remaining polities in the region stretching west to the Ningjing Mountains were instead administered by a centuries-old "loose rein" policy (羈縻政策 *jimi zhengce*) centered on exerting authority only over local rulers designated *tusi* (土司).[7] Neither the territory nor the people of the borderland were of immediate concern to the imperial government, nor were they easily accessible

[5] Chen Qichang, "Jingzangwei yi gushu jiangyi" (An opinion on controlling Tibet as a means to strengthen Sichuan's border), *Shuxuebao* (Sichuan journal) 9 (1898 [Guangxu (GX) 24.6.30]): 1a.

[6] Fu Songmu, *Xikang jiansheng ji*. The book is a compilation of Fu's initial 1911 memorial, which never reached the Qing Court due to the ferment of the Xinhai Revolution, and accompanying information regarding events in Kham over the preceding decade.

[7] On the "*tusi* system" see Wu Yongzhang, *Zhongguo tusi zhidu yuanyuan yu fazhan shi* (History of the origin and development of the native chieftain system in China) (Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe, 1988) and Gong Yin, *Zhongguo tusi zhidu* (China's native chieftain system) (Kunming: Yunnan minzu chubanshe, 1992).

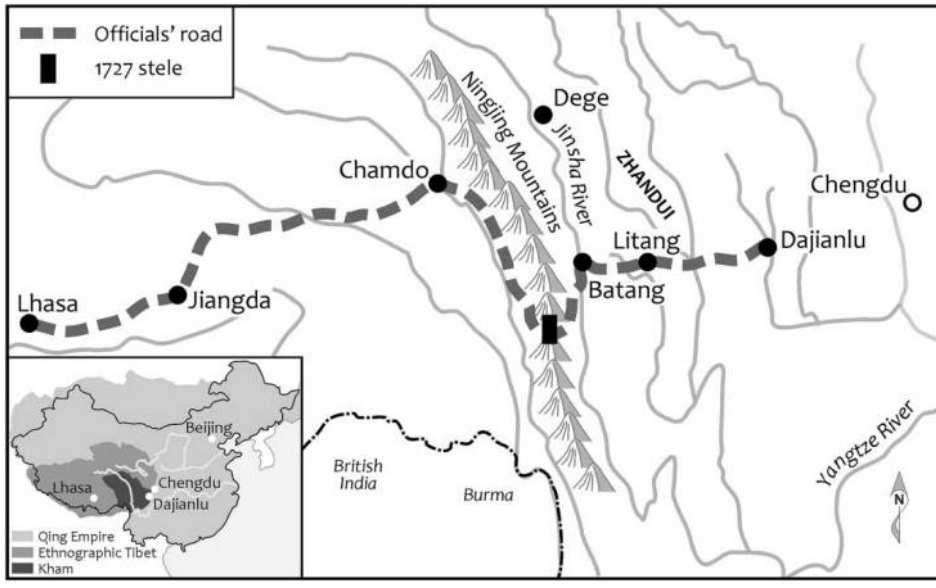

Figure 1. Location of the 1727 stele in Kham. Inset: Kham and ethnographic Tibet in the Qing Empire. [Cartography: Debbie Newell.]

across a rugged region popularly known as "the land of four rivers and six ranges" (རྒྱ་བལ་སྒང་དྲུག *chuzhi gangdruk*). As long as their rulers had submitted to the emperor by accepting investiture of a *tusi* title, refrained from aggression, periodically sent tribute, and defended their territory against external threats as commanded, then the officials and gentry of Sichuan perceived their western fence to be secure.

Historically, *tusi* investiture often resulted in the borderland's inclusion in the expanding empire, its native rulers replaced with bureaucratic officials under *gaitu guiliu* (改土歸流; shortened hereafter to *gailiu*), an imperial policy that I translate as bureaucratization. First documented in Yunnan in 1395, implementation of *gailiu* was haphazard, most often in response to succession disputes among *tusi*. Focus remained almost exclusively on the ruler as the key to stability in the frontier zone; even after installation of a civil official, little effort was expended either to demarcate territory or to acculturate the local populace.[8] Yet by the early Qing era, bureaucratization occurred most often in regions where there existed natural resources valued by the imperial government, land that offered a fertile and hospitable destination for immigrants or farming settlements, and inhabitants who were thought to be amenable to Confucian civilization. In the first decades of the eighteenth century, Kham was not seen as such a place. In querying readers'

[8] On the history of *gailiu* in the Ming and early Qing eras, see Ma Jinglin, *Qingmo Chuanbian Zangqu gaitu guiliu kao* (A study of bureaucratization in the Tibetan areas of the Sichuan borderlands at the end of the Qing dynasty) (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2004), 23–28 and Li Shiyu, *Qingdai tusi zhidu lunkao* (A study of the *tusi* system during the Qing dynasty) (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1998), 31–35.

knowledge of Tibet, a 1908 article from the *Sze-chuen Magazine* (四川), published by overseas students in Japan and circulated among the gentry of Chengdu, elucidates this traditional vision of the Tibetan plateau before suggesting its obsolescence:

> Every day the western territory is a desolate, cold, and sterile land; the Tibetans are a bunch of wild, uncouth, and unevolved people. The land is just like a field of stones, the people just like so many marionettes. Obtaining this land does not extend the territory of the country, and absorbing these people does not strengthen the military. We receive only annual tribute and annually return gold seals.[9]

With nothing of value and a population seemingly beyond reach, it is not surprising that there was little interest in Kham as anything but an inert frontier fence. Thus the indirect administration of its diverse polities through the loose structure of *tusi* investiture was sufficient—until the last years of the nineteenth century. The emergence of new dangers on the Tibetan plateau, both local and regional, and their convergence with the burgeoning influence of the newly globalizing norms of territoriality and sovereignty, fostered a challenge to earlier perceptions of Kham, ultimately rendering continuation of such indirect rule untenable.

First introduced to the Qing in the 1860s as *zhuquan* (主權) in William A. P. Martin's Chinese translation of Henry Wheaton's *Elements of International Law*, "sovereignty" came to be utilized extensively only in the aftermath of defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895). Previously, Qing government officials had paid little heed to the principles of international law, resistant to using its precepts as the basis for external relations, but the loss of influence on the Korean peninsula and heightened concern for expanding Russian and Japanese intrigue in Manchuria stimulated renewed attention to sovereignty as a diplomatic tool, appeal to which could preserve the empire's territorial integrity.[10] At the southwestern edge of the empire, the newly appointed governor-general, Lu Chuanlin (鹿傳霖 1836–1910), found the gentry of Sichuan eyeing a similar danger that would shake the Tibetan plateau for the following two decades. Their fears were expressed in another 1898 commentary in *Shuxuebao* warning of Russia's clear path into Tibet from neighboring Persia.[11] The son of a Qing official posted to Lhasa seemed to add credence to such fears in a letter to his friend in Chengdu: "For the last few years Russians have been constantly coming and going to and from Lhassa. That they have some secret object in view is evident, but what it is is not quite clear."[12] Written as Sir Francis Younghusband invaded Tibet in late 1903,

[9] "Xizang yu Sichuan qiantu zhi guanxi" (The future of relations between Tibet and Sichuan), *Sichuan* (*Sze-chuen Magazine*) 2 (January 15, 1908): 45.

[10] See Rune Svarverud, *International Law as World Order in Late Imperial China: Translation, Reception and Discourse, 1847–1911* (Boston: Brill, 2007), esp. chap. 4.

[11] See Peng Shixun, "Shuzhong fangshou ce" (A plan for defending central Sichuan), *Shuxuebao* 7 (1898 [GX 24.5.30]). Peng also warned of the perilous proximity to the provincial border of French trade dealings in Yunnan, but this proved insignificant beside the danger of the Great Game.

[12] Alex Hosie, Affairs in Ssuchuan and Thibet, 5 January 1904, FO 228/1549, The National Archive, Kew Garden, UK (hereafter abbreviated to *NA*). Many of these "Russians" were likely Buryat Mongols, followers of Tibetan Buddhism and subjects of the Tsar, though it is uncertain whether their business in Lhasa had in fact been of a military nature.

an action that compelled the Dalai Lama to seek temporary exile in Mongolia, where he did seek Russian support, the letter continued, "I fear if we do not give Thibet to the English to swallow, Russia will swallow it for us; but whether to England or Russia, it will make it very dangerous for China."

As Younghusband neared Lhasa, a Buddhist "pilgrim," Buddu Rabdanov, a former member of the Russian consul-general's staff in Urga (Ulaanbaatar), brought the danger deep into Kham, establishing a secret Russian consulate in Dajianlu.[13] Though few had been aware of his brief presence (barely a year), a series of articles published in the *Sze-chuen Magazine* in 1908 suggest that perceptions of the danger to Sichuan were growing more acute. Exposed to international law and a Japanese lexicon that had facilitated its renewed appeal among Qing officials,[14] the Sichuanese student authors also influenced evolving perceptions of Kham and Tibet among the officials and gentry of Sichuan. Entitled "A Warning to the Whole of Sichuan" (警告全蜀 "Jinggao quan Shu"), the series portrayed the province as the last great prize in a China already divided like a melon. A single phrase nestled in the middle of the second installment's second page, leaping toward the reader in bold, large print, exemplified their fears: "Sichuan promptly will become a great battlefield for big power competition."[15] A different article from the same issue offered a starker image of the danger emanating from Tibet: "When the English or the Russians leap from Tibet, their field of vision will narrow like an arrow upon our Sichuan."[16]

A fantastic vision of the British sailing from atop the plateau down the Yangtze River deep into the heart of Sichuan first appeared in the *Shuxuebao* commentary from 1898, just as a new vision of Kham began to emerge during Lu Chuanlin's brief but influential tenure. Like Qing officials in Beijing, Lu was reacting to a regional threat when he proposed to transform Qing authority on the eastern plateau. But in Kham, he perceived that competition as ancillary to a local crisis. In 1866, the Tongzhi Emperor had bestowed on the Dalai Lama the polity of Zhandui (瞻對; now Xinlong 新龙; Nyarong ཉག་རོང་), just west of Dajianlu, in lieu of remitting a 170,000-tael indemnity requested by Lhasa. This sum represented roughly half the expenses incurred by the Tibetan army in its campaign that year to defeat the rogue ruler of Zhandui, Gönpo Namgyel (མགོན་པོ་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་ 1799–1865), who had violently overthrown the rulers of several neighboring polities—and Qing-invested *tusi*—in an attempt to unify eastern Kham. The Dalai Lama then appointed a *chikhyap* (སྤྱི་ཁྱབ་ commissioner) to administer Zhandui on behalf of the Lhasa government.[17] As neither local ruler nor *tusi*, the *chikhyap* was an

[13] See Tatiana Shaumian, *Tibet: The Great Game and Tsarist Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 38–44.

[14] On the dominance of Japanese translations of international law after 1902 and the influence of these ideas on Chinese students studying in Japan, see Svarverud, *International Law as World Order*.

[15] Tie Y, "Jinggao quanshu" (A warning to the whole of Sichuan), *Sichuan* 2 (January 15, 1908): 2.

[16] "Xizang yu Sichuan qiantu zhi guanxi," 49.

[17] On Gönpo Namgyel, see Yudru Tsomu, *The Rise of Gönpo Namgyel in Kham: The Blind Warrior of Nyarong* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014) and Tashi Tsering, "Nag-Ron Mgon-Po Rnam-Rgyal: A 19th Century Khams-Pa Warrior," in Barbara Nimri Aziz and Matthew Kapstein, eds., *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1985), 196–214.

anomaly. And as he was a representative of the Lhasa government that had sought repeatedly to project its temporal influence into eastern Kham, Lu saw his presence as a direct threat to Sichuan.

In 1896, conflict between the *chikhyap* and the King of Chakla over three villages and the former's meddling in a succession dispute between the ruling families of two small polities north of Zhandui provided an opportunity for Lu to act. A Sichuan army evicted the *chikhyap*'s soldiers from the villages, driving the Lhasa official to flee for Tibet. The villages were returned to the loyal king, whose ancestors had accepted Qing investiture at the end of the seventeenth century, decades before their royal seat, Dajianlu, was incorporated into Sichuan.[18] Mirroring the earlier impetus for bureaucratization, resolving a *tusi* succession dispute, Lu then memorialized to implement *gailiu* in another eastern Kham polity, Dege (德格; Degé སྡེ་དགེ), where two brothers vied to replace their father, the king,[19] but his goals extended beyond stabilizing an ambiguous frontier zone. He wrote, "Internally, this can pacify every *tusi* that desires to swear allegiance and accept civilization; externally, this can sap the spirit of resistance among the distant Tibetans." Referring to growing Sichuanese perceptions of danger from Russia and British India, Lu continued, "If anything happens within Tibet, since this land [Kham] already has returned to Sichuan's control, it again will have a gate on which it can depend."[20]

For the governor-general, merely removing the *chikhyap* from Zhandui was insufficient to ensure the stability of Sichuan. Lu's repeated memorials suggested a vision of the polity, and implicitly the whole of eastern Kham, as offering reliable defense for Sichuan only if its local rulers were replaced and its land incorporated into the territorial bureaucracy of the province. By distinguishing eastern Kham from Tibet, he planned to pressure the Dalai Lama on two fronts, locally and regionally. Influenced by notions of sovereignty present among Qing officialdom since Martin's translation, Lu sought not only to strengthen Qing control but also to affirm exclusive authority by severing Lhasa's influence, temporal via the *chikhyap* and spiritual via monasteries, at the 1727 stele. Lu asserted that bureaucratization in eastern Kham would force the Dalai Lama to submit once again to imperial oversight, believing it was his obstinacy, in neither obeying the Amban, the Qing Imperial Resident in Lhasa, nor adhering to the principles of treaties previously negotiated with British India, that cultivated the apparent danger at Sichuan's back door.

In the introduction to a 1900 book comprised of his writings on Zhandui, Lu wrote,

> If we can sufficiently control Tibet, then England will be willing to acknowledge that Tibet belongs to us. Under international law (公法 *gongfa*), states do

[18] See *Ganze zhouzhi* (Gazetteer of Ganze Department) (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1997), 105–6; and Oliver R. Coales, "Narrative of a Journey from Tachienlu to Ch'amdo and Back via Batang" [1917], in Alex McKay, ed., *The History of Tibet*, vol. 3, *The Modern Period: 1895–1959 The Encounter with Modernity* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 203–6.

[19] On the succession struggle and Lu's actions, see *Dege xianzhi* (Gazetteer of Dege County) (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1995), 14.

[20] Lu Chuanlin, *Chouzhan shugao* (A draft record of the plan for Zhandui) (1900; repr., Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1968), 152.

> not invade each other, thus we can use this to repel Russia. Thereby Sichuan will have a fence on which it can rely.[21]

His perception of the danger posed by Russia and British India and his proposal to create a new reality in Kham by shifting the two-dimensional fence west of the stele evince the burgeoning influence of both territoriality and sovereignty on his thinking.[22] Unlike visions of eastern Kham as only an assemblage of invested *tusi* west of Dajianlu, the emerging vision Lu offered was that of a three-dimensional space worthy of Sichuan's direct attention and capable of protecting the province only if incorporated under its direct administration.

Swayed less by this new vision than by the Dalai Lama's objection to bureaucratization in eastern Kham, which the Court feared would deepen Russian influence in Lhasa, in 1897 the Emperor ordered Lu to restore authority in Zhandui to Lhasa's *chikhyap* and return the brothers to Dege. Thus the Qing Court continued a two-dimensional borderland policy centered on exerting control over local rulers—both *tusi* in Kham and the Dalai Lama—as the most effective means to secure Sichuan's western fence. Though rejected, Lu's vision of Kham as a land neither desolate nor unimportant spread among the officials and gentry of Sichuan in the first years of the twentieth century—just as European explorers caught a glimpse of golden sparkles in the sands.

Mining "El Dorado"

Echoing decades-old rumors in British India of Tibet as "a vast El Dorado,"[23] journalist E. J. Dillon, who accompanied Younghusband, proclaimed it the "California of the future," raving, "Nuggets as big as a hazel nut have been often found at a depth of two or three feet. Scratch the soil and all is gold that glitters."[24] On Kham, one British geographer wrote, "[T]here is abundant evidence of the existence of free gold in all the upper valleys of the Chinese rivers within the limits of eastern Tibet and on the borders of the Kam province." Noting the abundance also of silver, copper, lead, iron, and mercury in the region, he concluded that "there is quite enough of material value in Tibet to make it an objective to commercial enterprise."[25] Tibetans and Chinese had been mining gold on the plateau for centuries, but never in the quantities imagined in these reports. European observers ascribed this meager haul to the simple mining methods employed by the Chinese, largely

[21] Lu Chuanlin, *Chouzhan shugao*, 5. *Gongfa* was Martin's translation for international law, which remained current in the Qing until the introduction of *guojifa* from the Japanese after 1902. See Rune Svarverud, "The Formation of a Chinese Lexicon of International Law 1847–1903," in Michael Lackner and Natascha Vittinghoff, eds., *Mapping Meanings: The Field of New Learning in Late Qing China* (Boston: Brill, 2004), 507–33.

[22] Charles Maier defines territoriality as "the properties, including power, provided by the control of bordered political space." See Charles S. Maier, "Transformations of Territoriality 1600–2000," in Gunilla-Friederike Budde, Sebastian Conrad, and Oliver Janz, eds., *Transnationale Geschichte: Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 32–55.

[23] "Tibet," *Times of London*, October 22, 1877: 8E.

[24] E. J. Dillon, "The Mission to Tibet," *Contemporary Review* 85 (1904): 133–4.

[25] Thomas Hungerford Holdich, *Tibet, the Mysterious* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1906), 329–31.

placer mining, while continuing to trumpet the region's vast, yet unrealized potential.

Lu Chuanlin, too, perceived a potential wealth of resources in Kham but warned of increasing danger from foreigners plotting its exploitation. In an 1896 memorial, he lamented that only their voluntary adherence to international law had prevented the British in particular from seizing either land or resources on the plateau.[26] Yet, while governor-general, Lu did not advocate bureaucratization as a means to enforce that adherence, focusing instead exclusively on a local goal, strengthening the stability of Qing authority within Kham in order to regain the Dalai Lama's obeisance. Four years later, however, the reference to international law in his book became more active as he argued that demonstrable Qing control over the polities of Kham, and thereby the Dalai Lama, was essential to thwart both Russia and British India. Though his conception of *gailiu* remained focused inward, and closer to its earlier, imperial manifestation, Lu's assertion of a link between the policy in Kham and the territorial integrity of Tibet forged a blueprint for the more outwardly focused actions of the next Sichuan official to propose its implementation in Kham, Zhao Erfeng (趙爾豐 1845–1911).

A new conception of *gailiu*, inflected with territoriality and sovereignty, began to emerge in the first years of the twentieth century as a new vision of Kham as the "El Dorado" of foreign rumors evolved among the officials and gentry of Sichuan. Taining (泰凝; now Daofu 道孚; Tau ཏཽ), about 130 kilometers northwest of Dajianlu, offered the first expression of this new vision. As early as 1724, a small contingent of Qing soldiers had been posted to this town along the Nya River, where rich gold deposits formed at the river's confluence with several small tributaries, but management of the mines was strictly controlled by the nearby monastery. In 1904 the Sichuan army initiated a more extensive operation under its own exclusive management, though the mines were described by foreign missionaries in Kham as "only holes along the bank of the stream."[27] Proposing no explicit change to a policy centered on the loose administration of Khampa *tusi*, Sichuan officials advised British Consul Alexander Hosie that this was part of an effort to "effect submission on the part of the Thibetans and ensure the peace of the Ssuchuan frontier."[28] Four years later, Sichuan-Yunnan Frontier Commissioner (川滇邊務大臣 *Chuandian bianwu dachen*) Zhao Erfeng initiated a more ambitious mining effort in the midst of his endeavor to implement bureaucratization across Kham.

Under Zhao Erfeng's authority, in 1908 Liu Shilun (劉軾輪 dates unknown), an American-trained mining expert, conducted a survey of Taining and other deposits between Dajianlu and Litang (理塘; Litang ལི་ཐང་). Joined by four mining students from Sichuan, he produced three reports that affirmed Zhao's belief that Kham held abundant gold deposits. Yet Liu also concluded that productive mining of the riverbanks would be nearly impossible without employing a heavy, gas-powered machine that used steam to separate ore from rock. He warned that this machine would be both difficult to transport into the mountainous region and expensive to operate, consuming nearly 250 kilograms of coal each hour. There was one coal deposit between Dajianlu and Litang. Nonetheless, in February 1909, Zhao

[26] See Lu Chuanlin, *Chouzhan shugao*, 117–22.

[27] Flora Beal Shelton, *Shelton of Tibet* (New York: George H. Doran, 1923), 50.

[28] "Reclamation of Waste Land at Batang," 20 May 1904, FO 228/1549, General Series, 13, *NA*

cabled the Qing representative in San Francisco requesting purchase of the machine at a cost of roughly US$150,000. By the time it reached Chengdu later that year, Liu had resigned his position due to illness, leaving no one in Sichuan familiar with its operation.[29]

By the end of 1911, Zhao Erfeng had overseen the opening of a total of 25 mines across Kham, 19 gold, 1 silver, 2 copper, 1 lead, and 2 coal.[30] Emboldened by this previous success, Yin Changheng (尹昌衡 1884–1953), Zhao's Republican-era successor, held an even grander vision of natural resources in the "magnificent country" west of Dajianlu, suggesting in 1912 that its mineral bounty would "guarantee China a century of prosperity."[31] This realization among the officials and gentry of Sichuan that Kham was more than a desolate space contributed to a new conception of *gailiu*, one focused both inward and outward, on asserting exclusive Chinese authority over a territory with clearly delineated, inviolable borders. Yet a vision of mineral bounty alone was insufficient to fully cultivate this new conception, as demonstrated by events in Taining in 1905.

Discovering the Khampas

For centuries monasteries in Kham had limited extraction of gold through admonishments not to anger the spirits of the earth lest they withdraw the supply. The nuggets were said to be the roots from which new gold grew, thus the monks customarily replaced a portion of the mined ore so as not to deprive the earth entirely of gold seed.[32] For some gentry this was indicative of an ongoing impediment to Chinese policies on the plateau: "Although mineral production in Tibet is flourishing, the Tibetans persist in clinging to the teachings of ghosts and gods and adhering to the theory of *fengshui* (風水). These superstitions certainly cannot be dispelled by the mere power of proclamations and words."[33] Yet a report on mining in Litang from the same year suggested that Tibetans were ambivalent toward the legend of gold seed but rather wary of openly contradicting the monasteries. For the governor-general of Sichuan, Xiliang (錫良 1853–1917), and for Zhao Erfeng, the events of 1905 at the Taining mines revealed a challenge only partly perceived by Lu Chuanlin, while suggesting that the stability of Kham, and thereby the defense of Sichuan, required a new vision not just of the land, but also of its inhabitants.

By March 1905, simmering unrest sparked by the Sichuan army's expansion of mining operations in Taining the previous year was uncontrollable, especially

[29] See Zou Lixian, "Qingmo Liu Shilun kancha Xikang kuangqu sankai" (Three accounts of Liu Shilun's perambulation of Xikang at the end of the Qing), *Bianzheng* (Frontier affairs) (May 1931): 1–3; and Ren Naiqiang and Ren Xinjian, "Sichuan huangjin kaicai" (History of gold-digging in Sichuan) *Daziran tansuo* (Discovery of nature) 3 (1984): 88–9. See also FO 228/2584, D26, *NA*.

[30] See He Derun, "Qingmo Xikang kaicai kuangchan biao" (List of yields from mines opened in Xikang at the end of the Qing), *Bianzheng* (July 1932); and "General report on a journey to Kantzu," 18 January 1914, FO 228/2584 D26, *NA*.

[31] Wilkinson to Lord Hardinge, 24 August 1912, L/P+S/11/37/P4426, Oriental and India Office Collections, British Library, London, UK.

[32] J. Malcolm Maclaren, *Gold: Its Geological Occurrence and Geographical Distribution* (London: The Mining Journal, 1908), 236.

[33] "Zangshi weiyan" (Straight talk on Tibetan affairs), *Guangyi congbao* (The universal progressive journal) 192 (1908 [GX 34.12.10]): 3a.

Figure 2. A Khampa man, ca. 1910. [Records of the Division of Overseas Ministries, Disciples of Christ Historical Society.]

among monks, who no longer received a share of mining profits, and farmers, whose land had been seized. Soon after barricades rose around the mines, the standoff between locals and Sichuanese soldiers erupted in flames. At the reported instigation of the *khenpo* (མཁན་པོ་ abbot) of the local monastery and Lu's old nemesis, the *chikhyap*, the Chinese town was razed and a local Qing official slaughtered.[34] While the *chikhyap*'s involvement may have vindicated Lu's earlier warnings, he represented only the very limited temporal authority of Lhasa. More troubling was the *khenpo*'s leadership of the "rebellion," which signified a deeper threat to the stability of Kham, and thus of Sichuan—the pervasive spiritual influence of the Dalai Lama on Kham society.[35] By renewing and expanding Lu's earlier proposal to implement bureaucratization in Kham, Zhao Erfeng, influenced by an absolutist understanding of sovereignty, perceived in 1907 that erecting inviolable borders around Kham was essential to severing Lhasa's spiritual influence. The acculturative dimension of his policies, focused on remolding the Khampas (Figure 2) within those borders, signaled the influence of another norm, territoriality, which by the nineteenth century was concerned less with the earlier ambiguity of borders than with what happened within those borders.[36]

Sichuan officials typically perceived the Khampa "marionettes" as uneducated and thoroughly at the mercy of the monasteries. "Professing Buddhism is already an established custom. They are bewildered and ignorant without knowledge and follow all that the lamas say," observed Zhao Erfeng's elder brother, Zhao Erxun (趙爾巽 1844–1927), who was governor-general of Sichuan at the height of bureaucratization, "Therefore the lamas are able to use their religion in the light of day for

[34] See No. 0032 (1905 [GX 31.3.7]) in *Qingmo chuandian bianwu dang'an shiliao* (Studies of the reports of Sichuan and Yunnan border affair at the end of the Qing; hereafter abbreviated to *QCBDS*) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), vol. 1, 47; and *Ganze zhouzhi*, 106.

[35] Not every polity in Kham hosted a Gelukpa monastery or one with any stature, thus the Dalai Lama's spiritual influence in some polities might have been only slight. On the early twentieth-century struggle for authority in Kham between the Dalai Lama in the spiritual realm and the Qing in the temporal, see Scott Relyea, "Yokes of Gold and Threads of Silk: Sino-Tibetan Competition for Authority in Early Twentieth Century Kham," *Modern Asian Studies* 49, no. 4 (July 2015): 963–1009.

[36] See Maier, "Transformations of Territoriality 1600–2000," 41–46.

the attainment of benevolent goals, and in the shadows to spread evil schemes."[37] Opposition to Qing rule in Kham, such as the events at Taining, was thus cast in the light of "evil schemes" in which the Khampas were unwitting participants. Some even argued that the Khampas were impervious to the influence of Confucian civilization. "Already for many thousands of years, they have been an ignorant, benighted, and stubborn people accustomed to being wild and unbridled," wrote a soldier in Zhao Erfeng's frontier army, "If they were changed through immersion in the civilized arts and fine clothing, they would surely look upon this as an inescapable prison, stupidly uncertain how to carry on for another day."[38] The Frontier Commissioner, however, thought differently. Like Lu's actions a decade earlier, Zhao Erfeng's policies were shaped not only by the gradual adoption of sovereignty during the last decades of the Qing but also by the Kham borderland itself. He reinvigorated centuries-old imperial frontier policies and conceived a comprehensive plan for transforming both the land and people of Kham to facilitate their lasting integration into the Chinese state and nation awakening in the early twentieth century. This new conception of *gailiu* suggests that one could not be accomplished successfully without the other.

In a list of 43 regulations for the bureaucratization of Batang (巴塘; Batang བདའ་ཐང་), which provided the blueprint for his policy throughout Kham, Zhao Erfeng seems to have sought the Khampas' total cultural assimilation. In one provision, he stated that if they could demonstrate their awareness of shame and understanding of proper etiquette simply by wearing trousers, "I would love you, like you, and treat you the same as Chinese. Then how would there be any difference between Chinese (漢 Han) and Tibetan?"[39] Perhaps influenced by similar reforms implemented by the Police Bureau in Chengdu, other provisions emphasized hygiene: one called for the erection of public toilets and the imposition of fines for anyone not using them, and another directed the Khampas to comb their hair and wash their faces each morning.[40] Essential to this acculturative endeavor was the establishment of schools, the goals of which were threefold. The first and most crucial was to weaken the grip of the monasteries on Kham society by severing their spiritual link with the Dalai Lama and undermining their dominance in the local economy. The learning and civilization of China could then enter the resulting cultural vacuum, not merely to transform Khampa culture but also to forestall the heretical ideas Zhao Erfeng feared could be implanted irrevocably in the "simple" Khampa minds by Christian missionaries proliferating in what he expected would be the calm aftermath of bureaucratization.

[37] "Shouhui chunke gaori jiaohui tusi yinxin jingnei langjiling yibing gaitu guiliu zhe" (Take back the seals of Chunke and Gaori chieftains, retake their territories, and bureaucratize all including Langji Ling) (1909 [Xuantong (XT) 1.10.3]), in Wu Fengpei, ed., *Zhao Erfeng Chuanbian zoudu* (Memorials of Zhao Erfeng) (Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe, 1984), 304.

[38] Sun Jiyu, *Lubian diaocha ji* (A record of investigation in Lubian) (Changsha: Tiansheng baoguan, 1912), 42b.

[39] Qing 7-74, Sichuan Provincial Archives, Chengdu, Sichuan. Separate, nearly identical regulations were promulgated for Litang, with the preparation of more undoubtedly disrupted by the Xinhai Revolution of 1911.

[40] See Kristin Stapleton, *Civilizing Chengdu: Chinese Urban Reform, 1895–1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 136–7.

These new schools were unlike those established in borderlands throughout the previous millennium either before or after bureaucratization, which had focused on the rulers, inculcating Confucian mores primarily among the children of borderland elites. Under the influence of the globalizing norms, of the local struggle for authority between Sichuan and Tibet, and of perceived dangers from the regional competition between Russia and British India, the curriculum and textbooks specially prepared for Zhao Erfeng's schools were designed to transform not only the habits and customs of every Khampa child, as attendance was compulsory for boys and girls above age seven, but also to introduce them to the new reality in Kham. Three representative passages from *Three Character Rhymes of the Western Lands* (西垂三字韵語 *Xichui sanzi yunyu*)[41] chart this acculturative journey:

> Believing in the lamas and addicted to their religion, monks are increasing daily and their progeny cannot continue. Monks could return to secular life to have sons and grandsons, seek practical benefits, and shelter their kinfolk.
>
> You are very far away and lack knowledge. By going to school, you will understand the great meaning, the essence of which is in two phrases, loyalty to country (國 *guo*) and respect for Confucius.
>
> When the people are enlightened and a province is established, then Sichuan, Yunnan, and Tibet will have no troubles. If each of you students works hard, this province will join the Qing domain for eons.

After the first rhyme dissuaded Khampa youth from pursuing monastic study by highlighting the negative effects the lamas and their religion had on society, the second rhyme then awakened them both to the wisdom in the teachings of Confucius and to the nationalism at the core of their obligations to China. By referencing the establishment of a province and the resultant regional stability, the third rhyme embodied the new conception of *gailiu* inflected with territoriality and sovereignty and Zhao Erfeng's new vision of Kham.

This new vision also resonated in the curriculum of the Tibetan Language School (藏文學堂 Zangwen xuetang) established in Chengdu in 1907 to train the teachers who would mold these Khampa youths.[42] Though consuming only two instruction hours per week, the topics addressed in geography and history are revealing. In the former, prospective teachers studied in detail the borderlands between Tibet and Afghanistan and India, and between Tibet and Sichuan, Yunnan, and Qinghai; the administration of mines and commerce; the future determination of provincial borders; and the planned establishment of a railway across Kham. In the latter, they studied Tibet's drift away from the Emperor and recent efforts at reintegration in such topics as the evolution of Tibet since Tang times, the relationship between

[41] No. 0848 (1911 [XT 3.5.18]) in *QCBDS*, vol. 3, 963–5. See also Ma, *Qingmo Chuanbian Zangqu gaitu guiliu kao*, 175–6.

[42] See "Zangwen shexue" (Tibetan language school established), *Sichuan guanbao* 20 (1906 [GX32.7.10]): 1a and Qing 7-971, Sichuan Provincial Archives. While some graduates became teachers, others served as assistants to Qing military and civil officials in Kham.

Sichuan and Kham, and the "Westerners" in India "coveting" Tibet. This belief among Sichuan officials in the power of education to transform the Khampas persisted into the Republican era. "The native Tibetans are steadfast and valiant in character, they can labor through bitterness, they deeply love to sing and dance, and they like battles of courage. Certainly they possess the qualities of a military man," wrote a soldier in Yin's frontier army, "If civilization and education were again to enter Tibet, then they would be thoroughly transformed into citizens of the military government."[43]

Unmistakable both in these sentiments and in the books and lessons produced for Kham, Zhao Erfeng's new conception of *gailiu*, focused both inward and outward, represented the further influence of territoriality and sovereignty in the crucible of the borderland. When appointed Frontier Commissioner, however, he was tasked only with reconstituting a military garrison in Batang to support *tusi* across eastern Kham and facilitate the unfettered flow of commerce and imperial correspondence between Chengdu and Lhasa.[44] A decade after rejecting Lu Chuanlin's plan to bureaucratize Zhandui, the Qing Court, influenced by older notions of a fence propped up by invested *tusi*, still envisioned the borderland in two dimensions. By contrast, the opening of mines to exploit its mineral resources and the establishment of schools to acculturate its population together demonstrate the convergence of new visions of Kham as a land hosting both resources and a population of value to the province with a new conception of *gailiu* evolving among the officials and gentry of Sichuan.

Yet Zhao Erfeng's vision of Kham and his reinvigoration of centuries-old imperial frontier policy encompassed more than acculturating the Khampas through education. "In my humble opinion," he wrote in 1908, "to manage the whole of Tibet, it is most appropriate to give priority to colonization."[45] Zhao's vision of the settlement of Kham, however, drew on newer, global influences: "Examining each country's opening of distant wastelands, for instance England in Australia, France in Madagascar, the United States in the Philippines, and Japan in Hokkaido, all first constructed inns and used benefits to attract settlers, who then hastened to these places like rushing to market."[46] Such plans for the permanent extension of men and material into Kham in the early twentieth century signified its further integration into Sichuan, but they also presaged later plans for its incorporation into Republican China under a new name—Xikang (西康).

Conceiving Xikang

Establishing farming colonies in the borderlands, like founding schools, was a policy with a long imperial pedigree, but these older settlements often served more as

[43] Sun Shaoqian, "Pingxiang jishi" (Chronicle of pacifying the countryside), in Zhao Xinyu, Qin Heping, and Wang Chuan, eds., *Kangqu Zangzu shehui zhenxi ziliao jiyao* (A summary of rare materials on Tibetan society in Kham) (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2006), vol. 1, 266.

[44] No. 0077 (1906 [GX32.7]) in *QCBDS*, vol. 1, 91–2 and No. 0075 (1906 [GX32.6]) in *QCBDS*, vol. 1, 90–91.

[45] No. 0167 (1908 [GX34.5.24]) in *QCBDS*, vol. 1, 186–7.

[46] "Chuandian bianwu shiyi jun guan jinyao jushi lüchen ni ju zhangcheng zhe" (Memorial reporting in detail and making regulations on all important affairs in the Sichuan-Tibet borderland) (1907 [GX33.6.11]), in *Zhao Erfeng Chuanbian zoudu*, 48.

military outposts than as antecedents to borderland expansion. Broadly called *tunken* (屯墾) and historically manned by soldiers, they were established to facilitate the reclamation of "wastelands," potentially fertile areas of the borderland not under local cultivation. When Zhao Erfeng established farming colonies in Kham, however, he recruited commoners from the overcrowded Sichuan Basin, farmers who could serve both as a population of loyal subjects for new civil officials and as models of civilization in support of his acculturative endeavor, a vision that also encompassed "proper" farming. Indeed, as with future teachers recruited to attend the Tibetan Language School, these "model" colonists were expected to meet strict moral and physical qualifications.[47] And although nearly all fertile land across the Batang Valley, the prime destination for Zhao's future settlers, remained under large-scale local cultivation in 1906, the magistrate proclaimed the Khampas "foolish and ignorant of agriculture," thus reporting abundant wastelands ripe for occupation and reclamation.[48]

The content of three appeals for settlers prepared in vernacular Chinese by Zhao Erfeng, posted on yamen walls and printed in periodicals across Sichuan from 1907 to 1910, illustrates the resonance of both the historic, inward-looking conception of *gailiu* and its new, outward-looking manifestation envisioning Kham as "West." In particular, Zhao's second appeal seemed to tickle the nascent nationalism of the Sichuanese, exhorting them to seize an opportunity similar to the great foreign explorations of the globe.

> You see, foreigners pay close attention to colonization. Their commoners also know this truth. […] whether they must traverse tens of thousands of *li*, whether they must climb mountains or cross seas, they don't dislike the distance, nor are they afraid of danger as they strive to open wastelands. […] You decide if this is worthy of respect or not, that the foreigner in fearing no hardship can ensure the prosperity of his family and business.[49]

A 1909 article in *Sichuan guanbao* (四川官報 Sichuan gazette) similarly praised the first settlers in Kham as pioneers as great as Columbus or the settlers of the American West, venturing into dangerous spaces in service to the nation.[50] When 97 residents of a small prefecture east of Chengdu heeded the call of their local

[47] Zhao sought strong and healthy commoners no more than 30 years of age who came from an "honest" family and had neither an opium addiction nor a criminal record. See "Bianwu Dachen zisong guanwai kenwu zhanxing zhangcheng wen" (Temporary regulations governing settlers beyond the barrier), *Sichuan guanbao* 18 (1910 [XT 2.7.20]): 7a-8b. Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that few colonists met these criteria.

[48] Wu Xizhen, "Weiguan Batang liangwu tongzhi Wei Zizhen kaiban kenwu liu tiao qingzhe" (Temporary Batang Commissary and Magistrate Wu Xizhen prepares six points for opening wastelands), *Sichuan guanbao* 8 (1906 [GX 32.4.10]): 4b.

[49] "Zhuzang Chuandian bianwu dachen xiaoyu baixing guanwai kaiken liyi baihua gaoshi" (Frontier Commissioner notifies commoners of benefits of opening wastelands beyond the barrier), *Chengdu ribao* (Chengdu daily) 287 (1908 [GX 34.11.13]): 1b.

[50] "Liuxin bianwu" (Be aware of frontier matters), *Sichuan guanbao* 1 (1909 [XT 1.1.30]): 1a. Alexander Woodside suggests that Chinese elites of the era frequently referred to Columbus when they sought to celebrate "border expansion as positive wealth creation." See Alexander Woodside, "The Centre and the Borderlands in Chinese Political Theory," in Diana Lary, ed., *The Chinese State at the Borders* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 22–23.

magistrate, he too equated them with American settlers, Russians in Siberia, and Han Chinese settlers of the empire's northwest, which would become Xinjiang Province.[51] Beyond extending direct imperial rule into Kham, beyond managing and extracting its resources or transforming its inhabitants, colonization was essential to the new conception of *gailiu*, fostering among the officials and gentry of Sichuan a vision of Kham as integral to the province. This perception intensified in early 1912, when the Great Han Sichuan Military Government (大漢四川軍政府 Dahan Sichuan junzhengfu) established the Office for Managing the Frontier (籌邊處 Choubianchu; shortened hereafter to CBC).[52] With a department of colonization overseeing a subsection for education among its four divisions, the short-lived CBC represents the clearest expression of this local vision.

In addition to internal migration, both the American West and the Russian Far East provided perhaps other models for the integration of Kham. In 1909, a student recently returned from Japan wrote to Zhao Erxun urging him to construct a railroad linking Chengdu with Lhasa to strengthen the expansion of mining, industry, and commerce and, perhaps most importantly, to prevent British incursion into both Kham and Tibet.[53] Three years earlier, Xiliang had offered a similar rationale in a memorial requesting the Commerce Ministry to investigate construction of a Sichuan-Tibet railway (川藏鐵路 Chuanzang tielu): "When in the future this railway is completed, the mines and commerce of Tibet will flourish. This is the foundation of establishing a province, and also will serve to arrest British desires."[54] Numerous proposals followed, but only rumors of substantive action, one involving the "father of Chinese railways," Jeme Tien Yow (詹天佑 1861–1919).[55] Focused both inward and outward, construction of a railway, like colonization, was perceived as affirming absolute Chinese authority in the former borderland, complementing the new conception of *gailiu* that had come to encompass a notion of inviolable borders. Yet the strongest outward assertion of absolute authority, and the final shift in visions of Kham from frontier to "West," was not constituting the region as part of Sichuan but rather constituting it as a province in its own right.

Proposals to carve the plateau into one or more provinces circulated even as bureaucratization and colonization of Kham commenced. Reflecting the influence of absolutist notions of territoriality and sovereignty on the new conception of *gailiu*, these proposals implicitly referenced the precepts of international law.

[51] See Jin Fei, "Qingmo Xikang kenwu dang'an shican" (A collection of remaining records of reclamation works in Xikang at the end of the Qing), *Bianzheng* 9 (1932): 15–17. In one of his own appeals for settlers, the local magistrate compared settling Kham with the repopulation of Sichuan following the devastation of the Three Feudatories revolt at the end of the eighteenth century. See Yingcong Dai, *The Sichuan Frontier and Tibet: Imperial Strategy in the Early Qing* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 25–26.

[52] "Chengtu Press on Affairs in Tibet and the Marches," FO 228/2575 D51, *NA*.

[53] Zhao Erxun 543, roll 70, record 361 (1909 [XT 1.11.26]), First Historical Archive, Beijing, PRC.

[54] "Zoushe Chuanzang tielu" (Memorializing to construct the Sichuan-Tibet Railway), *Guangyi congbao* 105 (1906 [GX 32.4.24]): 11a-b.

[55] From 1905 to 1909, Jeme oversaw completion of the first section of the Beijing-Baotou Railway. On this project and Jeme's involvement with the Sichuan-Hankou Railway, see Jing Shenghong, *Zhan Tianyou pingzhuan* (A critical biography of Zhan Tianyou) (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2001).

"Kham and Tibet are the Emperor's domain, and ours to manage. It would be exceedingly difficult for foreigners to interfere as we are neither expanding our territory nor bursting through its borders," Zhao Erfeng wrote in 1911, "[…] With danger on all sides, certainly we must establish a province [in Kham], otherwise the territory cannot be controlled and Tibet cannot be saved."[56] Two years earlier, Zhao Erxun had explicitly linked the colonization of Kham with the importance of establishing a province: "Stabilizing the people and enriching the state must begin from having no empty lands and no idle people."[57] The words of the Zhao brothers suggest a synergy in the borderlands between creating a province and colonization, evident also with mines, railroads, and schools. Colonization of the former borderland would bolster internal stability, while a stable province would encourage further migration from the center, strengthening authority over the people of the new province. Opening mines, expanding commerce, and initiating industrial projects such as a tannery would assert authority over the land, thwarting external claims to natural resources and fortifying its borders. The construction of a railroad and the establishment of schools would deepen both physical and cultural links with the center, further affirming and projecting to the global community absolute authority over a land and people encircled by inviolable borders. Perceptions of this synergy in Kham and the ramifications for Tibet emerged concurrently with the new conception of *gailiu* and a three-dimensional vision of Kham among the officials and gentry of Sichuan. But proposals to establish a province and Zhao Erfeng's extension of bureaucratization west of the 1727 stele stimulated a different vision among officials in Beijing, one also harkening to older, imperial notions.

As Zhao Erfeng's armies reached Jiangda (江達; Gyamda རྒྱལ་མདའ་) in 1910, a mere 250 kilometers east of Lhasa, territorial perceptions of Kham among Sichuanese began to change. Historically known as Kamu (喀木) or Kang (康) in Chinese, by the early twentieth century the region east of the stele was styled either Lubian (鑪邊), the "Dajianlu frontier," or Chuanbian (川邊), the "Sichuan frontier," lexically binding it to Sichuan. With the publication in 1912 of Fu Songmu's undelivered memorial proposing the conversion into a province of the entire area purportedly "pacified" by Zhao Erfeng's frontier army, a new name emerged—Xikang, a name that simultaneously distinguished the region from Sichuan and bound it to the empire. Encompassing a territory both broader and narrower than traditional Khampa and Tibetan geographic conceptions of Kham,[58] Xikang extended west to Jiangda, encompassing neither Kham's southern regions, designated to Yunnan by the 1727 stele and today comprising that province's northwest, nor its northern regions, presumably under the authority of the Amban in Xining (西寧; Ziling ཟི་ལིང་) in the early twentieth century and today comprising southwest Gansu Province. This new name entered common usage after the republication of Fu's book in serialized form in a Beijing periodical on the eve of the Simla Conference in late 1913, entering official lexicon with the establishment of the Xikang Special Administrative Region (西康特別行政區 Xikang tebie xingzhengqu; shortened hereafter to SAR)

[56] No. 0808 (1911 [XT 3.3]), in *QCBDS*, vol. 3, 920–1.

[57] Zhao Erxun, 543, roll 70, record 361 (1909 [XT 1]), First Historical Archive.

[58] On geographic conceptions of Kham, see Scott Relyea, "Gazing at the Tibetan Plateau: Sovereignty and Chinese State Expansion in the Early Twentieth Century, PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2010, 15–22.

in June 1914.[59] Whereas the CBC represented a Sichuanese conception of *gailiu* in Kham focused both inward and outward, on settling the land and educating the people to affirm absolute authority, the SAR represented a central government vision of Kham focused predominately outward, on exerting control through civil officials to affirm ROC sovereignty in the global community.

Mapped onto Fu's territorial definition of Xikang (see Figure 3), the SAR was proclaimed in the waning days of the faltering Simla Conference, which was convened as a tripartite negotiation among the British, Tibetans, and Chinese to delineate the extent of Chinese sovereignty on the Tibetan plateau.[60] The final agreement, which paralleled the border defined by the 1727 stele, limiting ROC sovereignty to east of the Jinsha River and recognizing only its suzerainty over the territory stretching west to Lhasa and beyond, was left unsigned by the Chinese plenipotentiary. Initial documentation provided by the ROC government to support its claim to sovereignty as far west as Jiangda, renamed Taizhao (太昭) in 1912, comprised a single bill passed by the House of Senators of the National Assembly detailing the Chinese districts of Kham, collectively designated the eighth division of the parliamentary election district of Sichuan Province. Explicitly referring to the overstated exploits of Zhao Erfeng's frontier army, an accompanying statement grounded these territorial claims in "the historic connections of all those places with China and from what is called in International Law 'effective occupation'."[61] However, at no time during the conference did the armies of Yin Changheng control the entire claimed territory, rendering the subsequent proclamation of the SAR largely a figment of bureaucratic documentation. Echoing the two-dimensional frontier policy in place when the Qing Court denied Lu Chuanlin's proposed bureaucratization in 1897 and tasked Zhao Erfeng with only a limited mandate in 1907, the ROC based its conception of "effective occupation" almost entirely on its appointment of civil magistrates to the districts of the SAR, whether they served in person or on paper.[62]

By 1914, vestiges of Zhao Erfeng's endeavor—and the evidence supporting the ROC's claims—were scarce, and none of the farming colonies and only 30 of more than 300 schools extant. Although a new vision of Kham as no longer a two-dimensional frontier fence influenced gentry and officials in both the central government and Sichuan, their conceptions of the region's integration appeared to remain different. In 1913 the Sichuan Branch of the Agricultural Society (墾植協會四川支部 Kenzhi xiehui Sichuan zhibu) proposed sending 10,000 colonists beyond Dajianlu,

[59] See "Xikang jiansheng tan" (Speaking on the creation of Xikang Province), *Dongfang zazhi* (Eastern Miscellany) 9, no. 11 (1913), 1-6 to 1-16 and *Dongfang zazhi* 9, no. 12 (1913), 1-5 to 1-10. Its first official name was the Sichuan Frontier Special Administrative Region (Chuanbian tebie xingzhengqu); see *Min* 195 *juan* 9 (16 June 1914), Sichuan Provincial Archives. The name disappeared from atlases in 1955 on the dissolution of Xikang Province, which had been established in 1939.

[60] For a discussion of and texts from the Simla Conference, see Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 68–75 and Appendix C.

[61] "Item, 61," MSS EUR F80/177, Oriental and India Office Collections, British Library, London, UK. See also Anonymous, *The Boundary Question between China and Tibet: A Valuable Record of the Tripartite Conference between China, Britain, and Tibet held in India, 1913–1914* (Beijing, 1940), 14–19. Note that the parliamentary district did not extend as far west as Taizhao.

[62] For example, throughout the SAR's existence, no Chinese official appointed to Taizhao served there.

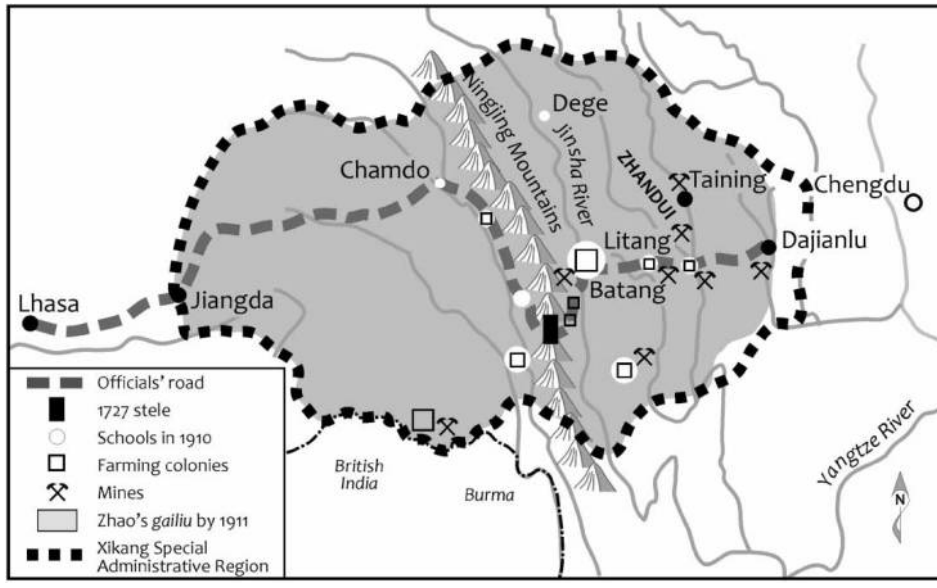

Figure 3. Geographic extent of Zhao Erfeng's frontier army and policies through 1911 and the 1914 border of the Xikang Special Administrative Region. [Cartography: Debbie Newell.]

beginning with the area near the Taining mines, and the Frontier Commissioner in 1916 proposed establishing four types of colonies in Kham centered around agriculture, animal husbandry, mining, and forestry.[63] Neither these nor other Sichuanese proposals to return settlers or teachers to Kham were implemented by the ROC in its first decade, though mining remained a top priority. The Qing-era Sichuan magistrate who perceived Kham parallels with the Russian Far East and the American West envisioned a new conception of *gailiu* focused as much inward as outward, on developing the land and people of Kham as essential to affirming authority. Central government officials, by contrast, perceived the integration of the borderland through the construction of railroads and the establishment of a province as predominately an outward projection of absolute sovereignty over a territory encircled by inviolable borders.

For Lu Chuanlin and Zhao Erfeng, the emergence of new dangers, both local and regional, and the transformative influence of the globalizing norms on centuries-old imperial frontier policies and conceptions of *gailiu* converged to foster a new, three-dimensional vision of Kham. Manifest in Fu Songmu's adaptation of the lips and teeth metaphor, this vision embodied the integration of the region's land and people into Sichuan and the geobody of the burgeoning Chinese state and nation. As the central government came to reassert its control over borderland policy with the establishment of the Xikang SAR, however, a different perception of this integration emerged, one inflected with both the imperial past and the globalizing

[63] See "Yimin shibian" (Filling the frontier with immigrants), *Sichuan shiye gongbao* (Sichuan industrial magazine) 8 (August 20, 1913): 1 and "Chinese-Tibetan Frontier," 21 November 1917, FO 228/2749 D122, *NA*.

norms of international law. Focused on affirming sovereignty in the global community by projecting its authority in the borderland outward, the ROC initially was less concerned with the situation within. The officials, gentry, and merchants of Sichuan closest to the Kham borderland, by contrast, seemed to perceive the importance of agricultural colonization and acculturation as local stabilizers of that authority. These different perceptions of Kham's integration presaged a tension in visions of the borderland that would accompany a shift in the central government's policy from an earlier, imperial emphasis on colonization—both to reclaim wastelands and to expand mining—to an almost exclusive concern for the management and extraction of mineral resources, a tension apparent throughout the borderland's transition from imperial to state space. In the early twentieth century, the emergence of a new conception of *gailiu* inflected with absolutist notions of territoriality and sovereignty and the simultaneous promotion of mining, industrialization, colonization, railroad construction, and province formation fostered a reenvisioning of the former imperial frontier as "West," a vision that has dominated conceptions of not just Kham but the entire western interior of the ROC and People's Republic of China for more than a century.

Acknowledgments

An earlier version of this article was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in 2014. I would like to thank participants in that panel, Kristin Stapleton, editor of *Twentieth-Century China*, Ken Pomeranz, and two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and suggestions.

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