

Home on the Margins: Tsowa Societies of the Chone Kingdom on the Inner  
Asian Frontier, 1862–1952

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This dissertation investigates the social-political mechanisms utilized by the Tibetan rulers and local societies of the Chone Kingdom to cope with China's transformation from an empire to a nation-state from 1862 to 1952. Combining written records and field materials, it offers a bottom-up perspective to comprehend the socio-political resilience of the kingdom and local *tsowa* societies under the impact of waves of social violence, natural catastrophe and the Chinese state-building process. It illustrates the slow collapse of the Chone Kingdom and the uneven social, economic, cultural and religious transitions of its *tsowa* societies. It argues that the evolving political system and the *tsowa* organization in the kingdom generated a “local state” for Tibetan authorities and societies to preserve themselves, resist external interventions and adapt to the central powers' incorporations. This local state was also employed by the Qing Empire to indirectly control this region, co-opted by the Chinese nation-state to establish direct governance, and utilized by the frontier Chinese and Muslims to survive the repeated frontier violence. Thus, this research examines the initiatives of the Chone rulers, local Tibetan authorities and societies to work with each other and serve their own ends. It highlights that the Chinese regimes mainly aimed to replace the political system of this local state, resulting in the incomplete nation-state building in this Tibetan borderland.

論文摘要:

边缘上的家：内亚边疆上卓尼王国的措哇社会，1862-1952

作者： 楊志強

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本文調查卓尼王國中的藏族統治者和本地社會在 1862 至 1952 間應對中國從帝國轉型到民族國家過程中所使用的社會和政治機制。結合文本記錄和田野資料，本文提供一個自下而上的視角去理解此王國和當地措哇社會在不斷的社會暴力、自然災難和中國國家建設過程中的社會政治韌性。它闡述卓尼王國的緩慢瓦解和它的措哇社會的不平衡的社會、經濟、文化和宗教變遷。它論辯了這個王國在演進中的政治制度和措哇組織為藏族權威和社會催生了一個“本地國家”來保全自身，反抗外部干預和適應中央權力的兼並。此“本地國家”也被清帝國用來非直接管控這個地區，被中國現代國家採納來建立直接統治，並被邊疆上的漢族和回族用來在不斷的邊疆暴力中生存。此項研究因此檢視卓尼統治者、當地藏族權威和社會互相協作並滿足自身需求的能動性。它強調中國政權主要意圖取代這個本地國家的政治制度，造成了這個藏族邊疆上不完整的民族國家建設。

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books and advices are the light towers for me to explore the field of Sino-Tibetan frontier studies when I was a sole “canoe” among scholars mostly researching southern and eastern China in Hong Kong.

I am deeply indebted to the folks in my hometown. In my motorcycle trip to conduct fieldwork in villages of southwestern Gansu, they provided comfortable accommodations and delicious food, and introduced me to their relatives and friends across the region. They eased most difficulties for me to enter into the communities where I was a stranger. I was privileged to be treated as “a local lad who likes old stories” instead of a scholar. I was so fortunate to document their life experiences, share their memoirs full of warmth and emotions, and hear their often modest and hidden voices behind the intellectual and official narratives of the past. Although I cannot mention their names here for the reason of their safety, I would like to acknowledge them collectively: “people make history.”

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## List of Abbreviations

AAL	Arnold Arboretum Library, Harvard University
DBXZ	<i>Diebu xianzhi</i> 迭部縣志
GQNSL	<i>Gan qing ning shi lue</i> 甘青寧史略
GSSDAG	The Gansu Provincial Archives 甘肅省檔案館, Lanzhou
GSWSZLXJ	<i>Gansu wenshi ziliao xuanji</i> 甘肅文史資料選輯
GNWSZL	<i>Gannan wenshi ziliao</i> 甘南文史資料
IMH	The Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, Taipei
LTWSZL	<i>Lintan wenshi ziliao</i> 臨潭文史資料
LTXZ	<i>Lintan xianzhi</i> 臨潭縣志
LXWSZL	<i>Linxia wenshi ziliao</i> 臨夏文史資料
MSL	<i>Ming shilu</i> 明實錄
MXZ	<i>Minxian zhi</i> 岷縣志
MZZ	<i>Minzhou zhi</i> 岷州志
MZXTZ	<i>Minzhou xiangtu zhi</i> 岷州鄉土志
NSHA	Nanjing Second Historical Archives 南京第二歷史檔案館
QSL	<i>Qing shilu</i> 清實錄
TZTZ	<i>Taozhou tingzhi</i> 洮州廳志
XHXZ	<i>Xiahe xianzhi</i> 夏河縣志
ZNWSZL	<i>Zhuoni wenshi ziliao</i> 卓尼文史資料
ZNXZ	<i>Zhuoni xianzhi</i> 卓尼縣志
ZQXZ	<i>Zhouqu xianzhi</i> 舟曲縣志



## Notes on Transliteration

Tibetan terms in this dissertation have been transcribed according to the transliteration system created by Turrell Wylie. In the body of this work, Tibetan terms and personal and place names have been transliterated using THDL Simplified Phonetic Transcription of Standard Tibetan by David Germano and Nicolas Thournadre in order to render them pronounceable to English speakers. The Tibetan language works in footnotes and bibliography have been transliterated into Roman forms based on the Wylie system.

Chinese terms, personal names and topologies have been transliterated according to the standard *pinyin* 拼音 system. Chinese characters are provided in parenthesis after the first occurrence of the terms, names and key phrases. The characters appear after the *pinyin* form of Chinese sources in footnotes and bibliography. For the Chinese transliterations of Tibetan terms, personal names and topologies, which do not have a standard system, I provide the Simplified Phonetic transliterations and Wylie transcriptions as well as Pinyin and Chinese characters.

## **Qing Reign Period**

Shunhzi 順治 / Eyeber Jasagchi (1644–1661)

Kangxi 康熙 / Engke Amuulang (1662–1722)

Yongzheng 雍正 / Nairaltu Töb (1723–1735)

Qianlong 乾隆 / Tengri Tedk gci (1736–1795)

Jiaqing 嘉慶 / Saisiyal Ir gelt (1796–1820)

Daoguang 道光 / Törö Gerelt (1821–1850)

Xianfeng 咸豐 / T g mel Elbegt (1851–1861)

Tongzhi 同治 / B rint Jasagchi (1862–1874)

Guangxu 光緒 / Badaragultu Törö (1875–1908)

Xuantong 宣統 / Kebt Yosutu (1909–1911)

## List of the Chone Kings and Regents

First King Changti / Xiedi 些地 (d.1420s)

Second King Tsenpo Pellek / Zan Xiuqie 贊秀𪛗 (d.1449, r.1420s–1449)

Third King Tashi Bum (d.1468, r.1449–1468)

Fourth King Gakye (d.1507, r.1468–1507)

Fifth King Wangchuk / Yang Hong 楊洪 (d.1537, r.1507–1537)

Sixth King Gonpo Dargye / Yang Zhen 楊臻 (d.1582, r.1537–1582)

Seventh King Kelzang Wangchuk / Yang Kuiming 楊葵明 (d.1620s)

Eighth King Tashi Rabten / Yang Guolong 楊國龍 (d.1670s)

Ninth King Tsewang Dondrub / Yang Chaoliang 楊朝梁 (1642–1682)

Regent Tsünmo Lobzang Tso

Tenth King Lobzang Dondrub / Yang Wei 楊威 (1660–1692)

Regent Tsünmo Menjang (d.1740s)

Eleventh King Makzor Gonpo / Yang Rusong 楊汝松 (1686–1740s, r.1692–1723)

Regent Tsünmo Rinchen Peldzom (d.1770s)

Twelfth King Jamyang Norbu / Yang Chongxiao 楊冲宵, 1703–1748, r.1723–1748)

Regent Tsünmo Kelsang Welmo

Thirteenth King Sonam Chopel / Yang Zhao 楊昭 (d.1747)

Regent Tsünmo Sonam Gyangdzom (r.1748–1759)

Fourteenth King Tensung Tsering / Yang Sheng 楊聲 (1742–1780, r.1760–1780)

Fifteenth King Tendzin Rinchen / Yang Zongye 楊宗業 (d.1813, r.1780–1813)

Sixteenth Religious King Jigme Topgye / Yang Zongji 楊宗基 (d.1843, r.1814–1843)

Seventeenth King Rinchen Tendzin Trinle Dorje / Yang Yuan 楊元 (1828–1886, r.1844–1875)

Eighteenth Religious King Tsewang Sonam Tobgyel / Yang Zuolin 楊作霖 (d.1902, r.1875–1902)

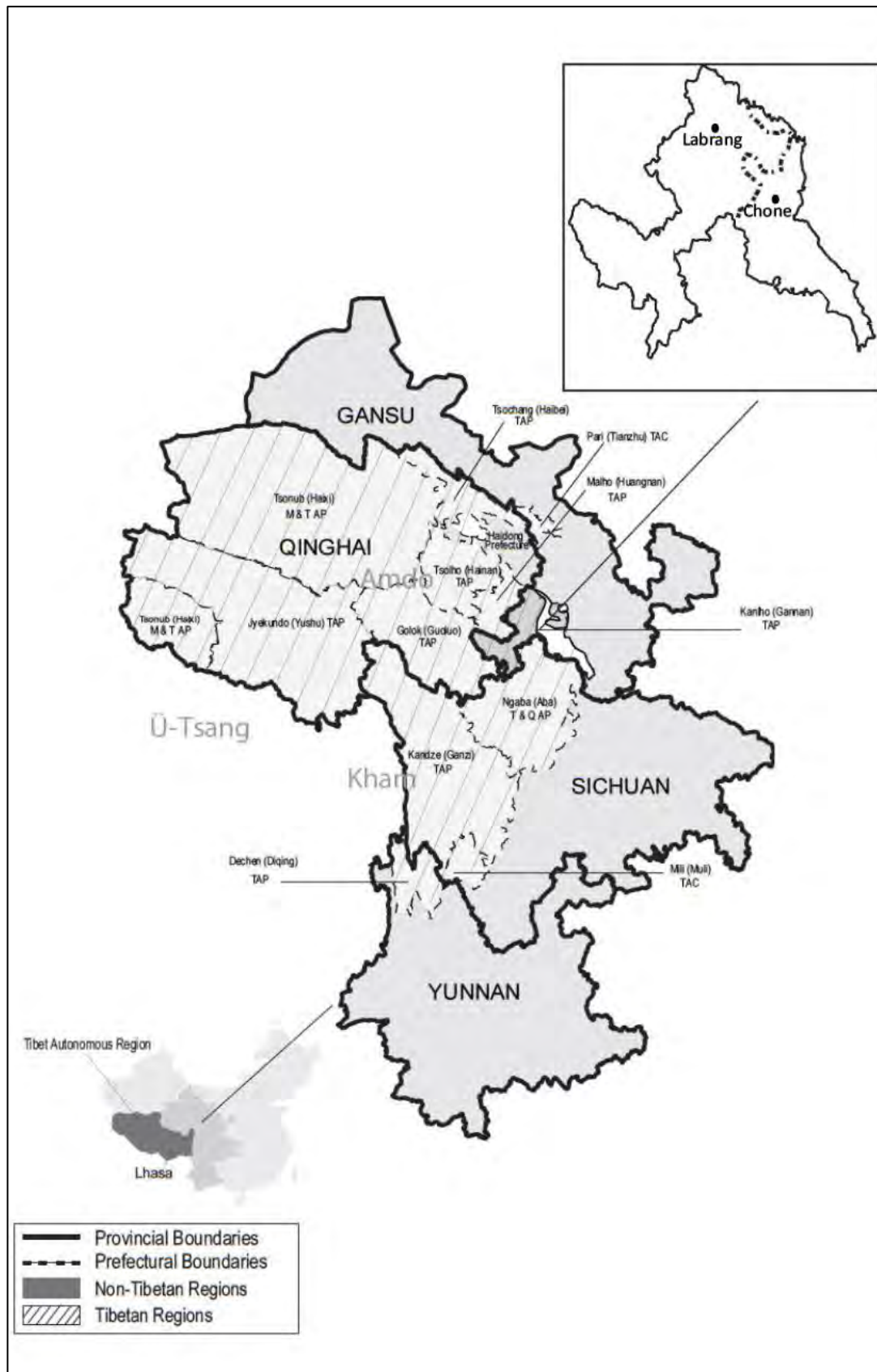
Regent Consort Yang 楊夫人 (r.1902–1906)

Nineteenth Religious King Lobzang Tendzin Namgyel Trinle Dorje / Yang Jiqing 楊積慶 (1889–1937, r.1907–1937)

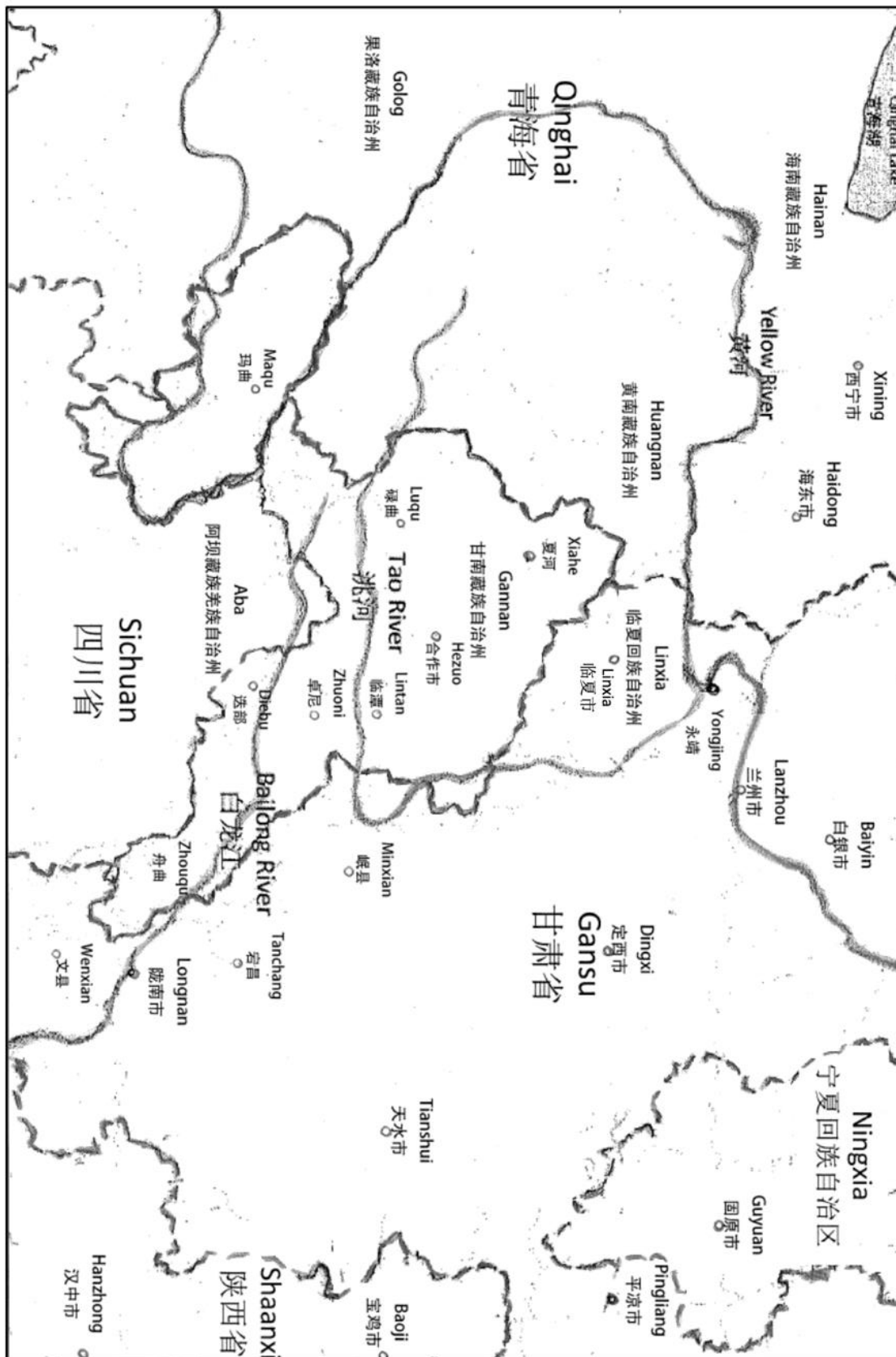
Regent Consort Yang 楊夫人 (r.1937–1946)

Twentieth King Pema Wangchuk / Yang Fuxing 楊復興 (1929–2000, r.1947–1950)

## Maps

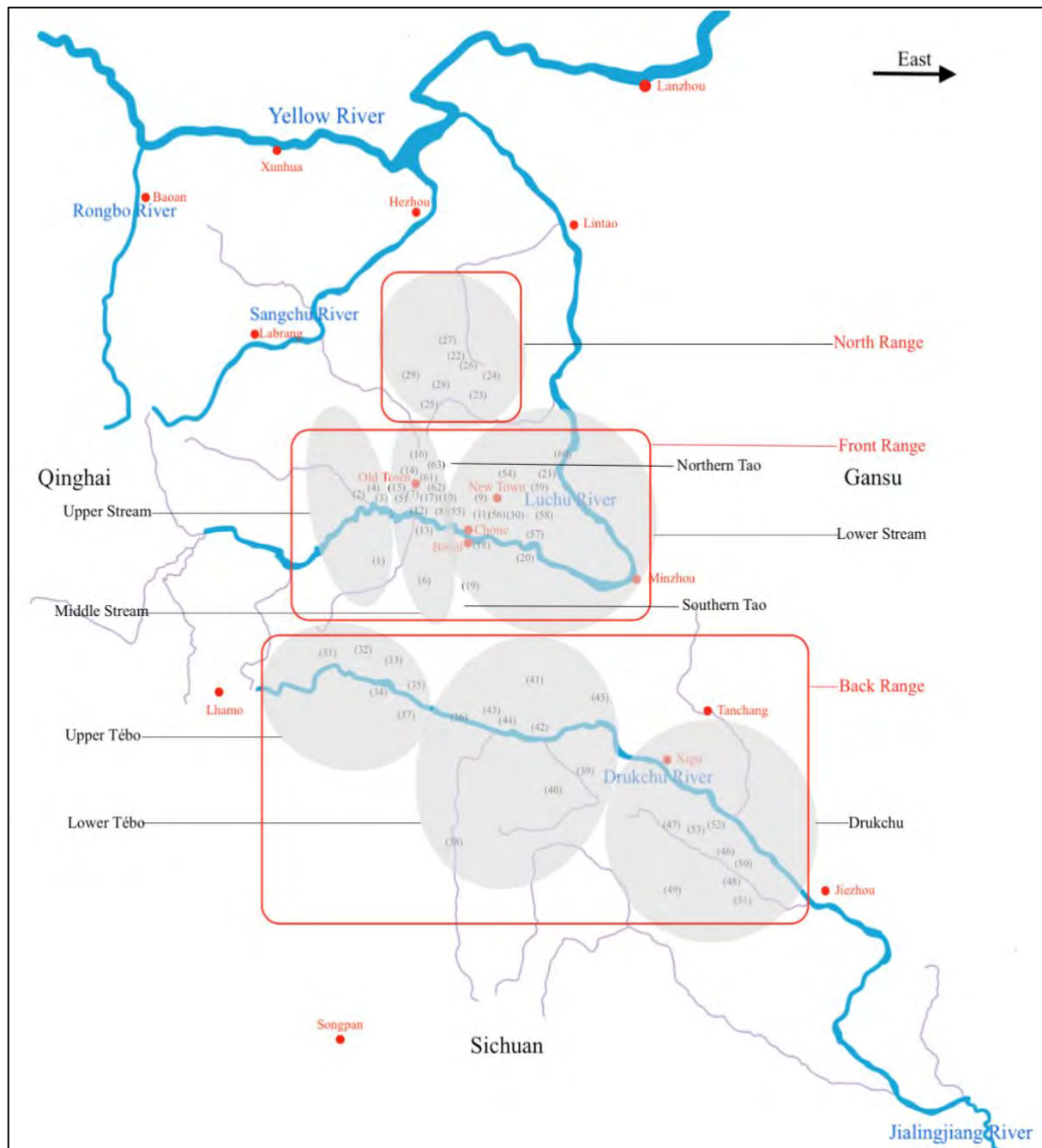


Map 1: The Chone Kingdom's Location



Map 2. Southern Gansu amid Qinghai, Sichuan and Shaanxi Provinces







Chone Gyelpo 卓尼楊土司		
Front Range: Southern Tao and Northern Tao, Upper Stream		
1. Chépa	車巴溝旗	Chas pa gshis
2. Luchung	魯瓊旗	Klu chung
3. Shentsa	善札旗	Gshen tsha
4. Détang	迭當旗	Bde thang
Front Range: Southern Tao and Northern Tao, Middle Stream		
5. Druktsa	朱札旗	'Brug rtsa
6. Kharchen	卡車旗	Mkhar chen
7. Mélungpak	麻路朋地旗	Smad lung phag
8. Takdzum	大族旗	Stag 'dzum
9. Pogönlung	破古錄旗	Pho gon lung
10. Drukgé-Töma	上朱蓋旗	'Brug dge stod ma
11. Drukgé-Méma	下朱蓋旗	'Brug dge smad ma
12. Samar-Pudo	旺桑朋多旗	Sa dmar phu mdo
13. Chubo	術布旗	Chu bo
14. Panglungshi	巴隆什旗	Pang lung gshis
15. Baboshi	包吾什旗	Dbas' bo gshis
16. Tangnang	他那旗	Thang nang
Front Range: Southern Tao and Northern Tao, Lower Stream		
17. Siboshi	思吾什旗	Gsi bo gshis
18. Tongkhorsum	冬禾索旗	Stong 'khor gsum
19. Lamarnang	納麻那旗	La mar nang
20. Dakyik	大峪溝旗	Dag yig
21. Laboshi	老吾什旗	Gla bo gshis
North Range		
22. Rubarma	日班麻旗	Ru bar ma
23. Shoba	勺哇旗	Sho ba
24. Samar-Rongdrok	岔麻隆地旗	Sa dmar rong 'brog
25. Rapso-Lölung	約沙必拉旗	Rab so slos lung
26. Toucho-Rongdrok	土橋旗	Tho'u cho rong 'drog
27. Töma	多麻旗	Stod ma
28. Akhor-Lungba	阿禾旗	A 'khor lung ba
29. Chakmarong	沙麻隆住旗	Chag ma rong
Front Range: Northern Tao, Lower Stream		
30. Öké-Marnang	口子下家人旗	'os ka'i mar nang
Back Range: Upper Tébo		
31. Todok	當多旗	Rto 'dogs
32. Gyiba	益哇旗	Gyi ba
33. Wapa	哇巴旗	Wa pa
34. Sippa	什巴旗	Srib pa
35. Nyinba	尼巴旗	Nyin ba
36. Méma-Khasum	曼麻卡松旗	Smad ma kha gsum
37. Dzamblha	札半旗	Dzam blha

Back Range: Lower Tébo		
38. Takra	達拉旗	Stag ra
39. Dorakhok	多力禾旗	Rdo ra khog
40. Azha	阿夏旗	A zha
41. Gyané	尖尼旗	Rgya ne
42. Nyinngö-Bartsang	尼傲哇藏旗	Nyin ngo'i bar gtsang
43. Endzi	安子旗	En 'dzi
44. Khapa-Luchuk	卡巴力秀旗	Kha pa klu phyug
45. Jabap	桑坦旗	Bya 'bab
Back Range: Drukchu		
46. Nyinkha	陽山旗	Nyin kha
47. Temp	鐵坦旗	Them pa
48. Sipkha	蔭山旗	Srib kha
49. Tépa	代巴旗	The pa
Tégyü Pönpo 宕昌馬土司		
Back Range: Drukchu		
50. Nyinngo	陽旗	Nyin ngo
51. Sipngo	蔭旗	Srib ngo
52. Töma	上旗	Stod ma
53. Méma	後旗	Smad ma
Nyentsa Gönpo 洮州咎土司		
Front Range: Northern Tao, Middle-Lower Stream		
54. Nupma-Gongma	上西路旗	Nub ma gong ma
55. Nupma-Gapma	下西路旗	Nub ma 'gab ma
56. Yarkha	牙卡路旗	Yar kha
57. Zhingna Marnang	南鄉納麻那旗	Zhing na mar nang
58. Zhinglo-Gyangba	東鄉錄元山旗	Zhing lo gyang ba
59. Gyosa	約沙旗	Gyo sa
60. Zhingla-Bumshé	北鄉新堡什旗	Zhing la 'bum gshes
Marnyung Khenpo 麻奴寺僧綱		
Front Range: Northern Tao, Upper-Middle Stream		
61. Sipngo	蔭山旗	Srib ngo
62. Nyinngo	陽山旗	Nyin ngo
Tsoksum Gönpo 洮州卓遜楊土司		
Front Range: Northern Tao, Middle Stream		
63. Tsoksum	卓遜旗	Tshogs sums

Map 4. Banners in North Range, Front Range and Back Range across the Luchu and Drukchu Valleys in the Nineteenth Century



## Introduction

This dissertation examines the resilience of the intertwined Tibetan political and social structures in the eastern Tibetan Plateau during the destructive historical course of China's far-reaching transition from a dynastic empire to a nation-state from the late Qing to the early People's Republic of China. It focuses on the "chieftain system" (*tusi zhidu* 土司制度), as defined originally by Chinese imperial states, and the *tsowa* organization that sustained the social, cultural and political order of the Chone Kingdom (*Co ne rgyal khab*; *Zhuoni tusi wangguo* 卓尼土司王國) and local societies throughout the transition of Inner Asia from an imperial frontier to the Chinese nation-state's ethnic borderland. In contrast to research that treats the major state powers and frontier elites as the primary historical players in a center-periphery paradigm, this dissertation adds the locals as the third dimension to the unfolding of events, emphasizing the agency of *tshe ba* (pronounced *tsowa*; *cuowa* 措哇 or *zu* 族). It analyzes the complex interactions among the "Great State," frontier powers and local societies, offering an emic understanding of the evolving commensal relationship between the frontier rulers and the local people.

Using the century-long slow demise of the Chone Kingdom from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century as a case, this study demonstrates how major political change and social violence arising outside this region profoundly impacted this particular polity and society and set in motion and drove multiple waves of often devastating social and political transformation. However, even as these frontier Tibetans were repeatedly drawn into the wars and revolutions of others at great cost to their lives and communities, this dissertation is not solely a story of destruction. Much of what follows, indeed, is a history of struggle for preservation and adaptation, illustrating how the Chone kings and *tsowa* maintained their

relevance over time in straining social-political circumstances that continually weakened the very foundations of their existence. Key to this process was, moreover, the formation of a Han Chinese migration society and a Hui Muslim society undergoing their own evolutionary struggles amid these long Tibetan predominant territories. Frontier Chinese and Muslims both transgressed ethnic boundaries and cooperated with Tibetan social and political systems. The modern history of this place cannot be understood without recognizing how Tibetan, Chinese and Muslim societies, living in close proximity to each other and all involved in and traumatized by the extreme violence of these decades, had to deal with and accommodated each other and successive outside powers and armed interlopers over repeated cycles of turbulence and relative calm.

From 1862 to 1952, the Chone Kingdom was transformed from a self-governed frontier polity of the Qing Empire into a Tibetan autonomous prefecture of the PRC. Those several hundred *tsowa* within the kingdom became villages administrated by the local governmental apparatus of the Chinese nation-state. In this course, the organizational principles of local *tsowa* were disrupted and even destroyed according to the regional variations. It is clear that the central powers' progressive expansion was not the only explanation. The destructive events erupted outside the kingdom usually instigated social violence and had disastrous consequences in this frontier region. The political, military, religious and taxation systems, as well as the *tsowa* organization of the kingdom were heavily affected by those external wars and political changes that resulted in the Tibetan depopulation and the Chinese and Muslim migrations into the Tibetan territories.

The Chone Kingdom once extended along the Luchu (*Klu chu*; Taohe 洮河) and Drukchu (*'Brug chu*; Bailongjiang 白龍江) rivers between the upper Yellow and Yangtze river basins in the easternmost Tibetan Plateau. It was reputed to be ruled by a lineage extending eventually to twenty kings (*dgon po*, *rgyal po*, *sa skyong*) who descended from

Yeshe Dargye (*Ye shes dar rgyas*), the minister to the Tibetan Emperor Ralpacan (*Ral pa can*, also *khri gtsug lde btsan*, 802–838) trusted with tax collection in the eastern border region of the Tibetan Empire (7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>1</sup> According to the genealogical narrative of the Chone rulers, the royal lineage was a branch of the Dak (*Dga'*), one of the six divinized ancestral clans that descended from the Bodhisattva monkey and demoness in Tibet. In the late fourteenth century, after being defeated in a pastoral feud, the First Chone King Changti and his brother Ngoti (*Dngo thi'*; Aodi 敖地) moved from Dzögé (*Mdzod dge*; Zuogai 佐蓋) in present-day western Sichuan to Chone in what is now southwestern Gansu, and established Chotsang (*Co tshang*; Zhuozang 著藏) Federation. From the fifteenth century onward, the descendants of Changti developed the federation into a kingdom, and ruled a realm with the size of Belgium up to the 1950s.<sup>2</sup>

Inner Asia was not at all a power vacuum and stateless borderland occupied by non-state tribes and meant to be conquered by an expansive center. Similar to other principalities, chiefdoms or state-like powers in Inner Asia, the Chone Kingdom was an evolving political entity which had a Tibetan sovereign family paying allegiance to the imperial center and managing native subjects through a complex system. In this research, I regard this kingdom as a “local state” with full autonomy. It had own political system and unique ways of governance. Yet, it simultaneously submitted to the indirect rule of the “Great State,” China, through the so-called chieftain system.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Based on traditional Tibetan history, Ralpacan was the 41<sup>st</sup> Tibetan King. In his reign, the Tibetan Empire reached the height of its power and partially annexed today’s Gansu, Sichuan, Yunnan and Xinjiang. For a brief record of Ralpacan and Yeshe Dargye, see Tsepon Wangchuk Deden Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, trans. Derek F. Maher (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2010), 147–148, 160.

<sup>2</sup> This family history is based on the widely circulated local narrative “Co ne dbon po’i lo rgyus [History of the Chone King].” Also see Chogs sums rdo rje (Yang Shihong), *Zhuoni yang tusi zhuanlüe* 卓尼楊土司傳略 (Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> According to Timothy Brook, “Great State” is an Inner Asian concept, based on the Mongolian term *yeke ulus*, demonstrating the rulership of one single family and the nature of this rulership is expansion and conquest. Brook indicates, “The sovereign of the Great State was endowed with an authority that was potentially universal: those within must submit to his authority, those without must defer to it. The concept matters because

The kingdom was established upon several hundred *tsowa*. As chapter 1 elaborates in detail, *tsowa* consisting of several to around thirty households/tents, was the common social unit of Tibetan ethnographic groups in the northern and eastern Tibetan Plateau. In *tsowa*, as I argue, the agnatic kinship, fictitious kinship, mutual-assistant network and communal territoriality were the main organizational principles. The *tsowa* membership was defined by patrilineal bone (*rus pa*), a Tibetan understanding of blood, and all secular and divine relationships organized around and maintained by it. I coin the term “*tsowa* societies” as an analytic approach to examine 1) the micro “imagined communities” of Tibetan ethnographic groups on a multiethnic frontier before the prevalence of the unitary Tibetan nationality or ethnicity; 2) the operation of the Chone Kingdom’s political system at the local level; 3) the initiatives of *tsowa* in coping with the central powers, the king and his officials, as well as Others.<sup>4</sup>

Employing “local state” and “*tsowa* societies” as two analytic nexuses, this dissertation investigates the entangled social and political structural resilience and evolutions in the Chone Kingdom along with the Chinese state’s incorporation of the Inner Asian frontier from 1862 to 1952. On the one hand, it probes into how the far-reaching wars, political events and social changes in nineteenth and twentieth century China, aside from the multilayer destructions, resulted in the social, political, religious and economic evolutions on its remote frontier, and the eventual demise of the Chone Kingdom. On the other hand, it investigates the local attitudes and actions to these events and consequential changes. It examines the multiple expressions of resistance, negotiation and adaption of the Tibetan frontiersmen. Having a close examination of the diverse Chone ruler-subject relations and the disparate interethnic relations, this dissertation regards the frontier as a center unto itself, tells a history

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it was a basic fact for those who owed the Great State allegiance as well as for those entering from zones beyond its reach.” See *Great State: China and the World* (London: Profile Books Ltd., 2019), 42–43.

<sup>4</sup> For the “imagined communities,” see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 2006).

from the inside out and the bottom up, and reveals the uneven social-political transformation and the unequal Chinese state-building in the Tibetan regions.

### The Chone Kingdom on the Geo-Political and Historical Margins

According to traditional Tibetan geographical knowledge, Tibet is roughly divided into the upper three divisions of Ngari (*stod mnga' ris skor gsum*), the intermediate four wing-districts of Ü-Tsang (*bar dbus gstang ru bzhi*) and the upper-lower six ranges of Kham (*smad mdo kham sgang drug*). As a legacy of the Tibetan imperial expansion since the seventh century, Kham (*Khams*; Kangqu 康區) referred to the frontier converging in the East, including Dokham (*Mdo khams*; Duokang 朵甘思) and Domé (*Mdo smad*; Duosimai 朵思麻). Over time, Kham came exclusively to refer to as the “Four Rivers and Six Ranges” (*chu bzhi sgang druk*) between Ü-Tsang (Wusizang 烏斯藏; Central Tibet) and southwestern China proper; Domé meant the region between the Anyé Machen (*A myes rma chen*; Anian-maqing 阿念瑪卿) and the Dolam Ringmo (*Mdo lam ring mo*; Qilianshan 祁連山) mountain ranges in the northern and eastern Himalayan Plateau. The toponym “Amdo (*A mdo*; Anduo 安多)” was coined by combining the first syllables of the names of the two mountain ranges.<sup>5</sup> Ü-Tsang, Amdo and Kham are loosely defined by Tibetan cultural-linguistic regional variations, based on which the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) government drew administrative boundaries in Tibet when the Mongol emperor donated them as three religious estates (*chol kha*) to the Sakya spiritual ruler (*gong ma/khri 'dzin*).<sup>6</sup> From this perspective, the Chone Kingdom straddled Amdo and Kham, within which the Amdo- and

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<sup>5</sup> Brag dgon pa dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas, *Mdo smad chos 'byung* (Lanzhou, Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1982), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Song Lian, *Yuanshi* 元史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), j87, 2193–2196, j202, 4517–4519. Stag tshang rdzong pa dpal 'byor bzang po, *Rgya bod kyi yig tshang Mkhas pa dga' byed chen mo 'dzam gling gsal ba'i me long*, 270–272.

Kham-language speaking settlements as well as some unidentified ethno-linguistic enclaves interlocked with each other along the Luchu and Drukchu valleys.

Due to the conflicting sovereign claims of the Chinese and Tibetan governments since the early twentieth century, scholars generally differentiate political Tibet from ethnographic Tibet. Political Tibet refers to Ü-Tsang, which was ruled by the Ganden Phodrang (*Dga' ldan pho brang*) government under the reign of the Dalai Lamas from the 1640s to the 1950s and overlaps with today's Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR). Ethnographic Tibet refers to all regions inhabited by people with the presumably unitary Tibetan ethnicity. In addition to Ü-Tsang, it includes Amdo and Kham extending from Qinghai, southwestern Gansu, western Sichuan to northwestern Yunnan, where the Tibetan central government in most cases exerted no political and religious control at all.<sup>7</sup> In the Lhasa-centric narratives, Amdo and Kham were demarcated and autonomously managed by several complex nexuses of authorities consisting of local temporary and ecclesiastic leaders who claimed power by inheritance, communal election, alliance and/or conquest, representatives appointed by the Dalai Lamas, and officials assigned by the imperial courts. The terms “petty frontier states” and “borderland barbarians” designated the marginality of Amdo-Kham polities and local inhabitants.<sup>8</sup> Among these frontier states in eastern ethnographic Tibet, the Chone Kingdom was the paramount one. The Lhasa regime never claimed to rule over this region. For local Tibetans, significant ties linking them with Ü-Tsang reflected a shared past with the Tibetan

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<sup>7</sup> For the early introductions of the political Tibet and ethnographic Tibet, see Charles Bell, *Tibet: Past and Present* (1924; reprint, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1992), 5–8; Hugh Richardson, *Tibet and Its History* (1962; reprint, Boston: Shambhala, 1986), 1–2. For an investigation of the Tibetan ethnicity and nationality, see Sara Shneiderman, “Barbarians at the border and Civilising Projects: Analysing Ethnic and National Identities in the Tibetan Context,” in Christiaan Klieger ed., *Tibetan Borderlands* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 9–34.

<sup>8</sup> Dge 'dun chos 'phel, *Deb ther dkar po* (Lanzhou: Xibei minzu xueyuan yanjiusuo, 1981), 89–90.

Empire, common cultural practices, flourishing monastic education, influential reincarnation lineages and active pilgrimage routes.<sup>9</sup>

In Chinese imperial official histories, Amdo and Kham bordered the Longyou 隴右 and Jiannan 劍南 circuits (*dao* 道) that were monitored by commissioners and gradually controlled by the regional military governors (*jiedushi* 節度使) on the edge of Tang China (618–907) where it met the Tibetan Empire. For the Song dynasty (960–1279), the Tibetan borderland adjoined Qinfeng 秦鳳 and Chengdu-fu 成都府 circuits (*lu* 路), being partially captured by the Gusiluo 唃廝囉 (*Rgyal sras*) Kingdom (997–1099), the Tangut Xia (1038–1227) and the Jurchen Jin (1114–1234). When ethnographic Tibet was incorporated into the Yuan Empire, it was demarcated into three administrative regions under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs (*Xuanzhengyuan* 宣政院) headed by the state preceptor (*guoshi* 國師) of the Sakya sect. In the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), some permanent Chinese garrisons (*weisuo* 衛所) were established in eastern Amdo-Kham. An artificial border combining rammed-earthen walls (*bianqiang* 邊牆), trenches (*haoqian* 壕塹), fortresses (*baozhai* 堡寨) and passes (*guan'ai* 關隘) taking strategic advantage of the local topographical features were built to protect western Shaanxi-Sichuan from Tibetans. Implementing the policy to “employ barbarians to rule barbarians” (*yiyi zhiyi* 以夷制夷), the Ming court vested in Tibetan secular and religious leaders of Amdo and Kham, as subalterns, the handling of local affairs and securing of frontier stability. The Qing Empire (1644–1911) inherited this policy and retained the Ming Shaanxi-Amdo border as the dividing line between Chinese subprefectures run by regular bureaucrats or appointed officials (*liuguan*

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<sup>9</sup> See Tshe ring don grub, *Mdo smad co ne'i lo rgyus sa gzhi skyong ba'i rgyan* (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe), 2016.

流官) and indigenous regions managed by indigenous chiefs or native officials (*tusi/tuguan* 土司/土官).<sup>10</sup>

From the Sinocentric point of view, the Chone rulers were conferred titles and official positions by the emperors and known as the “Yang chieftains” (Yang *tusi* 楊土司), and were assumed to pay their allegiance to the emperors and obtain imperial ratification of their inheritance. Qing officials and Gansu Chinese scholars of the time documented that the Yang chieftains governed 48 banners (*qi* 旗) comprising 520, in fact more than 600, *tsowa* arrayed along the borderland of Shaanxi-Gansu-Sichuan were the most potent *tusi* in the empire. The diverse Tibetan groups across the kingdom were classified as “peripheral people” (*bianmin* 邊民) or “barbarians” (*Xifan* 西番), who were indirectly ruled through a “loose rein” (*jimi* 羈縻) policy and so were expected to be eventually “civilized” by Confucian ethics someday.<sup>11</sup> Even as the Yang chieftains were nominally subordinated to the Ming Shaanxi and Qing Shaan-Gan provincial governors, the chieftain office (*tusi yamen* 土司衙門) was excluded from the Chinese regular administrative system. The regular bureaucrats rarely meddled in the domestic affairs of the chiefdom.<sup>12</sup>

From a local Tibetan point of view, this rich, dominant and long-standing ruling family funded several dozen monasteries and sponsored many famous lamas, receiving generous praise in the accounts of monastic scholars. Amdo monastic scholars Jamyang Zhépa

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<sup>10</sup> Liu Xu et al., *Jiu tang shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), j196–197; Wang Qinruo and Yang Yi, *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989). Toqto'a et al., *Songshi* 宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), j492; Chen Bangzhan, *Songshi jishi benmo* 宋史紀事本末 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), j41; Ma Duanlin, *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), j335; Song Lian et al., *Yuan shi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), j121–123; Zhang Tingyu et al., *Ming Shi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju chubanshe, 1974). For the Ming fortification, see Zhang Yu, *Bianzheng kao* 邊政考 (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chubanshe, 1990).

<sup>11</sup> For “civilization project,” see Stevan Harrell ed., *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers* (Seattle, London: University of Washington Press, 1995), 19.

<sup>12</sup> Zhang Yandu, *Taozhou tingzhi* 洮州廳志 (hereafter *TZTZ*; Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe youxian gongsi, 1970), 842; Zhao Erxun, *Qingshi gao* 清史稿 (Beijing: Zhonghuashuju, 1977), j517.14307.



Könchok Jikmé Wangpo (*'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa dkon mchog 'jigs med dbang po*, 1728–1791) and Drakgönpa Könchok Tenpa Rapgyé (*Brag dgon pa dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas*, 1800–1869) provided lavish details to portray the Chone rulers especially from the Eleventh King Makzor Gonpo to the Seventeenth King Rinchen Tendzin Trinle Dorje, as Buddhist kings (*gong ma*). Both Jikmé Wangpo and Drakgönpa had strong personal relations with the Chone royal family. The latter resided in northern Chone for a decade to avoid the Muslim revolt devastating northwestern China in the 1860s, and completed his monumental manuscript at Khyagé Monastery (*Khya dge dgon dge ldan legs bshad gling*).<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, their historical writings are deliberately crafted and mythified to serve religious and political needs. They paid little attention to the local Tibetan secular societies and experiences. In local Chinese gazetteers, there is much information concerning Tibetan groups, raids, trade, tribute, title endowments and ample stereotypical culturally-prejudiced images of the Xifan as backward and uncivilized. Few gazetteer compilers documented how the “chieftain system” (*tusi zhidu* 土司制度) functioned on the ground, how the little known political system bridged the governmental gap between the king and his subjects, and how local Tibetans actually organized their societies.<sup>14</sup> As a result, the Chone Kingdom and its people were not only on the margins of both Tibetan and Chinese centers’ geographic views and historical narratives, but also marginalized in local Buddhist-centric and Confucian-centric narratives.

Likewise, since two missionary families took refuge in Chone in the midst of the Muslim revolt in 1895, a considerable number of Westerners visited and sojourned in Chone

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<sup>13</sup> *'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa Dkon mchog 'jigs med dbang po*, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag* (Lanzhou, Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1990), 192.

<sup>14</sup> See “Yan’ge 沿革,” “Jianzhi 建制” and “Fanzu 番族” in Zhao Tingrui, *Shaanxi tongzhi* 陝西通志 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2005); An Jiyuan, *Gongchang fuzhi* 鞏昌府志 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2008); Wang Yuanjiong and Tian Ersui, *Minzhou zhi* 岷州志 (hereafter *MZZ*; Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2008); Zhang Yandu, *TZTZ*.

and left general information of this region and local events at the edges of their records. In the light of the experience of David Ekvall, who was received by the Eighteenth King Tsewang Sonam Tobgyel and his successor Lobzang Tendzin Namgyel Trinle Dorje around the 1900s:

Of these [native chiefs of Kham and Amdo] by far the most powerful is the Prince of Chone; who exercises authority over forty-eight clans of Fan-tsi (Tibetan), numbering in all seventy or eighty thousand people. He is, for all practical purposes, independent, receiving taxes in money or kind from his people, without having to pay any tribute to the Chinese Emperor. The only obligation devolving upon him being a guarantee to supply a certain number of troops in case of Moslem rebellion or the invasion of hostile tribes.<sup>15</sup>

This introduction to Chone was well circulated among Western readers and was repeatedly consulted and referenced by later missionaries and explorers who trekked across the region or sought refuge in Chone during the third Muslim revolt. However, local inhabitants never took the central focus in the works of Western visitors. They remained exotic and ambiguous elements used to decorate narratives of adventure or religious evangelism.

Furthermore, between the 1940s and the 1950s, some Republican scholars and Communist Party officials surveyed Chone with the help of the Twentieth King Pema Wangchuk, producing a culturally assimilative and politically integrative narrative to meet the demands of nation-state building in this ethnic borderland. From the late 1970s onward, local intellectuals and CCP officials have used imperial and Republican materials as well as fieldwork research to produce multiple volumes of gazetteers and local histories of present-day Tsö (*Gtsos*; Heicuo/Hezuo 黑錯/合作), Linxia 臨夏 (Hezhou 河州) and Longnan/Jiezhou 隴南/階州 cities, and Chone, Tébo (*The bo*; Diezhou/Diebu 疊州/迭部), Drukchu (*'Brug chu*; Zhouqu/Xigu 舟曲/西固), Luchu

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<sup>15</sup> David Ekvall, *Outposts or Tibetan Border Sketches* (New York: Alliance Press Co., 1907), 124–125.

(*Klu chu*; Luqu 碌曲), Lintan/Taozhou 臨潭/洮州, Sangchu/Labrang (*bsang chu/bla brang* Xiahe 夏河/拉卜楞); Minxian 岷縣 (Minzhou 岷州) and Lintao 臨洮 (Didao 狄道) counties—places that once were fully or partially under the jurisdiction of the Chone kings. Both Tibetan and Chinese scholars heavily rely on these sources to present descriptions of the “Yang Chieftain family” (*yang tusi jiazu* 楊土司家族), sketch local events and offer an impression of what they render as an unchanging society and static political and monastic systems in the kingdom. Because the region has become inaccessible to foreign travelers and researchers since the late 1940s, Western scholars also used these materials to overview the kingdom’s past. Yet, there is no extensive English-language study on the social, political or religious history of this region, a lacuna in Sino-Tibetan frontier or Amdo studies. Overall, the early written records generalize contemporary situations in exact locales, frame specific events and focus on the towering authorities on this frontier. Without comprehensive fieldwork to examine these sources, later researchers who set forth arguments on the basis of these ideally “first-hand records” inevitably slide toward oversimplification.

Motivated by a dissatisfaction with the inaccurate, overly-generalized political and religious history of this place, and the total absence of any serious social historical study of this region, my dissertation approaches the historical transition of this kingdom from the bottom-up. It focuses on varied Tibetan local experiences of waves of natural catastrophe, war, social unrest and “Great State” incorporation from 1862 to 1952.<sup>16</sup>

It examines the historical transformation of *tsowa*, the Tibetan social-religious-economic-territorial unit approximately equivalent to the sedentary village or pastoral

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<sup>16</sup> Timothy Brook, *Great State: China and the World*, 42–43.

encampment in the northern and eastern Tibetan Plateau. More specifically, it probes into the dynamic ruler-subject relationship between the Chone kings and *tsowa* in the kingdom. It analyzes the interactions between these *tsowa* and neighboring Han Chinese and Hui Muslim communities and the migrations of non-Tibetan people into different *tsowa* territories. It also traces the intercourse between the kingdom's seven Tibetan ethnographic groups, the Chone government and the Qing imperial, Republican and Communist states alongside the state building process in this region. In doing so, this dissertation delves into the divergent internal changes of these *tsowa*, and the collapse of the political, military, taxation and land systems of the kingdom that were closely associated with *tsowa* organization and the local social, political and cultural norms.

### **Inner Asian Frontier: China from Empire to Nation**

The arguments of this dissertation engage with the discussions of the Inner Asian frontier history. This is especially so relating to Amdo-Kham as a geohistorical place of multicultural encounters, a non-binary conceptualized process, a “middle ground,” a “convergence zone” and a center unto itself.<sup>17</sup> In recent scholarship in Amdo and Kham frontier studies, it is difficult to ignore the wide range of terms that have been adopted by scholars—Sino-Tibetan frontier, (non-binary) Sino-Tibetan borderland,

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<sup>17</sup> For the use of the concept of “middle ground” to analyze the relationship between imperial China and the politics on the Sino-Tibetan frontier, see Paul Nietupski, *Labrang Monastery: A Tibetan Buddhist Community on the Inner Asian Borderlands, 1709–1958* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2011); Jack Patrick Hayes, *A Change in Worlds on the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands: Politics, Economies, and Environments in Northern Sichuan* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014); Yudru Tsomu, *The Rise of Gönpö Namgyel in Kham: The Blind Warrior of Nyarong* (New York, London: Lexington Books, 2015). For understanding the Sino-Tibetan borderland as a “convergence zone where the Han and Tibetan peoples and cultures connect, interact, exchange, compete, blend, and coexist,” see Tenzin Jinba, *In the land of the Eastern Queendom: The politics of gender and ethnicity on the Sino-Tibetan border* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014), 7. For a discussion of Kham as a “meeting ground of diverging forces,” see Lawrence 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).

Yunnan frontier, Sichuan frontier, Sichuan's Tibetan borderlands, China's northwest frontier and China's Muslim borderlands—in order to demonstrate the geographic, political and ethnic foci of their studies. Some regional historians also have attempted to create meta-geographical categories by defining the massive borderland between China, the Middle East, India and Russia as Inner Asia and Central Asia in order to emphasize a certain centrality of the research of each specific region.<sup>18</sup> Straddling northern Kham and southern Amdo as well as Gansu and Sichuan, the Chone Kingdom was located on the interface of Amdo, Kham, Shaanxi, Gansu and Sichuan. It adjoined Han 漢 Chinese and Hui 回 Muslim societies in the east, Dongxiang 東鄉 Muslim, Salar 撒拉 Muslim and Labrang Tibetan communities in the north, Henan Mongol 河南蒙古 and Luchu Tibetan groups in the west, and Tibetan, Qiang 羌 and Han settlements along the mountainous Gansu-Sichuan provincial border in the south. It neighbored multiple regional political, religious, cultural and trading centers. Taking these features into account, I opt to use “Inner Asian frontier” instead of “Sino-Tibetan frontier” as a neutral and inclusive term to address the geographic, political, social and cultural location of the Chone Kingdom. This permits us viewing this autonomous polity in its interface with multiple ethnic groups even as it was situated on a frontier between Chinese and Tibetan centers of power.

The last several decades have witnessed an upsurge in Western research on Inner Asia that has been considerably influenced by American frontier historiography. The Western inquiry in the early twentieth century often derives from a fascination with the

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<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of Mongolia's position in Inner Asia/Central Asia/Eurasia studies, see Christopher Atwood, “Is There Such a Thing as Central/Inner (Eur)Asia and Is Mongolia a Part of It?” in Pula Sabloff, ed., *Mapping Mongolia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). For a “new approach” to understand these meta-geographical regions and their “transnational bonds” by complementing the Central Asian and Inner Asian studies with East Asian studies, see Uradyn Bulag, “Where is East Asia? Central Asian and Inner Asian Perspectives on Regionalism,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 3, no.10 (2005): 3.

geography, botany, society, trade, history and culture outside China proper, as well as the international political and military confrontations on the vast frontier of Qing China. Since the 1930s, the pioneering researches of Owen Lattimore, who travelled extensively in Inner Asia, were inspired by the “Frontier Thesis” of Frederick Jackson Turner and following debates around it in the United States. Unlike Turner articulating how the progressive expansion of “civilization” on the moving western frontier line shaped the American society and democracy, Lattimore focused on the interaction between steppe and sown, emphasizing the “native” viewpoint on the Inner Asian frontier.<sup>19</sup> He suggested that the frontier of China’s Inner Asia was a dynamic cross-civilizational configuration, an “inward-facing frontier” and a “pivot” between China and Russia. He ascribed the Chinese dynastic cycle to the dynamics of the power balance between Inner Asia and the Central Plains (*zhongyuan* 中原). Analogizing Inner Asia to the engine of dynastic cyclical history, he underlined that the Chinese agricultural colonization, Western imperialist penetration, economic integration, modern technological applications of weapon and railway, and fixed national border-making since the nineteenth century ultimately led to China’s change from the Qing to a modern state instead of another dynasty.<sup>20</sup>

From the 1950s to the 1980s, Western research on China was deeply influenced by Teng Ssu-      pioneering study on the late Qing scholar-official class’ response to the aggressive modern West, and John Fairbank’s Chinese world order paradigm to

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<sup>19</sup> The “Frontier Thesis” is the foundational study of American frontier history. It focuses on what the western frontier contributed to the formation of American society. See Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920).

<sup>20</sup> Owen Lattimore, “Chinese Colonization in Manchuria,” in *Studies in Frontier History: Collected Papers, 1928–1958* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 307–338; “Origins of the Great Wall of China: a frontier concept in theory and practice,” *Geographical Review* 27, no.4 (1937): 97–118; “The Geographical Factor in Mongol History,” *Geographical Journal* 91 (1938): 241–258; *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1940); “The Frontier in History,” in *Relazioni del X Congresso Internazionale di Scienze Storiche, vol.1* (Firenze: G. C. Sansoni, 1955), 136; *Pivot of Asia: Sinkiang and the Inner Asian Frontiers of China and Russia* (Boston: Little Brown, 1950).

explain China's dilemma of transforming the empire into a modern nation defined by Western nationalism and modernity. As Fairbank indicated, the policy and behavior of the China-based metropolitan center was embedded in the traditional notion of the "Mandate of Heaven" and an assumed superiority of Chinese culture. The imperial center relied on the tributary practice to maintain a political-cultural hierarchical system and ritualize its relations with neighboring states and indigenous polities.<sup>21</sup> In response to this sinocentric paradigm and broadly the Western-centric "impact-response approach" to China's modern evolution, some Western scholars situated Inner Asia as the center of their studies to write "China-centered history of China."<sup>22</sup> Their studies were inspired by the new development of American frontier historiography that came under the influence of social history and postcolonial theory in the late 1970s and defined the frontier as a "zone of interpenetration between two previously distinct societies."<sup>23</sup> Mark Mancall, Morris Rossabi, Joseph Fletcher, Frederic Wakeman and Thomas Barfield took much further Lattimore's exploration of the interactions between sown and steppe. They explicated what makes China an empire by showing the diverse and flexible ways the "polyethnic" center came to control China proper, Tibet, Xinjiang, Mongolia and Manchuria.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> See Teng Ssu-yü, *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839–1923* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954). John Fairbank ed., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968).

<sup>22</sup> Paul A. Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

<sup>23</sup> For the contention of frontier as a zone of cultural interaction, see Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson, eds., *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981).

<sup>24</sup> See Mark Mancall, *Russia and China: Their Diplomatic Relations to 1728* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971); Morris Rossabi, *China and Inner Asia: From 1368 to the Present Day* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975); Joseph Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner Asia c. 1800," in John Fairbank ed., *The Cambridge History of China: Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911*, vol. 10, part 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 35–106; Frederic Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); and Thomas Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China* (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1989), chaps. 8 and 9.

This trend of inquiry paved the way for a subsequent generation of scholarship in Inner Asian frontier history that views the formation of the cosmopolitan center from its margins. Thanks to the accessibility of multilingual collections of historical sources in China, particularly the examination of archives in Manchu language, scholars of the “new Qing studies” school illustrated the disparate interactions between the imperial center and its multiethnic peripheries and have displaced the sinocentric paradigm. Resonating with the literature on empires in history, “new Qing studies” pay attention to the imperial core of Manchu governance, and the socio-political mechanisms taking place to maintain a variety of direct and indirect political control over multiethnic polities along with territorial expansion and political negotiation.<sup>25</sup> According to the Qing-centric approach of Harold L. Kahn, Gertraude Roth Li and Evelyn Rawski, the Manchu royal house adopted multiple political systems and cultural practices to maintain its governance in the Han and non-Han regions.<sup>26</sup> In Inner Asia, the Manchu emperors employed Tibetan Buddhism and represented themselves as bodhisattvas to legitimate their control over Mongolia. They established the patron-priest relationship (*mchod yon*; *tanyue* 檀越) with the Dalai Lamas to rule Tibet. At the same time, they intended to retain and even reconstruct the Manchu identity to sustain the role of conqueror. In China proper, they ascended the Chinese throne as “Sons of Heaven” ruling the former Ming provinces from the apex of the Confucian hierarchy. On the ethnoculturally heterogenous southern frontier, they implemented the policy of

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<sup>25</sup> For the comparative approach of empire studies, see Michael W. Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986); Joseph W. Esherick, Hasan Kayali, Eric Van Young eds., *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World* (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2006); Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>26</sup> Harold L. Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes: Image and Reality in the Ch'ien-lung Reign* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971); Gertraude Roth Li, “The Rise of the Early Manchu State: A Portrait Drawn from Manchu Source to 1636,” PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1975; Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).



administrative regularization (*gaitu guiliu* 改土歸流) to make direct rule and promote sinicization.<sup>27</sup> As Pamela Crossley indicates, “simultaneity” signified the political ideology of the Qing rulers.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to the deconstruction of the Manchu center, “new Qing” historians examine the military, political and economic operations of the empire on the Inner Asian frontier. Based on the Qing administrative systems employed to rule different socio-political and cultural parts of Inner Asia, scholars have distinguished the region of Ü-Tsang, Xinjiang, Mongolia and Manchuria subordinated to Board for the Administration of Outlying Regions (*Lifanyuan* 理藩院), or “outer frontier” (*waibian* 外邊), from the places at the outskirts Chinese agricultural zones in Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, Sichuan and Yunnan, or “inner frontier” (*neibian* 內邊) ruled by local authorities such as *tusi* and monk officials who were nominally supervised by nearby regular bureaucrats.<sup>29</sup> In *Beyond the Pass*, James Millward examines Qing imperialism in Turkic Xinjiang, highlighting that the intertwined fiscal demands of conquest and control and penetration of Chinese merchants underlaid the entire course of Manchu expansion outside Jiayuguan 嘉峪關. He analyzes the Qing economic and ethnic policies in Xinjiang, elucidates the complex trade activities between China proper and Central Asia, and challenges the assumptions of a tribute-based “Chinese world order” as well as William Skinner’s concept of nine “macro regions” defined by a core-

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<sup>27</sup> David M. Farquhar, “Emperor as Bodhisattva in the Governance of the Ch’ing Empire,” in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 38, no.1 (1978): 5–34; Mark Elliot, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); Philippe Forêt, *Mapping Chengde: The Qing Landscape Enterprise* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000); James Millward et al. eds., *New Qing Imperial History: The Making of Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004).

<sup>28</sup> Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>29</sup> James A. Millward, “New Perspectives on the Qing Frontier,” in Gail Hershatter et al. eds., *Remapping China: Fissures in Historical Terrain* (Stanford University Press, 1996), 115–123.

periphery market system in China.<sup>30</sup> In the wake of the studies on frontier administrations, Dai Yingcong revealed that the eighteenth century Qing strategy to suppress Zunghars (Zhungaer 準噶爾) in order to control Central Tibet rejuvenated the Sichuan socioeconomic landscape devastated in the Ming-Qing transition, and transformed the region into a “key strategic base” to support the Qing frontier expansion.<sup>31</sup> Likewise, Wang Xiuyu investigates the expansion of imperial power on the Sino-Tibetan frontier in Sichuan when the Qing was threatened by the Anglo-Russian “Great Game” and resisted by Kham local forces in the last decades of the empire. He suggests that the relations between the Qing court and Sichuan officials, and between the court/provincial subalterns and Tibet/Kham authorities were fluid and conditioned by regionalism.<sup>32</sup> These studies are in relation to the center-periphery approach yet centering the Qing empire building on the dynamic, negotiated and multisided processes.<sup>33</sup>

In terms of the Chinese nation-state building process, Western and Chinese academics often have pursued divergent narratives. In China, revolutionary leaders and nationalists often illustrate the incorporation of non-Chinese regions by the Confucian Central State (*zhongguo* 中國) from two interwoven perspectives: cultural assimilation and territorial consistency. Rooted in the imperial statecraft writings of those dynasties under the threat of Others, in this case the Qing troubled by Inner Asian insurgents and

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<sup>30</sup> William Skinner, *Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Association for Asian Studies, 1965); *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977). James Millward, *Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759-1864* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 15–18.

<sup>31</sup> Dai Yingcong, *The Sichuan Frontier and Tibet: Imperial Strategy in the Early Qing* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 7–11.

<sup>32</sup> See Wang Xiuyu, *China's Last Imperial Frontier: Late Qing Expansion in Sichuan's Tibetan Borderlands* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2011).

<sup>33</sup> Peter Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005); Helen F. Siu, Pamela K. Crossley and Donald S. Sutton eds, *Empires at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); and Kent Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010).

Western powers, Chinese scholars in the early twentieth century employed the sinocentric paradigm to reconstitute the Qing geo-body, in which China proper was only a half of the complete Qing territory.<sup>34</sup> They embraced Western concepts of nationality and nation-state, and yet asserted the durability and assimilative strength of Chinese culture, demonstrating that the ethnic difference between Chinese and barbarians (*huayi zhibian* 華夷之辨) is rite/culture rather than the territoriality and race. The claims of Liang Qichao 梁啟超 and Sun Yat-sen 孫中山 endorsed the post-imperial political agenda to establish a nation with Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Tibetan and Hui under one union (*wuzu gonghe* 五族共和) in order to inherit the Qing territory. Their narratives of China's frontier centered on a single-directional process of Chinese culturalism and territorial expansionism, in which indigenous groups would be Sinicized (*hanhua* 漢化) by superior Chinese culture, borderland would be solidified (*shibian* 實邊) through Han migration and interethnic marriage, China would be shaped into a modern nation-state as a unitary "Chinese nation" (*zhonghua minzu* 中華民族).<sup>35</sup>

Following the fall of the Qing, the Chinese government exerted few substantial controls over Tibet, Xinjiang, Manchuria and Mongolia. Spurred on by the successive British, Russian and Japanese penetrations, invasions and, in cases, occupations in Inner Asia, some Chinese scholars initiated field research to rediscover the borderland.

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<sup>34</sup> For the Qing statecraft writings on Inner Asia, see Fu Heng, et al. eds., *Xiyu tongwen zhi* (1763), Zhang Mu, *Menggu youmu ji* (1843), Wei Yuan, *Sheng wu ji; Haiguo tuzhi*, He Changling and Wei Yuan, *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* (1873), and imperial memorials of late Qing officials such as Gong Zizhen (1792–1841), Wei Yuan (1794–1856), Lin Zexu (1785–1850), Zuo Zongtang (1812–1885), Li Hongzhang (1823–1901), Zhang Zhidong (1837–1909), Liu Jintang (1844–1894), Zhao Erfeng (1845–1911) and so on.

<sup>35</sup> Zhang Taiyan, "Ding fuchou zhi shifei," in *Minbao* 16, September 25; Liang Qichao, "Guojia sixiang bianqian yitong lun 國家思想變遷異同論," in *Yinbingshi heji* 飲冰室合集, vol.6, 11–12; Sun Zhongshan, "Linshi dazongtong xuanyanshu 臨時大總統宣言書," in *Sun Zhongshan quanji* 孫中山全集, vol.2, 2. For an analysis of the Chinese culturalism and territorial expansionism, see James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and Its Indigenes Became Chinese* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), chapter 1.

These surveys reached the peak when southwestern China temporarily served as the political, military, economic and educational base during the Sino-Japanese War from 1937 to 1945. For instance, Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 advocated the long-term melding of ethnic diversity (*minzu ronghe* 民族融合). Tan Qixiang 譚其驤 focused on Chinese frontier historical geography and mapped different dynastic administrative borders in Inner Asia. Inspired by Western social and anthropological studies, Li Anzhai 李安宅, Yu Shiyu 于式玉, Ren Naiqiang 任乃強, Lin Yaohua 林耀華 and Ma Hetian 馬鶴天 utilized field research to study the indigenous peoples, cultures, religions and political institutions in Amdo and Kham. As frontier inspectors or special commissioners assigned by the Nationalist Party or Guomindang 國民黨 (GMD) government, they often documented frontier socio-political circumstance in detail for the central government's reference. Their fieldwork findings corresponded to the Chinese-centered multiethnic nation-state building process which projected state power through military, political, economic and educational institutions. They demonstrated the significance of frontier development (*bianjiang kaifa* 邊疆開發) for the stabilization of borderland and the economic rejuvenation of war-torn China. Emphasizing the acculturation (*tonghua* 同化) of non-Han peoples, they depicted military conquests, administrative integration, agricultural colonization and the spread of institutionalized Confucian ethics and Han cultural practices on the frontier as the civilized Chinese center's endeavor to improve the cultural, political and economic standing of peoples on the peripheries.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Gu Jiegang, "Zhonghua minzu shi yige 中華民族是一個," *Yishi bao* 益世報, February 13, 1939; Tan Qixiang, *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji* 中國歷史地圖集 (1987, Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1991); Li Anzhai, *History of Tibetan Religion: A Study in the Field* (Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, The University of Tokyo, 1982); Yu Shiyu, *Yu Shiyu Zangqu kaocha wenji* 于式玉藏區考察文集 (Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 1990); Ren Naiqiang, *Kangzang shidi dagang* 康藏史地大綱 (Lhasa: Xizang renmin chubanshe, 1982); Lin Yaohua, "Chuan kang beijie de jiarong tusi 川康北界的嘉戎土司," in *Bianzheng gonglun* 邊政公論

In the People's Republic of China, scholars require careful self-censorship to avoid politically sensitive topics of ethnic minority regions (*shaoshu minzu diqu* 少數民族地區). They analyze the multiethnic frontier's transition from empire to nation in the theoretical framework of Historical Materialism (*lishi weiwu zhuyi* 歷史唯物主義) up through the 1980s. The diverse ethnic societies in China's borderland are defined as socially primitive and economically backward. In official narratives, the feudal powers across Inner Asia were overthrown by the oppressed indigenous grassroots who embraced the advanced socio-political system of Communism with the help of the Chinese Communist Party 共產黨 (CCP) and Han majority. Acknowledging the ethnocultural distinction and borrowing the Soviet model of ethnic classification (*minzu shibie* 民族識別), the CCP claimed that the Chinese nation was a "collective creation" of all nationalities in China.<sup>37</sup> The 55 ethnic minority groups were integrated into the "unitary multiethnic state" (*tongyi de duo minzu guojia* 統一的多民族國家) through liberation, socialist campaign and United Front (*tongyi zhanxian* 統一戰線) instead of Chinese acculturation.<sup>38</sup> Nonetheless, like the Republican intellectuals, post-1949 Chinese scholars paid little attention to the precise nature of the Qing Empire and

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論 6, no.2 (1947): 33–43; Ma Hetian, *Gan qing zang bianqu kaocha ji* 甘青藏邊區考察記 (Lanzhou: Lanzhou guji shudian, 1990).

<sup>37</sup> Chang Chih-i, *The Party and the National Question in China*, trans. George Mosely (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1966), 39.

<sup>38</sup> See Fan Wenlan, *Zhongguo tongshi jianbian* 中國通史簡編 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1955); Jiang Ping, *Zhongguo minzu wenti de lilun yu shiyan* 中國民族問題的理論與實驗 (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994); Li Ziyuan, *Zhongguo jinxindai shaoshu minzu geming shiyao* 中國近現代少數民族革命史要 (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 1995); Wang Jianmin, *Zhongguo minzu xueshi* 中國民族學史, vol.1 (Kunmin: Yunnan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1997); Yang Jianxin, *Zhongguo xibei shaoshu minzu tongshi: daolun juan* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2009), to list but a few. Thomas Mullaney indicates that the CCP government's policy of the 1954 Ethnic Classification project was greatly relied on Republican scholars' concept and method for identifying ethnic groups. See *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011). For a summary of the United Front and its implementation in ethnic minority regions, see June Teufel Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions: Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 261–262.

its operations and transitions on the frontier. Oftentimes examined from the top-down and central-periphery perspectives, the post-1949 Chinese narratives delineate a backward, static condition of “ethnic minorities,” and tend to imply a teleology of the imperial past leading to the construction of the modern Chinese nation. In this process, the diverse *minzu* and their historical connections with the imperial center have been used to define the legitimacy of the historical, multinational and unitary Chinese nation-state.<sup>39</sup>

Building on aforementioned Western studies, Inner Asia and its non-Han inhabitants have become a central focus of scholars to comprehend the process by which the Qing became modern China. As Crossley demonstrates, “successive Chinese republics were forced to deal with a state rhetoric that in one form or another founded itself on an ideology of heritable Chinese identity.”<sup>40</sup> The notion of *zhonghua minzu* was unlikely to be attractive to the rulers and social elites of peripheral polities who once served as the subalterns of the Manchu emperor. The pursuit of independence in Inner Asia occurred alongside the birth of the Chinese nation-state. The centralized administrative system in China proper was insufficient to govern the Qing geo-body. As James Leibold argues, the Republican and Nationalist governments “adopted a pragmatic yet inherently conservative frontier policy rooted in the language and administration of the Qing court.”<sup>41</sup> Uradyn Bulag refers to such utilization of the

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<sup>39</sup> For the analysis of this issue, see Peter Perdue, “Where Do Incorrect Political Ideas Come From? Writing History of the Qing Empire and the Chinese Nation,” in *The Teleology of the Modern Nation-State: Japan and China*, ed. Joshua Fogel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 188; “Erasing Empire, Re-Racing the Nation: Racialism and Culturalism in Imperial China,” in *Imperial Formations*, eds. Ann Laura Stoler, Carole McGranahan and Peter Perdue (Santa Fe, NM: Scholl for Advanced Research Press, 2007); Pamela Kyle Crossley, “Nationality and Difference in China: The Post-Imperial Dilemma,” in Joshua A. Fogel ed, *The Teleology of the Modern Nation-State: Japan and China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 138–158; Joseph Wsherick, “How the Qing Became China,” in *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World*, ed. Joseph Esherick, Hasan Kayah and Eric Van Young (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006).

<sup>40</sup> Crossley, “Nationality and Difference in China: The Post-Imperial Dilemma,” 148.

<sup>41</sup> James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and Its Indigenes Became Chinese* (Basingstoke, Hampshire, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 13.

Qing Empire's ways of governance as "sub-imperialism." In the case of Tibet, Gray Tuttle indicates that the Chinese nation-state builders depended on the pan-Buddhist culture and imperial-style patron-priest relationship to exercise nominal sovereignty over Tibetan government.<sup>42</sup> The post-imperial Chinese governments struggled to overcome the contradictions between the inadequacy of efficient means to control the borderland and the necessity of erasing all traits of empire. As James Leibold, Liu Xiaoyuan and Lin Hsiao-ting suggest, imperial frontiers greatly shaped the policies of the KMT and the CCP with respect to incorporating and transforming the massive territory inherited from the polyethnic Qing Empire.<sup>43</sup>

Even though these studies probe into the Qing outward operations in Inner Asia and the Chinese nation-state builders' incorporation of ethnic borderlands, they tend to overlook local agency on the margins. A new trend toward a local-centered history of Inner Asian frontier and elsewhere, such as southern China, has emerged to question the interaction between the imperial center and indigenous subalterns. Adopting fieldwork and reading multilingual local sources, this scholarship emphasizes local circumstances, events and initiatives.<sup>44</sup> This line of inquiry deals with the experiences of multicultural frontiersmen and the flows of goods and ideas. In an attempt to bring

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<sup>42</sup> See Uradyn Erden Bulag, *Collaborative Nationalism: The Politics of Friendship on China's Mongolian Frontier* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010); "Going Imperial: Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhism and Nationalisms in China and Inner Asia," in Joseph Esherick, Hasan Kayali and Eric Van Young eds., *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 260–295. Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

<sup>43</sup> Lin Hsiao-ting argues for the importance of investigating Tibetan and all other Inner Asian frontiers together to examine China's ethnic borderlands and Nationalist regime's ethnic policies. He indicates that the KMT's ethnic policies towards Tibet and other non-Han frontiers were opportunistic and more "the result of rhetorical grandstanding by the Nationalists than a definite plan to exert direct control over the region." See *Modern China's Ethnic Frontiers: A Journey to the West* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2010), xii–xxiii; *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier: Intrigues and Ethnopolitics, 1928–49* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006). Liu Xiaoyuan shows the shift of the CCP's ethnopolitics from Marxist-Leninist dogma on the nationalities questions to including all ethnic groups into the Han-dominated Chinese nation in his *Frontier Passages: Ethnopolitics and the Rise of Chinese Communism, 1921–1945* (California: Stanford University Press, 2004). James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 5.

<sup>44</sup> For employing fieldwork to study Chinese history, see Thomas D. DuBois and Jan Kiely eds., *Fieldwork in Modern Chinese History: A Research Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

forward local voices and displace the paradigm of a dominant center and passive periphery, Kim Hodong offers “the perspective of the local Xinjiang people who were the main actors in these events” during the Xinjiang Muslim revolt.<sup>45</sup> Also, Patterson Giersch has surveyed encounters of Qing officials, native leaders and Han migrants on eighteenth century Yunnan and so argues that the Chinese southwestern frontier was a place of multidirectional acculturation.<sup>46</sup> Inner Asian historiography also absorbs the path-breaking research of Richard White, James Merrell and Jane Merritt, who scrutinize the multicultural encounters, mediations and cultural inventions in the American West, and conceptualize frontier as “middle ground,” zone of negotiation and multicultural crossroad.<sup>47</sup> A growing body of Amdo and Kham studies depict the Sino-Tibetan frontier as “center unto itself,” “middle ground” or hub of “nexuses of power,” and illustrate the imperial penetration as a “dynamic process of continuous negotiation and accommodation.”<sup>48</sup>

Similarly, the radical political evolution of early twentieth century China not only shaped the coercive center and flooded the Chinese intellectual domain, but also profoundly altered every aspect of the existing political structures of peripheral groups. In an attempt to replace the institutionalized and ritualized relations between the imperial center and frontier local agents by the standardized state administration in borderlands, the KMT and CCP encountered great variations in the forms of local

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<sup>45</sup> Kim Hodong, *Holy War in China: The Muslim Rebellion and State in Chinese Central Asia, 1864–1877* (California: Stanford University Press, 2004), xv–xvi.

<sup>46</sup> See Patterson Giersch, *Asian Borderlands: The Transformation of Qing China's Yunnan Frontier* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006).

<sup>47</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); James H. Merrell, *Into the Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: Norton, 1999); and Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

<sup>48</sup> Lawrence Epstein, ed., *Khams pa History: Visions of People, Place and Authority* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); William M. Coleman IV, “Making the State on the Sino-Tibetan Frontier: Chinese Expansion and Local Power in Batang, 1842–1939,” PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2014; Jack Patrick Hayes, *A Change in Worlds on the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands*; Yudru Tsomu, *The Rise of Gönpö Namgyel in Kham*, xx.



authority and politics across Inner Asia. Historical literature on China's empire-to-nation transition in Inner Asia also lacks the local-centered perspective. The works of Paul Nietupski, William Coleman and Benno Weiner are welcome additions to the paucity of studies on the diverse Tibetan local authorities in Amdo and Kham, and their fluid interactions with the non-Tibetan representatives of the imperial and party-states on this frontier.<sup>49</sup> Yet, more nuanced research on local power and inter-local power relation is needed to elucidate the behavior of local authority, evaluate the frontier polity's precise status with respect to the Tibetan and Chinese governments, to understand local political change propelled by both local circumstance and national integration on the frontier, and to "recover a multiplicity of voices from the frontier."<sup>50</sup>

From this frontier yet local perspective, my approach to the Chone Kingdom is to focus on local events and situate this local history in the broad Inner Asian and national contexts. This dissertation thereby examines the evolution of the kingdom's political structure, namely the administrative system, political practices and political norms that governed the ruler-subject relationship within the kingdom, and conditioned the Chone king's relations with neighboring regional authorities as well as the officials of China-based states from 1862 to 1952. It deals with local experiences of and reactions to the changing forms of coerciveness of the Qing and Chinese state actions to reconfigure this paramount chiefdom on their inner frontier. Furthermore, this study contextualizes the successive waves of devastating violence on the frontier, as well as the related accommodative processes, through which this area of Inner Asia came to be

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<sup>49</sup> Paul Nietupski, *Labrang: A Tibetan Buddhist Monastery at the Crossroads of Four Civilizations* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 1999); *Labrang Monastery: A Tibetan Buddhist Community on the Inner Asian Borderlands, 1709–1958*; William Coleman, "Making the State on the Sino-Tibetan Frontier"; Benno Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution on the Tibetan Frontier* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020).

<sup>50</sup> Lawrence Epstein ed., *Khams Pa Histories*, 5. For a recent collection of essays dealing with the inter-power relations in Amdo, see Ute Wallenboeck, Bianca Horlemann and Jarmila Ptáčeková eds., *Mapping Amdo: Dynamics of Power* (Prague: Oriental Institute, 2020).

transformed at many levels from the segmented territories of the Qing Empire to the multiethnic borderland of the People's Republic of China. This study also closely looks at the long ignored regional events and processes, in particular, the three massive Muslim revolts, the British-Russian "Great Game," issues of militarization, warlords and regionalism, power struggles of Gansu, Hunan and Muslim cliques, as well as the KMT and CCP operations in western China, and their socio-political consequences in this seemingly irrelevant kingdom.

### **Toward a Tibetan Social History**

The second aspect of this dissertation deals with the social transitions of the Chone Kingdom on the Inner Asian frontier. This means the focus is on the structural change of society and the collective experience of ordinary people. This genre of literature focuses on groups of people and their agencies in shaping local society and the course of history.<sup>51</sup> In the case of ethnographic Tibet, historical writings on society are still few and far between. Much of the literature on Tibetan social history has attempted to categorize the diverse Tibetan societies on the basis of the varied systems of social stratification in different Tibetan areas. Melvyn Goldstein analyzes the social system under the Ganden Podrang government and defines the socio-economic structure of the pre-1950s Central Tibet as a form of feudal serfdom.<sup>52</sup> Borrowing the concept of "galactic polity" that describes the Mandala model of political power distribution from center to multiple local centers in Southeast Asia, Geoffrey Samuel suggests that the political system of ethnographic Tibet with a weak center in Lhasa

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<sup>51</sup> For the tasks of social historians, see Charles Tilly, *The Contentious French* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985); and "European Violence and Collective Action since 1700," *Social Research* 53 (1986), 158–184.

<sup>52</sup> Melvyn Goldstein, "An Anthropological Study of the Tibetan Political System" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1968); "Serfdom and Mobility: An Examination of the Institution of 'Human Lease' in Traditional Tibetan Society," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 30, no.3 (1971), 521–534.

had similar galactic structure.<sup>53</sup> Certain scholars also employ the “Zomia Thesis” and regard the societies in the Asian highlands from the western Himalaya through the Tibetan Plateau to the Southeastern Asian peninsula as a transnational region with its own social and geographic space.<sup>54</sup> This trend of scholarship defines the diverse Tibetan-speaking communities as being stateless societies. The idea of a stateless society may, to some degree, make sense for Amdo and Kham, as the region lacked the direct governance of a centralized state while the penetration of top-down control from Lhasa or Beijing was never absent.

Aside from this political control-centered definition of Tibetan society, Tibetologists have also defined Tibetan social typologies by examining the political economies and primary modes of subsistence in valleys and steppes. Geoffrey Samuel investigates the estate system, lineage-based system and household-based kinship system in the agricultural, pastoral and primitive urban areas, and classifies Tibetan societies into four types, namely, the centralized agricultural communities, the remote agricultural communities, pastoral communities and urban communities.<sup>55</sup> In *The Rise of Gönpö Namgyel*, Yudro Tsomu adopts Samuel’s theory of Tibetan social patterns and shows that most agricultural states in Kham were centralized agricultural communities. She offers an overview of the social structure in nineteenth century Kham and points out that “a marked stratification of social rank and power existed among settled communities [while] the nomadic communities were characterized by a greater degree of egalitarian ethos.”<sup>56</sup> Nonetheless, Samuel’s thesis should be carefully

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<sup>53</sup> Geoffrey Samuel, *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 61–63.

<sup>54</sup> Jean Michaud, “Editorial-Zomia and Beyond,” *Journal of Global History* 5, no.2 (2010), 187; James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Jack Patrick Hayes, *A Change in Worlds on the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands*; and Tenzin Jinba, *In the Land of the Eastern Queendom*.

<sup>55</sup> Geoffrey Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, 115–116.

<sup>56</sup> Yudru Tsomu, *The Rise of Gönpö Namgyel in Kham*, 12.

scrutinized and questioned when defining the social types of a Tibetan region as the detailed case studies on social formations, structures and operations in the diverse societies across ethnographic Tibet are still sparse. Using the accounts of Western explorers and missionaries published in the early twentieth century, Samuel considered the Chone Kingdom to be a centralized agricultural community where the estate system, “by which peasant families have the hereditary rights to cultivate land in exchange for the payment of tax and corvée labor to a particular estate,” engendered the relatively centralized political system.<sup>57</sup> However, these conclusions are limited in scope, as his sources focused on around twenty villages in the capital of the kingdom, which were fundamentally different in type from the other some 500–600 villages ruled by the Chone kings. Thus, it is not surprised that he draws that generalized conclusion about the social typology of Chone.

There are a few case studies that have presented nuanced descriptions of the disparate Tibetan social structures in Central Tibet and its borderlands. As early as 1939, Robert Ekvall studied the social organizational forms of Tibetan nomads in Gansu. He suggested that nomadic communities were tribes, consisting of encampments and intermediary *tsowa* organizations.<sup>58</sup> Also, Rinzin Thargyal’s survey of the pre-1950s social organizations, folk customs, pastoral economy, taxation and the nomadic way of life in the Dege Kingdom is an excellent model for the ethnographic study of the multifarious Tibetan societies.<sup>59</sup> Barbara Aziz, furthermore, employs Lévi-Strauss’ notion of “house society” (*société à maisons*) to analyze the internal structure and relations in the villages of Dingri on the Tibet-Nepal border. Reinier Langelaar, moreover, indicates that Tibetan household (*tshang*), the basic Tibetan

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<sup>57</sup> Geoffrey Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, 97, 116.

<sup>58</sup> Robert Ekvall, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border*, 34–35, 64.

<sup>59</sup> See Rinzin Thargyal, *Nomads of Eastern Tibet: Social Organization and Economy of a Pastoral Estate in the Kingdom of Dege* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007).

social unit in Rebong, resembles the *maison* of the “house society.”<sup>60</sup> Yet, examining local oral histories and communal accounts, the outcomes of a diachronic perspective of anthropologists more often than not are historical cross sections of a more contemporary period.

Hence, it is not wise to neglect social change in Tibetan regions, no matter how comparatively gradual they may appear, and, as a result, nostalgically depict the Plateau as a static, Shangrila-like place only disturbed and radically transformed by the Chinese invasion and its aftermath. Graham Clarke’s study of the social organization of Qinghai Tibetan pastoral communities shows the dynamics of the pastoral social organizations and their interactions with various economic and environmental circumstances. He asserts that the residence and inheritance of early social terms and units not only “allow adaptations to pastoral management under varying economic and ecological conditions over the annual cycle and life-cycle of the domestic group,” but also sustained the nomadic communities in Qinghai over the course of a succession of socialist reforms.<sup>61</sup> These studies, and others noted below, have touched upon the *tsowa* organization.

Systematic research on the *tsowa* is scarce in comparison with its significance to understand Tibetan frontier societies. Limited historical references and ethnographic data has largely prevented contemporary scholars from precisely examining this organization. As Samuels and Langelaar indicate, the scattered accounts to date depict an oversimplified,

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<sup>60</sup> Barbara Aziz, *Tibetan Frontier Families: Reflections of Three Generations from D’ing-ri* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978), 26–35. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Way of the Masks*, trans. Sylvia Modelski (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 173–174. Reinier Langelaar, “Historical and Social Organisation on the Eastern Tibetan Plateau: The Territorial Origins and Etymology of tsho-ba,” *Inner Asia* 21 (2019): 7–37; “Descent and Houses in Rebong (Reb gong): Group Formation and Rules of Recruitment among Eastern Tibetan tsho ba,” in *Mapping Amdo: Dynamics of Change*, eds., Jarmila Ptáčeková and Adrian Zens (Prague: Oriental Institute CAS, 2017), 155–183.

<sup>61</sup> Graham Clarke, “Aspects of the Social Organisation of Tibetan Pastoral Communities,” in *Tibetan Studies, Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies, Narita 1989*, reprinted in 1992.

idealized and inconsistent picture of *tsowa* and its frequent translation—clan.<sup>62</sup> Taking the ideas of “shared bones” or *rus pa* and lineages (*rgyud*) presented in *tsowa* origin legends for granted, Tibetan native scholars in the PRC regard *tsowa* as clan. When non-Tibetan anthropologists and historians raise the question—what is *tsowa*, their informants often give descriptive answers mixed with *tsowa* origin legends and migration histories. These responses can corroborate neither Tibetan imperial accounts nor historical works produced in the twentieth century. It is difficult to find traceable records showing that *tsowa* comprised related patriarchal/matriarchal lineages, or that households shared the same founding ancestor. Recent ethnographic data scarcely conforms to the Tibetan scholars’ common view that *tsowa* is clan and the membership is primarily assigned through kinship.<sup>63</sup> As the Tibetan communitarian base of territory and practices of kinship and politics resemble those in tribal societies, some Western scholars regard *tsowa* as tribe. Similar to the misrepresentation of the Mongolian societies as nomadic, egalitarian, kinship-based tribal societies, it is also misleading to examine *tsowa* in the theoretical framework of tribal societies.<sup>64</sup> Under the influences of social Darwinism and Marxism, Chinese scholars replaced the terms clan/group (*zu*) and federation (*bu* 部) with tribe (*buluo* 部落) in the twentieth century. The term connotes a strong sense of primitiveness and backwardness in the Chinese ethnopolitical context.<sup>65</sup> Overall, historians and anthropologists translate *tsowa*

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<sup>62</sup> Jonathan Samuels, “Are We Legend? Reconsidering Clan in Tibet,” *Revue d’Etudes Tibétaines* 37 (2016): 311. Reinier Langelaar, “Historical and Social Organisation on the Eastern Tibetan Plateau,” 8.

<sup>63</sup> Katia Buffetrille, “Some Remarks on Mediums: The Case of the *lha pa* of the Musical Festival (*Glu rol*) of *Sog ru* (A mdo),” *Mongolo-Tibetica Pragensia* 1, no.2 (2008): 15–6. Gerald Roche and Lcag mo tshe ring, “Notes on the Maintenance of Diversity in Amdo: Language Use in gNyan thog Village Annual Rituals,” *Studia Orientalia* 113 (2013): 168. Ekvall, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border*, 79. Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, 92. Samten Karmay, “The Social Organization of Ling and the Term *phu nu* in the Gesar Epic,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 58, no.2 (1995): 303. Emily Yeh, “Tibetan Range Wars: Spatial Politics and Authority on the Grasslands of Amdo,” *Development and Change* 34, no.3 (2003): 510. Snying bo rgyal and Solomon Rino, “Deity Men: Reb gong Tibetan Trance Mediums in Transition,” *Asian Highlands Perspectives* 3 (2008): 74–81.

<sup>64</sup> David Sneath, *The Headless State: Aristocratic Orders, Kinship Society, and Misrepresentations of Nomadic Inner Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 4–6.

<sup>65</sup> Kevin Stuart, Banmadorji and Huangchojia, “Mountain Gods and Trance Mediums: A Qinghai Tibetan Summer Festival,” *Asian Folklore Studies* 54, no.2 (1995): 219–237. Lawrence Epstein and Peng Wenbin,

loosely as lineage, clan and tribe, cautiously as federative unit and social-political-territorial division and wider group, or explicitly as social networks overarching households or smaller units of grouped households.<sup>66</sup> Their major debate is about the presentation of *tsowa* as unilineal descent-based unit, territorially defined unit or village intra-network centered unit.

Additionally, social regulation is equally critical to social organization to apprehend the structural transition of Amdo and Kham societies undergoing multiple political, administrative, legal and frontier processes. For over ten centuries up to the mid-Qing, unlike Ü-Tsang, there was no strong top-down political penetration ever in the Tibetan frontiers. In this region, the natural and social circumstances generated a complex political, religious and economic makeup that did not acquiesce easily to systematic and centralized governance. Yet, the coercive power of the centers was never entirely absent. Tibetan frontiersmen had to

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“Ritual, Ethnicity and Generational Identity,” in *Buddhism in Contemporary Tibet: Religious Revival and Cultural Identity*, eds., Melvyn Goldstein and Matthew Kapstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 120–138. Nancy Levine, “From Nomads to Ranchers: Managing Pasture Among Ethnic Tibetans in Sichuan,” in *Development, Society, and Environment in Tibet. Papers Presented at a Panel of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995*, ed. Graham Clarke (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1998), 69–76; “The Theory of R Kinship, Descent and Status in a Tibetan Society,” in *Asian Highland Societies in Anthropological Perspective*, ed. Christoph von F rer-Haimendorf (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1981), 52–78. Mark Stevenson, “Wheel of History: Cultural Change and Cultural Production in an Amdo Tibetan Community,” PhD Dissertation, University of Melbourne (1999), 234. Charlene Markley, *The Violence of Liberation: Gender and Tibetan Buddhist Revival in Post-Mao China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 65. Wu Qi, “Cultural Continuum and Transition Among Tibetans in Amdo,” PhD Dissertation, University of Helsinki, 44. Tshe ring skyid, “Rka-gsar, a Monguor (Tu) Village in Reb gong (Tongren): Communal Rituals and Everyday Life,” in “Mapping the Monguor,” eds. Gerald Roche and Charles Kevin Stuart, *Asian Highlands Perspectives* 36, 251–275. Marie-Paule Hille, Bianca Horlemann and Paul Nietupski suggest that more detailed local ethnographic research need to be done instead of simply translating the term. See *Muslims in Amdo Tibetan Society: Multidisciplinary Approaches* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 4–5.

<sup>66</sup> Graham Clarke, “Aspects of the Social Organisation of Tibetan Pastoral Communities,” 399. Graham Gelek, “The Washu Serthar: A Nomadic Community of Eastern Tibet,” in *Development, Society, and Environment in Tibet. Papers Presented at a Panel of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995*, edited by Graham Clarke (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1998), 50–51. Fernanda Pirie, “Violence and Opposition among the Nomads of Amdo: Expectations of Leadership and Religious Authority,” in *Conflict and Social Order in Tibet and Inner Asia*, eds. Fernanda Pirie and Toni Huber, (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 221; “Feuding, Mediation and the Negotiation of Authority Among the Nomads of Eastern Tibet,” *Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Working Paper* 72 (2005), 12. Benno Ryan Weiner, “The Chinese Revolution on the Tibetan Frontier,” 54. Stobs stag lha, “A Multi-Ethnic Village in Northeast Tibet: History, Ritual, and Daily Life in Chu cha,” *Asian Highlands Perspectives* 24 (2013): 33. Jack Hayes, *Change in Worlds on the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands*, 22–23, 37–38. Kang Xiaofei and Donald S. Sutton, *Contesting the Yellow Dragon: Ethnicity, Religion, and the State in the Sino-Tibetan Borderland* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2016), 25–26. Langelaar, “Descent and Houses in Rebong (Reb gong),” 156–179. Barbara Aziz, *Tibetan Frontier Families*, 26–35. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Way of the Masks*, 173–174.

comply with various external regulations translated and localized by subalterns following up on demands issued from Beijing or Lhasa. At the same time, local rulers enacted laws and regulations to govern their own realms. To understand Tibetan social regulations and groups of people involved in them, as scholars of “the Social History of Tibetan Societies” field advocate, it is necessary to explore local archival material and other written documents.<sup>67</sup>

Meanwhile, as Eva Dargyay indicates, “to analyze the social system of a civilization without referring to the norms which give origin to its distinct behaviour and preferences, so important for any social life, would mean to describe only the issues and never to seek for the motivations.”<sup>68</sup> Inspired by Dargyay’s call for the study of Tibetan norms, this work pays attention to the rich frontier Tibetan customs and oral histories and from which they distilled social norms. Such norms could guide day-to-day life, communal affairs of all significant kinds and the operation of local politics. The norms included social etiquettes, religious ethics, various relations established in the temporary and ecclesiastical domains, countless precedents, *tsowa* histories and so on, which were encapsulated in the form of oral tradition, then memorized, transmitted, enriched and reshaped from generation to generation by Tibetan farmers and nomads. Each norm is believed to have an original root (*’byung rtsa*) which was closely linked to the settled, unsettled and ongoing constructed communal and local histories. They could be traced back hundreds of years. Based on these oral records, or “memorized archives” as I call them, local Tibetans formed the reasons, precedents and criteria to accept or reject a matchmaking, delineate or transgress a territorial boundary, instigate or settle a dispute, organize or split an alliance, and honor or disobey a leader/ruler.

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<sup>67</sup> Charles Ramble, Peter SchWieger and Alice Travers eds., *Tibetans Who Escaped the Historian’s Net: Studies in the Social History of Tibetan Societies* (Kathmandu: Vajra Publications, 2013), “Introduction.” Also see Saul Mullard and Jeannine Bischoff eds., *Social Regulation: Case Studies from Tibetan History* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 3–4

<sup>68</sup> Eva K. Dargyay, *Tibetan Village Communities: Structure and Change* (Warminster Wilts.: Aris and Philips Ltd., 1982), 50.



This dissertation draws from this line of inquiry and probes into the profound structural changes of the *tsowa* in the Chone Kingdom, which have a comparative value and share great similarities with respect to other Tibetan societies of the northern and eastern Tibetan Plateau. Considering the term has no matching terminologies in English and Chinese, I keep *tsowa* untranslated and use “*tsowa* society” as an alternative conceptualization of the Tibetan socio-typology in contrast to the existing uses of “stateless society,” “Zomia” or “house society” in the literature. It defines the neighboring *tsowa* linked by the same social, religious and political networks in an ecological niche as a small society with stronger strength and solidarity to execute the communal will. The plurality of *tsowa* society encompasses the diverse Tibetan ethnographic groups with disparate regional, cultural and linguistic identities in the Chone Kingdom. The concept of *tsowa* societies addresses the grouping practices and communal organizational characteristics of the Tibetan ethnographic groups in Amdo and Kham. Moreover, it is instructive to examine the processes that gradually and unevenly altered the Tibetan social structure, institutions, regulations and norms in the Chone Kingdom within a century. It is a precise approach to analyze the operation of the political system, the evolving relationship between the ruler and Tibetans in the Chone Kingdom, as well as the dynamic interactions between Tibetan groups and other neighboring ethnic communities. This new conceptualization of the Tibetan socio-typology also rejects the theoretical notion that has been put forward by some scholars, according to which Tibetan frontier societies in Amdo and Kham are “house societies.”

In doing so, I put *tsowa*, the group organization of Tibetan ordinary people and upon which the kingdom’s social system and governmental structure takes shapes, in the central place of historical process. The narrative illustrates the dynamics of changing social relations in frontier Tibetan society. It focuses on the collective will, action and violence related to *tsowa* organization and *tsowa* societies, demonstrates the local initiatives to respond to top-

down controls, survive social and natural crises, interact with Others and alter the frontier socio-political circumstances, therefore, contributes to the broader discussions of the *Shangrilazation* and *Romanticization* of Tibetan societies and their historical trajectories.

## Sources

In writing this inclusive history of the Chone Kingdom with the diverse *tsowa* societies together, I examine the textual and oral sources in a wide range of genres that I have collected over the past five years. The sources comprise 1) Tibetan–language monastic histories, family histories, biographies, annals, 2) Chinese–language veritable records, imperial memorials, archives, gazetteers, intellectual writings, newspapers, 3) European–language travelogues, missionary records, natural and social exploration notes, diaries, letters, 4) and field discoveries such as oral histories, singing narratives, genealogies, ritual texts, folklores and steles in multiple languages. To balance the voices of historical actors possessing and lacking power, this dissertation equally treats materials produced by the Qing government, Chinese states, regional powers, religious authorities, temporary elites, local communities as well as outside travelers and investigators, whose narratives followed disparate purposes and agendas. Although this study emphasizes the varied Tibetan collective experiences of the social and political structural changes in the Chone Kindgom, it attempts to take into account the multiple perspectives through which the Tibetan, Chinese, Muslim and other smaller ethnic group participants can remain in the frame of analysis. Drawing from these diverse sources in concert makes possible the telling of this story from the localized inside out, in sharp contrast to how such communities have long been narrated by outsiders. Moreover, in consideration of the sharp, multisided conflicts that still remain keenly felt in this place, the use of these sources seeks to discuss this history from a neutral position that strives for accuracy and fairness to all groups on this frontier. Through critical

reading, cross-examining and contextualizing the written records, oral histories and field discoveries, this project scrutinizes and de-structures the intersected, overlapped and contested narratives of the state, frontier authorities and local peoples.

### *Tibetan Sources*

Most monastic histories (*ldan rabs* or *dgon pa'i lo rgyus*) did not survive the Tibetan-Muslim conflicts and post-1956 massive destructions. For Drakgönpa extensively cited from earlier records to compose *Mdo smad chos 'byung*, we can have a glimpse of the pre-1866 monastic histories of 10 regional monasteries (*dgon chen*), 55 communal monasteries (*dgon pa*) and over 100 god temples (*lha khang*) and retreat (*ri khrod*) across the historical Chone Kingdom in his information-dense narrative. Additionally, since the 1980s, some monastic scholars in Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (Kanlho TAP; *Gannan zangzu zizhizhou* 甘南藏族自治州) have relied on annals, biographies (*rnam thar*) of local eminent lamas, communal oral histories as well as monastic oral accounts to restore the tradition to document local monasteries' past and present situations. A monastic history is similar to a monastery-centered gazetteer containing records of dharma lineages, institutes, educational systems, religious activities and relations between monastery, *tsowa* and other local sacred sites. It pays little attention to the social organizations and communal affairs of Tibetan groups that supported or were subordinated to the monastery. Its account of local religious development is usually quasi-historical and quasi-mythical by addressing the “miracle power” of religious leaders. Issues of sectarian reform, intra-/inter-monastery feuds and *tsowa* revolts against monastic leaders are either omitted or briefly recorded from a Buddhist and non-violent perspective.

Family histories (*gdung rabs*) of the Chone ruling lineage are valuable for this study. When local monastic historians wrote monastic histories and religious annals or *chos 'byung*,

they typically provided genealogical narratives or brief accounts of the Chone royal family. The one written by the Second Jamyang Zhepa in 1773, and the other one complemented by Drakgönpa in 1866 are the most valuable records of the Chone ruling house and its patronage of Buddhism.<sup>69</sup> There is also a short oral text of the Chone kings' history entitled "Co ne dbon po'i lo rgyus" and often performed by local *bshad pa* narrators in communal festivals. Exploring these accounts, local oral histories and archival documents, Choksum Dorjé (*Chogs sums rdo rje*, Yang Shihong) and Gönpö Wanggyel (*Mgon po dbang rgyal*) have contributed two books on a more comprehensive politico-religious history of this family from the thirteenth century to 1950.<sup>70</sup> I consult these family histories to discuss the formation and evolution of the political structure in the Chone Kingdom, the characteristic of this polity, as well as the ruler-decided instead of institute-regulated relation between the Chone kings and neighboring authorities.

The other genre of Tibetan sources are biographies of famous Chone scholars, dharma teachers and reincarnated lamas who were contemporaries of different Chone kings. The kingdom was homeland of many Buddhist figures who left long-lasting influences on both religious and political histories of Amdo, Ü-Tsang and Mongolia. Up to 1912, six Chone lamas were selected as the Ganden Tripa (*Dga' ldan khri pa*), the most preeminent title conferred on Gelug (*Dge lugs*) monks who served seven year terms as the religious leader of the Gelug school.<sup>71</sup> The reincarnations of the Tsémönling (*Tshe smon gling*) lineage from Chone actively engaged in Lhasa politics and Qing-Tibet relations, as they were the regents ruling Ü-Tsang on behalf of the Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh and Thirteenth Dalai Lamas.

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<sup>69</sup> Dkon mchog 'jigs med dbang po, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*.

<sup>70</sup> Mgon po dbang rgyal, *Co je sa skyong gi lo rgyus klu chu sngon mo'i gyel dbyangs* (Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997); Yang Shihong, *Zhuoni yang tusi zhuanlüe*.

<sup>71</sup> They were the Twenty-ninth Ganden Tripa Bshes gnyen grags pa (1545–1615), the Forty-fifth Ganden Tripa Tshul khrims dar rgyas (1632–99), the Forty-ninth Ganden Tripa Blo bzang dar rgyas (1650–1715), the Sixty-first Ganden Tripa Ngag dbang tshul khrims (1721–91), the Seventy-third Ganden Tripa Ngag dbang 'jam dpal tshul khrims rgya mtsho (1792–1864), and the Eighty-seventh Ganden Tripa Ngag dbang blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1844–1919).

In addition to the biographies of these religious figures, there are some scattered introductions and brief accounts of the three ranks of nearly thirty reincarnation lineages and 136 dharma throne holders (*khri pa*) of Chone Monastery (*Dgon chen dga 'ldan bshad grub gling, Co ne dgon chen*). The biographical material normally portrays the individual's spiritual development, justifies his activities in the Buddhist value system, highlights his religious and temporary merits, and illustrates the rationality of founding a reincarnation lineage. As an eminent monk or lama had a mediating role in Tibetan local society, the biographical account offers a religious background of local politics and an experiential perspective of historical events.

### *Chinese Sources*

The first category of Chinese sources scrutinized in this study are official materials of the Qing, Beiyang, GMD and CCP governments. They comprise veritable records, imperial memorials and miscellaneous archival documents that are relevant to the events and situations in the Chone Kingdom, Gansu-Qinghai-Sichuan borderland and broadly western China. These official accounts focus on taxation, tribute, ratification of title/position inheritance of Tibetan authority, administrative regularization, writ, national policy, insurgent cases, punitive campaigns, social order restoration, natural disaster relief and so on. They were generated in the interactive process between central government and its local officials who followed the reporting procedures, used bureaucratic rhetoric, posed the Confucian ethics, upheld Sino-centric views and defended the will, policy, action as well as image of the state. Inevitably, official sources sent from this frontier were already tailored by local and provincial officials who drafted reports for superiors, emperors or the central government while meeting their needs by omitting, distorting or exaggerating specific issues. The discrepancies between central government, local administration and reality on the ground

regarding the formulation and implementation of policy often existed in official materials.

Chinese officials' cultural biases and legal discriminations against Tibetans and Muslims also pervade their reports. Hence, I take their limitations into consideration and avoid taking them at face value.

The second category of Chinese sources are various accounts produced by Chinese-speaking officials, scholars and social elites. They consist of gazetteers, political essays, prose writings, periodical articles, news and field reports. Conventionally, the regular bureaucrats worked with local intellectuals to compile and update gazetteers as referential materials for successive magistrates and superior officials to better understand local circumstances. In the Republican and Socialist periods, the development-oriented gazetteer compilers also focused on frontier natural resources, trade, mass education, organs of public security and so on. Particularly, the CCP propaganda, statistical data of local government's achievements and narratives of institutional reforms plague the post-1990s local gazetteers. These sources provide rich information about the frontier region, administration and peoples, describe frontier sceneries and lives, report contemporary events, discuss frontier policies, and show Chinese cultural practices in foreign territories. In dealing with them, I recognize that Chinese writers idealized local reality to serve certain purposes, asserted progressive integration of the frontier region, and described non-Chinese Others as culturally inferior and social-politically underdeveloped.

### *Western Sources*

As the Nineteenth Chone King indicated, around thirty Western explorers, travelers and missionaries visited his realm between 1895 and 1935.<sup>72</sup> Their field notes, mission reports, periodical articles, travelogues, biographies, letters, dairies,

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<sup>72</sup> Fan Changjiang, *Zhongguo de xibei jiao* 中國的西北角 (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chubanshe, 2010), 44.

photographs and even films, which have been published or preserved in various archives in Europe and North America, offer a novel perspective to comprehend the kingdom's past. By analyzing these records, it is clear that Western visitors, such as the British botanist Frank Kingdon-Ward (1885–1958), plant hunter Reginald Farrer (1880–1920) and diplomat Eric Teichman (1884–1944) who passed through the kingdom, read the few publications in European languages, consulted Chinese gazetteers and newspapers, and employed the same group of local informants in Chone. Even though the American botanist Joseph Rock (1884–1962) and missionary anthropologist Robert Ekvall (1898–1983) lived in Chone Town for a longer term, they depicted the paramount “Chone prince” in detail while providing a similarly generalized profile of the kingdom in their accounts.<sup>73</sup>

Notwithstanding, Westerners were treated by Tibetan villagers as authorities or privileged ones who could override local laws and regulations, receive assistance of the Chone king, pressure Chinese officials and be spared by Muslim warlords. Given their direct interactions with specific social classes and groups of people in the multiethnic border region, they documented some significant local events and invaluable living experiences in this place so distant from the West. I treat them as historical actors rather than pure observers. I bear in mind that the accounts about this region are not central to their works and must not be generalized. Knowing their specific field sites and contextualizing the information they collected are critical to handling these sources properly. Also, it is essential to be cautious with the self-aggrandizing tendencies, exaggerations and adventure-narratives as well as Western-centric or Christian

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<sup>73</sup> For the introduction of the Chone Kingdom, see Joseph Rock, “The Land of the Tebbus,” *The Geographical Journal* 81, no.2 (1933): 115; Robert Ekvall, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 32; Frank Kingdon-Ward, *On the Way to Tibet* (Shanghai: Shanghai Mercury Ltd., 1910), 53–54; Reginald Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World* (London: Edward Arnold, 1916), vol.1–2; Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in North-West China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), 134.

evangelical views that pervade these fragmentary materials. Unlike later descriptions of the Tibetan world as Shangrila, Tibetans were frequently represented in these accounts as wild, barbaric, warlike, ignorant, superstitious, filthy and backward people in contrast to the modern, educated, hygienic and advanced Westerners.

### *Field Materials*

The last portion of primary sources are the outcome of fieldwork conducted by scholars, local intellectuals and officials between the 1930s and the 1950s, during the Reform and Opening-up period after 1978, and field research conducted by myself from May to July in 2015, from May to November in 2016 and from May to August in 2019. They consist of filed reports/notes, community-produced texts, oral histories and firsthand accounts, as well as oral interviews and discussions with those who experienced particular events and periods, heard such experiences from family members and retold hearsays. In the eastern Tibetan Plateau, each ethnic/cultural group has unique cultural traits, religious practices and collective mindsets that further draw internal boundaries of identity affiliation. Tibetans of disparate ethnographic groups, Muslims of the diverse Islamic sects, and Han residents belonging to various social classes and Chinese religious groups usually provide dissimilar perspectives and narratives concerning the same event or historical period. Memory of each social group or individual is usually self-serving and selective. The individual and group censorships regarding “what can be talked,” “what should be told” and “what needs to be concealed” must be evaluated carefully case by case.

When examining field materials, especially field reports and interviews, I situate the earlier researchers’ and my own informants in their social, political and cultural contexts and clarify the possible subtexts as a cultural insider. The background of the informant, such as his/her ethnic identity, political stance and social relation with the historical figures, often



affects the quality of the information and attitude of the informant concerning the historical event. As to oral histories, which are more exclusively known by members of different communities, I divide them into “reliable accounts” within 150 years and “unreliable accounts” with respect to local events. I also bear in my mind that these oral histories were more about social and cultural meanings and less concerning facts. All field materials are checked against other field reports, interviews, firsthand accounts and archival materials when available. The identities of my informants are anonymous.<sup>74</sup>

Tibetan field materials include Bon and Buddhist ritual texts, documents issued by the Chone kings, cultural relics, singing narratives (*bshad pa*), *tsowa* oral histories, communal regulations, land deeds, folklore and a considerable volume of publications about local cultures, customs and histories compiled by the county and prefectural governments in Kanlho TAP. In contrast to Western sources, the published Tibetan field materials retain extensive oral accounts and thereby can better reflect local reality. They not only present the social, cultural and religious images of the diverse Tibetan ethnographic groups across the kingdom, but also shed light on local value systems, social regulations and norms, cultural and religious practices, military system and politico-economic mechanisms that underlay the rationales of individual behaviors and collective actions, defined the nature of the king-subject relation, and propelled the rise and fall of the kingdom. It is noteworthy that Tibetan oral histories often obscure and reconstruct “historical fact” despite the fact that they contain profound social-cultural meanings, deep communal feelings and reinterpretations of events.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Robert Ekvall suggested that history memorized by Tibetans was often within 300 years. Whilst, my field experience shows that the countable oral history is often within one and half a centuries. See Robert Ekvall, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border*, 50.

<sup>75</sup> Carole McGranahan, “Sa sPang mDa’ gNam sPang mDa’: Murder, History, and Social Politics in 1920s Lhasa,” in *Khams Pa Histories: Visions of People, Place and Authority: PIATS 2000: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Nineth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000*, ed. Lawrence Epstein (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 120–123.

Hence, I take their historical reliability, mythical characteristic and interpretive nature into account while using them.

Chinese field materials include fieldworks published in government reports, academic journals and local “cultural and historical materials” (*wenshi ziliao* 文史資料), genealogies, temple gazetteers, ritual texts, steles, title deeds, oral accounts and folklores. As local Tibetans overall held a hostile attitude toward Chinese authorities, the field sites of Chinese scholars and officials were concentrated in some twenty villages near Chone Town. The linguistic barrier forced these cultural outsiders to consult the king and his officials who could speak Chinese. Combining field discoveries with local gazetteers, in which the information about indigenous circumstance was also provided by Chone authorities, Chinese scholars and officials produced more unified and standardized narratives of the Chone Kingdom. These narratives have been absorbed as local historical knowledge by Tibetan intellectuals who were educated in Chinese schools since the 1950s and have served as local informants for writers of cultural and historical materials and researchers from the 1980s onward. Both coherence and consistency, or in other words, misleading generalization regarding the politico-economic system and past of the kingdom occur in Chinese local and academic narratives. Similar to handling Western sources, the contextualization of Chinese fieldworks must be done properly. This study thus explicates the issue of writing Tibetan local history along with the growing dominance of the Chinese government and Han people in the Chone Kingdom.

# **Chapter 1 The Chone Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century: Land, People, Tsowa Societies and the Local State**

## **Introduction**

This chapter discusses the roles of the geographic makeup, Tibetan ethnographic groups, *tsowa* organization and social-political-religious systems in shaping the *tsowa* societies and local state in the Luchu and Drukchu river basins by the mid-nineteenth century. Through an examination of the early history of the Chone Kingdom and local Tibetans, it explores how the ruling house established the control over some 600 *tsowa* and incorporated some 300 *tsowa* of neighboring Tibetan rulers into an alliance. Contrary to the romanticized image of Tibetan authorities who represented local interests, I argue that the king and his central administration relied on the commensal relationship between the royal lineage and *tsowa* societies, which was conditioned by local social-political norms and customary practices, to manage the kingdom. And the interests of the king, his officials and local people were often not in line with each other.

In this chapter, the first section illustrates that the heterogeneous inhabitants across the kingdom chose differing ways of life to adapt to the diverse geographic features and natural environments. Most native groups traced their origins, either real or fictitious, back to the heyday of the Tibetan Empire, constructing histories of Ü-Tsang migrants and memories of Tibetan garrison soldiers. Some groups indicated that they were descended from the ancient Qiang and other non-Chinese groups in the eastern Tibetan Plateau, assimilating Tibetan and Chinese cultures and religions. The section introduces the linguistic practices, cultural traits and political-religious identity affiliations of the local people to different lay and Buddhist rulers along the Luchu and Drukchu valleys. It addresses the fact that the interaction between

natural environment and local groups led to the formation of diverse ecological-social niches between sown and steppe.

The second section analyzes the organization and operation of *tsowa*, and the *tsowa* societies that formed in different ecological-social niches. Examining the fluid implications of *zu* in Chinese records, it shows the process that *tsowa* as a Tibetan social divisional unit was increasingly clarified and documented after several centuries of Sino-Tibetan interaction on the western margin of China proper. It elaborates the organizational principles of *tsowa* and the operational mechanism of this unit from the level of the Tibetan household. It explains the intra-*tsowa* relations that held the households together and the inter-*tsowa* relations to form a federation or league. It asserts that Tibetans used *tsowa*, which was evolving over time, as the basic social-political-religious-territorial-economic unit to organize the larger *tsowa* societies, cope with the top-down control and express their voices.

The last section illustrates the early history of the Chone Kingdom and the surrounding polities attached to the Chone throne. It centers on the local Tibetan practice of raising mutual defensive militia when allied *tsowa* were under external threat. It shows the processes through which the Chone rulers expanded their realm and legitimized authority with the endorsements of the Ming and Qing emperors and the religious leaders in Central Tibet. Both the centralized secular government and Buddhist regime played key roles in managing several hundred *tsowa* linked by 72 federations and so securing the power of the Chone throne. Thereby, it explores the establishment of a local state along with a mutual defense practice that was altered into fixed corvée, and the loose organization to raise regional militia became the administrative unit of the kingdom. It scrutinizes the varied land, tax and corvée systems from one ecological-social niche to another in this local state, and argues that these divergent systems embodied the dynamic and diverse relations between the king and different *tsowa* societies.

## Land and People

The Chone Kingdom was in the intersecting zone of the eastern Tibetan Plateau and the western Loess Plateau, where the Kunlunshan Mountains 崑崙山 and its Qilianshan and Bayankalashan 巴顏喀拉山 branch ranges stretch southeastward in parallel and intersect with the western Qinling Mountains 秦嶺. In the realm of the Chone kings, the Luchu and Drukchu rivers and their tributaries wind across the steppe and zigzag among the rising Taizishan 太子山 and Dieshan 迭山 mountains, which are the ends of Qilian and Bayan Har ranges in southern Gansu. Here the altitude drops sharply from an average of over 4,000 meters in the northwest to around 1,000 meters in the southeast. Under the influence of the cold-dry northwest air and the warm-wet southeast monsoon, the ecological niches in the forms of highland steppe, alpine meadow and temperate valley each have their place in this descending, groove-like terrain. The undulating mountains and crisscrossing ravines not only create countless geographical barriers for local inhabitants, but also shape the local topoclimate often associated with disastrous sudden rain, hail, blizzards and drought.<sup>1</sup> From north to south, with the kingdom's capital Chone Town roughly at the geometric center, a traveler in the nineteenth century could encounter Tibetans subsisting on herding, growing barley and wheat, undertaking *samadrok* (*sa ma 'brog*, which combines husbandry and agriculture), hunting and planting rice within 350 kilometers, which was reckoned as a trip taking one-week on horse-back.<sup>2</sup>

Setting off from Chone Town, traders, travelers and pilgrims in the nineteenth century could head northward, cross the Tsö or Achok (*A mchog*; Amuquhu 阿木去乎) grassland,

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<sup>1</sup> *Lintan xianzhi* 臨潭縣志 (hereafter *LTXZ*), 109–117; *Zhouqu xianzhi* 舟曲縣志 (hereafter *ZQXZ*), 46–50, 61–65.

<sup>2</sup> *Gannan Zangzu zizhizhou gaikuang*, 1–14.

and arrive in Labrang, the political-religious headquarters of around 30 Tibetan federations under the religious-political sway of the Jamyang Zhépa reincarnations (*sprul sku*). Further north, the Qing imperial government bureaus, regional markets, Islamic sacred sites and larger populations were concentrated in urban Hezhou, Lanzhou 蘭州 and Xining 西寧; from those small cities travelers could travel to Shaanxi, Mongolia or Xinjiang. Following the Luchu and Drukchu rivers downward, one could make a journey via Minzhou and Jiezhou to Sichuan or Shaanxi. Following the Drukchu River upstream, trekking through Tébo, they could reach Taktsang Lhamo Monastery (*Stag tshang lha mo dgon pa, Dga' ldan bshad sgrub pad dkar grol ba'i gling*; Langmu-si 郎木寺), a trading nexus between Amdo and Kham and controlled by the reincarnation lineage of Lhamo Sertri (*Lha mo'i gser khri*). Departing from this monastery town, they could advance northwestward to the Golog (*Mgo log*; Guoluo 果洛) Tibetan territory and the Upper Mongol princes' pasturelands, or southward to Ngawa (*Rnga ba*; Aba 阿坝) and Garzê (*Dkar mdzes*; Ganzi 甘孜) under the jurisdictions of dozens of chiefs and religious leaders.<sup>3</sup>

In the Chone Kingdom, as the Taizishan separates Mébo-Zhongpa (*Dme bo-Gzhong pa*) from Hezhou and Lintao, and the Dieshan mountains form a natural barrier between the Luchu and the Drukchu valleys, the Mébo-Zhongpa, Luchu and Drukchu areas are known as North Range (*byang sgang*; Beishan 北山), Front Range (*ngos sgang*; Qianshan 前山) and Back Range (*rgyab sgang*; Houshan 後山) respectively. After the Ming state built border walls, trenches and passes in the Luchu and lower Drukchu valleys to defend against Tibetan and Mongolian pastoral raiders, local Chinese generally considered Front Range as “inside the passes” (*kounei* 口内) and North Range and Back Range as “outside the passes” (*kouwai*

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<sup>3</sup> Dbal mang dkon mchog rgyal mtshan *Bla brang bkra shi 'khyil gyi gdan rabs lha'i rnga chen* (Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rigs dbe skrun khang, 1989).

□外) of Taozhou and Minzhou.<sup>4</sup> These regional toponyms are less often used by local Tibetans who prefer local names of places that are closely related to their political, religious and territorial identity affiliations. Tibetans named places in accordance with the names of clans, federations and local monasteries, descriptions of landforms, and key information of significant events. They reckoned themselves foremost as members of a specific *tsowa*, federation or league, then as people of an ethnographic group and last as subjects (*mi ser*; *baixing* 百姓) of the Chone king. Given the great number of these locally used toponyms and their conversational context-based fluid implications, according to Tibetan understandings of local geography and internal boundaries of sense of belonging, the three regions of the Chone Kindgom can be divided into several geographic and ethnographic areas and enclaves that interlocked with places ruled by other Tibetan authorities or which were inhabited by other ethnic groups.

### *Northern Tao*

Front Range consists of Upper Stream from Chépa, Luchung (*Klu chung*; Luqiong 魯瓊) to Karchen (*Mkhar chen*; Kache 卡車), Middle Stream from Dartsédo (*Dar rtse mdo*; Daziduo 達子多) to Tangnang (*Thang nang*; Tana 他那), and Lower Stream from Ziboshi (*Gzi bo gshis*; Siwushi 思吾什) to Laboshi (*Gla bo gshis*; Laowushi 老吾什). Here the Luchu River flows from the Amdo steppe southeastward to Minzhou, turns northeast toward Lintao, zigzags in the gorges amid the Taizishan Mountains, and divides the valley into the sunny-side (*nyin aos*; *heyang* 河陽) and shady-side (*srib aos*; *heyin* 河陰), or Northern Tao (Taobei 洮北) and Southern Tao (Taonan 洮南). Further north of the sunny-side is where

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<sup>4</sup> Lobsang Dongrub and Böpa Tsering, *Anduo gucha chandingsi* 安多古剎禪定寺 (Lanzhou: Gansu minzu chubanshe, 1995), 228–230; Zhizhisi (Drindren Monastery), “Zhizhisi jiankuang,” (Manuscript), 1–22.

North Range abuts Hezhou and Lintao. The massif known as Beishan, extending from Khyagé (*Khya dge*; Qiagai 恰蓋) to Khangtok (*Khang thog*; Kangduo 康多), stands as a barrier between the Mébo-Zhongpa steppe and Northern Tao. On the southern slopes of the Beishan, magnificent forest valleys gradually give way to gentle hills and flat valleys that stretch to the northern bank of the Luchu River. These loess-covered low rolling hills and flat valleys are the only arable lands in this region. Hence, many Chinese dynasties chose Northern Tao to construct military outposts and strategic fortresses there. Ever since the early Ming state established two guard outposts (*wei* 衛), several battalions (*suo* 所) and dozens of forts and reclamation sites (*tuntian* 屯田) in the central area of Northern Tao, the Chinese-speaking population steadily increased and terraced the low hills. Up to the nineteenth century, over 400 Han and Hui settlements that radiated from New Town (Xincheng 新城), Old Town (Jiucheng 舊城), Tiecheng 鐵城 and Minzhou were densely concentrated in this area governed by imperial regular bureaucrats. These settlements were surrounded by nearly 250 Tibetan *tsowa* in the upper part of Beishan's southern slopes and the Luchu's immediate riverbeds.<sup>5</sup>

These *tsowa* scattered in Northern Tao were separately managed by the Chépa khenpo (*Chas pa mkhan po*; Chuiba-si *senggang* 垂巴寺僧綱, monk preceptor), the Marnyung khenpo (*Mar snyung mkhan po*; Manu-si *senggang* 麻奴寺僧綱), the Chokro khenchen (*Cog ro mkhan chen*; Zhuoluo-si *dugang* 卓洛寺都綱, supervisory monk preceptor), the Nyentsa gönpo (*Nyan tsha dgon po*; Zibao Zan *tusi* 資堡咎土司), the Tsoksum gönpo (*Tshogs sum dgon po*; Zhuoxun Yang *tusi* 卓遜楊土司), the Yerba lapön (*Yer ba bla dpon*; Houjia-si/Yuancheng-si *sengzheng* 侯家寺/圓城寺僧正, monk supervisor) and the Tsordor lapön

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<sup>5</sup> MZZ, j2.11b–17b; TZZ, 137–169.



(*Tshor dor bla dpon*; Yanjia-si/Caduo-si *sengzheng* 閻家寺/擦多寺僧正). They were all nominally subordinated to the Qing imperial Taozhou placatory commander (*fufan tongzhi* 撫番同知). In-between Taozhou and Minzhou, the *tsowa* were managed by the Dugang state preceptor (*Chabuyu Hou guoshi* 茶埠峪后國師), the Dongnak gönpo (*Sdong nag dgon po*; *Duona Zhao tusi* 多納趙土司) and the Cuandugou Hou chieftain (攢都溝后土司) who were supervised by the Minzhou magistrate (*zhizhou* 知州).<sup>6</sup> Because these lay and Buddhist rulers paid allegiance to the Ming and Qing emperors, presented tribute and so were granted official positions and religious titles in return, their subjects were recorded in Chinese official documents as “cooked barbarians” (*shufan* 熟番). Their domains immediately bordered the Chone Kingdom. Although they were independently governed subjects, they were allied with the Chone throne through religion or marriage, as they were deemed the Yang chieftain’s inferiors in the imperial bureaucratic system and also in Tibetan religious terms, were the Chone khenpo’s subordinates. In the nineteenth century, some of their subjects were practically managed by the Chone kings.<sup>7</sup>

Tibetans in Northern Tao typically established *sde ba* or sedentary villages. Although their economy was historically nomadic, they gradually shifted to a sedentary way of life after the Ming and Qing frontiersmen terraced a large portion of mountain meadow, and the tea-horse trade in eastern Amdo began to decline from the seventeenth century onward. They referred to themselves as Riverside Tibetans (*chu kha rgyud*). The nearby Tibetan nomads (*'brog pa*), who were classified in Chinese official reports as “raw barbarians” (*shengfan* 生番) or “remote/wild barbarians” (*yuanfan/yefan* 遠番/野番), called the Riverside Tibetans

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<sup>6</sup> Chen Bingguang, *Qingdai bianzheng tongkao* 清代邊政通考 (1934, Taipei: Nantian shuju, 1987), 159–161; MZZ, j3.1a–27b; TZZ, 837–922.

<sup>7</sup> Ma Dengkun and Wanma Duoqi, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus* (Gannan zangzu buluo gaishu; Hezuo: Gannan baoshe, 1994).

“famers” (*rongpa*) distaining their tedious agricultural labor and prejudicially referring to these riverine settlers as “neither Tibetan nor Chinese” (*rgya ma bod*). Taozhou and Minzhou Chinese residents stereotypically described them as crafting unwieldy tools based on Chinese models, heavily utilizing Chinese loanwords in their language, using Tibetan grammar when speaking Chinese, adopting half-Chinese and half-Tibetan names and yet culturally and racially belonging to “the barbarians” (*fanzi* 番子). They called these immediate Tibetan neighbors “half barbarians” (*banfanzi* 半番子), which implied that they were partially “civilized” in Chinese terms. Also, since the Riverside Tibetan women combed three long braids, which they regarded as the hairstyle of gods (*lha*) and the noble hairstyle in the Tibetan imperial period, they were also known as “Sangaomer” (people with three braids) by local Chinese-speakers.<sup>8</sup>

However, the seemingly unitary Riverside Tibetan group was internally diverse; their externally assumed cohesion merely derived from the fact that they shared the same past synthesized, constructed and reconstructed by local oral narrators. Local oral histories evolved as each generation mixed, discarded previous associations, blended in, mediated and rearranged new elements that were memorialized in orally recalled memory over time. In these oral traditions, Riverside Tibetans traced their ancestral origins far back to Central Tibet and adopted nostalgic toponyms such as Tsangpawa (*Gtsang pa ba*; Zangbawa 藏巴哇, “Tibetan people”) and Böyül (*Bod yul*; Boyu 博峪, “Tibetan place”) to indicate their origins. Yet, through cross-checking the key information with Chinese and Tibetan written records and carefully deconstructing and re-layering the oral narratives, it is evident that the ancestors of Riverside Tibetans migrated to Front Range in three main periods. The first group of migrants were the Ü-Tsang troops arriving during the Tang-Tibetan wars. They

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<sup>8</sup> TZZ, 926–931; Robert Ekvall, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border*, 31; Ma Yongshou, *Zhuoni fushi wenhua* 卓尼服飾文化 (Lanzhou: Gansu wenhua chubanshe, 2014).

were known as Ngédo (*Ngas mdo*), Gongso (*Gong so*), Ara (*A ra*), Luchung and Zhunba (*Gzhung ba*) people, who formed Chone Five-Division Confederation (*Co ne khag lnga*) in Upper Stream and Middle Stream, and smaller federations in Lower Stream. Their descendants consider the ethnonym Sangaomer as a Chinese phonetic rendering of Songtsenmak (*Srong btsan dmag*), which means the army of Songtsen Gampo (*Srong btsan sgam po*; 604–650); and they believe that their mother tongue is the language spoken in eighth-century Lhasa.<sup>9</sup> The second group, such as the Lhündrup (*Lhan grub*), Penpod (*Phan po*) and Barlung (*Bar lung*) federations, which were thought to have migrated from the Lhasa region, had been the paramount pastoral leagues affiliated to the Gusiluo Kingdom, the Song, the Jin or the Yuan dynasties. They moved from the Tsongkha (*Tsong kha*) region to Northern Tao between the eleventh and twelfth centuries. These federation names indicate their remote homelands.<sup>10</sup> The third group of migrants were the Kham and Amdo nomads who sought arable land to plant barley and wheat or suitable markets for trade in the Ming era. They occupied Middle Stream and named the place Chone by conjoining the Tibetan words for wheat (*gro*) and barley (*nas*), by one theory, or because they were ruled by two kings (*co ne*), as another view has it. Thus, although all these groups ended up populating the banks of the Luchu River and share many similar cultural practices and some cultural traits, their linguistic practices and costumes are noticeably different from place to place.<sup>11</sup>

### *Southern Tao*

<sup>9</sup> Gendün Chöpel pointed out that Chone Tibetans were Songtsen's soldiers. See *Deb ther dkar po*, 90.

<sup>10</sup> They were descended from Lhangrub and Phanpo federations recorded as Longbu 陇逋, Pangbai 庞拜 and Baling/Bayang 巴凌/把羊 *zu* in Chinese sources. See Li Tao, *Xu zizhi tongjian* (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan, 1792), j265, j398, j404, j520; Toqto'a, *Songshi*, j42, j326; *Jinshi* 金史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), j26, j79, j80, j91, j95, j98, j103, j113; Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, j39, j43, j121, j123. For an analysis of the origins of Riverside Tibetan from historical and linguistic perspectives, see Chogs sums rdo rje, "Xu Zhuoni zhengjiao shi 續卓尼政教史," 272–279.

<sup>11</sup> Guru Tsering, Chone, January 3, 2015; Meng Tenzin, Lungsde, June 25, 2017. Also see Jam dbyangs bzhad pa Dkon mchog 'jigs med dbang po, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 197–207.

In Southern Tao, the northern slopes of the Dieshan are cut into numerous deep valleys densely forested with pines, conifers, birches and thickets on the shady side in contrast to the patchy meadows and thorny bushes on the sunny side. Following the Luchu River downstream, over 200 Tibetan settlements occupied Luchung and dispersed along the Chépa, Chubo (*Chu bo*; Shubu 術布), Karchen, Lali (*La li*; Laligou 拉力溝), Droné (*Sgro ne*; Zhuonigou 卓尼溝), Maru (*Ma ru*; Muer 木耳), Böyül, Dakyik (*Dag yig*; Dayugou 大峪溝), Lamarnang (*La mar nang*; Nalang 納浪), Surunang (*Su ru nang*; Xinigou 西尼溝), Pellung (*Spel lung*; Bailin 柏林) and Tsangpawa valleys in the southern part of the Luchu valley. With the exception of several *tsowa* managed by the Chépa khenpo and the Marnyung khenpo, these Tibetans were under the jurisdiction of the Chone throne. They were known to late imperial Ming and Qing officials as “raw barbarians in forest” (*linzhong shengfan* 林中生番). Locally, they were known as three distinct ethnographic groups.<sup>12</sup>

In upper Southern Tao, Chépa and Karchen are the largest branch valleys of the Luchu valley. Local inhabitants were called Drokpa and “valley nomads” (*gouli zhuogua* 溝里卓瓜) by Riverside Tibetans and Chinese-speakers. Based at higher altitudes amid abundant alpine meadows, the Tibetans in the Chépa and Karchen valleys predominantly subsisted on herding. While the majority of valley dwellers farmed a small portion of land near their village bases, their livelihoods primarily depended on the vast summer pastureland. They were the butter-makers of the region and also supplied the best working oxen (*mdzo* or *pianniu* 犏牛, a hybrid of yak and cattle) to nearby farmers. They shared similar costumes and diets with other Tibetan nomads. Chépa people were Amdo Tibetan-speakers, whereas, the language of Karchen dwellers was closer to the Kham Tibetan. These linguistic practices

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<sup>12</sup> Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 292–302; 'Jam dbyangs, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 198.

roughly indicated their origins. Tibetans of the two valleys had a long history of internecine feuding and frequently accused each other of being “thieves and robbers.” Drokpa women had a cornrow-hairstyle, and so were dubbed the “demon (*'dre*) hairstyle-wearers” by Riverside Tibetans who generally described the Drokpa as wild, violent and dirty.<sup>13</sup>

Between the two nomadic valleys and the Riverside Tibetan settlements in Northern Tao was an area historically known as Luchung occupied by the Chubo, Shentsa (*Gshen tsha*; Shanzha 善札), Détang (*Bde thang*; Diedang 迭當), Samarpukdo (*Sa dmar phu mdo*; Sangwang-pengduo 桑旺朋多) and Panglungshi (*Pang lung gshis*; Balongshi 巴隆什) federations. There were more than 60 Tibetan *tsowa* using the languages that were phonetically closer to either Riverside Tibetans or Amdo nomads with respect to their settlements’ geographical locations. Their economy was sustained on what was known as *samadrok* that divided the labors of a household to manage farming and herding in village and ranch separately. As they seemingly blended the Drokpa and Songtsenmak cultural traits, especially women’s hairstyles, they were referred to as *titima* by Riverside Tibetans or *niuzitou* 鈕子頭 by local Chinese speakers. Up to the late seventeenth century, the Luchung Tibetans retained remarkably strong Bon traditions. These Tibetans worshipped Bon deities, particularly *lu* who dwell in the water and protect or persecute believers depending on their maintenance of long-term offerings. These local women’s hairstyle thereby was considered as the hairstyle of water dieties.<sup>14</sup>

From Datsédo to Tsangpawa in middle and lower Southern Tao, Tibetans built more than 150 sedentary villages in branch valleys and on alluvial deposits along the Luchu River. These villages controlled the long and thickly forested valleys of the northern Dieshan Mountains. In each village, several households managed summer camps in the deep valley

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<sup>13</sup> Guru Tsering, Chone, January 3, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> Guru Tsering, Chone, January 3, 2015.

areas alongside the farmland near the village base. Other households completely relied on farming. These Tibetans also retained memories of being sent from Central Tibet as garrison soldiers and called themselves Songtsenmak. Their linguistic and cultural practices were undifferentiated from the Riverside Tibetans in Middle Stream of Northern Tao.<sup>15</sup>

### *North Range*

North Range was the region between Northern Tao and the southern slopes of the towering Taizishan. It was recorded as *kouwai* or Zuogai 佐蓋 in Chinese imperial documents. In fact, North Range comprised Dzögé and Khyagé. According to the local Tibetan geographical perspective, the Mébo steppe, which was reckoned as a place taking three-days on horse-back to cross, was in the north and the west of the Beishan. The area was dominated by the Mébo gönpo lineage which managed five nomadic federations (*shog pa*; *buyi* 部翼) of around 40 encampment-circles (*ru skor*; *zhangquan* 帳圈). Zhongpa was composed of the Khangtok, Shoba (*Sho ba*; Shaowa 勺哇), Samar (*Sa dmar*; Shamao 沙冒), Akhor (*A 'khor*; Ahe 阿禾), Rapso (*Rab so*; Resuo 熱索), Töma (*Stod ma*; Duoma 多麻), Toucho (*Tho 'u cho*; Tuqiao 土橋) and Chakma (*Chag ma*; Chama 岔麻) federations of some 60 *tsowa* that were collectively known as the “Zhongpa Three Divisions” (*Gzhong pa khag gsum*) under the jurisdiction of the Chone throne. It was divided into two halves, *rong* and *'brog*, or farming and herding. The Beishan Mountains were inhabited by Tibetan agricultural and *samadrok* communities. The Khyagé-Khangtok pasture along the Beishan range was grazed by pastoral encampments.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Chogs sums rdo rje, “Xu Zhuoni zhengjiao shi,” 272–279.

<sup>16</sup> TZTZ, 842; Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 214–228, 307–311; Hans Stübel, *The Mewu Fantzu: A Tibetan Tribe of Kansu* (New Haven: HRAF Press, 1958).

Based on the local oral history, the Mébo göngpo lineage was from the Dzögé league in Ngawa. The göngpo and his clansmen were defeated in a pastoral feud with the nomadic federation in northern Ngawa. Expelled and needing new pastureland, they migrated to North Range and named the new territory Dzögé. Likely due to a murder case, internal bloodshed subsequently split this group into two factions. Following the customary law on the pastureland, “murderers” or “captured killers” were exiled after providing compensation to the victim’s family and *tsowa*. The exiled faction migrated again and finally settled to the south of the triumphant faction in Upper Dzögé (*mdzod dge stod ma*). The pasture there was called Lower Dzögé (*mdzod dge smad ma*), or Mébo, “the land of murders.” Subsequently, before the seventeenth century, the Mébo göngpo family conquered all encampment-circles in Dzögé and established the pastoral confederation of the Mébo, Ritöma (*Ri stod ma*; Renduoma 仁多瑪), Drukge (’*Drug ge*; Zhouge 洲格), Nato (*Na to*; Nadao 那道) and Nangba (*Nang ba*; Nangwa 囊哇) *shog pa*. In the Qing official account, this confederation was one of the “Twenty-One Southern Tibetan Federations” (*nanfan ershiyi zhai* 南番二十一寨) nominally administered by the Xunhua Subprefecture 循化廳 between 1762 and 1875.<sup>17</sup>

These inhabitants of North Range used Amdo Tibetan language with subtle phonetical differences. Like the valley nomads, the Mébo-Zhongpa nomads shared the similar cultural traits with other Amdo pastoralists. They took pride in their nomadic way of life and considered themselves superior to farmers. They derided farming as an onerous work which often disturbs the wrathful earth spirits (*sa dag*) and accumulates negative karma by killing countless insects and worms. In the mountainous part of North Range, a transitional zone of agriculturalism and pastoralism, the mountain-dwellers subsisted on both farming and

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<sup>17</sup> See Gong Jinghan. *Xunhua ting zhi* 循化廳志 (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1968), 21–45, 100–110; ’Jam dbyangs, *Co ne’i bstan ’gyur gyi dkar chag*, 199; TZZT, 921.

herding. The closer a village was located to the steppe, the more its economy tended to rely on herding. Likewise, the closer a village was to the Han and Hui settlements of Old Town, Yangsha 羊沙 and Yeliguan 冶力關, the more its economy relied on farming. Depending on their geographical locations, the Tibetan farmers of this area were culturally closer to either Songtsenmak or Titima Tibetans.<sup>18</sup>

### *Back Range*

Crossing the Chépa, Karchen or Dakyik valleys of Southern Tao and climbing over the limestone massif of Dieshan, which Tibetans conceptualized as two-days on horse-back, one could reach the precipitous Back Range. Local residents divided the Drukchu valley into Upper Tébo (*The bo stod ma*; Shangdie 上迭) from Tadok (*Rta 'dogs*; Dangduo 當多) to Dzambha (*Dzam bha*; Banzha 半札), Lower Tébo (*The bo smad ma*; Xiadie 下迭) from Takra (*Stag ra*; Dala 達拉) to Zangbap (*Bzang 'bab*; Sangba 桑坝), and Drukchu from Batsang (*'Ba' gtsang*; Bazang 巴藏) to Böyül. This is the watershed of the Yangtse and Yellow river basins. The southern Dieshan and the northern Minshan slopes are cut through with deep gorges and their rushing rivers. These natural barriers and rugged terrain render much of the area mostly uninhabitable for human beings. Here, however, Tibetans settled either on the few flat banks along the Drukchu River from Tébo to Drukchu or on some level ground in the high mountains. Snow-covered peaks, high ridges with stunning cliffs, alpine meadows, pine forests, steep mountains and long valleys of the Minshan and Dieshan ranges and numerous rushing rivers physically set this region apart from Chone, Songpan 松潘 and the outside world. These geographical barriers sheltered many self-governed Tibetan

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<sup>18</sup> Tashi Döndrup, Ritöma, October 16, 2016. For a discussion of the superiority of Drokpa, see Robert Ekvall, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border*, 76–80.



federations along the Drukchu valley, rendering the region a forbidden zone for most external authorities.<sup>19</sup>

As the region was covered by dense old-growth forests, the Tibetan-speakers and Chinese-speakers in Front Range called the dwellers along the Drukchu River and its tributaries “foresters” (*nags khrod pa*) or “raw barbarians in forest.” They used Tébo as the toponym of the upper Drukchu valley and the ethnonym of local inhabitants, and called the peoples living in the lower Drukchu valley “Black Tibetans” (*heifan* 黑番) based on their black costumes. Also, there were a considerable number of Han Chinese settlements concentrated around the Xigu Battalion since the early Ming.<sup>20</sup> Except for the Ridang (*Ri dwangs*; Ridang/Luoda 日當/洛大), Badzong (*Sba rdzong*; Bazang 巴藏) and Latsen (*La rtsa*; Lazikou 臘子口) areas in Lower Tébo ruled by the Dongnak gönpo, over 200 *tsowa* across Tébo were subordinated to the Chone throne. In Drukchu, the Tangbar Tégyü pönpo (*Tanchang Ma tusi* 宕昌馬土司, maternal nephew of the Chone king in the 1880s) ruled more than 60 *tsowa*, the Serpo Shonggön lapön (*Gser po'i bla dbon*; Heiyu-si *senggang* 黑峪寺僧綱) managed 62 *tsowa*, and the Chone king controlled 54 *tsowa*. Drukchu Tibetans had interacted with neighboring Chinese for centuries, and adopted certain Chinese cultural practices; thus, they were called “Xigu Chinese” (*Si gu rgya*) by Tébo Tibetans. At the same time, farmers of the lower Drukchu valley often depicted their Tébo neighbors as “bandits” and “robbers” since they raided Xigu areas in years when food supplies became scarce.<sup>21</sup>

The main economy in Upper Tébo was based on animal husbandry. The lands local Tibetans ploughed could barely allow them to make ends meet. In Lower Tébo, the chief

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<sup>19</sup> *TZTZ*, 127–128; *LTXZ*, 103–109; *Zhuoni xianzhi* (hereafter *ZNXZ*), 40–45; *ZQXZ*, 96–7; Joseph Rock, “The Land of the Tebbus,” 108; Joseph Rock to Charles Sprague Sargent, September 24, 1926, Arnold Arboretum Library (hereafter *AAL*), Harvard University, RIVaF5-37t1, 1.

<sup>20</sup> 'Jam dbyangs, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 198. An Jiyuan, *Gongchang fuzhi*, j7, 1a–9b.

<sup>21</sup> *MZZ*, j3.1a–27b; Interview with Danba, Drukchu, July 25, 2016.

mode of production was characterized as a mix of farming, herding and hunting. In Drukchu, owing to the climate variation and mountainous terrain, local people primarily subsisted on cultivating barley, wheat or rice in the extremely slim farmlands reclaimed on the abrupt mountain slopes and tiny alluviums along the drastic altitude decrease. The linguistic practices along the Drukchu River were as complex and diverse as in the Luchu valley. The inhabitants of every branch valley believed that they spoke a Tibetan dialect with unique pronunciations and phrases which differentiated their mother tongue from other Tibetan dialects. In some extreme cases, languages spoken by the villagers in the upper and lower parts of the same branch valley were not mutually intelligible.<sup>22</sup>

Like other Tibetan groups on the margins of ethnographic Tibet who traced their origins back to the Ü-Tsang ancestral clans, the settlers of Back Range considered that they were descendants of the Dön (*Ldon*, *'Don*, *Gdon*, *Sdon*) and Ba (*Sbra*, *Dbra*) clans. Local toponyms also suggested their Ü-Tsang origins and garrison memories. Tébo was believed to be a phonetic rendering of Dakpo (*De pod*), the name of Tibetan garrison soldiers' hometown to the southeast of Lhasa. Tibetans along the lower Drukchu valley used toponyms such as Böyül, Ridang (a place in present-day Gyantse 江孜) and Tsagang (*Tsha sgang*; the abbreviation of Tsawagang in the east of Chamdo 昌都), proving their Central Tibet origins. Local oral histories demonstrated that they were descendants of cavalymen (*rta dmag*) who captured Diezhou in the Tang dynasty and were thereafter stationed in this valley.<sup>23</sup>

### *Ethnographic Enclaves*

The outlying mountainous areas of the Chone Kingdom retained diverse non-Tibetan indigenous cultures, languages and memories of some communities who were categorized as

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with Yudru Man, Wangtsang, November 7, 2019, which is confirmed by the interview with Kelzang Döndrup, Tébo, April 4, 2020.

<sup>23</sup> Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 1–10.

Xifan by the Chinese imperial courts and Tibetan nationality (*zangzu* 藏族) by the Chinese Nationalist and Communist governments. In the eastern North Range, the Monguor (*tuzu* 土族) people, or what Tibetans called Azha (*A zha*; Tuyuhun 吐谷渾), made their homes on the mountain tops of Shoba. They terraced all near slopes and mostly subsisted on farming. According to Monguor oral history, their ancestors migrated to Azhatang (*A zha thang*; Azitan 阿子灘) in the north of Jiucheng, then, escaped to Shoba after the Tibetan Empire conquered the Tuyunhun Kingdom (284–670). In Lower Tébo, the twelve *tsowa* of Azha (Axia 阿夏) were regarded as the Tuyuhun offshoots. Local Tibetans indicated that Monguors were “Tibetanized” in terms of their linguistic, cultural and religious practices. Nonetheless, they retained certain unique cultural traits. Their religious practice blended Tibetan Buddhism, Bon, Daoism and some local folk religions.<sup>24</sup>

In lower Drukchu valley, several groups claimed that they descended from the Qiang and Di 氏 divisions. For instance, Zangbap held they were descended from a Qiang branch that fled to the Tang-Tibetan border when their Sumpa (*Sum pa*; Supi 蘇毗) Queendom was destroyed by Songtsen Gampo. The Zangbap people’s language was closer to Kham Tibetan. Their costumes were similar to Drukchu Tibetans. The Qiang groups in Jiezhou specified that they descended from the Tanchang Qiang 宕昌羌 of the Wei-Jin period (220–589) who established the Tangut Kingdom (*Mi nyag*) in the eleventh century, and returned to this “historical homeland” after the demise of the kingdom in the early thirteenth century. They preserved the unique Qiangic languages and shared certain identical cultural practices with the Qiang groups in northwestern Sichuan. The Baima people in the Gansu-Sichuan borderland, who were generally classified as ethnic Tibetans, indicated that they were

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<sup>24</sup> See Louis Schram, *The Monguors of the Kansu-Tibetan Frontier: Their Origin, History, and Social Organization* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1954).

offspring of the Di. Their language was distinct, and its vocabulary includes both Tibetan and Qiangic words as well as the Chinese loanwords. Yet, even as they had such unique linguistic and cultural practices, the boundaries in terms of religious practices were blurred between these ethnographic enclaves and their Tibetan neighbors.<sup>25</sup>

To conclude, the geographic barriers and ethnographic boundaries in the Luchu and Drukchu valleys divided the residents of the Chone Kingdom into the Riverside, Titima, Valley Drokpa, Zhongpa, Tébo, Drukchu Tibetan groups and several other “Tibetanized” ethnographic enclaves. In these groups, as the next section elaborates, those *tsowa* that shared same regional/local, political and religious identity affiliations formed a *tsowa* society in the form of federation or league.

## **Tsowa Societies: An Alternative Conceptualization of Tibetan Socio-Typology**

### *The Changing Implications of Zu*

There were more than 900 *tsowa* in the Chone Kingdom and nearby areas ruled by Tibetan authorities who had political, religious and/or affinal relations with the Chone ruling family. Historically, imperial Chinese scholars noticed that Tibetans of this region often coalesced into various military and political alliances. The alliances known as Jitang 吉唐, Luli 鲁黎, Baling 巴凌, Longbu 陇逋, Pangbai 庞拜, Mubo 木波 and Shibazu 十八族 occupying the region between Xining and Songpan, each of which was composed of over ten to thirty thousand households, were denoted as *bu* or *zu* (confederation/division) in Chinese sources. These were predominantly Tibetan leagues that waged wars against or affiliated

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<sup>25</sup> Group interviews, Böyül, Tsangang, Wuduguan and Zhouqu County, July 20–28, 2016; Group interviews, Ridang, Zangbap and Diebu County, June 16–25, 2017. The interviews in villages, except the individual interviews, often became group interviews. Sometimes the discussions turned into hot debates. The information used in this research are mostly based on the widely remembered and/or agreed “facts.” For a study on the Baima language, see Sun Hongkai, “Is Baima a Dialect or Vernacular of Tibetan,” *Cahiers de Linguistique-Asie Orientale* 32, no.1 (2003): 61–81.

themselves with the Song, Xia and Jin states in a variety of circumstances. From the mid-thirteenth century onward, these Tibetan leagues were incorporated into the Mongol Empire, though they remained autonomous locally under the management of Tibetan battalion or company heads (*qianhu* or *baihu* 千戶, 百戶) and Sakya monasteries under the jurisdiction of Tufan Regions Pacification Commission (*Tufan deng chu xuanweisi duyuanshuaifu* 吐蕃等處宣慰司都元帥府). Chinese official records of this period regarding the frontier Tibetans most often concern military campaigns and the imperial conferring of official positions. They provide little insight into the internal structure and organization of these *bu* and *zu*.<sup>26</sup>

Along with establishing permanent Chinese garrisons for the first time in eastern Amdo-Kham, the Ming empire bestowed hundreds of official positions and titles on Tibetan chiefs and religious leaders, and used tea as a political device to maintain its western frontier stability. Because the Ming attempted to manage local Tibetans in a more systematic way, Chinese officials and scholars documented the names, locations, populations and amount of horses for trade/tribute of more than Xifan 700 *zu*, mostly *shufan* and *shengfan* in the valleys and pasturelands near the Ming western border. In his book on the Ming northern and western borderland policies and defensive system, Zhang Yu indicated that the population of Tibetan *zu* often ranged from several to 10,000 men and women in the mid-sixteenth century. He classified these *zu* into some 90 “horse-payer *zu*” (*nama fanzu* 納馬番族, border-traders) trading at the Ming tea-horse bureaus (*chamasi* 茶馬司) in Xining, Hezhou and Taozhou, and over 600 “horse-tributary *zu*” (*gongma fanzu* 貢馬番族) paying tributes to the emperor in Ming capital and trading in China proper. As a consequence of the Ming empire’s regulated border trade and tightened tribute policy, particularly after the 1460s, a horse-tributary *zu* once sending several dozen envoys to pay tribute was only allowed to send 1 to 5

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<sup>26</sup> See Li Tao, *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編 (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan, 1792), j262; Ma Duanlin, *Wenxian tongkao*, j335.

envoys. Apart from the Tibetan con/federations recognized as official horse-traders by the Ming, the frontier Tibetans intended to register smaller groups in their con/federations as independent *zu* for obtaining more quota of envoys. Hence, the disparity of population among these *zu* in the sizes of village, encampment, federation and confederation suggests that the Ming registered Tibetan horse-payer and horse-tributary groups on the basis of local identity affiliations and grouping units.<sup>27</sup> In the local Tibetan context, discussed in the following section, these *zu* were either *tsho ba* (*tsho khag, rus khag*), or *shog pa* (*tsho shog, dmag shog*).

In the early Qing, the Manchu Emperors ratified the inheritances of official positions and titles of around 40 Tibetan secular chiefs, 10 monastic officials and 40 religious leaders. These Tibetan authorities had become the most powerful local rulers by incorporating autonomous federations and smaller groups through military conquest, patron-priest relationships, various monastic systems as well as political and marital alignments in eastern Amdo. Their realms, despite being autonomous, were treated as within the administrative boundaries of the sub/prefectures in Shaan-Gan. Especially after western Amdo, that is, the Kokonor (*Mtsho sngon po*; Qinghai Lake 青海湖) region controlled by the Upper Mongol (Qinghai Mongol 青海蒙古) rulers, was integrated into the Qing Empire in the early eighteenth century, Qing officials and local scholars delineated local jurisdictional borders in Amdo and specified each native official's *zu* subjects in imperial memorials and local gazetteers. In eastern Amdo, they documented more than 1,500 *zu* scattered along the Sangchu, Luchu and Drukchu valleys. Even though no further information of these *zu* was

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<sup>27</sup> *Mingshilu* 明實錄 (hereafter *MSL*) Yingzong: j76.1501, j97.1942–1943, j196.6311, j232.5079–5080, j305.6437–6438, Xiaozong: j63.1207, j194.3579–3580; Zhang Yu, *Bianzheng kao*, j9; Gu Yanwu, *Tianxia junguo libing shu* 天下郡國利病書 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe), vol.3, 27–107. Zhang Tingyu, *Mingshi* 明史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), j330. For an analysis of the Ming-Tibetan tea-horse trade and Amdo Tibetan tributaries, see Marnyi Gyatso, “The Ming, Tibetan and Mongol Interactions in Shaping the Ming Fortification, Multicultural Society and Natural Landscape in Mdo smad, 1368–1644.” In *Revue d’Etudes Tibétaines* 55 (2020): 351–384.

given apart from their names and territorial locations, the “Fanzu/Fanshu 番族/番屬” category in local gazetteers compiled from the 1680s to the 1900s does reflect toponyms of Tibetan sedentary villages and pastoral encampments, or names of *tsowa*—the fundamental units of Tibetan frontier societies.<sup>28</sup>

When Robert Ekvall surveyed the Tibetan, Chinese and Muslim societies in the Gansu-Amdo borderland during the Republican era, he did not notice the existence of *tsowa*, describing “the farming communities of the Choni district,” as “hanging under the impact of Chinese culture.” In his comparison of “the strictly Tibetan culture of the sedentary people with the strictly Tibetan culture of the nomad,” he suggested that the basic nomadic social unit was the tribe consisting of several encampments and the basic social unit in sedentary society was the village. He was aware of the existence of *tsowa* in the nomadic federations of Tsö, Amchok, Zamtsa (*Zam tsha*; Sanmucha 三木察) and Lhamo and interpreted it as the “intermediate organization” between encampment and tribe. This observation was misleading if we take the contemporary situation and the continuously evolving history of the *tsowa* organization in eastern Amdo into account. Local Tibetans were acquainted with their self-governed *tsowa* as well as the base-village (*grangs ka*) and military unit (*dmag ru*) systems developed by the Chone rulers to organize tributary missions, collect tax and local tributes, and levy various corvées. Yet, strongly hostile toward Western missionaries, they did not allow Ekvall to conduct missionary work and anthropological research in their communities

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<sup>28</sup> See “Fanzu” in An Jiyuan, *Gongchang fuzhi* (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2008); Wu Zhen, *Hezhou weizhi* 河州衛志 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2008); Wang Quanchen, *Hezhou zhi* 河州志 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2008); Yang Yingju, *Xining fu xin zhi* 西寧府新志 (Lanzhou: Guji shudian, 1990); Liu Minkuan and Ying Long, *Xining weizhi* 西寧衛志 (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1993); Su Xian, *Xining zhi* 西寧志 (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1993); Gong Jinghan, *Xunhua tingzhi*; Zhang Yandu, *TZTZ*; Wang Yuanjiong and Tian Ersui, *MZZ*; Debin, *Minzhou xiangtu zhi* 岷州鄉土志 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2008); Zu Zhaoqing, *Jiezhou zhi* 階州志 (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin chubanshe, 2013); Ge Shizheng, *Zhili jiezhou zhi* 直隸階州志 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2008); Wu Peng’ao, *Wujie beizhi* 武階備志 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan, 2001); Lü Zhennan and Ye Enpei, *Jiezhou zhilizhou xuzhi* 階州直隸州續志 (Cambridge: The Harvard-Yenching Library, 1886).

from the 1920s to the 1930s, leaving him with limited, distorted perspective of local social organization. Based on the information provided by Chone authorities and local Han Christians, Ekvall concluded that Chone Tibetans lived in “Sinicizing” villages.<sup>29</sup>

As my following chapters illustrate, the *tsowa* societies in different parts of the Chone Kingdom unevenly experienced the social, political, economic, cultural and religious structural changes from 1862 onward. As several waves of Chinese migrants poured into the areas of the Tibetan settlements of Northern Tao, middle-lower Southern Tao and Drukchu, these Chinese migrants replaced “*tsowa*” with the Chinese term “*zhuang* 莊” or “*cun* 村” (village). When the Nationalist government implemented a series of state building policies on this frontier from the 1930s into the 1940s, GMD officials used the term “village” when mapping the settlements and reporting local affairs. In the 1950s, CCP officials registered these *zhuang* and *cun* as the most basic administrative and productive units—brigades (*dadui* 大隊) of different townships (*xiang/zhen* 鄉/鎮) or people’s communes (*renmin gongshe* 人民公社) across the historical realm of the Chone king. *Tsowa* organization became less important in everyday life for local Tibetans, particularly when communal religious activities closely associated with this organization were banned. The notion of *tsowa* territorial boundary was much weakened, if not completely eradicated from 1956 to the 1970s. Memories of *tsowa* faded away not only in Front Range, but also in North Range and Back Range. Hence, although eastern Amdo Tibetans born before the 1940s still remember some information about their *tsowa*, for outsiders and scholars writing about this area, it was the chieftain system and political structure of the Chone Kingdom that drew their interest, while the *tsowa* remained a rather unfamiliar concept.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Robert Ekvall, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border*, 34–35, 64.

<sup>30</sup> See “Jianzhi zhi” in *ZNXZ*; *Lintan xianzhi* (hereafter *LTXZ*); *Diebu xianzhi* 迭部縣志 (hereafter *DBXZ*); *ZQXZ*; *Xianhe xianzhi* (hereafter *XHXZ*); *Minxian zhi* 岷縣志 (hereafter *MXZ*). For similar cases, see Langelaar, “Descent and Houses in Regong,” 160; Buffetrille, “Remarks on Mediums,” 15; Snying bo rgyal and Rino, “Deity Men,” 74.



## *Tsowa Societies*

In the Luchu and Drukchu valleys, as local elders explain, a *tsowa* usually consisted of several to over thirty households in the form of a house (*khang*) or a tent (*khyim tshang*). Households were essential to the organization and preservation of a *tsowa*. Having a sufficient number of members of the households provided the necessary manpower to secure *tsowa* territory, protect the settlement or encampment, organize mutual-assistance in farm labor or assign seasonally circulated ranches, fulfill religious duties, respond to an overlord's instruction and so on. Every household had a house name (*khang ming*; *fangming* 房名) known by its neighbors, the *tsowa* leader and the tax collector of the local ruler. The household could own farmland, graze grassland and fell timbers in the forest of the *tsowa* territory. The householder was expected to take many long-term reciprocal responsibilities for other households in the *tsowa*, and keep good relations with household deities and all sacred beings known as dwelling in the *tsowa* territory. Every mature male was a warrior expected to fight for other *tsowa* members, their overlord, monastery, territory or goods whenever required. It was a widely recognized tradition that every household possessed weapons and raised horses in preparation for battle. The property and all sacred and secular relations and responsibilities bonding the family were transmitted to the male successor of the household. When a family had only daughters or no heir at all, uxori-local marriage or adoption would take place, more frequently after the 1860s, so the household would persist. The male child of a son-in-law or adopted son (usually from relative's household) was considered the house-name carrier and equally treated as a male member of the *tsowa*. Thus, overall, the descent system in *tsowa* was patrilineal.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> In his study on Tibetan pastoralism based on field research in the west of the Chone Kingdom, Robert Ekvall gave a brief explanation of the matriloal marriage practice in nomadic communities. See *Fields on the Hoof: Nexus of Tibetan Nomadic Pastoralism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1968), 27.

Meanwhile, from a demographic perspective, local *tsowa* maintained quite stable household numbers and populations after the sixteenth century. Comparing the population of the *zu* recorded by Zhang Yu in 1547 with the local Tibetan population documented in Chinese gazetteers in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and the population estimations reported by the Western visitors and the GMD as well as the CCP officials in the first half of the twentieth century, it seems that most *tsowa* kept an average number of adults between 40 to 180 in the Chone Kingdom.<sup>32</sup> Ekvall suggested that the birth-rate of Tibetan nomadic families was lower than that of Tibetan sedentary households, whose birth rate was fairly good yet lower than neighboring Chinese families. The relatively low birth rate plus poor medical condition and infant mortality cannot explain the almost stationary population of the kingdom and nearby Tibetan areas.<sup>33</sup> Based on the information about family members that local Tibetans recall, every household had at least two or three children in the nineteenth century. Yet, unlike the societies elsewhere having the mode of cognatic or agnatic kinship where the ancestral household was divided into several lineages that formed a clan alongside the population and property increase, household division was rare in local *tsowa*. The mass Buddhist monastic education developed by the Gelug sect and thriving in Amdo from the late sixteenth century onward would, it might seem, be a major reason for a stable curve of local population. Customarily, a Tibetan household kept only one son to manage the household and sent the others to become monks and/or uxori-local sons-in-law (*mag pa*) of daughters-only households. Except some well off households with more than two sons staying at home at maturity, few Tibetan families divided household and property, which would increase the difficulty for a family to make both ends meet. Sending sons to a monastery also provided the opportunity for a household to enhance its social and even economic status once a son

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<sup>32</sup> Zhang Yu, *Bianzheng kao*, j9.1a–12a; MZZ, j3. 1a–27b; TZZ, j16.837–922; Frank Kingdon-Ward, *On the Way to Tibet*, 53–54; and “Renkou zhi 人口志 [Demographic record]” in local county gazetteers compiled in the 1990s.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Ekvall, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border*, 81.

obtained higher degrees and titles in the monastic educational system. As a result, a Tibetan household, without dividing itself, became a lineage unto itself.<sup>34</sup>

In each *tsowa*, two to around ten households formed a subdivision and were said to have consanguineous relationships defined as having the same patrilineal bone. The male members of a subdivision considered themselves to be descendants of the same founding ancestor who was either a legendary general, mythical figure, powerful leader, brave warrior and so forth. The consanguineous relationship in a subdivision was defined by the agnatic inter-household kinship, namely the patrilineal sibling relation (*sha khrag*, *sbun mched* and *gnyen nye* used in different areas). The related households were called “brother-houses” (*sha nye*; *qinfang* 親房), bearing the same lineage name (*rus ming*), sharing the same protector deity (*lha mchod*) and worshipping the same mountain god (*yul lha*). The subdivision of related households was called *rus khag*, *khyim khag* or *tshang* on the basis of regional variations, which can be understood as clan. The subdivision was critical for brother-houses to organize agricultural or pastoral production. Members of the subdivision usually had strong solidarity and took mutual responsibility. They supported each other in holding weddings, funerals, as well as in farming/herding work, constructions, trades, feuds against others and all matters requiring additional support, counsel, resources or labor.<sup>35</sup>

Since most subdivisions were weak with respect to the resource management and self-preservation, the majority of *tsowa* consisted of around three subdivisions. There was a full category of inter-household and inter-subdivision relations overarching subdivisions to explain Tibetan communal notions of inclusion and exclusion in a *tsowa*. Based on my field research, I classify these relations into the bone-related, fictitious kinship-based, friendly

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<sup>34</sup> In *tsowa* of North Range, Southern Tao and Back Range, local Tibetans commonly suggest that “dividing household would make the family poor.” In the central agricultural zone, local villagers indicate that “dividing household would increase tax.”

<sup>35</sup> Interviews in Maru, May 20, 2015; Droné, May 23, 2015; Larmanang, May 30, 2015; Pukgyo, May 23, 2017; Wamar, October 29, 2016; Karchen, June 6, 2015; Kangtok, June 10, 2015; Drukchu, July 25, 2016.

reciprocal assistant (*rogs pa*), and communal responsibility (*ulag*)-obligated types. In specific, similar to the brother-houses, subdivisions were said to have consanguineous relationship. The *tsowa* oral history, or idealized original legend, usually suggests that the subdivisions were established by three or more bone-related brothers, and all householders were kinsman. If a *tsowa* was composed of several unrelated subdivisions, a fictitious kinship would be forged by *tsowa* members over time. Subgroups were described as having the same founding ancestor, who could be identified as an offshoot of the four/six ancestral clans or their branches in ancient Tibet. Or, since brother-houses of a subdivision worshipped the same mountain god known as small *yul lha*, in some cases, the small mountain gods of subdivisions in a *tsowa* were depicted as blood brothers. As the elders of Lamarnang *tsowa* who indicate,

The members of Lamarnang *tsowa* were descendants of three generals who were brothers. They were sent to garrison the (Tang-Tibetan) border. When they marched through Dakyik valley and climbed up Mount Khyilchen, a general missed his Ü-Tsang hometown so much that he could barely go on further. Then he ended his journey at the summit of Khyilchen, turned his face westward and looked toward Ü-Tsang day and night. The other two generals directed soldiers to march down the mountain and to settle down on the Luchu riverside. The three generals became the mountain gods of Lamarnang *tsowa*. That is why two of them reside in the vicinity of the village. They watch over villagers from both sides of Lamarnang valley. The other one resides at the summit of Mount Khyilchen in the deepest Lamarnang valley and turns his back to the village and overlooks Ü-Tsang.<sup>36</sup>

Similar cases are also found in Lappa *tsowa* and elsewhere, even though the subdivisions did not share a founding ancestor; rather, the small mountain gods were said to be brothers. In order to strengthen the *tsowa* solidarity, a chief or large *yul lha* of the *tsowa*, who was always a great warrior, regional hero or ancestral figure, would be summoned and worshipped by all subdivisions. Moreover, the inter-household relations characterized as reciprocal assistant/friendly type, and communal responsibility-obligated type were crucial

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<sup>36</sup> Interviews with Lamarnang elders who are in charge of communal religious affairs. Villagers believe that the elders are authorities of their *tsowa* history. Lamarnang, Chone, June 2–4, 2016.

networks to hold a *tsowa* together. The amicable neighborhood relationship and friendship guaranteed extra reciprocal helpers in the growing and harvest seasons for farmer, or the camp-moving and trading periods for nomads. This type of *ulag* was compulsory responsibility for the purpose of mutual assistance and communal good with regard to *tsowa* events. It could be works of constructing village temple or monastery, taking care of domestic animals of the whole *tsowa* in sprouting month, reaping crops collectively in hail period, or battling with other *tsowa* because of theft, robbery, murder or territorial dispute. Some services required every *tsowa* member to turn out to help, whereas, some were taken in turns among the households. Therefore, the inter-household and inter-subdivision networks held an unnecessarily kinship-based community together, underpinned group solidarity and regulated membership.<sup>37</sup>

The membership in *tsowa* was closely associated with territory as well. Only at the level of *tsowa*, the concept of territory had substantial meaning. For long local Chinese gazetteers use the four-end (*sizhi* 四至) of traditional Chinese way of mapping administrative boundary to describe the territories of Tibetan rulers in eastern Amdo. Local Tibetans, however, conceived of the notion of territory in a very different way. The territorial boundary, marked by topographic feature and natural sign in most cases, were normally drawn by a *tsowa* and negotiated with neighboring *tsowa*. It was mapped in grassland and along river and mountain range in accordance with *tsowa* elders' memories. For *tsowa* members, the territory was inherited from the distant past when their ancestors first colonized the place, conquered or expelled the former settlers, and established the relationship with the natural space through performing rituals for the divine and demonic beings resided in the mountain, water, forest and so on. In each *tsowa*, the lay Bon priest (*bon po*) or lay Nyingma ritual specialist (*sngogs*

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<sup>37</sup> Also see Dpal ldan bkra shis and Kevin Stuart, "Perilous Novelties," *Anthropos* 93 (1998): 38–40. Emily Yeh notices that there are clans overarching *tsowa*. See "Tibetan Range Wars," 510.

*pa*) household possessed disparate texts and techniques to quell vicious spirits and maintain good relations with these non-human beings, especially the specific territorial deities. The Gelug ritual monks, lamas and reincarnations were annually invited to “tame” the mountain, earth, water and other spirits in the *tsowa* territory. Consequently, territoriality was not merely about the ownership and practical management of land, water, forest and pasture. It’s more concerning the human relations with territorial deities who were relevant to communal good.

Although territoriality was significant for *tsowa*, the relationship between *tsowa* and land was dynamic. Social unrest and natural catastrophe oftentimes disturbed the stability of the tie between *tsowa* and land. As the following chapters elaborate, an overlord’s suppression, Manchu incorporation, Tibetan-Muslim conflict, Chinese integration and severe natural disasters all triggered territorial changes and internal reconfigurations of *tsowa* in Amdo.<sup>38</sup> A *tsowa* could move or be separated from its territory and moved to a new place, lose households or recruit new households, restructure (merge or divide) itself after conquering adjacent *tsowa* or being defeated in a conflict; and, in these cases, a *tsowa* often retained its group identity and name in a new location. As Paul Nietupski points out, “territorial identity is an important, but not invariable component of a *shog pa* (or *tsowa*).”<sup>39</sup> Preserving an average number of households and maintaining various relations with the immaterial world were crucial for a *tsowa* to bond with new land and reestablish territoriality after relocation. Put another way, keeping a set of relations between households and deities that embodied in physical space alive through religious means were important to define the *tsowa* identity. The territory itself was not a decisive component to regulate *tsowa* membership.

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<sup>38</sup> In Langelaar’s two articles on household and *tsowa* in Reb gong, how the violent events in Amdo from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century that heavily affected *tsowa* organization is overlooked.

<sup>39</sup> Paul Nietupski, *Labrang Monastery*, 57.

It was common that a settlement or encampment consisted of several *tsowa* particularly in northern and western Amdo. This was a result of the split of *tsowa* and the amalgamation of subdivisions of different *tsowa*. However, the *tsowa*-territory relation was less fluid in eastern Amdo. Local *tsowa* registered as horse-payer and horse-tributary *tsowa* up to the sixteenth century were more stable units and had relatively fixed territories. Based on the Ming and Qing official records about Tibetan communities along the Luchu and Drukchu valleys, each *tsowa* was often a settlement or encampment onto itself. There were cases when *tsowa* were affected by a destructive event such as a large-scale Tibetan feud, a Ming punitive campaign against *shengfan*, Upper Mongol looting or Qing suppression of revolts in Amdo. This would lead to the relocation of *tsowa*. Since Tibetans named new territory after the *tsowa* name or toponym of their original or former homeland, *tsowa* oral history often connected places with the same name by a chronological line to remember the *tsowa* origin and migration history as well as to show a cross-region agnatic kinship network generated from Central Tibet. If we take this kind of idealized and continuously constructed oral histories at face value, the society across the Plateau would be seen as a unified entity of over a hundred patrilineal mega-clans. Yet, the local oral histories offer key clues to trace the diffusion of brother-houses bearing the same *tsowa* name. When some households of a *tsowa* moved elsewhere, the kinship of brother-houses was retained across two periods of migration and especially in the moment of shift from nomadic *tsowa* to sedentary or semi-sedentary *tsowa*. Even though two brother-houses inhabited different *tsowa*, for instance, one in Upper Tébo and another one in Northern Tao, they visited each other on a regular basis once every two to three years. Some irregular visits that combined the purpose of trading nomadic products with grains or the other way around, borrowing cash, requesting labor, inviting for wedding and funeral ceremonies, or participating in religious festivals would be made as well. This long-distance inter-household network was crucial to understand local Tibetan

social and economic lives.<sup>40</sup>

When it comes to inter-*tsowa* matters, federation or *shog pa* was a basic organization. Aside from the federations cited as “toponym-*tsowa*/*tso*-number” (e.g. Chépa-*tsowa*-eighteen, Bora-*tso*-fourteen), most federations were called “toponym-*shog pa*” (e.g. Mébo-*shog pa*, Rutöma-*shog pa*). Like *tsowa*, *shog pa* was bounded by inter-*tsowa* kinship, fictitious kinship, communal responsibility and territorial identity. Federation was often known as evolving out of an ancestral *tsowa*, which divided into several *tsowa* over time. Yet, the membership and territory of a federation were not fixed according to detailed *tsowa* oral histories. The *shog pa* unit could dissolved and reorganized as a result of territorial change, intra-/inter-federation feud or internal conflict over the federative leadership. Possibly because of the mass monastic education, with only one son managing household and the rest sent to the monastery, the population of *tsowa* in many federations were fixed by the eighteenth century. Only on special local occasions, either religious or military, the federative organization would appear to support local monastery, annex territory and field militia for self-defense or in waging war. Every year, there were several specific dates saved for worshipping the *yul lha* of a federation, offering tea to monks of a communal or regional monastery, and inviting religious leaders as well as ritual specialists to conduct empowerment or other pragmatic-oriented rituals for all members of the federation. In the case of local battle against a rival federation, *shog pa* became a fighting unit. The term *dmag shog* (military division), which is cognate with *shog pa*, clearly shows the military characteristic of this organization.<sup>41</sup>

Normally, three to around ten *shog pa* formed a league. A league was often known as “toponym-*shog pa*-number” (e.g. Ala-*shog pa*-five, Tsö-*shog pa*-four, Dzögé-*shog pa*-five)

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<sup>40</sup> Based on the extensive individual and group interviews conducted in *tsowa* of North Range, Front Range and Back Range, May–July 2015; May–August 2016; May–November 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, see chapters on Maqu, Luqu and Xiahe counties.



or confusingly as “toponym-*tsowa*/tso-number” (e.g. Khotsé-*tsowa*-three, Amchok-*tsowa*-eight, Ngok-*tsowa*-five, Chökhör-*tsowa*-twelve). To articulate the inter-federation kinship and solidarity, or simply because the federation evolved out of a *tsowa*, members of this mega-organization sometimes used *shog pa* and *tsowa* as interchangeable terms to describe their league. The networks binding federations to a league and defining league membership were the same as those uniting *tsowa* into a federation. The league identity was loosely assigned through practices such as worshipping a mountain god of the league and patronizing a regional monastery. Apart from the leagues managed by monastic representatives (*sku tshab*) if they were affiliated to a regional monastery, leagues were often governed by secular lords called *mgon po*. In a league, the federative chiefs’ lineages were depicted as branches of the lord’s lineage. The oral history regarding the league’s origin is, typically, in fact, the lord’s lineage history; and, it often demonstrates that *shog pa* constituting the league derived from this ruling lineage’s oldest *tsowa* alongside the population proliferation. As an administrative unit, leagues played leading roles in regional warfare, politics and religious affairs, as well as occasionally in dealings with the Chone kings, the Labrang monastic regime and the Qing government.<sup>42</sup>

The powers and boundaries of authority of local leaders were well defined in *tsowa*, federation and league. Local authorities were either hereditary chiefs, superior ruler-ratified officials/representatives, communally elected prestigious figures, or elders serving in set rotations. The leading authority of a *tsowa* was the headman (*’go ba*), minor chief (*dbon phran*, known as nomadic *gur khang pa* or sedentary *ming btags pa*) or *tsowa* elders. The leading authorities of the federation was either a chief (*dbon po*), a monastery-ratified chief (also called *’go ba* in Tibetan), or a council of elders (*rgan po*). The league, as

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<sup>42</sup> For a detailed study on the *shog pa* organizations of Labrang, see Paul Nietuoski, *Labrang Monastery*, 54–58. For a reference of *shog pa* in Kanlho, see Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho’i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*.

aforementioned, was managed by a secular lord or monastic representative. Many heritable positions had at some point been instituted by the Yuan, Ming or Qing government. Even though local leaders, such as *qianhu* and *baihu* vested by the Yuan and Ming emperors, commonly no longer obtained imperial ratification and were displaced by the Qing government, they tended to retain authority, nonetheless, remaining largely untouched. They also survived dynastic change, and were appointed as local officials by the GMD government and, eventually, employed by the CCP to form the United Front to integrate ethnic minorities.<sup>43</sup> Besides, there were some seasonal and cross-*tsowa* organizations, particularly encampment-circles (*ru skor*) formed by nomadic families following the grazing calendar to divide and use pastureland, and so being mutually-obligated to offer assistance in neighboring or related agriculturalist villages in the course of the intensive labor-consuming period. In these provisional organizations, leaders were often prestigious headmen, chiefs or elected figures considered highly capable.<sup>44</sup>

In terms of the management of communal matters, *tsowa* were, effectively, self-ruled units. The power of a federation chief, league lord or regional overlord was often compromised by the autonomy of *tsowa*. The notion that territory belonging to an overlord was not common among Tibetans. The Chone king and other native authorities understood that they ruled *mi ser* or subjects and managed households of different *tsowa* instead of directly possessing definite territories. The size of an overlord's realm was determined by his influence on the number of *tsowa*. Neighboring *tsowa*, whether belonging to the same overlord or not, were not necessarily on good terms with each other. Indeed, disputes and feuds over forest, farmland, pasture, robbery, theft and even boundary of communal hail-

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<sup>43</sup> Benno Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution on the Tibetan Frontier* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020).

<sup>44</sup> See Ekvall, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu–Tibetan Border*, 4–82. For the political structures of the Kham region, see Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, 3, 13, 142. For an anthropological study on Amdo nomadic social organization, see Matthias Hermanns, *Die Nomaden von Tibet* (Wien: Verlag Herold, 1949), 231.

/drought-preventing ritual cases erupted frequently in this region. Under such circumstances, the secular and ecclesiastical authorities could serve as mediators instead of arbitrators to settle the case. Leaving local affairs in the hands of *tsowa*, federation and league leaders and councils was the principle and baseline approach for overlords to exercise rulership. With the exception of large-scale wars, major challenges to the “local states” and revolts against the Qing authorities, overlords would not directly meddle in *tsowa*, federation or league matters.<sup>45</sup>

Besides, the regional ruler paid particular attention to the collective will and action of *tsowa*. All households of a *tsowa* had more or less equal social, economic and political status in spite of regional variations. The multilayer relations among overlord, lord, chief, headman and commoners were not necessarily unilateral and dominated by the superior authorities. It was an acceptable practice that the households of a subdivision shifted their affiliation to the *tsowa*. As Hans Stübel found in Mébo, which was common across Amdo, “[o]ften a certain family strives to shift from a less influential group (*tsowa*) to a more influential one; they can do this by presenting the group leader and several respected members of the group with a sheep and several chin (*jin*) of wine and inviting them to a meal.”<sup>46</sup> It was also not rare that a *tsowa* separated itself from a federation, religious sovereign or kingdom by enacting a communal decision and relocating elsewhere. The same was true of federations separating from a league and a league dissociating from an overlord.

By the nineteenth century, most *tsowa* in eastern Amdo were under the political-religious controls of the Chone king and the Jamyang Zhépa reincarnations. There were also a few autonomous federations and leagues controlled by petty authorities. They usually

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<sup>45</sup> Many early twentieth century travelers noticed this issue. See Ekvall, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border*; Joseph Rock, *The Amney Ma-Chhen Range and Adjacent Regions: A Monographic Study* (Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Serie Orientale Roma XII, 1956); Reginald Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.1, 164; Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in North-West China*, 134.

<sup>46</sup> Hans Stübel, *The Mewu Fantzu: A Tibetan Tribe of Kansu*, 56.

affiliated to the Chone or Labrang regime. To oversee *tsowa* for political, religious, military and economic interests, these secular and ecclesiastic authorities adopted various political systems to exert political and religious powers. The substantial extent of an overlord's control could be affected by the distance between his headquarters and *tsowa* subjects. More hierarchical and direct control was restrained within a day's horse-riding radius. *Tsowa* in this category were the base-villages of Chone and divine communities (*lha sde*) of Labrang that were tied to the secular or monastic estate more strictly. In areas reckoned as three-day to one-week trip on horse-back, *tsowa* headmen and councils either managed their communities independently, or cooperated with officials appointed by the regional ruler to collect tax, levy corvée or field militia.<sup>47</sup>

In sum, *tsowa* were the fundamental social, political, economic, religious and territorial unit of this society, and so significant players in the processes of local social and political change. As a Tibetan household was strictly managed by a male householder and his name, material and immaterial property, and complex social and religious ties transmitted through patrilineal descent (uxorilocal marriage was arranged to produce a male successor), Lévi-Strauss' notion of the "house society" does accurately help us understand and think through how these households and the grassroots community were organized. Taking the factors of *tsowa* population and household management into account, a Tibetan household represented a lineage. The brother-houses constituted a subdivision, or clan. *Tsowa* was a unit that had multiple inter-household and inter-subdivision relations overarching all households in its territory. Yet, Langelaar's concept that territory as the "main organizational axis" of *tsowa* should be reconsidered. As the following chapters show, when Gansu-Qinghai repeatedly suffered episodes of social unrest and natural disaster from the 1860s onward, the *tsowa* evolved from a kinship-formed unit bonded through multiple social-political networks into a

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<sup>47</sup> Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, see chapters on Xiahe and Zhuoni.

fundamentally territorial organization. In other words, the *tsowa* transformed from bonds inhering in blood to those rooted in soil.<sup>48</sup>

Given that *tsowa* were familiar with “the art of being governed,” in Michael Szonyi’s phrase, to handle the imperial states in China proper, it does not make sense to use “zomia” or “stateless society” to comprehend the frontier Tibetan world where the power of centralized states was weak but never absent.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, I argue that *tsowa*, sharing the same geographic and ecologic niche, and with their inhabitants belonging to the same ethnographic group, should be regarded as the core social units of a relatively independent micro society or “*tsowa* society.” A *tsowa* society could be a federation or league in which *tsowa* handled most matters on their own. Because of the diversity of natural environment and local ethnographic groups, I use “*tsowa* society” in plural form to define the social typology of Tibetans in the northern and eastern Tibetan Plateau.

### **Government Structure of the Chone Kingdom by the Nineteenth Century**

The Tibetan historians Yang Shihong and Zhouta hold that the Chone Kingdom was a theocracy (*chos srin zung ’brel*) in which secular power outshone religious authority.<sup>50</sup> This is an oversimplified and hasty conclusion. Even though Buddhism was inseparable from the formation of the Chone ruling lineage’s authority, the operations of secular and religious powers in Chone were clearly different. In contrast to the three categories of Kham polities summarized by Yudru Tsomu, namely, the merging of religion with politics, the alliance between secular and religious powers, and the sharing of authority by secular ruler and

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<sup>48</sup> Langelaar demonstrates that “territorial basis” was the main organizational axis of *tsowa*. As I elaborate above, territorial relation instead of territory was an important marker of *tsowa* identity.

<sup>49</sup> James Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*; Szonyi, Michael. *The Art of Being Governed: Everyday Politics in Late Imperial China*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017); Geoffrey Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*.

<sup>50</sup> Yang Shihong, *Zhuoni Yang tusi zhuanlüe*, 1; Zhouta, *Zhuoni Zangchuan Fojiao lishi wenhua*, 94–101.

monastic institution, Chone provides another distinct type of polity.<sup>51</sup> In Chone, the ruling family held ultimate secular power and relatively strong religious authority. The lineage headed the parallel centralized secular government and the ecclesiastic administration, which managed temporal and religious matters separately. As to the neighboring Tibetan powers affiliated to Chone, in some cases secular and in others religious authorities, managed several to dozens of *tsowa*. With the exception of the Chokro khenchen and the Serpo lapön whose lineages passed on rulership from father to son, the other religious rulers transmitted power from patrilineal uncle to immediate nephew.<sup>52</sup>

#### *Central Administration: The Chone Yamen and Banner System*

Since the Yongle Emperor (1360–1424) in 1418 conferred on the First Chone King the title of battalion-head, his successors steadily expanded the family's political strength in the Luchu valley.<sup>53</sup> It was a customary practice in Amdo that the influential leader summoned householders of neighboring *tsowa* and federations to support his defense against rivals and invaders. Based on this mutual support practice, a larger alliance came into being when a leading figure consolidated his dominance among the allies by political incorporation, marriage, religion and trade. Up to the mid-sixteenth century, the alliance centering around the Chone ruling family included more than 100 *tsowa* in Northern Tao. In 1551, in recognition of the Sixth King Gonpo Dargye's fortification of Chone Town and assistance to the Taozhou Guard officials against Upper Mongol raiders, the king was named the Taozhou assistant commandant (*zhihui qianshi* 指揮僉事) and given the title of grand commandant

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<sup>51</sup> Yudru Tsomu categorizes the Kham political systems into three precise types that the ultimate power respectively lied in the hands of religious leader, secular ruler and both. See *The Rise of Gönpö Namgyel in Kham*, 8–9.

<sup>52</sup> Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 265–314.

<sup>53</sup> *MSL*, Taizong, j196.2055.

(*shoubei xuxian* 守備虛銜).<sup>54</sup> In 1582, Gonpo Dargye organized the chiefs of Tolo, Lamarnang, Traok, Gongso, Rebsta, Shentsa, Dokpa, Détang and Chépa federations in Southern Tao to pay tribute to the Wanli Emperor (1563–1620). As I elaborate elsewhere, this was the “enlistment” (*zhaofu* 招撫) policy in the Ming official language and had been a customary practice of trade prevailing among Amdo Tibetans since the 1400s.<sup>55</sup> Although these chiefs were allies of the Chone king, the Second Jamyang indicated that the Ming emperor awarded these federations to the Chone gyelpos, who he deemed great patrons of his previous and current lives.<sup>56</sup>

During the Ming-Qing transition, the Ninth King Tsewang Dondrub had become the paramount Tibetan leader in the Luchu valley. In 1675, Shaanxi Provincial Military Commander (*tidu* 提督) Wang Fuchen 王輔臣 (d.1681) colluded with Wu Sangui 吳三桂 (1612–1678) who led the “Revolt of the Three Feudatories” (*sanfan zhiluan* 三藩之亂) against the Kangxi Emperor (1654–1722). As Shaan-Gan Chinese troops and officials were under his practical control, he promptly announced the secession of the province from the Qing empire and sought to connect his realm with Sichuan, Yunnan and other revolting provinces in southern China. Tsewang Dondrub responded by organizing the Ming-recognized native officials and monastic officials in eastern Amdo to field a Tibetan force to assist the Qing army in suppressing Wang Fucheng. In the *Catalogue of the Chone Tengyur*, the Second Jamyang illustrated that Tsewang Dondrub and his son Lobzang Dondrub, commanding Tibetan soldiers, captured Taozhou, Minzhou and Gongchang 鞏昌 (Longxi 隴西), subdued local Chinese forces and compelled them to accept Qing governance and the

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<sup>54</sup> *MSL*, Shenzong, j66.1455, j150.2787, j232.4308; Zhang Yu, *Bianzheng kao*, j9.4a; 'Jam dbyangs, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 196-98.

<sup>55</sup> Marnyi Gyatso, “The Ming, Tibetan and Mongol Interactions.”

<sup>56</sup> 'Jam dbyangs, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 197.

Manchu hairstyle.<sup>57</sup> To reward their contribution, the emperor conferred the title of Tao-Min assistant deputy general (*xiefujiang* 協副將) and the third-rank hereditary position of Baitalature-hafan (*jiduwei* 騎都尉) on Tsewang Dondrub. The Nyentsa gönpo Zan Chengfu and Lobzang Dondrub were granted the titles of brigade commander (*suiying youji* 隨行游擊). Other local Tibetan officials were allowed to inherit their positions.<sup>58</sup>

At this point, the Chone gyelpo held the highest military position in Tao-Min. The Tibetan military force of 2,000–3,000 men organized by following the customary practice to field provisional militia for self-defense, doubled the size of the Tao-Min assistant Green Standard brigade (*taomin xieying* 洮岷協營). It was treated as a standard force of the Yang *tusi* by Qing officials.<sup>59</sup> To deploy this force and stabilize the Tibetan region between Hezhou and Jiezhou, Tsewang Dondrub surveyed the household numbers in Middle Stream and Lower Stream, organized his Chotsang federation into 24 base-villages, and rearranged other allied federations and his allies' estates (*gzhis khag*) into 30 military units called *dmag ru*. He conferred the positions of inferior headmen (*zho tho'u*, *xiaotou* 小頭) and chief managers (*tsung gon*, *zongguan* 總管) on *tsowa* headmen, federation chiefs and local prestigious figures in order to organize soldiers and guard the border passes, or form a regional militia in the moment of crisis. As the military unit imitated the chief-banner (*zongqi* 總旗) of company or battalion in the Ming garrison system, each *dmag ru* provided 50 soldiers. It was also called “banner” (*qi* 旗) by Tao-Min Chinese-speakers. The once loose alliance of the Chone throne was structured by banners.<sup>60</sup>

From the 1680s, the Chone gyelpo brought more and more *tsowa* of North Range and

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<sup>57</sup> 'Jam dbyangs, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 198–203.

<sup>58</sup> *Qingshilu* 清實錄 (hereafter *QSL*), Shengzu, j55.15b–16a, j56.6a–b; *MZZ*, j3.1a–27b.

<sup>59</sup> *TZTZ*, j9.478–479.

<sup>60</sup> 'Jam dbyangs, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 203–216; Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 274.



Upper Stream under his military command. To secure the tea route (*ja lam*) from Hezhou via Taozhou to Amdo steppe, as the second Jamyang wrote, Tsewang Dondrub “pacified” Dzögé, Tsö, Khagyé (*Rgan gya*; Ganjia 甘加) and Ngok (*Rngog*; Ehe 俄合) pastoral leagues nearby North Range as well as Lushöd, Ala and Zamtsa leagues abutting Upper Stream, and dedicated these “unruled” Tibetan groups to the Manchu emperor. Although these leagues surrendered and their lords paid allegiance to the Chone king, they were never directly incorporated into the banner system. In 1747, the Chone king donated the Lushöd eight-*tsowa*, Ala five-*shog pa* and Zamtsa six-*tsho* to the First Lhamo Sertri Lobzang Gyeltsen Senggé (*Blo bzang rgyal mtshan seng ge*, 1678–1756) when the latter founded Taktsang Lhamo Monastery. Because the Zhongpa nomads supported by the Chone throne encroached on the grasslands of the leagues in North Range, the Dzögé, Tsö, Khagyé and Ngok leaders gradually established the patron-priest relation with the Jamyang Zhépa lineage alongside Labrang Monastery (Labrang Trashikhyil, *Dge ldan bshad sgrub dar rgyas bkra shis gyas su 'khyil ba'i gling*). Established in 1709, it became a regional religious center in the late eighteenth century<sup>61</sup> Ever since, these leagues formed a buffer zone between Chone and Labrang.

In Back Range, Tébo was the homeland of many Bon practicing communities. In 1680, Tsewang Dondrub repressed the upper Drukchu valley and executed all major Tébo headmen and chiefs after some Tébo federations looted the *tsowa* in Kharchen. Two years later, likely seeking revenge, Tébo Tibetans clashed with the newly enthroned Chone King Lobzang Dondrub. The latter mercilessly slaughtered the Tébo “raiders” and imprisoned their chiefs. Based on the Second Jamyang’s anti-Bon narrative, the Chone rulers’ campaigns were justified as promoting the Gelug teaching and converting the ignorant Bon followers. To

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<sup>61</sup> See Grags pa mkhas grub, *Khri thog lnga bcu nga gsum pa khri chen rgyal mtshan seng ge'i rnam thar* in *Dga' ldan khri rabs rnam thar*, 1–7b; 'Jam dbyangs, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 233, 240; Mgon po dbang rgyal, *Co je sa skyong gi lo rgyus klu chu sngon mo'i gyer dbyangs*, 43–45. *XHXZ*, 38–54.

avoid further trouble with these “untamed” Tébos, Lobzang Dondrub organized the 96 Tébo *tsowa* and small federations into 22 banners, appointed chief managers to govern them, and reformed local Bon monasteries into Gelug institutes. All the same, these *tsowa* shared the same hostile attitude toward the king and his officials.<sup>62</sup>

Meanwhile, Drukchu was partially brought under the Chone reign. During the lunar New Year of 1710, probably to obtain grain, tea and other necessities, some *shengfan tsowa* attacked the Qing garrison soldiers in Xigu. The insurgent *tsowa* were vanquished by the Green Standard Army in southern Gansu and put under the jurisdictions of the Tangbar pönpo and the Serpo lapön. The pönpo modeled the Chone banner system and organized his *tsowa* into four banners. Yet, more *tsowa* in the lower Drukchu valley rose up against the Qing intrusion. The fighting continued for another three years in the crisscrossing valleys. With the assistance of the Chone militia, the Qing army subdued the Yukbé and Latsa federations in 1714. Considering Tibetans easier to bridle by native officials, the Qing Ministry of War (*bingbu* 兵部) instructed the Eleventh King Makzor Gonpo to govern the newly enlisted *tsowa*. To oversee the Drukchu inhabitants, the king reorganized local federations into four banners.<sup>63</sup>

Later, when the Serpo lapön and the Dongnak gönpo forged a marital alliance in 1724, he endowed his daughter with three *tsowa* as dowry. Since the relationship between *tsowa* and monastic official was locally interpreted as patron-priest instead of subject-ruler, and the donation or tribute to monastery was lower than the tax collected by secular officials, local *tsowa* headmen strongly opposed the decision of the Serpo lapön. They reported the case to Chuan-Shaan Governor-General (*zongdu* 總督) Yue Zhongqi 岳鍾琪 (1686–1754). As the

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<sup>62</sup> 'Jam dbyangs, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 209–210; Joseph Rock, “The Land of the Tebbus,” 108–127.

<sup>63</sup> *QSL*, Shengzu, j258.8b–9a; Zhang Hongyin, “Pingfan zhi,” in *TZTZ*, 783–786; 'Jam dbyangs, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 209–211, 214–216.

Yongzheng Emperor (1678–1735) had just began to implement the policy of administrative regularization in southwestern China, Yue displaced the Serpo lapön and the Dongnak gönpo for they formed a clique and oppressed native people in 1728. Following the implementation of *gaitu guiliu*, these *tsowa* were *de jure* governed by the Xigu placatory commander (*fuyi tongzhi* 撫夷同知). In fact, they were self-ruled, and to certain extent under the military and political coercion and religious influence of the Chone king. Whenever local unrest broke out, the Qing government dispatched the Yang chieftains to handle it.<sup>64</sup>

Historically, the Chone gyelpo incorporated *tsowa* (also applied to federations and leagues) into his realm in four ways. First, *tsowa* allied with the Chotsang federation were incorporated to receive military protection and drive off Upper Mongols, Ming garrison troops and Qing officials. Second, some *tsowa* attached themselves to the Chone ruler because he paid tribute to the emperor and could trade in China proper, and had organized one of the largest regional markets outside Chone Monastery in the upper part of Chone Town. It was one of the three central university monasteries in Amdo. Third, some *tsowa* were only religiously subordinated to the regional monastery. To fulfill the pragmatic and karma-oriented needs of ritual and join the network of trade centered around Ganden Shédrubling, *tsowa*/federation/league, they would affiliate with a communal or regional monastery as a branch institute to Chone Monastery. Fourth, some *tsowa* were absorbed into a regional polity through military conquest, such as the *tsowa* in Tébo. In general, the Chone kings and *tsowa* abided by specific local social, political and religious practices and norms to maintain the ruler-subject relation.<sup>65</sup>

In the first half of the eighteenth century, the Chone royal family substantialized the

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<sup>64</sup> QSL, Shizong, j73.13a–b; Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 18–19.

<sup>65</sup> Marnyi Gyatso, “The Ming, Tibetan and Mongol Interactions,” 24–6; Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, 177–212; Fernanda Pirie, “Feuding, Mediation and the Negotiation of Authority Among the Nomads of Eastern Tibet,” 1–30; Tsering Shakya, “Ga rgya ’gram nag,” *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* 31 (2015): 359–375; Eva Dargyay emphasizes the importance of Tibetan norms to understand Tibetan society and social-political systems. See *Tibetan Village Communities*, 50.

banner system through the regularization of taxation and tribute, and the systematization of military corvée. During the reigns of Makzor Gongpo and his successor Jamyang Norbu, the family commissioned the carving of wooden printing blocks of the Tibetan Buddhist canon, Tengyur (commentaries) and Kangyur (Buddha's teachings). Especially with the effort of the regents, Tsünmo (Queens) Menjang and Rinchen Peldzom, the famous scripture carving house of the Chone Monastery was established and the Buddhist canon of the Chone version was published. It was a customary practice for Tibetans to distribute the cost for public goods such as the building of bridges and monasteries, the conducting of communal rituals and so on among households of a community. Makzor Gongpo thus collected donations to support the project of carving the Kangyur blocks from *tsowa* in the Luchu valley between 1722 and 1731. Ten years later, Makzor Gongpo extracted funds again to carve the Tengyur blocks. The royal family's Buddhist entrepreneurship became a burden for its allies. <sup>66</sup>

A tale suggests that the collected silver was spent to renovate the ruling family's residence, the Yongdü Palace (*yongs 'dus*), which was also known as the Zhuoni yamen 卓尼衙門. The 65 *tsowa* of "Druktsa Seven Banners" (*'brug rtsa dmag ru bdun*) in Middle Stream sued Makzor Gongpo for excessively levying tax to the Qianlong Emperor (1711–1799) in 1738 and again in 1744. Consequently, Makzor Gongpo was removed from the *tusi* position. The imperial court instructed Jamyang Norbu to rule on behalf of his father and standardize the grain and cash collected from each household as his "righteousness-cultivating salary" (*yanglian yin* 養廉銀).<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> 'Jam dbyangs, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 223.

<sup>67</sup> The Druktsa alliance did not stop their resistance. The Seven Banners sued the eleventh gyelpo in the provincial government in 1750. Makzor Gongpo accused Bashan Celeng of the Seven Banners of collaboration with the "treacherous monk" Maer Wanbu, damaging the roads between Middle Stream and Chone Town and looting his estates. The Druktsa alliance accused that the Chone gyelpo connived his headmen to excessively collect tax. The Shaan-Gan governor-general trailed the case. After a physical punishment, Bashan and Maer confessed that they sued the chieftain based on local hearsay. The case was reported to the Qianlong Emperor again. Makzor Gongpo was ordered to stay in Minzhou and repent his wrongdoings. Bashan and Maer were exiled, serving in a remote troop. See 'Jam dbyangs, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 233; *QSL*, Gaozong: j221.38b–39a, j231.21a–b, j362.1a–2b.

For the first time, at least from the perspective of the Chone ruler, the in-kind tributes presented by allied federations became compulsory taxes legitimized by the imperial court. The regional self-defensive practice became a well-defined *ulag* or military corvée levied by the king. The 30 military units in Front Range were reorganized by the gyelpo. The system of “48 banners” (*dmag ru bzhi bcu zhe brgyad, sishiba-qi* 四十八旗) thus came into being by the nineteenth century. The *dmag ru* served as the basic administrative units overarching the kingdom.<sup>68</sup> Considering the geographical proximity and historical affinity, one to three federations were organized into a banner. In Front Range, the federations formed “Eighteen Banners inside the Passes” (*'og sgang mar nang dmag ru bcu brgyad, kounei shiba-qi* 口内十八旗). In North Range, the federations were organized into “Twelve Banners outside the Passes” (*'og sgang mar nang dmag ru bcu gnyis, kouwai shier-qi* 口外十二旗). In Back Range, local federations were arranged into “Upper Tébo Six Banners” (*the bo stod ma dmag ru drug; shangdie liu-qi* 上迭六旗), “Lower Tébo Eight Banners” (*the bo smad ma dmag ru brgyad; xiadie ba-qi* 下迭八旗) and “Drukchu Four Banners” (*rol ba dmag ru bzhi; heifan/zhouqu si-qi* 黑番/舟曲四旗).<sup>69</sup>

To manage these banners, a centralized administration with the Chone gyelpo at the apex came into being. Since the Chone kings were military officials in the Qing bureaucracy, the Yongdü Palace was designed and functioned like a Chinese yamen, consisting of a court and administrative offices in the front, a residential section in the rear, and prison cells and store rooms in the southern corner. From a Tibetan perspective, the Yongdü Palace was similar to the aristocratic estates in Central Tibet. There were around thirty servants working in the Palace. They included seven to eight horse-breeders, five to seven cooks, a miller, eight to nine stove-managers, eight water-carriers, a cannoneer who was also the night watchman,

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<sup>68</sup> A banner was approximate to today's township in terms of its population and territory.

<sup>69</sup> Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdu*, 290–311.

as well as a manager who was in charge of the daily maintenance of the protector-god hall of the royal family. Before the lunar new year, with the exception of the water-carrier permitted to farm eight *mu* 畝 of the gyelpo's land without paying rent, the gyelpo gave a certain amount of grain as a gift to each estate servant. The royal estates, which were distributed in the twelve inner base-villages (*nang grangs ka bcu gnyis*; *nei shier zhangga* 內十二掌噶) directly ruled by the king and the four outer base-villages (*phyi grangs ka bzhi*; *waisi zhangga* 外四掌噶) managed by the branches of the royal lineage, were respectively taken care of by households of each base-village.<sup>70</sup>

The bureaucratic apparatus of the Chone yamen consisted of the secretariat, revenue and administrative departments that were respectively in charge of 1) advisory and clerical work, 2) revenue management, 3) and tax collection, militia conscription and adjudication of justice. The secretary was called the red-brush adviser (*hongbi shiye* 紅筆師爺), who was often a reputable Chinese intellectual hired by the chieftain from nearby counties. He ran the clerk office (*fangke* 房科) and supervised an archive manager (*zhang'an* 掌案) and eight or nine clerical staff (*wenshu* 文書) who were responsible for drafting official documents. The revenue department was staffed by the superior manager (*da zongguan* 大總管), second manager or treasurer (*er zongguan* 二總管) and third manager or chamberlain (*san zongguan* 三總管). They managed the royal estates and dealt with fiscal and trading issues. In the administrative department, officials were in six ranks. The first-rank superior headman (*da toumu* 大頭目) and second-rank vice superior headman (*fu toumu* 副頭目) took charge of most administrative and judicial matters. The third-rank official was a chief messenger (*chuanhao toumu* 傳號頭目) who supervised three messengers to deliver messages, collect

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<sup>70</sup> “Zhuoni boyu shibian de qianhou 卓尼博峪事變的前後,” in *Zhuoni wenshi ziliao* (hereafter ZNWSZL), vol.3, 30–33. On the aristocratic and monastic estates in Central Tibet, see Melvyn Goldstein, “An Anthropological Study of the Tibetan Political System” (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1968), 104–109.

information and issue orders on behalf of the king. The messengers also managed the yamen prison with the assistance of two wardens (*bantou* 班頭) and ten jailers (*banyi* 班役). The fourth-rank officials consisted of 32 accountants (*grangs shes*; *changxian* 長憲). They were also called banner-chiefs (*qizhang* 旗長). Most accountants managed one banner. Only a few accountants governed more than one banner. A banner consisted of one to three federations. The 72 federation chiefs, either hereditary or appointed by the king, were the fifth-rank officials. They were also called chief managers (*tsung gon*, *zongguan* 總管), whose duty was to assist the accountants to handle local matters concerning taxation, tributary, lawsuit and militia. The sixteen inferior headmen (*xiaotou* 小頭) of base-villages were the sixth-rank officials. They took care of communal affairs and assisted the four branches of the royal lineage to run estates in the base-villages. With the exception of the secretariat department, the other departments were only staffed by Tibetans who were capable men of the twelve inner base-villages recommended by the superior headman and selected by the king.<sup>71</sup>

### *The Prime-Subordinate Monastery System*

As the secular and ecclesiastic powers were closely associated with each other, the religious influence could be easily transformed into political power and vice versa. In the Chone Kingdom, the ruling family secured its secular power through Buddhism. As early as the 1400s, the first king became the patron of Chone Monastery. The monastery was a Nyingma monastery “reformed” into a Sakya institute by Sherab Yeshe, the disciple of the Yuan imperial preceptor Drogön Chogyal Phagpa 八思巴 (1235–1280). It was also known as Ganden Shédrubling and Chone Gönchen. The king’s brothers in each generation became

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<sup>71</sup> Messengers were considered more powerful than banner-chiefs by local people. “Zhuoni tusi zhidu 卓尼土司制度,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 4–6; Gao Yongjiu, “Zhuoni tusi de lishi jiqi yanbian 卓尼土司的歷史及其演變,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.3, 32–35. *TZTZ*, 273, 943–951.

monks at Chone Monastery with only a few exceptions that had led to divisions of the royal household. In 1449, the second king's third son Rinchen L ( *Rin chen lhun po* ) “reformed” Chone Monastery into a Gelug institute. As Rinchen Lhünpo appointed himself the “dharma lord” ( *chos rje* ) of the monastery, this sectarian reform resulted in the Chone ruling lineage's partial control of the local religious domain.<sup>72</sup> In the following two centuries, the lineage donated enormous fortunes to expand the monastery and maintain good relations with religious authorities in Central Tibet. For the Chone rulers, the official recognition of Ü-Tsang spiritual leaders was as crucial as the appointment of the emperors.<sup>73</sup> In the 1690s, Makzor Gonpo's younger brother, Ngawang Trinlé Gyatso ( *Ngag dbang 'phrin las rgya mtsho*, 1688–1738), attained the khenpo title from the Fifth Tongkhor Hotoktu Ngawang Sonam Gyatso ( *Ngag dbang bsod nams rgya mtsho*, 1684–1753). After being granted the title of Chan preceptor ( *chanshi* 禪師 ) by the Kangxi Emperor in 1710, he became the dharma lord and abbot of Ganden Shédrubling, or Chanding-si 禪定寺 named by the Kangxi Emperor. In the 1730s, the Twelfth King's brother Lobzang Tenpé Gyeltsen ( *Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan*, b.1708) inherited the title of Chan preceptor and, meanwhile, obtained the ratification of the khenpo from the Fifth Panchen Lama Lobsang Yéshé ( *Blo bzang ye shes*, 1663-1737). The latter also bestowed “nomen-khan” 諾門罕 (dharma king), the second-rank title granted by the Qing emperors, the Dalai Lamas or the Panchen Lamas to Tibetan regional spiritual leaders, especially the reincarnated lamas, on Lobzang Tenpé Gyeltsen. Henceforth, the royal lineage dominated Chone Monastery.<sup>74</sup>

Meanwhile, the family enthusiastically patronized Gelug teachers and reincarnated lamas, built and restored monasteries, and transformed Ganden Shédrubling into a central university monastery in Amdo. It promoted the Gelug monastic education system, and

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<sup>72</sup> Brag dgon pa, *Mdo smad chos 'byung*, 646–647.

<sup>73</sup> Lobsang Dongrub and Bopa Tsering, *Anduo gucha chandingsi*, 14–24, 243–247.

<sup>74</sup> 'Jam dbyangs, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 244.



institutionalized the hierarchical relationship between central and regional or communal monasteries with the prime-subordinate monastery system. In this process, famous scholars and reincarnated lamas who established the master-disciple relations with the Chone ruling lineage usually played crucial roles. In the 1600s, the Seventh King invited the First Sökhangpa Sanggyé Gyatso (*Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho*, 1558–1643) to take up the position of dharma lord. The latter reformed the loose educational units of Chone Monastery into an exoteric college (*mtshan nyid grwa tshang*) in order to promote the systematic training system of the Gelug sect. In 1716, following the suggestion of the Kangxi Emperor concerning exoteric and esoteric education, Ngakwang Trinlé Gyatso requested the famous Chone lama Drakpa Shédруп (*Grags pa bshad sgrub*, 1675–1748) to complete the education system in Ganden Shédrubling. In near thirty years, the gyelpo family established the esoteric college (*rgyud pa grwa tshang*), the astrology-calendar college (*sa ris grwa tshang*) and the dharma-dance college (*'cham pa grwa tshang*). The colleges adopted the curriculums, grade levels and examination standards of Sera Monastery, the Gelug central university in Lhasa. Thereby, Chone Monastery became a central university monastery in Amdo.<sup>75</sup>

Moreover, regional monasteries, which normally had only one or two colleges, such as Yerba, Chépa, Marnyung, Chokro, Tsordor and Dugang monasteries were reformed into Gelug institutes in the seventeenth century. The monastic officials recognized by the imperial government often headed these monasteries, ruled more than one federation and directly collected tax from *tsowa* classified as *lha sde* or divine communities. From the 1670s to the 1730s, all monastic officials along the Luchu valley were commanded by the spectacularly

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<sup>75</sup> 'Jam dbyangs, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 199; also see Tshe ring don grub, *Mdo smad co ne'i lo rgyus sa gzhi skyong ba'i rgyan*. For studies and introductions of the Gelukpa monastic education, see Dreyfus Georges, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk* (California: University of California Press, 2003); Tarab Tulku, *A Brief History of Tibetan Academic Degree in Buddhist Philosophy* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2000); Michael Lempert, *Discipline and Debate: The Language of Violence in a Tibetan Buddhist Monastery* (California: University of California Press, 2012); Daniel Perdue, *Debate in Tibetan Buddhism: Textual Studies and Translations in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* (New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1992).

ascended ninth and tenth Chone kings. They were also patronized by the Chone rulers who subdued *tsowa* in the vicinities of these monasteries and donated them to different monastic officials. Hence, an interesting twist occurred with regard to the relationships linking the king, monastic officials and their federations. The regional monasteries were affiliated to Ganden Shédrubling. Every monastic official still independently managed his monastery and *tsowa* without interference of the Chone authorities. Yet, the connection between regional monastery and the central university, as well as the hierarchical relation between the Yang chieftain and neighboring monastic officials somehow bestowed power on the Chone gyelpo to levy soldier-horse corvée upon the divine communities of his allies in the moment of crisis. Since monks of the regional monasteries in advanced grades received higher-level training in the central university, the monastic officials' federations were regarded as *chos sde* or religious communities of Chone Monastery.<sup>76</sup>

The communal monasteries, which could evolve into regional monasteries under the management of influential religious figures, were incorporated into the religious regime of Ganden Shédrubling. In the case of the Chödzhong Gönpa (*Chos dzong dgon pa*) and Nakdo Gön Ganden Chöling (Nags mdo dgon dga' ldan chos gling) supported respectively by the Chödzhong and Dakyik federations of Front Range, many long-standing communal monasteries were converted into the subordinate institutes of Chone Monastery in the seventeenth century. Given that the Chone royal family suppressed the Bon practice in the kingdom, most Bon communal monasteries were reformed, such as the Wangtsang (*bang tshang*; Wangzang 旺藏) and Luchung monasteries, for the purpose of converting Bon followers in Upper Stream and Tébo. These communal monasteries were directly subordinate to Chone Monastery. The abbots of these subordinate monasteries were called “dharma-seat

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<sup>76</sup> 'Jam dbyangs, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 199; TZZT, 902–904; Brag dgon pa, *Mdo smad chos 'byung*, 643; Lobsang Dongrub and Bopa Tsering, *Anduo gucha chandingsi*, 61.

holders” (*khri pa*), who were selected by the dharma lord from outstanding monks of the exoteric college and directly appointed by the Chone khenpo.<sup>77</sup> In the case of other communal monasteries controlled by reincarnated lamas, the gyelpo built the master-disciple relation with the reincarnations and exerted an indirect control over local *tsowa* when the royal family began to dominate eastern Amdo from the 1680s onward. The reincarnations recognized the gyelpo as protector of their monasteries. In turn, the gyelpo recognized the right of the religious authorities to manage their monasteries and divine or religious communities independently. Monasteries like Khangtok, Töma, Shoba and Khyagé in North Range became the subordinate institutes of Ganden Shédrubling yet remained autonomous. The central university did not assign dharma-seat holders to manage these monasteries. The Chone khenpo only issued ratifications to the hereditary abbots or reincarnations and nominally supervised the educational matters of these monasteries. The *tsowa* supporting these subordinate monasteries consequently became the religious communities of Chone Monastery. By the nineteenth century, all *tsowa* in the kingdom were organized into seventeen religious communities of Ganden Shédrubling.<sup>78</sup>

In Chone Monastery, the Senggang yamen 僧綱衙門 (*lhag gi nang*), chief dharma throne (*khri pa*) and parish-assembly house (*spyi khang*, *shangshulou* 尚書樓) constituted the main body exerting control over religious, educational and financial matters. They were respectively headed by the Chone khenpo, dharma lord and manager (*spyi pa*). To be specific, the khenpo oversaw all monastic affairs. This position was taken by the king’s brother. When a king’s only successor came to a premature end, theoretically, the king’s brother would be enthroned regardless of his monastic identity. Such a coincidence occurred

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<sup>77</sup> Brag dgon pa, *Mdo smad chos 'byung*, 666, 674–75.

<sup>78</sup> See Lobsang Dongrub and Bopa Tsering, *Anduo gucha chandingsi*, 231–238; Zongzhi, *Khya dge dgon pa'i lo rgyus mdor bsdu* (Zhuoni: Khyagé Monastery, 2004), 7; Skal bzang legs bshad kyi brtsams, *Khya dge dgon dge ldan legs bshad gling gi lo rgyus* (Zhuoni: Khyagé Monastery, 2008).

in 1814. After the Fifteenth King Tendzin Rinchen and his heir sequentially died, Tenzin Rinchen's younger brother Jigme Topgye resumed secular life and held the gyelpo position. He concurrently took the secular and ecclesiastical thrones. In this case, the ruler was called Chone religious king (*dgon ma*). The khenpo appointed the dharma lord who held the position for a three-year term in charge of monastic education, managing the four colleges, 54 subordinate monasteries and several dozen hermitages (*ri khrod*). The manager was elected by monastic representatives of the seventeen religious communities, who formed the "religious council" (*mi sna bcu bdun*). He supervised two-dozen staffs to collect rents from tenants in the estates of Ganden Shédrubling, organize ritual performances, enforce monastic regulations and settle both monastic and secular lawsuits. Additionally, there were eighteen "great residences" (*nang chen* or *bla brang*) which belonged to the three ranks of reincarnations studying in Chone Monastery. These reincarnation lineages had their own monasteries, and possessed agricultural and pastoral estates in Amdo, Mongolia or even Dzungaria. Their monasteries were considered as the subordinate monasteries of Ganden Shédrubling. Their estates were independent and managed by the treasurers (*phyag mdzod*) and internal managers (*nang mdzod*) of great residences.<sup>79</sup>

#### *Land Systems: Tax, Tribute and Corvée*

At first glance, the king was a paramount estate owner. He collected taxes in cash or kind from the subjects. It seems that the king held ultimate right over the land in his realm. Every household was a tenant family of his estates. A Riverside Tibetan saying—"land and property belong to the king, body and soul belong to Yama" (*sa bdag yul bdag, tshe bdag srog bdag*)—seemingly supports this point. Nevertheless, almost all Western and Chinese

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<sup>79</sup> See Brag dgon pa, *Mdo smad chos 'byung*, 660–666; Lobsang Dongrub and Bopa Tsering, *Anduo gucha chandingsi*.

visitors before the 1950s were misled by their Tibetan guides or informants from the sixteen base-villages, where local households paid a fixed tax to the king and worked in the royal estates. Given that the Chone gyelpo utilized varied systems and practices to exert control over 72 federations, a historical outcome was that there was no standard land system that universally applied to every *tsowa*. In the nineteenth century, the Chone Kingdom had four types of land systems that intricately related to tax, tribute and corvée.

First, the ruling lineage owned approximately seventy percent of farmland of the sixteen base-villages, which were known as a manorial estate or *gzhis kha*). The Chone yamen directly managed the lands in the twelve inner base-villages. The Maru, Shotsang (*sho tshang*; Suozang 所藏), Lingsar (*gling gsar*; Lisai 例賽) and Ropa (*ro pa*; Luoba 洛巴) yamens of the four royal branches separately ran the estates in the four outer base-villages. These demesnes of the royal estates were also called yamen lands (*yamen di* 衙門地). In each base-village, 12–30 hereditary tenant households cultivated the demesne for the specific yamen as manorial corvée.

Second, the rest of lands in base-villages were distributed to the tenant households. The land was called “base-village land” (*grangs ka zhing kha* or *zhangga di* 掌噶地), which was characterized as inheritable property. A tenant household usually farmed 10–15 *mu* of base-village land, annually paid a *khal* or *dou* 斗 (50 *jin* or 25 kilograms) of wheat or barley as the agricultural tax (*khral*) to the king and kept the rest of yield. The households in the twelve inner base-villages provided manorial corvée to the Chone yamen but were exempted from the military corvée. The households in the four outer base-villages not only paid tax and military corvée to the king, but also provided labor to farm demesnes, collected fuel, felled logs and so on for the royal branches. The tenant households were tightly bound to the estates by hereditary tenement rule and obligations. Based on local oral accounts, households in base-villages could make ends meet. Buying and selling base-village land, which was quite

unusual, required the consent of the king. An expensive fee in kind (a horse for the seller and a sheep for the buyer) had to be paid to the king to sign the contract (*gan rgya*) and legitimize the transaction.<sup>80</sup>

Third, the manorial estate belonging to Ganden Shédubling was a religious estate (*chos gzhis*) similar to those in Central Tibet. Its land was known as incense land (*xianghuo di* 香火地). In the late seventeenth century, the gyelpo family donated 500 *mu* of yamen land outside Chone Monastery as religious estate to the Senggang yamen. In 1716, the king contributed another 500 *mu* of land, which were the dowry lands of the Nyentsa gönpö and other rulers who married daughters into the Chone royal family, to support the maintenance of the exoteric college. In 1727, when the Dongnak gönpö was displaced, the Qing court instructed the gyelpo to govern the Dongnak gönpö's subjects. The king donated the manor and over 500 *mu* of land confiscated from the Dongnak ruler to support the esoteric college's expenses. By the nineteenth century, the monastery's religious estate had more than 2,000 *mu* of land, including the land of Senggang yamen and parish-assembly house respectively managed by a manager (*gnyer pa chen po*) and a treasurer (*tshogs chen sbyi ba*). The incense land was distributed to different *tsowa* like the yamen land in the base-villages. The monastery leased incense land to tenants and collected 50–75 *jin* 斤 of grain per *mu* as the standard rent. The treasurer appointed two accountants (*gnyer pa*) and many tax collectors (*khral skul*) to collect in-kind rents. The tenants were not religious manorial serfs. The monastery could not levy corvée on them. The tenant often rented incense land for many years unless the laborers of his household were too few to work on extra slots of farmland.<sup>81</sup>

Fourth, lands in the 48 banners belonged to *tsowa*. In a *tsowa*, every household's right over farmland, grassland and forest in the *tsowa* territory was theoretically equal. Yet, the

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<sup>80</sup> Interviews with the former yamen families in Maru, Shotsang, Lingsar and Ropa, May 22, 2015; June 28, 2015; October 9, 2016; May 16, 2017.

<sup>81</sup> Gao Yongjiu, "Zhuoni tusi de lishi jiqi yanbian," in *ZNWSZL* vol.3, 27.

households of headmen and chiefs were better-off than ordinary families. The position of leader did not grant him practical power to levy tax or corvée on commoners, but conferred him prestige, influence and opportunity to gain wealth. A successful household with a larger herd naturally grazed a larger meadow. The effort put into the management of the household determined the size of a family's farmland, which was private property instead of manorial tenement. In heavily agricultural *tsowa*, a household farmed 20–30 *mu* of land and raised 2–3 labor bulls and 1–2 horses. In *samadrok tsowa*, a family owned around 10 *mu* of land, several horses, 30–60 yaks and cows, and/or some 100 sheep. In pastoral *tsowa*, an average size of herd was 100–150 yaks and cows, some horses and 300–500 sheep. As most households had similar numbers of laborers, the slight variation of households' economic statuses did not create disparity in social class. Every *tsowa* was a relatively egalitarian unit.<sup>82</sup> According to local title deeds from the eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, land transactions were infrequent and mainly carried out by households in the same *tsowa*. Selling land from the local Tibetan perspective was disgraceful. The householder who sold the farmland was called a “traitor of the ancestral soul” (*bla 'tshong*), and usually despised by other villagers. The king or his accountant occasionally signed deeds as the witness of the transactions. The Chone yamen had no power to control the buying and selling of land in banners.<sup>83</sup>

The households' corvées varied from banner to banner. In Front Range and North Range, each household of the 30 banners was required to provide a soldier, a horse and provision whenever the king sent the feather-arrow tokens (*bya rtags*) to the specific banners and raised militia. When the Qing government waged wars and suppressed revolts in Amdo and Gansu, the gyelpo thereby irregularly organized a troop with 1,500 infantrymen from

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<sup>82</sup> Based on the extensive individual and group interviews conducted in *tsowa* of North Range, Front Range and Back Range, May–July 2015; May–August 2016; May–November 2017. Also see Robert Ekvall, *Fields on the Hoof*, 31–69.

<sup>83</sup> Local Tibetan householders were very cautious when I read through their old deeds. I was not allowed to take photos or transcribe the documents. They still have a feeling that one day they may get back the lands which were confiscated in the 1950s and redistributed to other villagers in the 1980s.

agricultural *tsowa* and 500 cavalrymen from pastoral *tsowa*. In addition, *tsowa* of the 30 banners provided regular military corvée to guard the 30 border passes between Gansu and Amdo. A *tsowa* sent around 4 men with their own provisions and weapons to be stationed at a specific border pass for 5–15 days per year until the next *tsowa* took over the duty. In each *tsowa*, this duty was fulfilled by householders in turn or fixed personnel receiving payment from other families. These *tsowa* also needed to contribute labor force (men, bulls and horses) when the banner was assigned temporary works by the royal family for transporting heavy materials, felling logs, quarrying stones, constructing houses, bridges, roads and sacred buildings, escorting the Qing officials and king's guests and so on. In North Range, the pastoral *tsowa* looked after the king's herds.<sup>84</sup> In Back Range, the king only enlisted militia for a handful of times. Drukchu Four-banner were levied transportation and military corvées all locally called *ulag* and performed by *tsowa* in rotation. The banners provided manpower, horses, mules and donkeys to convey goods of the king as well as escort accountants. In Tébo, Upper Tébo Six-banner sent men to join the Chone militia. In Lower Tébo, local *tsowa* would only take Chone's military corvée seriously when the gyelpo showed considerable military strength in the region. Overall, the *dmag ru* system in Back Range was more closely related to taxation and tribute instead of corvée.<sup>85</sup>

From a local perspective, Tibetans along the Luchu and Drukchu valleys distinguished tax (*khral*) from tribute (*rten 'bul*). In Front Range, only the base-villages of Chotsang federation and *tsowa* of Panglungshi, Pawoshi, Ziboshi, Laboshi banners having “*gshis*” (or “*gzhis*” indicating the status of manorial estate) as suffix in their names paid regular tax (*khral*) to the Chone throne. As a result of promoting *lijia* 里甲 system in the cooked Tibetan areas, these five federations subordinated to the Chone gyelpo in the fifteenth century

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<sup>84</sup> TZTZ, 842–847.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Danba, Drukchu, July 25, 2016; Group discussions with elders in Gönpa, Böyül and Tsagang, July 20–28, 2016.



were documented as five *jia* of Taozhou Guard by Ming officials. The tax was standardized before the 1540s. A household normally paid a *khal* of grain to the king.<sup>86</sup> Because the Druktsa Seven-banner formed a league to resist the king's taxation in the early eighteenth century, the tax levied on Druktsa Tibetans was standardized according to the Qing government's six edicts regarding the issue from 1738 to 1853. The seven banners were composed of 13 federations under the autonomous management of a prime manager (*tsung chen*; zongcheng 總承) ratified by the Taozhou Subprefecture government. The king could send an accountant who only received tax from the Druktsa prime manager and transmitted order to recruit militia. The edict of 1818 specified that the chief managers of federations yearly collected 4.5 *khal* of grains, 300 copper coins and a pack basket of firewood from every household of their units. The gathered taxes would be delivered by the prime manager to the Taozhou yamen, from where the accountant took over and transported to the Chone yamen.<sup>87</sup>

The rest of *tsowa* of the "eighteen banners within the pass" in Front Range, and *tsowa* of "twelve banners beyond the pass" in North Range, due to local federations historically allied with the Chone ruling family, only paid annual tribute to the king. These consisted of various of the best-known local products. For instance, Chépa Banner paid 22 *jin* of butter and 15 *jin* of morchella; Shentsa, Détang, Chuwo and Tangnang banners paid 80 *jin* of butter together; Samarpudo Banner paid 70 *jin* of butter; every household of Dakyik Banner paid a pack basket of birch charcoal; the Zhongpa banners presented 6 sheep. In Back Range, Drukchu Four Banners presented honey, pepper, bear gallbladders, walnuts, wine, rice and so on as tribute. In Lower Tébo, Zangbap Banner paid 50 taels of gold produced in a local gold mine;

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<sup>86</sup> Zhang Yu, *Bianzheng kao*, j9.4a, 9a. For the Ming promotion of the *lijia* system in eastern Amdo, see Marnyi Gyatso, "The Ming, Tibetan and Mongol Interactions."

<sup>87</sup> Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 293–294; "Zhuoni tusi zhidu," in *ZNWSZL* vol.1, 7–9; Gao Yongjiu, "Zhuoni tusi de lishi jiqi yanbian," in *ZNWSZL*, vol.3, 41–42.

Azha, Endzi (*en 'dzi*; Anzi 安子), Gyané (*rgya ne*; Jianni 尖尼) and Khapa (*kha pa*; Kaba 卡巴) banners respectively presented four pigs, and Azha paid a sack of fern additionally; Takra Banner contributed a cow every year. In Upper Tébo, the six banners collectively presented a horse and 20 pigs to the gyelpo. Besides, each household in the agricultural *tsowa* of Tébo paid 50 *jin* of wheat locally understood as tribute to the king, which were collected by two granary officers and stored in the Gyelni and Tsalung granaries in Lower Tébo.<sup>88</sup> This tributary practice was a gift-based relation between the king and *tsowa*. According to local oral history, federation chiefs prepared gifts collected from every *tsowa* or extracted from the communal property before the new year festival. They visited the gyelpo in Chone and presented gifts. The gyelpo reciprocated by giving two bags of tea and some copper coins to every federation's chief manager. The federations accepted this ritualized practice as long as they accepted the leading position of the Chone king.

## Conclusion

By the nineteenth century, the Chone ruling house had incorporated the *tsowa* societies of the Tibetan and other ethnographic groups into its realm through disparate political, religious and military means. These groups with diverse origins migrated to the Luchu and Drukchu valleys in different historical periods and were segregated by the geographic and locally evident social, political and religious boundaries. In the Chone Kingdom, each *tsowa* had definite political, cultural and religious identity affiliations. The kings enlarged their realm piece by piece through regularizing the conventional militia service, customary taxation and tributary practice, and promoting the prime-subordinate monastery system. However, the Chone king ruled the region by supervising the leaders of *tsowa* societies, and

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<sup>88</sup> “Zhuoni tusi zhidu,” in *ZNWSZL* vol.1, 8; Gao Yongjiu, “Zhuoni tusi de lishi jiqi yanbian,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.3, 24–25.

his control over *tsowa* was neither direct nor unilaterally dominant. These top-down enforcements of centralized political and religious systems with the Chone royal family at the apex mainly functioned at the level of banners. Below the finely organized 48 banners and the monastic institutes of Ganden Shédrupling, *tsowa* societies were autonomous, federations were self-ruled, and leagues sought to maintain minimal intervention by the Chone government.

This chapter sets the scene for a detailed examination of the resilience of the kingdom and its *tsowa* societies from the late Qing to the early PRC. It sheds light on an in-depth understanding of the local natural environment, identity affiliations, social organizations, political systems and religious institutions that interwove together and shaped the ruler-subject relationship in the largest Tibetan kingdom of the eastern Himalayan Plateau. This relationship encountered the first huge challenge when the whole of northwestern China was devastated by the Qing-Muslim warfare from 1862 to 1877. In the course of handling the internal crises caused by this seemingly irrelevant war, the *tsowa* societies in the war-torn Northern Tao reorganized households and *tsowa*, and local rulers adopted new military corvée-based land system to survive the aftermath.

## Chapter 2 An Irrelevant War? The Tongzhi Muslim Revolt, 1862–1878

### Introduction

This chapter focuses on the Tibetan experiences of the Shaan-Gan Muslim Revolt and the social-political consequences this Qing-Muslim war brought to the Chone Kingdom and nearby Chinese and Muslim communities. It illustrates the involvement of Tibetan *tsowa* societies during the outbreak, and over the course and aftermath of this multifocal and recurrent war on the Gansu-Amdo frontier. As major battles often erupted between the Hui militias and Qing forces, including official troops and local Chinese militias in Gansu, historians tend to consider this war to be irrelevant to Tibetans. This overlooks the fact that Tibetan *tsowa*, Chinese villages and Hui Muslim communities had been closely intertwined with each other for centuries in eastern Amdo. Long simmering local ethnic tensions could easily boil over into interethnic warfare. Also, local Tibetan native officials held commissioned positions of the Qing imperial state. They had a duty to maintain the stability in their own domains and to show loyalty to the emperor by aiding the Qing military operations. The Chone king thus commanded the largest Tibetan militia to organize the defense and suppress the Muslim insurgents in southern Gansu.

With the Tibetan militia joining this decade-long war, no *tsowa* was spared from this catastrophic event. Most Northern Tao *tsowa* were destroyed and local Tibetans were slaughtered. Along with the Qing campaign that recaptured the cities and towns in Gansu, the Chone Tibetan troops were incorporated into the official force and fought in many places. In this process, the Tibetan militiamen suffered costly casualties over time that had long-term social and political consequences for their families and *tsowa*. To deal with the severe depopulation and revenue decline, the Chone king and other Tibetan rulers adopted a new

land system to absorb the Han and Hui refugee-migrants and refill the large houses in Northern Tao *tsowa*. To preserve community and handle the shortage of labor, Tibetans reorganized households, subdivisions and *tsowa*, and accepted Han refugee-migrants as new *tsowa* members according to the organizational principles of *tsowa* in Northern Tao and beyond. The population crisis also generated new religious and political identity affiliations of the Tibetan, Han and Hui societies. Hence, this chapter argues that *tsowa* organization played a central role in surviving the frontier violence, handling manpower crises and recovering from the war for both local Tibetan communities and the kingdom.

### **The Missing Piece in the Historical Narrative of the Hui Muslim Revolt**

Modern Chinese historians often employ nationalist vocabularies to narrate late-Qing history. They emphasize the theme of “national humiliation” (*guochi* 國恥) of an incompetent Qing dynasty at the hands of foreign imperialist powers. From this perspective, the repeated revolts all over the empire signify the weakness and backwardness of the late Qing state. Insurgents were often depicted as “anti-imperialist” and “anti-feudal” peasants striving to overthrow the corrupt Qing government in the contemporary Chinese historiography. The Tongzhi Hui Revolt (*tongzhi huiluan* 同治回亂, 1862–1877), also known as the Dungan Revolt by Western scholars and the second He-Huang Incident (*hehuang shibian* 河湟事變) by Gansu-Qinghai local historians, has been commonly narrated with this theme.<sup>1</sup> Sparked by a trivial dispute in the Weihe River 渭河 valley and exploding into a tragic war that swept across northwestern China, this event, in the dominant

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<sup>1</sup> In Gansu and Qinghai, local historians also refer to the four Muslim revolts centered in Hezhou and the Huangshui River valley as the First He-Huang Incident (or Su Sishisan Revolt, 1780s), the Second He-Huang Incident (1862–1877), the Third He-Huang Incident (1895–1896) and the Fourth He-Huang Incident (1928–1929). The Chongqing kings participated in the state suppressions of all these incidents. In accordance with this almost cyclical pattern of revolt breaking out every thirty to sixty years, “small rebellion every thirty years, large rebellion every sixty years” (*sanshi nian yi xiaofan, liushi nian yi dafan*) has been a common saying among Han Chinese communities in Gansu and Qinghai since the late Qing.

narratives of mainland China, is depicted as a systematic anti-Qing uprising of Hui Muslims whose heroic anti-feudal and anti-landlord militia (*dizhu tuanlian* 地主團練) actions contributed to the making of a unified multiethnic nation-state. In Taiwan, historians ascribe the main cause of this social catastrophe to a corrupt, impotent and failing Qing government instead of the class struggle. In addition to numerous volumes of local histories in Shaanxi, Ningxia and Gansu, Chinese narratives also offer local witnesses and chronological accounts of the developments of this conflict in specific counties, prefectures and provinces, and detailed descriptions of imperial government suppression campaigns.<sup>2</sup>

Western studies on this revolt stress that Hui or Sino-Muslims had no intention to overthrow Qing rule. The anti-Qing cause of this event, this scholarship holds, was a misconception of later Chinese scholars. The full-scale eruption of this revolt in 1862 had multiple causes and locations.<sup>3</sup> Similar to the Hui Muslim revolt in Yunnan from 1856 to 1873, social-economic pressures alongside the population explosion and environmental degradation in mid-Qing Shaan-Gan deteriorated relationships between Hui and Han communities living alongside each other.<sup>4</sup> Han-Hui social tensions and ethno-religious discrimination increased to a combustible level. At the same time, since the “Old Teaching” (*laojiao* 老教) composed of the Gedimu and the Khufiyya Sufi sect, and the Jahriyya Sufi sect known as the “New Teaching” (*xinjiao* 新教) coexisted in Gansu from the eighteenth century onward, sectarian conflicts repeatedly evolved into local wars. The anti-New Teaching attitudes of Qing officials became paradigmatic and developed into a more

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<sup>2</sup> Shao Hongmo and Han Min, *Shaanxi huimin qi yi shi* 陝西回民起義史 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 1992); Ma Changshou, *Tongzhi nianjian shaanxi huimin qi yi lishi diaocha jilu* 同治年間陝西回民起義歷史調查紀錄 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 1993); Gao Wenyan, *Qingmo xibei huimin zhi fan qing yundong* 清末西北回民之反清運動 (Taipei: Xuehai Shuju, 1988).

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Lipman, *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 117–18, 130.

<sup>4</sup> David G Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate: Islam, Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856-1873* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006), 11–63.

common practice of judicial discrimination against the Jahriyya followers over time, which could swiftly trigger the latter party's revenge. As Jonathan Lipman articulates it, the Tongzhi Hui Revolt consisted of multifocal wars that were conditioned by heterogeneous local, and regional social, political and economic circumstances instead of being caused by a particular case, solely motivated by the aims of anti-feudalism or holy war (*jihad*), and under the command of a unified leadership.<sup>5</sup>

There was no riot comparable to the Dungan Revolt, which was unprecedented in terms of its geographic scale, time of duration and consequences. In narratives of this most disastrous event in the late nineteenth-century Northwest, historians mainly focus on the Han-Hui interfaces in areas under the jurisdiction of the Qing imperial apparatuses.<sup>6</sup> Yet, this conflict took place not only in Shaan-Gan, but also in eastern Amdo. The insurgents included Hui, Salar, Dongxiang and Bao'an 保安 Muslim groups that belonged to various Islamic sects. They neighbored Tibetan societies from Xining to Minzhou. Aside from the brief accounts of Lipman and Nietupski, historians often miss the crucial social-political context of the multiethnic frontier between Shaan-Gan and Amdo, where the "Salar bandits" (*safei* 撒匪), "Hui rebels" (*nihui* 逆回), "Tibetan barbarians" and "law-abiding Han Chinese" (*liangmin* 良民) classified by the Qing state were primarily oriented toward their own interests.<sup>7</sup> These ethno-religious groups lived alongside and repeatedly clashed with each other for centuries. The common mutually-exchanged epithets of stereotypical Otherness and sneering judgements of cultural and religious differences could easily turn into

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<sup>5</sup> Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, chapter 4. For a study on the Hui communities and their beliefs, see Michael Dillion, *China's Muslim Hui Community: Migration, Settlement and Sects* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Shao Hongmo and Han Min, *Shaanxi huimin qiyi shi*; Ma Changshou, *Tongzhi nianjian shaanxi huimin qiyi lishi diaocha jilu*; Gao Wenyuan, *Qingmo xibei huimin zhi fan qing yundong*. Also see the multiple volumes and chapters concerning this revolt in *Shaanxi sheng wenshi ziliao xuanji*, *Gansu wenshi ziliao xuanji* (hereafter *GSWSZLXJ*), *Qinghai sheng wenshi ziliao xuanji* and *Ningxia wenshi ziliao xuanji*.

<sup>7</sup> Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*; Nietupski, "Islam and Labrang Monastery: A Muslim Community in a Tibetan Buddhist Estate," in *Muslims in Amdo Tibetan Society: Multidisciplinary Approaches*, eds. Marie-Paule Hille, Bianca Horlemann and Paul Nietupski (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 135–152; *Labrang Monastery*, 121–146.

discrimination, hostility and fuel interethnic violence. The socio-economic and religious tensions could swiftly flare up with communal feuds and regional conflicts. In such moments of crisis, Qing officials often did not hesitate to deploy the militias supervised by Tibetan native officials to suppress, in their view, Muslim rebels and bandits. Time and again, this practice increasingly deepened local ethnic and sectarian hatreds between Tibetans and Hui.<sup>8</sup>

Since the 1680s, the Chone Yang chieftains commanded the largest “native troop” (*tubing* 土兵) recruited via Tibetan soldier-horse *ulag* in western Shaan-Gan. They were enlisted to suppress unrest on the Qing inner frontier and promoted by the Manchu emperors after the punitive campaigns. In 1781, the Fifteenth King Tendzin Rinchen joined the battle against the New Teaching insurgents in Xunhua and Hezhou, and, for this, was awarded the third-rank “hat button and peacock feather” (*dingdai hualin* 頂戴花翎). Likewise, there was nothing new in the fact that the Seventeenth King Trinle Dorje serve “the Great Qing” and demonstrated his loyalty when he sent in militia in 1862. Although his predecessors only assisted official troops, he directly commanded combat against Muslim rebels for ten years right at the doorstep of the Chone Kingdom. His Tibetan militia was the only major force protecting the Tibetan and Chinese communities in the Luchu valley before General Zuo Zongtang 左宗棠 (1812–1885) led his Xiang Army (*xiangjun* 湘軍, Hunanese soldiers) into western Shaan-Gan in 1871.<sup>9</sup>

From the Qing strategic perspective, eastern Amdo was merely a distant margin of the major revolts in Guyuan 固原, Dongzhiyuan 董志塬 and Jinjibao 金積堡. When the Taozhou Muslims appeared to be “rebels collaborating with Hui renegades” of Hezhou, Lintao and Gongchang in the Qing official memorials in 1865, it had already been two years

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<sup>8</sup> *QSL*, Gaozong, j1127.17a, j1128.11b–12b, j1133.3a, j1137.14b.

<sup>9</sup> The Chone rulers participated the pacifications of the Wang Fuchen incident in the 1670s, Lobzang Tendzin revolt in the 1720s, Tébo revolt in the 1760s, the First He-Huang Incident in 1781, the Gongchang incident in 1784 and the Tsö revolt in 1846. See *TZTZ*, 839–841.



since the first clash of the Hui and Han-Tibetan militias in Northern Tao. Even when Hezhou and Xining became the central battlefields after the Shaanxi and Ningxia Muslim insurgents defeated by Zuo Zongtang continuously fled westward from 1871 to 1873, the Qing expeditionary-force generals attached little strategic significance to the Luchu valley.<sup>10</sup> As a result, the battles taking place in the Tibetan areas were rarely mentioned in official sources. Local gazetteer compilers documented the deaths of local Chinese and heralded loyal acts of “martyrdom” in imperial Confucian ethical terms while never showing any concern for the devastating Tibetan human and economic losses. The sparse and fragmented accounts of the battles in which the Chone militia participated misleadingly treat the Muslim revolt as largely by-passing Minzhou, Taozhou, Gongchang and Lintao instead of breaking out there, as it did. Chinese records ignore the catastrophic events that devastated the valley and profoundly impacted the local *tsowa* society at so many levels.<sup>11</sup>

In local narratives, multiethnic accounts of the ten-year turbulence were narrated, and so distorted, to justify each specific group’s actions. Along the Luchu valley, all interethnic conflicts have been highly sensitive and controversial for local people in the past century. The Tibetan, Han and Hui groups naturally took the central roles in their own remembrances of loss and grief. The memories of burned houses, gutted human bodies, panicked mass flights for refuge, and stories of family members tortured and killed by Muslims/militiamen or hunted and cannibalized by other villagers cannot fade away easily. These narratives blame each other for inciting the bloodshed and slaughtering unarmed commoners. And most importantly, they seek to justify their historical vengeance in the present political context. Even today, Tibetans claim that they protected the region and defended against the Hui rebels; Han Chinese lament their weak solidarity and losses in the Hui rebellion; and Hui

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<sup>10</sup> *QSL*, Muzong, j145, 38a–40a.

<sup>11</sup> *TZTZ*, 985–987.

Muslims highlight that the revolt was an anti-feudal and anti-Qing uprising.<sup>12</sup> On cross-examining these written and oral accounts, the social tension between local Han and Hui groups does not, in my view, adequately explain the outbreak of the Muslim riots along the edges of the Chone Kingdom. As the next section illustrates, the Muslim revolt in eastern Amdo involved a series of events inflamed by different parties with various motivations. Its destructive extent and scale not only turned the lives of local inhabitants completely upside down, regardless of their ethno-religious identities, but also shaped social relations in many Hui and Han villages and Tibetan *tsowa* that suffered massive depopulation.

### **The Outbreak of the War**

From the eruptions of the Xunhua Muslim sectarian feud in 1862, through the Muslim and non-Muslim conflicts playing out all over the Gansu-Amdo borderland, to General Zuo Zongtang's campaign and assertion of control in 1873, this lengthy period of large-scale violence nearly destroyed the social-economic bases of the Tibetan native and monastic officials in Northern Tao, and deeply shook the military corvée system of the Chone Kingdom that was seemingly located outside the conflagration. In contrast to the Chinese areas seriously damaged by this revolt, the hostile attitude of Han militias against Muslim communities was not the main cause of the riot on this multiethnic frontier. In the course of my field research, local Tibetan, Han and Hui elders who have authority to explain historical events commonly indicate that the Chone ruling lineage, chieftains, Qing civil and military officials, religious authorities, Han and Hui clan leaders, and local social elites in Northern Tao formed a loose alliance for reciprocal protection, disaster relief, dispute mediation and so

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<sup>12</sup> Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi* 臨潭回族史 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2013), 103; Li Zongxian, "Shiqidai tusi yang yuan shuaibing hanwei taozhou 十七代土司楊元率兵捍衛洮州," in *ZNWSZL* vol.7, 129–131.

on before this revolt.<sup>13</sup> The alliance played crucial roles in defending against the Qinghai Mongols in the sixteenth century, raising *tuanlian* militia to ward off the multifocal millenarian insurgents fleeing to southern Gansu, who were called “White Lotus rebels” (*bailian jiaofei* 白蓮教匪) by the Qing officials in the 1800s, and in cooperating on arranging famine relief in the 1820s. The alliance was designed to maintain local social stability through political alignment, marital network, long-term trading partnership and friendship crossing ethnic, cultural and religious boundaries.<sup>14</sup>

To secure the region in wartime and provide mutual military assistance, there were four types of military forces in the Luchu valley. The Chone king commanded a troop of 2,000 to 3,000 Tibetan warriors, which was assumed as the most capable force in the Luchu valley by local Han and Hui peoples. Meanwhile, most military households (*junhu* 軍戶) of Old Town were Hui Muslim families registered in the Ming garrison system.<sup>15</sup> As in other concentrated Hui settlements, Taozhou Hui Muslims having the hereditary military status in the Ming continued to serve the Qing. The Hui military households filled slots of professional soldiers in the local Green Standard Army (*lüying jun* 綠營軍) from generation to generation. The number of Hui soldiers in Shaan-Gan quickly grew in the 1850s in the era of the Taiping Civil War and other conflicts. As Gansu scholar Mu Shouqi 慕壽祺 (1874–1947) remarked, Han Chinese were reluctant to serve while Hui people actively joined armies after more than thirty percent of local official troops were deployed to suppress the Taiping Rebellion (1851–1864).<sup>16</sup> Hence, there was a considerable number of Hui soldiers in the Tao-Min Coordinate

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<sup>13</sup> Interviews with the gazetteer compilers and *wenshi ziliao* writers in Lintan and Zhuoni counties.

<sup>14</sup> *TZTZ*, 903; *LTXZ*, 15; *ZNXXZ*, 14–18. For the White Lotus revolt, see Ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 261. For the marital networks between the Chone gyelpo family and the powerful Han and Hui Muslim clans, see *Dingshi zupu* 丁氏族譜; *Lishi zongpu* 李氏宗譜; 'Jam dbyangs, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 198–199.

<sup>15</sup> This is based on the Taozhou Hui genealogies and my field data on the distribution of Hui settlements in the Luchu valley. For a similar observation, see Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1991), 191.

<sup>16</sup> Mu Shouqi, *Gan ning qing shilüe* 甘寧青史略 (hereafter *GNQSL*, Lanzhou: Guji shudian, 1990), j20.8a–b.

Army (*taomin xieying* 洮岷協營), which consisted of the Old Town, New Town, Minzhou, Jiezhou, Xigu and Wenzhou 文州 brigades (*ying* 營). In sharp contrast to the stereotypical image of the incompetent late Qing soldiers, the fighting capacity of the Hui troops was impressive. These soldiers primarily considered themselves as Muslims. In the Tongzhi Hui Revolt, they tended to collaborate with their ethno-religious comrades instead of following official orders.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, due to the state's reliance on local militias to put down rebellions, local societies in China proper were militarized from the early nineteenth century onward. Fielding militias in the moment of crisis and training militiamen or braves (*yong* 勇) in winter were ubiquitous across Shaan-Gan. As the Han and Hui communities were basically segregated from each other, the militias were separately organized by the Han and Muslim social elites—including martial *juren* (*wujuren* 武舉人), degree-holding scholars, Muslim *ahong* 阿訇 or reputable landholders—in their own communities.<sup>18</sup> However, these military forces were usually motivated by their own interests. In the Luchu valley, the alliance for avoiding local conflict by no means prevented many low-level feuds and Muslim sectarian frictions. The social tension and religious strife in Northern Tao were as overt and intense as in the Huangshui valley.

From the winter of 1860, after the Xining amban (*banshi dachen* 辦事大臣) reduced the size of official troop numbers to ease the burden of military funds, some Salar villagers of the Jahriyya sect took up arms against the local officials who purposefully suspended the judicial process to handle the New Teaching followers' cases. Employing Han militias, Shaan-Gan Governor-General Shen Zhaolin 潘兆霖 (1801–1862) promptly repressed the Salar insurgents. The Salars seemed to ascribe the loss of over 2,000 men to their Han neighbors,

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<sup>17</sup> *TZTZ*, 478–483.

<sup>18</sup> *TZTZ*, 483–487. For the militarization of Chinese local society, see Philip Kuhn, *Rebellion and its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796–1864* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

which ensured further local interethnic feuds.<sup>19</sup> In the third month of 1861, religious sectarian strife between the Huasi 華寺 suborder (called *menhuan* 門宦 after the 1890s) of the Khufiyya sect and the Lintao Gedimu sect in Xining worsened the situation. The Salars joined the Huasi Muslims to revenge. They demolished Gedimu and Han villages, killing Old Teaching followers and Chinese residents in the Huangshui valley. The Xining amban ordered the Mongol and Tibetan native officials nearby Dangaer (Huangyuan 湟源), Xunhua, Bayanrongge (Hualong 化隆) and Guide 貴德 to suppress the revolts in early 1862. Local Tibetans were said to have decades of enmity with Muslims. The riot thus evolved into a regional war that lasted for ten years.<sup>20</sup>

At the same time, Han and Hui militias clashed in multiple locales in Shaanxi. In the seventh month of 1862, Gansu officials found that handbills bearing such phrases as “Qin (Shaanxi) spares no Hui” (*qin bu liu hui* 秦不留回) or “kill Hui and eradicate Islam” (*shahui miejiao* 殺回滅教) had been brought in from Shaanxi and circulated in their administrative jurisdictions.<sup>21</sup> After the Qing court sent the Manchu General Dorongga 多隆阿 (1818–1864) to suppress the riots in Shaanxi from the eleventh month to the third month of the next year, the majority of the Hui insurgents fled to Ningxia and Gansu.<sup>22</sup> The stories of cruel bloodshed in Shaanxi, relating the suffering of Han and Hui, were spread by refugees to Gansu. In areas where Muslim and Chinese settlements often were closely interlocked with each other, both communities were horrified and suspected the worst of each other. As preventive measures, the Han and Hui social elites raised militias and soon these forces were fighting each other in Guyuan, Qinzhou 秦州 (Tianshui 天水), Gongchang and Jiezhou, the

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<sup>19</sup> *QSL*, Wenzong, j249.3b–4b; Muzong, j29, 28a, 44b–45b. For the historical conflicts between the Jahriyya and the Khufiyya sects, see Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, chapter 4.

<sup>20</sup> *QSL*, Muzong, j68.28a–29a, j75.14a–15a; *GNQSL*, j20.9b–10a.

<sup>21</sup> *QSL*, Muzong, j33.46a–47a.

<sup>22</sup> *QSL*, Muzong, j47.32b–34b.

major gateway prefectures to Shaanxi. In a couple of weeks, every subprefecture and county in Gansu was engulfed by the local Han and Hui militia warfare.<sup>23</sup> News of the violence poured into Taozhou from traders and refugees. The Chinese degree-holders and landlords quickly fielded the Dongxiang 東鄉 and Xi'nanxiang 西南鄉 militias for self-defense, which caused panic among the Hui populace congregated around New Town and Old Town. Yet, the alliance of the multiethnic social elites maintained social order, although Taozhou was on the verge of war. Local Hui *ahong* and prestigious elders promised Taozhou officials that they would never rebel against the empire and vowed along with the Han elites to never turn against each other.<sup>24</sup>

Meanwhile, a tax revolt breaking out in Songpan across the Gansu-Sichuan border contributed to the turbulence of the spring of 1862. Two years before, the conventional wooden tokens (*muke* 木刻) calling for revolt against the Qing tax officials were circulating in the Fan, Qiang and *min* 民 (including Han and Hui) areas at a time when the major Qing military force of the region had been sent to repress the Taiping insurrection. E'nengzuo 額能作, a Tibetan (or Qiang) woman in Xiaoxing 小姓 to the south of Songpan, stated that her son Heilunlai 黑侖來 was a Bon living buddha (*huofo* 活佛). When a huge number of followers gathered in his village, the *huofo* announced the launching of an uprising. In a few months, the insurgents captured most forts between the Baishui 白水 and Heishu 黑水 valleys with the native chiefs joining in the revolt. In this process, the anti-tax protest precipitated a massacre of Qing officials and Han and Hui civilians alike. As a result, some Qing officials in the Gansu-Sichuan borderland took a preventive approach and attacked local

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<sup>23</sup> Yang Yuxiu, Wang Zhiyi, Zhang Rongze and Yang Cunze, *Pinghui zhi* 平回志 (Guangxu jichou edition, 1889), j3.1a–2b.

<sup>24</sup> Debin, *Minzhou xiangtu zhi* (hereafter *MZXTZ*), 223.

native groups first.<sup>25</sup> In Nanping 南坪, a town bordering Drukchu, local officials burnt down nearby Tibetan settlements and killed native headmen. In the fourth month of 1861, swearing vengeance, local Tibetans systematically plundered Nanping Town and destroyed the Han and Hui villages along the Baishui River. The Baima Tibetans concerned with the Qing rampage also joined the Nanping insurgents. At this time, the Qing court finally mobilized a Sichuan and Gansu joint force to “pacify” the escalating violence. The Seventeenth King Trinle Dorje was ordered to facilitate the punitive expedition. The Chone militia and the six brigades of the Tao-Min Coordinate Army formed a major fighting unit from Gansu.<sup>26</sup> Alarmed by the official troops advancing from Gansu toward this region in the ninth lunar month, they eluded the Qing relief force by escaping northward deep into the forested Back Range where the Tibetan inhabitants were long hostile to the imperial officials. Rumors spreading with the fleeing rebel party inflamed resentment and fear of the approaching Qing army in the Chone king’s four banners, leading to open violence along the southern edge of the Chone kingdom. In light of the official report, a unified rebel force arose in Drukchu and ferociously plundered Xigu. Then, these “mutinous barbaric subjects of the Chone chieftain” marched northward and attacked Minzhou in late 1862.<sup>27</sup>

In fact, the Nanping and Baima Tibetans were too scared to return to their homelands. Based on a longstanding Tibetan norm in eastern Amdo, and particularly in the Chone Kingdom, by which someone suffering a life-and-death matter could take refuge in a Tibetan family known as a “host household” (*zhurenjia* 主人家) with the introduction of a mutual acquaintance. This practice not only adhered to Buddhist values, but also had pragmatic meaning. The system of introduction overlapped the networks of distant relatives, friends,

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<sup>25</sup> *Songpan xianzhi* (1924), j3.45b–48b. For the Songpan anti-tax revolt and its aftermath, see Kang Xiaofei and Donald Sutton, *Contesting the Yellow Dragon*, 104–117.

<sup>26</sup> Tsewang Sonam Tobgyel, “Xian daren shanting hangsan fujun xingzhuang 先大人善亭行三府君行狀 (manuscript, 1886),” in *ZNWSZL* vol.4, 3.

<sup>27</sup> *MZXTZ*, 246.

inter-*tsowa* and inter-federation kin, craftsmen, traders, seasonal agricultural helpers and even contracted laborers. In a reciprocal manner, when the former host requested assistance, the refugee who survived the crisis and returned home was obligated to reciprocate and host the former host. For instance, Robert Ekvall, whose parents and who himself took refuge in eastern Amdo in the 1890s, 1900s and 1920s, wrote that “reinforced by the claims of acquaintance and the functioning of the ‘guest-host’ system, this right of refuge can open a path into the most exclusive of Tibetan communities.” The missionary stations in Taozhou and Minzhou provided lodges and fodder when Tibetans visited the markets or passed by the areas.<sup>28</sup>

In this case, Drukchu Tibetans recalled a precedent in the 1710s when the Chone gyelpo served as a mediator between the Tibetan chiefs leading a revolt and the Qing pacification force. The four banners and the refugees attempted to seek help from Trinle Dorje after the Drukchu hosts became the immediate target of the state. Seeking an influential mediator, after women, children and elders hid in the deeper mountains, the Nanping, Baima and Drukchu Tibetan men trekked to Minzhou, the border subprefecture town securing the only route to the Luchu valley from the south. Minzhou officials saw them as rebels. The Left Outpost (*zuoshao* 左哨) soldiers of the Minzhou Brigade, mostly Han Chinese, clashed with the refugees and defeated them. As the Minzhou Commander Meng Shusi 蒙述思 aimed to drive out the rebels, he chased them across Northern Tao to Guzhan 古戰, five *li* west of Old Town. This was where the border wall stood between the Taozhou Hui Muslim settlements and the *tsowa* of the king’s Pawoshi Banner and the Nyentsa gönpo’s Nupma-gongma (*nub ma gong ma*; Shangxilu 上西路) Banner. These *tsowa* came to the aid of the refugees and

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<sup>28</sup> Ekvall, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border*, 38.



ambushed the Minzhou troop. They slaughtered the imperial troops, killed Commander Meng and raided the nearby Hui villages on the thirteenth day of the second month in 1863.<sup>29</sup>

Afterwards, the Guzhan Hui villagers appealed to the Taozhou yamen to punish these “bandits” and recover their property. This was a justifiable request but unlikely to be favored by the highest official in Taozhou, Conciliatory Commander Dan Dianchen 淡殿臣. Dan was reluctant to step into the Tibetan territory and incite further trouble to satisfy the Hui villagers. His only gesture was to ask the Chone chieftain to arrest the revolt leaders. A source suggests that Trinle Dorje, who returned to Chone from Songpan because of “leg ailment,” imprisoned the “robber” Qi’an Garong 七暗尕茸, who was likely a Drukchu Tibetan according to the toponym “Qi’an” (*mchod yul*) in his name.<sup>30</sup> As their petition was ignored by the Taozhou yamen, local Muslims decided to pursue justice and take revenge by themselves. In order to take over the Taozhou official troops mainly composed of Hui soldiers, an army coup took place in the Tao-Min Coordinate Army. Ding Chongxuan, a captain (*bazong* 把總) of the Old Town Brigade (*jiutao ying* 舊洮營), led his soldiers to mutiny and join the Old Town militia organized by a reputable local Muslim Ma Fang 馬芳. The supervisory commander (*dusi* 都司) Ding Yong’an 丁永安 and the commander Li Fazhen 李發珍 of the Taozhou Brigade Middle Troop (*taozhou ying zhongjun* 洮岷營中軍), both were Hui Muslims, executed several Chinese military officers and controlled the official force in Taozhou. They immediately occupied New Town, declared to let local

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<sup>29</sup> Zhang Guochang, *Gansu zhongyi lu zhuan* 甘肅忠義錄傳 (Guangxu gengyin edition, 1890), j8.4–5; *MZXTZ*, 246; *Minzhou zhi jiaozhu* 岷州志校注 (Minxian: Minxianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, 1988), 458.

<sup>30</sup> It was a common Tibetan practice to address someone with the toponym of their place of origin before the personal name. Garong was prisoned in Chone at this time. The gyelpo released him to fight against the Muslims in the fifth month of 1863. See *Lintan xianzhi gao* 臨潭縣志稿 (transcribed edition, 1940s), j8; *ZNXZ*, 18; Tsewang, “Xian daren,” 3.

Chinese communities remain undisturbed, and launched a systematic campaign of vendetta against Tibetans.<sup>31</sup>

## The Immediate Losses

1862–1863

In a thoroughly planned manner, the attack began on the fourth day of the third month. Ding Yong'an and Li Fazhen commanded the mutinied official troops and Hui militiamen in New Town, wreaking vengeance upon around twenty Tibetan *tsowa* adjoining Guzhan. Many local Tibetans were slaughtered regardless of sex and age, and their villages were burned to the ground. Those who escaped toward Southern Tao were hunted down by the Hui soldiers or drowned in the Luchu River. As the administrative and religious center of these Tibetan *tsowa*, Marnyung Monastery was plundered and demolished. More than a hundred monks were killed in the same way that Muslims bled sheep. Afterwards, Ding and Li converged with Ma Fang on Old Town. A Hui force of 3,000 to 4,000 men equipped with muzzle loading muskets of the local arsenal as well as self-made spears and machetes thus assembled in Old Town. Based on their later movements, it appears that this vendetta war evolved into a cleansing of all Tibetans in Northern Tao.<sup>32</sup>

The Hui force was divided into two sections. Ma Fang commanded the troops setting out to eliminate Tibetans in the north of Old Town, assaulting the *tsowa* managed by the Chokro khenchen and the Tsoksum gönpo. Li Fazhen led forces to clear out Tibetans ruled by the Nyentsa gönpo and the Yerba lapön residing in the south of New Town.<sup>33</sup> On the basis of the Tsoksum Tibetan oral account which was confirmed by the *Taozhou tingzhi*:

Some Tibetans in Chokro and Shingtsang (*Gshing tshang*; Shenzang 申藏) fled to Tsoksum Fort, the administrative seat of the Tsoksum Gönpo Yang Xiuchun

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<sup>31</sup> *TZTZ*, 513, 531–532, 985–986.

<sup>32</sup> *TZTZ*, 563; *Kan lho'i bod brgyud nang bstan dgon sde so so'i lo rgyus mdor bsdus* (Hezuo: Gannan baoshe yinshuachang, 1991) vol.1, 127; vol.3 (1995), 230–231.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*; Li Zongxian, “Shiqidai tusi yang yuan shuaibing hanwei taozhou,” in *ZNWSZL* vol.7, 129.

(d.1863). The gönpo organized the refugees and his subjects to defend the fort, which was soon besieged by Ma Fang's troops. The Hui rebels quickly broke into the fort. They tortured the gönpo and his family members demanding treasure, and killed them along with more than four hundred (456) Tibetans.<sup>34</sup>

While Ma Fang slaughtered most Tibetan inhabitants along the border wall, Li Fazhen's section marched southward and spread out across Liushun 流順 Valley. The Hui insurgents overran all Tibetan villages. They ransacked Yerba Monastery and looted Tibetan households. After slaughtering the Yerba lapön, monks and nearby villagers, they set every Tibetan building on fire. This was, indeed, a form of "ethnic cleansing," a little known pogrom like others in world history, as they only targeted Tibetans for being Tibetan. The Chinese settlements along Liushun Valley were not disturbed. Hence, the Xi'naxiang Chinese militia did not take any action. Later that day, chasing after the fleeing Tibetans, the two Hui forces converged and advanced toward the fortified Chone Town. Trinle Dorje organized the defense and repulsed the Muslims. Ma and Li retreated to the walled Old Town and New Town. It was the seeding season. When the insurgents returned to farmlands, the markets and basic order were temporarily resumed amid fears of further turbulence. In this wave of unrest, the *tsowa* ruled by the Tsoksum gönpo, the Chokro khenchen and the Yerba lapön were almost wiped out. Nearly half of the Tibetans in Northern Tao died of the sudden Hui attacks. Some survivors returned to their *tsowa*, held funerals for their brutalized family members, relatives and friends, and cultivated as much land as possible. Yet, the majority of Tibetan men who escaped the massacre took refuge in Southern Tao or Zhongpa and joined the Chone militia, waiting for the opportunity to take revenge on their losses.<sup>35</sup>

In the meantime, as Han-Hui relations deteriorated quickly in Gansu, Enlin 恩麟, the temporary Shaan-Gan governor-general, instructed local officials to eradicate the Hui rebellions by combining suppression with enlistment (*jiaofu bingyong* 剿撫並用). As local

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with the Kōnpa family, Tsoksum, April 05, 2019; *TZTZ*, 985–986.

<sup>35</sup> Zhang Guochang, *Gansu zhongyi lu zhuan*, j10, 36a; *TZTZ*, 892, 900, 904–905, 908.

officials thought that Hui Muslims either were rebels or planned to rebel, they encouraged Chinese militias to attack the Hui settlements. Consequently, the large-scale Han and Hui blood-lust killing erupted in all districts abutting Taozhou. Xining and Hezhou had fallen under the seesaw battles between the Muslims and the united force of limited official troops and Han militias. In Lintao, when the rising Dongxiang Muslims came to accept the Qing enlistment, Magistrate Lu Sheng insisted that the submission could be a disguised foray. He ordered the surrendered Hui leaders to kill several dozen followers to prove their sincerity. The latter did so while the magistrate believed that the killed insurgents were Han Chinese. The Dongxiang Muslims thus cried out for the revenge killing of Magistrate Lu Sheng and attacked Lintao. After repulsing the Dongxiang Muslims, the Chinese militia burned down all mosques and massacred the entire Muslim neighborhood in Lintao. Over five hundred Hui households were wiped out. To avenge the massacre, Lintao Muslims Mufuti 穆夫提 and his brother Ma Liu 馬六 directed villagers of the Beizhuang suborder 北莊門宦 of the Khufiyya sect, broke into Lintao City and took weapons from the arsenal. They killed the magistrate and slaughtered Han Chinese in return.<sup>36</sup>

At this point, Minzhou Chinese braves openly cried out “exterminate the Hui” (*miehui* 滅回). Local Hui Muslims gathered together in Diaogou 鴛溝 and made the place a stronghold to protect themselves. The Minzhou Manchu magistrate Zengqi 曾啟 treated this local Hui action as a rebellion. In the fifth month of 1863, he instructed the Minzhou militia comprised of 3,000 men to “pacify” Diaogou. Some three hundred Hui men prepared to fight a suicidal resistance. Seeing the embattled Hui militia at a distance and having heard stories of the fierce Hui people in the past months, the poorly organized Chinese militiamen collapsed and fled in every direction. Several dozen people were injured because of the

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<sup>36</sup> *GNQSL*, j20.12b–13b.

stampede.<sup>37</sup> Had Zengqi admitted that the Han militia was responsible for this event and executed the militia leader, local Muslims would have returned to normal life. More and more Hui Muslims heard that Minzhou was a safer place and fled to this area. The magistrate and his inferiors even invited an imam to recite the *Quran* in the yamen hall in order to placate local Muslims.<sup>38</sup>

In the sixth month, Enlin appointed Yan Changhuan 嚴長宦, who was the Taozhou placatory commander from 1841 to 1857, the Tao-Min Coordinate Army commandant (*shoubei* 守備) at the age of 75 to placate the situation. Yan arrived in Taozhou and had no official troops to command. As the Green Standard soldiers in Gansu either were extracted to repress the riots in Shaanxi and Ningxia or were scattered in multiple places to quell uprisings, or deserted and even joined the insurgents, Gansu quickly faced a shortage of pacification troops. Yan could expect no imperial reinforcements anytime soon. And, as the Nyentsa gönpo was a major patron of Yerba Monastery and some of his *tsowa* had been destroyed by the Hui Muslims, he fielded a militia of his seven banners to take revenge. The commander thus deployed the Chinese and Tibetan militias to recapture New Town. For reasons that are not clear, Commander Yan, who had once worked with Trinle Dorje to suppress the Tsö Tibetan and Salar Muslim risings in the 1850s, did not instruct the chieftain to assist his military action. As he misjudged the capacity of the Hui renegades and local Hui militiamen who occupied the administrative seat in the slack season, the siege was a strategic failure. In the six months of 1863, the Chinese Dongxiang militia and the Nyentsa gönpo's Tibetan militia were defeated by the better equipped and outnumbered Hui force. They were tightly pursued to Dakyik Valley in Southern Tao, with 483 men killed in the battle.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *GNQSL*, j20.24b.

<sup>38</sup> *Minzhou zhi jiaozhu*, 458–459, 485.

<sup>39</sup> *MZXTZ*, 223–224; *Lintan xianzhi gao*, j8; *GNQSL*, j20.27b.

At this point, the Chone king had sent out feather-arrow tokens to his banners and raised militia for action. Yet, he seemed to have deliberately kept the Chone troops on the sidelines, avoiding any direct clash with Hui forces as long as Chone Town was secure. By the harvest season, Yan endeavored to ease the Han-Hui tension and ensure local grain safety. Since the gyelpo family and the Ding lineage 丁氏 (a leading Hui clan in Old Town), were marital relatives, Yan turned to Trinle Dorje for help and asked him to negotiate the peace with the Taozhou Hui gentry (*huishen* 回紳). Local Muslims also welcomed the truce if only for the sake of bringing in the harvest and avoiding any eventual punishment by the Qing government. Thus, negotiation for a cessation of hostilities took place that autumn. The gyelpo asked his master Drakgönpa Könchok Tenpa Rapgyé, one of the most influential Tibetan Buddhist scholars in Amdo, to serve as the mediator. Drakgönpa was a monk of Labrang Monastery, where he had hosted many Taozhou Hui traders (*huishang* 回商). Trusted by all parties, Drakgönpa invited the Taozhou officials, Hui military leaders and social-religious elites, Tibetan representatives and Han gentry (*hanshen* 漢紳) to Gyakhar Monastery (*rgya mkhar dgon pa*; Jiangke-si 江可寺) in the north of Old Town. Following the customary judicial practice, they evened up each group's human and economic losses, agreed to make no other compensations, and took an oath to restrict their own parties from restarting the war. Yan enlisted the Hui force and appointed Li Fazhen the deputy commander (*fu zongbing* 副總兵) of the Tao-Min Coordinate Army. To prevent outside Muslims from disturbing Taozhou, Chone troops were deployed to guard all border passes between Taozhou and neighboring prefectures.<sup>40</sup>

However, the fragile ceasefire only lasted a few months. After local farmers harvested their land, the Hui forces in war-torn Hezhou, Lintao, Gongchang and Qinzhou searching for

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<sup>40</sup> Tsewang, "Xian daren," 4; *TZTZ*, 531; *ZNXZ*, 18.

supplies roved about the Luchu valley, looted villages and mistreated local non-Muslim inhabitants. In the eighth month, the Qinzhou and Minzhou Hui insurgents killed Magistrate Zengqi and seized Diaogou again. The Lintao Muslims commanded by Mufuti marched westward through Yeliguan Valley to Yangshaguan Pass 羊沙關 in the east of New Town. The Pass was guarded by the Zhongpa cavalymen, who ambushed Mufuti and exacted over 1,000 Hui casualties.<sup>41</sup> Anxiety resurfaced among the Tibetan, Han and Hui communities of Taozhou when around 1,000 Hezhou Muslim insurgents then entered the Taozhou region through the Mébo pasture that winter. Ding Yong'an, Ma Fang and Li Fazhen launched the uprising again. The *Taozhou tingzhi* states that Commandant Yan “heard the news when having dinner, spit up his food and stood up and then died of resentment.”<sup>42</sup> Without a new official appointment of the highest military position in Taozhou, the Chone gyelpo was in charge of local defense. Old Town became a stronghold of the Hui force and New Town was secured by Trinle Dorje. Both parties maintained a peculiar, disquieting truce up to the spring of 1864.<sup>43</sup>

#### 1864–1868

Enlin had long realized that Gansu's imperial forces were entirely insufficient to extinguish the multifocal Hui rebellions. He had employed all available troops against the Muslim militias, but the uprising grew day by day as the mobility of the insurgents proved far more efficient than that of the imperial pacification forces. The limited number of Green Standard soldiers were exhausted from continually fighting off the sieges repeatedly laid by Muslim forces to cities and towns in Shaan-Gan. After summoning the Alaša (Alashan 阿拉善) Mongol prince (*qinwang* 親王) to rescue Ningxia and instructing the Upper Mongols

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<sup>41</sup> *Minzhou zhi jiaozhu*, 485; *Pinghui zhi*, j3.7a.

<sup>42</sup> *TZTZ*, 563.

<sup>43</sup> *GNQSL*, j20.39a–b; Tsewang, “Xian daren,” 4;

and northeastern Amdo Tibetan leaders to support the official troops in Xining, Enlin ordered the Chone chieftain to repress the Salar and Hui insurgents inundating Xunhua and Hezhou.<sup>44</sup> Considering that Chone Town would be poorly defended once he took his local men to Hezhou, Trinle Dorje deployed Chone militia to steadily guard the border passes, and enlisted cavalymen from the pastoral Mébo, Khotso, Ngoktso and Hortsang leagues. In the fifth month of 1864, the cavalry struck the Muslim villages near Tumen Pass, the main gateway between Hezhou and the Labrang-Chone region. After demolishing several Hui villages in Hezhou, Trinle Dorje was ordered to reinforce the imperial troops in Lintao. On his way southward, the Tibetan cavalry encountered the Salar Muslim militia which was, according to exaggerated reports, said to have over 10,000 fighters, in Maijiaji 買家集. In fact, these Salars had been defeated by the Tibetan and Chinese militias in Gaerdan and had fled to Hezhou a few days earlier. Based on the battle communique, the Tibetan cavalry killed six hundred Salars and scattered the rest.<sup>45</sup>

In the sixth month, the Hui leaders in Old Town grasped this opportunity to recapture the lightly defended Taozhou. Bao Yongchang, a local *jinshi* of 1877, asserted that Ma Fang and Li Fazhen had acted at the insistence of the Hezhou Hui.<sup>46</sup> The Hui leaders now launched an expedition to sweep through all Chinese and Tibetan villages between Old Town and New Town. They destroyed Chépa and Tsordor monasteries, the only remaining two regional monasteries within the border wall. Local monks and Tibetans fled to Southern Tao or North Range; a considerable number of them were slaughtered. The Hui force rapidly occupied Shuimochuan Fort 水磨川堡 and killed over a hundred residents. The Han social elites and the Nyentsa gönpo reacted immediately to the Hui uprising. They summoned the Xi'nanxiang militia of eight hundred Chinese and Tibetan men from the west and south of

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<sup>44</sup> *GNQSL*, j20.21b; *ZNXZ*, 18.

<sup>45</sup> *GNQSL*, j20.36b–37a; *Pinghui zhi*, j3.10a–b.

<sup>46</sup> *TZTZ*, 987.



Northern Tao. On the twelfth day of the sixth month, the Xi'nanxiang militia confronted the Muslim force in Machanggou 馬場溝 and lost over seven hundred men. The rest of militiamen and non-Muslim villagers escaped to Qiqi Fort 戚旗堡 and Zhanqi Fort 張旗堡, two central towns respectively located in the southwest and the northeast of New City. Ma and Li stormed these forts. The casualty count was several thousands. Most Taozhou officials and wealthy Han families sought refuge in Chone Town. Many Han and Tibetan refugees hid in Southern Tao and watched the smoke above the burning home villages on the other side of the Luchu River.<sup>47</sup>

After this battle, Taozhou fell to the Hui force. Ma and Li broke the truce with the Taozhou Chinese while keeping their oath with the Chone king. With the exception of those cases involving Northern Tao Tibetans who joined the Xi'nanxiang militia to kill Hui Muslims in revenge, there was no direct conflict between the Chone troops and the Hui force. The Taozhou government no longer existed under these chaotic circumstances. All of this was either not promptly reported to the provincial government or governor-general Enlin was too overwhelmed to handle it. His priority was to end the wars in multiple major cities, especially Xining, Hezhou, Qinzhou and areas nearby the capital Lanzhou. Likewise, no official troop was involved when some constantly moving Hui forces from Gongchang and Yanguan 鹽官 (Lixian 禮縣) merged with the Diaogou Hui militia and eliminated the Han militia in Minzhou.<sup>48</sup> Enlin continued to have Trinle Dorje assist with punitive campaigns in Xunhuan and Hezhou. As the situation in Shaanxi improved, the court designated Cao Kezhong 曹克忠 (1826–1896), who had recruited 5,000 Hunan braves (*chuyong* 楚勇), as the Hezhou *zongbing* to “clean up” (*suqing* 肅清) the Hui rebels in Gansu. Cao led his army

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<sup>47</sup> TZTZ, 676–678, 985; GNQSL, j20.39b.

<sup>48</sup> GNQSL, j20.39a.

to Jiezhou in the eighth month. Soon he was busy rescuing various cities in southern Gansu.<sup>49</sup> At this time, the Chinese militia slaughtered 2,000 Hui Muslims in Gongchang. The Hui forces in southern Gansu then gathered in Gongchang for revenge, massacring over 20,000 Han civilians and laying siege to the city. It was only in the twelfth month that siege was raised. Afterwards, the Gongchang Prefect (*zhifu* 知府) Zhao Guifang 趙桂芳 sent two officials and a troop to assist Trinle Dorje in suppressing the Taozhou Hui unrest.<sup>50</sup>

In the second month of 1865, the Chone gyelpo and the newly appointed Tao-Min deputy commander Feng Guangming 馮光明 organized all available Tibetan and Chinese men to recapture Taozhou. Yet, the campaign was cancelled due to the Gongchang military officers' defiance of the order to join the fight. At this point, Cao was also in shortage of soldiers and supplies. After recruiting another 4,000 Hunan braves, he instructed Trinle Dorje to field 1,000 cavalymen with their own provisions to participate in a punitive campaign.<sup>51</sup> Following the seeding season, Ma Fang and Li Fazhen launched a campaign to capture Chone Town since the king and his pastoral fighters had left for Gongchang. In the fourth month, the Chone infantry force of at least 1,000 men fought the Hui forces in Northern Tao. The two parties encountered each other in Machanggou again. Although the Hui troops took major losses, the Chone militia was almost wiped out, taking 800 casualties. Meanwhile, Cao's suppression of Hui forces in the major Gansu cities forced many defeated Hui troops to flee toward remote places. In the Luchu valley, a Hui force broke into Minzhou and killed several hundred Chinese residents. After looting the city and torching temples, civilian houses and Tibetan monasteries, a section of this force advanced northward. They plundered villages and killed over 500 residents on the way to Taozhou, then, joined Ma and Li. As the

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<sup>49</sup> *QSL*, Muzong, j120.26b–27a, j122.36b–39a, j123.30a–32b; *GNQSL*, j21.13b, 16a–17a.

<sup>50</sup> *QSL*, Muzong, j109.25b–26a; Li Zongxian, “Shiqidai tusi yang yuan shuaibing hanwei taozhou,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.7.130.

<sup>51</sup> *QSL*, Muzong, j127.15b, j131.11b.

new crop was not ripe, the Hui soldiers and militiamen looted most non-Muslim settlements in Northern Tao to gather grain and sustain their forces from the fifteenth to the twenty-second days of the fifth month. They even attacked the *tsowa* on the immediate northern bank of the Luchu River—the core agricultural zone of the Chone Kingdom and only a few *li* away from Chone Town. Many inhabitants of Northern Tao fled across the Luchu again. The casualties of Chone Tibetans, mainly elders, women and children, were unknown.<sup>52</sup>

With no more militia available, the Taozhou deputy commander Feng invited the Black-head Braves (*heitouyong* 黑頭勇), a dominant Han militia that roamed back and forth between Lintao, Gongchang and Minzhou for years, to suppress the Hui force. In the seventh month of 1865, the Braves led by Cui Yonglu 崔永祿 and He Jianwei 何建威 battled against the Hui troops. After they killed Li Fazhen and dispersed the Hui troops to the south of New Town, the starved Braves halted their pursuit and began to plunder the impoverished Chinese and Tibetan villages in Northern Tao.<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately, there was not much grain to be had from local families across this war-torn region. As the local gazetteer compiler Bao Yongchang 包永昌 remarked:

At that time, bodies of the starved filled the roads and grains for cooking were not sustainable. The forts attacked and the houses destroyed by Cui and He were uncountable. They even extorted the hard-won possessions of people, torturing men and women on burning stakes (so they would reveal where their silver and grain were hidden). In the southwest along the river, residents survived the Hui riots even as they bitterly suffered the depredations of the braves.<sup>54</sup>

The event was reported to the Hunanese general Yang Yuebin 楊岳斌 (1822–1890), who commanded a Hunan Army that he led to Lanzhou where he assumed the provincial governor-generalship. Shaan-Gan conventionally received assistance of military fund (*xiexiang* 協餉) from other provinces. In the previous few years, Enlin requested financial

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<sup>52</sup> *MZXTZ*, 225; *ZNXZ*, 18.

<sup>53</sup> *Pinghui zhi*, j3.21a–b.

<sup>54</sup> *TZTZ*, 986.

support from Sichuan, Shanxi, Shandong and Henan. Yet, obtaining *xiexiang* was increasingly difficult as the whole Qing Empire was experiencing a serious fiscal crisis. The new governor-general dispatched the Jiezhou troops to handle the incident in Taozhou. Without funds and provisions, the Jiezhou troops mutinied along with several other official forces in the ninth month.<sup>55</sup>

In the tenth month, Cao Kezhong returned to southern Gansu after being defeated by the Ningxia Hui force in Jinjibao. Loyally fulfilling his duty even as he repeatedly encountered provisioning crises, Cao was promoted Ganzhou *tidu* commander. The governor-general dispatched him to rescue Gongchang. After raising the siege of Gongchang, Cao proceeded toward Tao-Min to deal with the Braves incident. He commanded thirteen brigades including the Chone cavalry to Taozhou.<sup>56</sup> Fearing the outnumbered relief force and the Chone gyelpo's revenge, Ma Fang and Ding Yong'an reached an agreement with the Han gentry. They drove off the Black-head Braves; in exchange, deputy commander Feng and the Taozhou social elites would testify before Commander Cao that the local Muslims were "obedient Hui" (*lianghui* 良回). This show of "enlisting Hui to expel Braves" (*zhaohui zhuyong* 招回逐勇) was performed smoothly.<sup>57</sup> Ma and Ding led tens of thousands of Hui men and women, old and young, to kneel in submission outside New Town. Cao executed the 28 Hui men who were said to have led the uprising. Those hold-outs who insisted on fighting against the relief force, mostly men from other regions, were chased to Qianjiazhai 千家寨 to the east of Old Town. From there, they fled to Hezhou and joined the regional Muslim leader Ma Zhan'ao 馬占鰲 (1830–1886). The peace of Taozhou was seemingly restored. To prevent the local Hui communities from rebelling, their weapons and iron-made tools were

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<sup>55</sup> *QSL*, Muzong, j124.37b–38a, j138. 23a–b, j145.38a–40a, j153.8b–9a.

<sup>56</sup> *QSL*, Muzong, j140.34b–35a, j144.16a–17b, j161.3b–4a.

<sup>57</sup> *GNQSL*, j21.39a.

confiscated. As Cao intended to supply his army there, he also expropriated the grain, horses, oxen and sheep from every Hui household and distributed this to his imperial troops. He also enforced the rule of collective punishment. The Hui households within Old Town and New Town were registered in the *baojia* 保甲 system to reciprocally supervise each other. The remaining Muslim refugees from elsewhere were relocated on the outskirts of the walled towns. After stationing five brigades of fewer than 200 Han soldiers in Old Town, Commander Cao conscripted 500 young and strong Hui men into his army and returned to the battlefields between Qinzhou and Xining.<sup>58</sup>

However, this placating policy clearly discriminated against and put restrictions on Hui Muslims. Another severe repression experienced by Taozhou Hui villagers was marked by the requirement to supply the five garrison brigades. The Luchu valley had experienced varied scales of famine for two years. Following the harvest season, the garrison troops began to extract their provisions from the local Hui communities. In the tenth month of 1866, the Hui villagers united to resist the extortion. Ding Yong'an chose to stand with his ethno-religious comrades and requested the Hezhou and Lintao Hui leaders to reinforce the uprising. In the meantime, he escorted some Taozhou officials and their family members, such as the deputy commander Feng's wife and children, to seek refuge in Chone Town, which was protected by the Tibetan militiamen fielded from the Southern Tao, Tébo and Drukchu banners.<sup>59</sup> It seems that Ding planned a coup and used the outside reinforcements as scapegoats of this anti-tax revolt. There are few sources on this incident. Local Confucian scholars changed the timeline of this decade-long event and concealed it to avoid provoking further "Han-Hui hatred" (*hanhui chouhen* 漢回仇恨) in the *Taozhou tingzhi* compiled in 1905. The *jinshi* Bao Yongchang criticized Ding's moral quality and refused to write a short

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<sup>58</sup> *QSL*, Muzong, j167.28a–b; *Pinghui zhi*, j3.24a–b.

<sup>59</sup> Tsewang, "Xian daren," 4.

biography for him. According to the biographic entry of Feng Guangming, several dozen Hui rebels killed Feng and several military officers Ding had invited for dinner in the twelfth month. The Hui force “completely eliminated dozens of Han families in the town, and captured New Town, Taipingzhai 太平寨, Qianjiazhai, Wanghuaizhai 旺懷寨 and Changchuan 長川,” which were the main townships in Taozhou.<sup>60</sup>

At this point, the Gansu official troops mostly mutinied, acted of their own will for self-preservation and fought against Hui forces in a haphazard and uncoordinated manner. Cao took a sick leave and left Gansu as early as the ninth month of 1866. Trinle Dorje and his troop were transferred to defend Gongchang. As Yang Yuebin had resigned for his failures to capture the major cities and deal with the mutiny, the Qing court designated the Hunan general Zuo Zongtang the Shaan-Gan governor-general to quell the Hui unrest. Preoccupied by the revolts of peasants and militias documented as “Nian rebels” (*nianfei/nianzei* 捻匪/捻賊) by Qing officials in northern China and considering that the “West Nian” (*xinian* 西捻) had collaborated with the Hui insurgents in Shaanxi, Zuo planned to first eliminate the Nian and then pacify the Shaanxi Hui, and finally clean up the Hui rebels along all routes to Lanzhou. Consequently, the Manchu official Nalata Mutushan 那拉塔穆圖善 (d.1887) was assigned the temporary Shaan-Gan governor-generalship. The Qing campaign against the Shaan-Gan Muslims continued in a chaotic way from the sixth month of 1866 up to Zuo’s arrival in Xi’an. During this stage, local commanders tended to consolidate defense in large cities, crucial passes and strategic forts, where were often besieged for months or shortly and repeatedly harassed by the Muslim forces. The multifocal wars devastated every part of Gansu. The long-lasting ethnic cleansing annihilated millions of lives. The massacre of entire communities was a common scene.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *TZTZ*, 531–532, 564; *Pinghui zhi*, j3.27b–28a; *GNQSL*, j21.21a.

<sup>61</sup> *QSL*, Muzong, j184.5b–6a; *GNQSL*, j21.39a–50b.

In the fifth month of 1867, the Tao-Min Commander Fan Ming 範銘 retreated to Chone after being defeated by the Hui troops in the north of Minzhou. Since the Hui force occupied Taozhou, he enlisted the Black-head Braves and attacked Taipingzhai, Qianjiazhai and Shuimochuan. A brief account shows that the Hui force was vanquished and expelled toward Hezhou. Fan lacked soldiers. He accepted the assistance of Ding Yong'an. Afterwards, he incorporated Ding's brigade into his army. The governor-general designated Ding the temporary Taozhou deputy commander. An entry in the *Veritable History* shows that the court instructed Mutushan to investigate whether Ding took part in the earlier rebellion in order to confirm this appointment of a Hui officer in the tenth month. As Ding protected local officials and ascribed the massacre of the Han townspeople to the non-local Hui rebels, he remained in the post. At that time, it was said that more than 50,000 Muslims assembled on the western bank of the Luchu River, fortified the mountainous Gansu-Amdo border area, and assaulted Gongchang, Lintao and Hezhou. From the eleventh month to the eighth month of 1868, with the reinforcement of Mutushan, Commander Fan killed thousands of Muslims, defeating them multiple times. Nonetheless, as Mu Shouqi commented, he could not fully pacify the region due to the Hui fortifications in the mountains and the frequent shortage of official supplies.<sup>62</sup>

The provincial government could not provide any supplies. Gansu encountered a severe drought in 1867. The *xiexiang* of other provinces were oftentimes empty promises. The famine not only hindered military action, but also caused serious humanitarian crisis.

Since the spring, it did not rain for a long time. The summer sprouts perished and the autumn grains were not seeded. Everywhere (people) begged (the provincial government) for grains. (The situation in) Longdong was the worst, Longnan was light and Lanzhou was lighter. In the capital, the market did not have any rice and wheat. Some civilian carried gold, took their wife and children and threw themselves into the Yellow River. Beggars stole children to eat. Knowing a family had grain, Hunan soldiers gathered and broke into their house, paid useless official

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<sup>62</sup> *QSL*, Muzong, j213.15a-16b; *Pinghui zhi*, j4.2a; *GNQSL*, j21.39a-48b.

cash (and) ransacked chests and shared out grains. Sichuan soldiers did not pay. So bodies of the starved filled the roads. People began to eat other people.<sup>63</sup>

Cannibalism prevailed in Gansu and lasted up to the end of this war. David Ekvall, a Gospel missionary who worked in the Chinese communities on the Gansu-Amdo border since 1895, heard the stories of the fifteen-year havoc from local people and wrote for his American audience:

For years the regular planting of crops and reaping of harvests was discontinued. Cannibalism became not a mere incidental horror, but the rule of life and human beings were hunted by the strong with all the tricks of the chase—dogs—to fill the pot that some might survive. The population of the province was reduced from fifteen million to three million, and when final peace came as an alternative of mutual extinction, Kansu was a land of deserted villages and untilled fields.<sup>64</sup>

In these years, Cao and Fan relied on raiding Hui villages and extorting Han civilians to gain provisions. They also received grain from the Chone king. The Chone granaries could furnish supplies to a force of 3,000 soldiers for two to three years. Both Cao and Fan took armies to Northern Tao several times to recover their fighting strength. In contrast, the remaining Muslim and Han residents in the lower western Luchu valley (Taoxi 洮西) were less lucky. Consuming wild vegetables, bark and even white clay (Avalokiteshvara dirt, *guanyintu* 觀音土), the desperate hungry masses either died of starvation or started to hunt the weak ones. Children and women were often gutted and then, fried, boiled or steamed. Although the Chone Kingdom was less affected by the famine than other parts of Gansu, the Tibetan human losses in this period were massive. The Chone cavalry was transferred to repress the insurrections in Lintao, Hezhou, Qinzhou and Gongchang. To maintain the fighting capacity alongside very high casualties, the able-bodied Tibetan men were sent continuously from different banners to the frontline. Yet, the death toll was a mystery.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *GNQSL*, j21.45b.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Ekvall, *Gateway to Tibet*, 23.

<sup>65</sup> Tsewang, “Xian daren,” 4; *GNQSL*, j21.46b.



1869–1875

It was only in late 1868 that the situation in Shaan-Gan, from the Qing perspective, had considerably improved. Zuo Zongtang commanded an army of more than 60,000 soldiers, mostly Hunanese, with sufficient funds and provisions, leading them in to Shaanxi. The Hunan Army was armed with Western modern weapons such as Mausers and Remingtons, which outclassed the muskets and spears of the Hui troops. He divided the army into three sections according to the three main routes linking Shaanxi and Gansu. On the middle route, Zuo forced Bai Yanhu 白彥虎 (1830-1882) and his Shaanxi Hui Eighteenth-Brigade (*shiba daying* 十八大營) to withdraw toward eastern Gansu. By the fifth month of 1869, he stabilized the situation in Shaanxi. The Shaanxi Hui army of near 200,000 men withdrew to Jinjibao. On the north route, Liu Songshan 劉松山 (1833–1870) was deployed to capture Jinjibao, which was controlled by Ma Hualong 馬化龍 (1810-1871), an *ahong* of the New Teaching sect and the Hui military leader in Ningxia. In the eighth month, Liu eradicated the resistance force in northern Shaanxi and arrived in Lingzhou 靈州. He rejected offers to surrender, slaughtering Hui civilians, militiamen and soldiers alike on his way to Jinjibao. In return, Ma Hualong, who encouraged his Muslim soldiers to fight with the spirit of “holy war” (*jihad*), massacred the 100,000 Han residents in Lingzhou. They also killed Liu in battle in the first month of 1870. Liu’s nephew Liu Jintang 劉錦堂 (1844–1894) was assigned by Zuo to replace his uncle in the same post, and continued to retake the forts and towns in Ningxia for the Qing. Reinforced by the middle route army, Liu Jintang laid siege to Jinjibao from the sixth to the eleventh month and forced Ma into submission. In the first month of 1871, General Zuo executed Ma, his sons, relatives, the “rebellious faction” (*nidang* 逆黨) and as many as several thousand local Hui for their Jahriyya identity affiliation. Bai Yanhu led the major Shaanxi and Ningxia Muslim forces to Gansu. The surrendering Hui people

amounted to fewer than 20,000 women and children; they were relocated to reclaim remote areas.<sup>66</sup>

On the south route, Circuit Inspector (*daoyuan* 道員) Zhou Kaixi 周開錫 (1826–1871) was sent to eliminate the Hui forces from Qinzhou to Hezhou. He absorbed the official troops scattered in southern Gansu. Throughout 1870, Zhou slowly controlled Qinzhou, Jiezhou and Gongchang. And Mutushan endeavored to repulse the Muslim troops harassing Lanzhou. At this point, the Chone militia was in Taoxi assisting Fu Xianzong 傅先宗 (d.1872) with the recapture of Gongchang. In the fifth month of 1870, the Chone gyelpo and Commander Fan pursued the vanquished Gongchang Hui troops to Taozhou. They drove that Hui force off toward Hezhou and executed Ma Fang, who had been the earliest major Taozhou Hui leader to collaborate with the non-Taozhou Hui forces. The Chone forces then returned to Minzhou. At this point, Commander Fan organized the Chinese braves of Taoxi into thirteen brigades. The number of men in each brigade was several times the standard amount, and many of them were refugees who joined the army with their brothers and sons. As Mu Shouqi commented, this force fought fearlessly in order to receive supplies. However, as the official provisions were insufficient for so many men, in the twelfth month, these braves mutinied after running out of food and going hungry for seven days. Fan was displaced and hid in the Chone king's Zhongpa pasture. Trinle Dorje blocked the braves and executed the mutiny leaders.<sup>67</sup>

In the meantime, the defeated Hui troops streamed back into Hezhou, which was then held by Ma Zhan'ao, an *ahong* of the Huasi suborder of the Khufiyya sect, as it had been since 1862. It was the tenth turbulent year for the Hui, Dongxiang, Salar, Han and Tibetan groups in He-Huang. Apart from those who died in the early stage of the uprisings, or who

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<sup>66</sup> *GNQSL*, j21.51a–b, j22.1a–43a, j23.1a–b.

<sup>67</sup> *TZTZ*, 567; *GNQSL*, j22.44a; Tsewang, “Xian daren,” 4.

took refuge in Tibetan regions or fled to Tao-Min and Lintao and joined local braves, many non-Muslim residents actually took part in the Muslim uprisings in the name of “following the (Islamic) teaching” (*suijiao* 隨教). Many local Han children had been adopted by Hezhou Muslims. Some Shaanxi Han Chinese participating in the Hui insurrection also fled to Hezhou, becoming foster sons (*yizi* 義子) or servants of local Muslims. Several massive anti-Qing armies thereby were concentrated along the Taizishan Mountains and dominated the Gansu-Amdo border. Under the leadership of Ma Zhan’ao, Hezhou became the center of revolt in Gansu, in the view of the Qing empire. For many Hui, it was seen as a haven of protection against cruel Qing troops.<sup>68</sup>

In the fifth month of 1871, Zuo Zongtang initiated the pacification of Gansu and set the agenda to recapture Hezhou. After deploying official troops to secure the logistics, cultivate untilled lands and reap the winter wheat in eastern and southern Gansu, he instructed Yang Shijun 楊世俊 (d.1874), Fu Xianzong, Liu Mingdeng 劉明燈 (1838–1895) and Xu Wenxiu 徐文秀 (d.1872)—all Hunanese commanders—to recover Anding 安定 (Dingxi 定西). He intended to clean up the Muslim forces between the Taizishan Mountains and the lower Luchu valley and then, use Anding as a base to assault Hezhou from the north, middle and south directions. The Hunanese commanders adopted the tactic of blockhouse warfare to form an encirclement. They established simple and basic fortifications to consolidate combat successes and shrink the Hui-occupied region. In light of the suggestion of the Qinzhou *juren* Wang Quan 王權, General Zuo enlisted the *suijiao* Chinese as inside coordinative force and employed Trinle Dorje’s 48-banner soldiers who had “long bred enmity with the rebels” 與

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<sup>68</sup> Yixin. *Qinding pingding shaan gan xinjiang huiwei fanglüe* 欽定平定陝甘新疆回匪方略 (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1968), 83.7b; *GNQSL*, j23.32a–b.

賊結仇素深 to attack Hezhou from the west. This strategy was overall successful. By the end of 1871, the relief army had encircled the Hezhou region.<sup>69</sup>

In this process, Trinle Dorje undertook the construction of frontline forts. His troop often served as the vanguard in battles and aided Fu Xianzong to seize Lintao. At the new year of 1872, General Zuo launched the assault on Taizisi 太子寺 (Guanghe 廣河) just to the south of Hezhou. The Chone chieftain was transferred under the command of Yang Shijun. Zuo ordered the Chone troops and the other five brigades to secure the border passes in the Taizishan, and prevent the Muslim armies from escaping to eastern Amdo.<sup>70</sup> To fulfill the duty, Trinle Dorje summoned 2,000 able-bodied Tibetan men to North Range. In the Taizisi Battle, Ma Zhan'ao triumphed over the relief force of forty brigades with several hundred soldiers and killed Fu Xianzong in battle. Ma counterattacked the official force and killed the leading commander Xu Wenxiu. Afterwards, both sides ceased fire, returned to farmland and worked for future supplies. Sporadic battles resumed in the late fall and continued up to the second month of 1873. In the wake of his victory, Ma Zhan'ao submitted to the Qing. A common explanation is that he intended to protect Hezhou Muslims from further bloodshed. His son Ma Qiwu 馬七五 (1855–1918), who was named by Zuo as Ma Anliang 馬安良 later, and sons of several other Hui leaders were sent to pay allegiance to the Qing emperor, promising to assist the imperial force and suppress the Muslim riots. In the third month, Zuo accepted the surrender of Ma Zhan'ao. Considering the complex Han-Hui relations in Hezhou, especially the issue of Chinese being coercively or voluntarily converted to the Islamic belief, Zuo separated the Hui from the *suijiao* Han people and moved them

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<sup>69</sup> *GNQSL*, j22.25b–j23.13b, j23.14a–15b.

<sup>70</sup> *Pinghui zhi*, j5.21a.

away from Hezhou.<sup>71</sup> The relocation of non-Muslim communities, as Lipman points out, “happened nowhere else in northwest China.”<sup>72</sup>

Subsequently, Governor-General Zuo launched the campaigns against the Xining and Suzhou Muslim insurgents. He dispatched Liu Jintang and the Manchu general Jinshun 金順 (1831–1886) to control the Huangshui valley and the Hexi Corridor respectively. In the twelfth month, he implemented the policy of “harnessing the Hui with the Hui” (*yihui zhihui* 以回制回) and appointed Ma Zhan’ao the Hezhou supervisory commander (*dutong* 都統). Ma then executed the Muslim leaders opposing submission and helped Liu Jintang to recapture Datong 大通, Xunhua and Xining. The next year, Bai Yanhu and the four remaining Shaanxi Muslim brigades left Jiayuguan and escaped toward Xinjiang, which had experienced its own turmoil triggered by the Dungan Revolt since 1864. Suzhou 肅州 was seized by the Qing army in the ninth month of 1874. In the winter, Min Dianchen 敏殿臣 and some Dongxiang Muslim leaders, who considered themselves to have been mistreated by Ma Zhan’ao and so long resented him, revolted again in the vicinity of Hezhou. Liu and Ma killed some 4,000 insurgents and promptly suppressed this insurrection. In the spring of 1875, peace was eventually restored in Gansu.<sup>73</sup> Then General Zuo prepared supplies and solved the logistics difficulties for the conquest of Xinjiang. Qing forces moved west toward the areas where Yaqub Beg (1820–1877) had established the Yettishar Uyghur Kingdom in southern Xinjiang and Lama Karpo Kunga Gyeltsen (Bla ma dkar po kun dga’ rgyal mtshan, 1835–1895), a monk from Chépa Banner of Chone, had led Dzungaria Mongols to resist the Muslim forces in the north.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> *GNQSL*, j23.31a–36a; Tsewang, “Xian daren,” 4.

<sup>72</sup> Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 127.

<sup>73</sup> Zuo Zongtang, “Nanxiang fuhui gouxin xishu jiaochu zhe,” the seventeenth day of the twelfth month, 1874.

<sup>74</sup> For the unrest in Xinjiang, see Kim Hodong, *Holy War in China: The Muslim Rebellion and State in Chinese Central Asia, 1864-1877* (California: Stanford University Press, 2004). For the experience of Lama Karpo, see Zhao Tonghua, *Wei jiang yingxiong gunga zhalecan hutuketu* (Lanzhou: Gansu Minzu Chubanshe, 2014), and

The remaining Chone soldiers returned to their own *tsowa*. According to the Eighteenth King Sonam Tobgyel's memorial essay, it was his father Trinle Dorje who had actually won the battles in Taizisi and Hezhou, and then accompanied the imperial army to Xining where they had defeated the Hui rebels in Gulang 古浪 and Pingfan 平番 (Yongdeng 永登). In fact, as related above, his Tibetan militia was trounced and almost annihilated in the Taizisi Battle, resulting in deep trauma and endless mourning for many Tibetan households that paid the military corvée and lost fathers or sons or both. The remnant survivors along the Luchu valley watched as the Qing troops rebuilt their camps, yamen officials began again to adjudicate cases, markets reopened, horse and cow traders returned to the Tibetan border towns, and the Han refugees from other prefectures and Shaanxi, as well, packed up and went home. The local Tibetan survivors believed that the catastrophic war was finally over.<sup>75</sup> However, the scars of war remained. Although the Han and Hui elites of Taozhou officially made scapegoats of the Hezhou Muslims for causing all the trouble, the deep-seated and broadly concentrated Tibetan-Hui and Han-Hui cross-generational hatreds (*shichou* 世仇) had been seared into minds, bodies, local places, tales and memories in this ethno-religiously tripartite region. Intensely visceral feelings of mutual hostility and suspicion had supplanted the once tense but mostly peaceful interethnic relations. The persistent intensity of these tensions, especially between Tibetan and Hui Muslim groups, planted the seeds for future violence and catastrophes. And, the Tibetans in eastern Amdo, who already suffered from the immediate losses of life and property during this war, had to confront further social, political, economic and cultural consequences.

## Further Consequences

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Lobsang Yongdan, "The Invention of a Tibetan Lama General: A Biographical Account of Bla ma dkar po (1835–1895)," *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* 49 (2019): 67–92.

<sup>75</sup> *GNQSL*, j23.37b–j24.14a.

*Depopulation, Troubled Households and Reconfiguration of Tsowa*

The scale of depopulation was phenomenal. A frequently cited source also shows that the population of Gan, including today's Gansu, Ningxia and northeastern Qinghai, decreased from nineteen million to around five million people.<sup>76</sup> In Taozhou, the late 1870s registration of civilian households (*hu* 戶) in Taozhou Subprefecture indicates that the number of Han and Hui households were respectively 3,541 (20,430 *kou* 口) and 1,250 (10,116 *kou*). Taking the number of the villages (around 240) administrated by the Taozhou yamen into account, the post-war village had less than 20 household on average. Thirty years later, the Han and Hui households increased to 5,672 (40,932 *kou*) and 1,668 *hu* (10,683 *kou*). A considerable number of Hui families that moved to the Tibetan areas and refused to be registered resulted in this relatively small number of Hui households. Chinese and Muslim elders state that their villages normally have forty to eighty households before the massacre in 1929. These numbers should be taken more as estimates than demographic analysis, and, among others, certainly excluded unregistered households and women; nonetheless, they suggest the disturbing patterns evident in growth and death rates over eighty years in Taozhou. If the household number and population in the 1920s recovered to the standard before 1862, it seems that Taozhou lost at least about half of its population in the Tongzhi reign.<sup>77</sup>

For Tibetans, the most overt consequence was the sudden decline of population and the massive influx of refugees. *Tsowa* neighboring Han and Hui communities in Northern Tao suffered severe depopulation. Due to the nature of household management in the *tsowa* societies, the Tibetan population never recovered in this region. The repeated massacres of non-Muslims and dreadful Tibetan military casualties – those men of the *tsowa* who responded to the soldier-horse *ulag*— left hundreds of half and completely empty *tsowa* in

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<sup>76</sup> Cao Shuji, *Zhongguo renkou shi* 中國人口史, vol.5 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2001), 635.

<sup>77</sup> TZTZ, 292–293; Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 19.

Northern Tao. With Tibetan men called up by the Chone king to fight against the Muslim forces over nearly fifteen years, many surviving *tsowa* were full of broken families, recipient of the king's certificates of martyrdom (*bka' zhog*) with its attendant exemptions from paying tax, tribute and corvée for ten years.<sup>78</sup> Such compensation was insufficient to the challenge.

Specifically, in the seven banners of the Nyentsa gönpo, only 76 *tsowa* of 384 households survived the war. The Tsoksum gönpo, his family members and most subjects were killed in the first Taozhou Hui attack. An heir chosen from a collateral branch only inherited seven *tsowa* of thirty households in total. During the uprising, the five regional monasteries in Northern Tao were wrecked, monks slaughtered, and communal bases destroyed. After fielding militia to aid the Chone king, the Chokro khenchen managed 23 *tsowa* of 130 households. The Chépa khenpo ruled ten *tsowa* of 63 households. The Marnyung khenpo ruled 21 *tsowa* of 120 households. For the Yerba lapön, only four *tsowa* of 18 households survived the turbulence. As the Hui and Black-head Braves demolished Tsordor Monastery and nearby Tibetan settlements, the Tsordor lapön no longer administered any *tsowa*. His lineage ceased to obtain the imperial ratification and eventually disappeared. As to the Chone king's *tsowa* in Northern Tao, their territories were enmeshed with the realms of these petty rulers. Their fate was no different from that of the neighboring *tsowa*. As every *tsowa* was normally constituted of fifteen to thirty households, a rough estimate would suggest that the Tibetan population of Northern Tao decreased by more than sixty percent. It is common for remnant *tsowa* to only have a mere handful of households. In an extreme case, only one family lived in a *tsowa* settlement.<sup>79</sup>

In addition, this war resulted in large-scale poverty in Northern Tao. In this agricultural zone, every Tibetan household cultivated fifteen to over thirty *mu* of land, which could

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<sup>78</sup> Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 286

<sup>79</sup> TZTZ, 837–922; Frank Kingdon-Ward, *On the Way to Tibet*, 53–54; Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 139–141, 144–146, 160, 164, 314.



support a reasonably comfortable life before the 1860s. For them, even in the good years, building the two-story wooden house often cost the entire hard-earned fortune of a family and required the aid of subdivisions or every household of the *tsowa*. The years of war essentially destroyed all villages in Northern Tao, an area that had been cleared and terraced since the late fifteenth century. Many houses were burned to the ground. To rebuild houses upon the rubble, local Tibetans had to utilize the inter-*tsowa* network to gain timber from the forested North Range or Southern Tao. They had little choice other than to purchase lumber from *tsowa* in Karchen, Lali, Maru, Dakyik and Lamarnang. Yet, cash was even more rare. The householder in need of timber would contact the marital, bone related or friend's household in the forest area. The householder could cut timber with the permission of the latter's *tsowa* members, which often involved the logger giving gifts to or working for that *tsowa*. In most cases, they could buy the timber below market value. Sometimes the logger without good connections needed to secretly cut timber. If he was caught by the *tsowa*, he would be beaten and fined heavily. Worse still, the expense of funerals and rituals for family members who had died during the wars was also expensive. A tea-offering in a regional or central monastery was equal in cost to a Tibetan's whole life saving. The customary tax and corvée might be exempted, but temporary tribute and corvée exactions were often heavier because some ecclesiastic and secular rulers rebuilt monasteries and residential mansions. Therefore, most remaining Tibetan families of Northern Tao faced severe deprivation.<sup>80</sup>

To cope with the post-war scarcity of labor, cash and resources, the traditional mutual-aid system and marriage-network brought shattered Tibetan families of the same *tsowa* and even several related *tsowa* together. A common practice was the merging of households. For instance, if two households with blood-ties lost major working adults, particularly those households in the consanguineously related subdivisions of different *tsowa*, the two families

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<sup>80</sup> Interviews in Chokro, Tsoksum, Guzhan, Zibao, Yerba and Laboshi, October 18–25, 2016.

converged into one household regardless of their political identity affiliations. Consequently, a household could be simultaneously managed by the Chone king and another Northern Tao Tibetan ruler. The members of such a household often remembered their distinct political identities from generation to generation. The peculiar division of political allegiance in the same household was memorized as a significant custom by all members of the family, who were tightly tied to the fairly similar taxes and corvées imposed by the two rulers.<sup>81</sup>

After the Hui militia assaulted the Northern Tao Tibetan communities, the remaining households of many *tsowa* could no longer defend themselves to survive the calamitous event. In some cases, two or three *tsowa* in close proximity to each other often merged into one village and this also came with a reconfiguration of households. The new village usually situated itself in the most well-preserved settlements. In other cases, some Tibetan families traumatized by the Hui massacres relocated to Southern Tao and Upper Stream, far from the Hui populations of Guzhan, Changchuan, Qianjiazhai and Old Town. Such households often belonged to the same subdivision. If they were subject to a Northern Tao ruler, their political identity remained unchanged after joining a *tsowa* of the Chone king. Thus, as the account of *tsowa* in the *Taozhou tingzhi* reveals, the three chieftains and five senggangs in Taozhou governed some *tsowa* bearing the same names.<sup>82</sup> From the local Tibetan perspective, every Tibetan family carried on a specific house name. Wherever the family plowed land, it paid allegiance to the same ruler. The accountants and tax officers assigned by these rulers, being helped by *tsowa* headmen or elders, knew where the dividing lines exactly lay by memorizing the house names. As the nineteenth king explained to his foreign visitors, he “ruled people instead of land.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Joseph Rock, Diary, April 22, 1925 and notes following March 3, 1927; Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 314; Interviews with elders in Chokro, Tsoksum, Guzhan, Zibao, Yerba and Laboshi, October 18–25, 2016.

<sup>82</sup> *TZTZ*, 837–922.

<sup>83</sup> Albeit Tafel, *Eine Studienfahrt durch das nordwestliche China und durch die innere Mongolei in das östliche Tibet* (Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1914), vol.1, 159; Reginald Farrer, *On the Eaves of the*

Given the extensive household-level resettlement, the Northern Tao Tibetans inevitably experienced a substantial transformation of their social relations. When a new *tsowa* was organized, a new headman or elder council would be elected. The *sha nye* or brother-house relation was seriously damaged if not entirely destroyed. This brother-house network was crucial for households in the same subdivision or *tsowa* to assist each other. In order to maintain the mutual-aid custom, forming the fictitious brother-house relationship became a popular practice. Tibetans called the households bound with real kinship as “brother-houses of people” (*mi sha nye*). When households without bone-kinship became brother-houses to reciprocally support agricultural production, this type of kinship was known as “brother-houses of land” (*sa sha nye*). Becoming brother-houses of land often needed the permission and witness of other *tsowa* members. The unrelated households took an oath in front of the mountain god of the *tsowa* and thereafter treated each other as the closest relatives. When the real and fictitious brother-houses still had insufficient manpower to guarantee the mutual-aid system to function efficiently, the fictitious bone-related subdivisions as well as the neighborhood and friendship of households belonging to different subdivisions were crucial to mobilize the whole *tsowa* to work together.<sup>84</sup>

Likewise, the fictitious-kinship at the communal level was altered as well. This change was frequently associated with the religious identity affiliation. When a family resettled in another *tsowa*, its relations with territorial deities in the former *tsowa* would be replaced by the new ones. The village Bon priest was invited to ask the mountain god to protect the newcomers, either in the new year or the communal ritual dedicated to the *tsowa*’s *yul lha*. When several households of a subdivision moved to another *tsowa*, the social and religious relations in this subdivision could be transplanted to the new resettlement. The immigrant households

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*World* (London: Edward Arnold, 1916), vol.1, 164; Ekvall, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border*; Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in North-West China*, 134; Joseph Rock, “The Amney Ma-Chen Range and Adjacent Regions: A Monographic Study.”

<sup>84</sup> This is based on my fieldwork in several dozen villages in Northern Tao, 2016.

retained the inferior *yul lha* of their subdivision even as they worshiped the *tsowa* mountain god. When a completely new *tsowa* was organized by households from different *tsowa*, a new *yul lha* was summoned and worshipped by all members in the new settlement. In general, the immigrant households joined the mutual-aid system, fulfilled the communal *ulag* and took part in all *tsowa* affairs.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, the decline of male population, the destruction of monastic sites and the resettlement of households had an enormous impact on the regional monasteries. The Northern Tao Tibetan families normally chose to resettle in Upper Stream and Southern Tao where the *tsowa* were administrated by the Chone king. These *tsowa* belonged to specific to one of the seventeen religious communities or *lha sde* of Ganden Shédrubling. In these *tsowa*, pupils were sent to Chone Monastery. When an immigrant family had more than one son, for a better chance to receive monastic training from a better teacher, the householder would send his son to the central monastery instead of the regional monastery to which the family had once belonged. With these households affiliated to Ganden Shédrubling, the monastic communities of regional monasteries never recovered from this unrest. The power of the ecclesiastic rulers declined day by day in Northern Tao.<sup>86</sup>

### *Refugees and Soldier-Horse Land System*

The war years also resulted in an influx of Han refugees into the Riverside Tibetan *tsowa*. On the one hand, historically, Han Chinese of southern Gansu fleeing from the Qing taxation, local banditry or warfare often crossed the border passes and took refuge in *tsowa* along the Luchu valley. As mentioned, Tibetans provided basic supplies to these refugees for days or even months by following the conventional norm regarding refuge. The long-term

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<sup>85</sup> This is based on my fieldwork in several dozen villages in Northern Tao, 2016.

<sup>86</sup> Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 139–141, 144–146, 160, 164, 314.

refugees also worked as hired hands for one or more Tibetan households in exchange for grain or rent of a small portion of land. After the turbulence, they returned to their homelands. The refugees from the Tongzhi Hui Revolt era warfare usually returned home to find their houses demolished, villages and towns ruined, and family members, relatives and friends slaughtered. And, as neither the Qing officials nor the local rulers imposed “imperial grain” (*huangliang* 皇糧) and corvée on them when they were taking refuge in the Luchu Valley, they could live well enough if they diligently worked as tenants for Tibetan households. Some Han people left their ruined homeland and came back to the Tibetan region where they had lived as refugees. They built small shelters on the outskirts of Riverside Tibetan villages where the native inhabitants were sedentary farmers and some of them were bilingual in Taozhou Chinese dialect. Such shabby shelters, which only had one or two rooms, were called “small house” or “small smoke” (*du chung*; *gafangzi* 尕房子). The small houses were not responsible for providing *ulag* services to the *tsowa* and ruler or paying tax and tribute. Nor were they allowed to own farmland, graze grassland and cut down trees in the *tsowa* territory. By contrast, Tibetan household were known as “large house” or “large smoke” (*du rgyal*; *dafangzi* 大房子), which represented the status of a hereditary tax-payer, tributary and corvée-provider. Only with the permission of headman or elder council could “small houses” collect fuel and rent farmland. At this point, their long-term labor was welcomed by *tsowa* in urgent need of manpower. As is evident in the oral histories of Northern Tao Tibetans, in most *tsowa*, there were several permanent small houses constructed by Hezhou, Minzhou or Taozhou Han refugees before the Republican era.<sup>87</sup>

On the other hand, some Han Chinese moved into *tsowa* and became formal members of the Tibetan communities. For Tibetan families who had lost all male members, their common

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<sup>87</sup> In the Songtsenmak Tibetan villages, the Han and Hui people are considered “unclean bones” and barely chosen to establish marital relations. Hence villagers, especially the match-makers clearly know the origins or bones of each household.

strategy to produce an heir and carry on the household was to arrange an uxorilocal marriage for a daughter. Since so many Tibetan young men of the region had died in the wars and local marriage networks were no longer functioning, and this was particularly so in Front Range where the king repeatedly fielded the local militiamen, some of the remaining post-war large houses chose sons-in-law from among the Han refugees. In Northern Tao, as the large houses which went bankrupt or had no heirs could not continuously run the households, they either merged with other households or went to live with relatives for shelter. Thus, the massacre of Tibetan people, the destruction of *tsowa* settlements and the relocation of remnant households left many ruined and empty Tibetan villages along the Taozhou border wall. Much land remained uncultivated for years. Therefore, to secure revenues and levy various *ulag*, the secular and ecclesiastic rulers extensively promoted a practice that was only occasionally used to handle the tenement transaction in their own manorial estates. They allowed the Han families to refill the empty large houses and use the same house names. In such cases, the Han family invited a prestigious local middleman, prepared a sheep as gift to the Tibetan ruler, and formally requested to replace the bankrupt or empty large house. The ruler agreed and issued an official certificate, stating that this family inherited a specific Tibetan household's right over a share (15–30 *mu*) of land and commitment to fulfill the *ulag* duties. The members of the Han family became subjects of this ruler. To maintain a stable number of households, the ruler often made it difficult for the Han migrant family to dissolve the relationship and the obligations tied to the large house. Normally, the family was required to present the ruler a horse as a gift to terminate the contract. As the primary obligation in this contract was to provide traditional soldier-horse service to the ruler, local Chinese-speakers named this practice as “eating (subsisting on) soldier-horse land” (*chi bing ma tian* 吃兵馬

田). The land system in the Chone Kingdom was simply termed as “soldier-horse land system” (*bing ma tian zhi* 兵馬田制) by local scholars.<sup>88</sup>

Local recollections indicate that in the remaining *tsowa* of the Nyentsa gönpo and the Tsoksum gönpo, over fifty percent of large houses were continued by Han Chinese. In the Northern Tao *tsowa* ruled by the Chone king where there was less damage by the Hui troops, Han families only refilled a few large houses. To survive in a culturally alien place and benefit from the mutual-aid system, when the number of Han families was not enough to form a subdivision in a *tsowa*, the Chinese residents were gradually “Tibetanized” in terms of costume, language, religious practice and participation of communal *ulag*. However, when the Han families had numerical superiority in a *tsowa*, they retained more Chinese religious and cultural practices, such as earth burial which was strongly opposed by Tibetan villagers and religious authorities. Nonetheless, they also adopted Tibetan religious practices that were dedicated to the communal good and agricultural production such as to prevent the spring blizzard, late summer storms and early autumn hail that were “divine” enough to destroy the crops of a *tsowa* while sparing the neighboring village. Yet, they would never send sons to the monastery. In sum, because of the quarrels and feuds over various issues, the Tibetan and Chinese households in such *tsowa* were often concentrated on different sides of the village. And their relations were often unsettled, even tense.<sup>89</sup>

Furthermore, a large number of Hui Muslims settled in Tibetan *tsowa* as well. In Tibetan areas distant from the centers of this war, there were some Muslims who had fled from

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<sup>88</sup> Yang Shihong, *Zhuoni yang tusi zhuanlüe*, 188–194; Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsodus*, 142–143, 154–155, 285–287, 314; Gao Yongjiu, “Zhuoni tusi zhidu jiqi yanbian,” in *ZNWSZL* vol.3, 22–30.

<sup>89</sup> For Tibetans along the Luchu River, earth burial would upset the earth spirit and the mountain god. The buried corpse could become rising corpse (*ro langs*) and disturb the village. Some Han families adopted the Tibetan way of cremation. Some continued to bury their deceased ones. They invited *fengshui* masters to search for grave locations. Unfortunately, the masters often chose the hill resided by the mountain god as the best place, where was usually behind the village, sitting at the head of a mountain range (dragon vein) and facing a river. Tibetans were certainly unhappy. To avoid troubles, Chinese also searched graveyards in places distant from the villages. This is based on my long-term fieldworks in Northern Tao.

Hezhou, Lintao, Taozhou and Minzhou, making use of the Hui-Tibetan trading networks and opportunity to take refuge in Tibetan host households or *zhurenjia*. As Muslim traders maintained amicable relations with the monastic leaders in Mébo, Tsö, Lhamo and Labrang, they often sought refuge in the religious manorial estates. They worked for host households or monastic estates in exchange for food and shelter. When the social-political order was restored in Gansu, those who were too frightened of the imperial government's punishment to return home became tenants in monastic estates or long-term laborers in *tsowa*. In *tsowa* near Taozhou, due to the reciprocal Tibetan-Hui killings, no Tibetan settlement would accept the Hui refugees during the war. The gyelpo forbade Hui Muslims from moving to his domain. After 1875, some Hui families avoided the household registration and state tax and settled in the empty *tsowa* of the Nyentsa gönpo and the Chokro khenchen who were enlisting labors to refill the empty slots of large houses. Depending on sectarian solidarity and remarkable social network, several related or close Hui families relocated themselves together to a completely destroyed Tibetan village. Once a small Hui settlement was established, more Hui families moved into the village via kinship, religious ties and friendship. They farmed similar portions of land and paid tax and corvée to the Tibetan ruler. With the accumulation of economic wealth in these low-tax Tibetan villages, some Hui families purchased land permanently from Tibetan rulers. Up to the 1890s, Pamochen, Puptsangsip, Gyaktang, Draktsa, Jatsang, Labtsé, Garru and Chokro *tsowa* became pure Muslim villages where mosques had replaced Tibetan temples and stupas. The Tibetan overlords had few substantial controls over these Hui subjects. Yet, like the Han Chinese, these Hui Muslims asserted that they were the *baixing* or subjects of the Tibetan ruler. They used this new political identity affiliation to ward off the Qing officials who attempted to register their households and levy various taxes.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 156, 161; Zhengxie Gannan Zangzu Zizhizhou Weiyuanhui, *Gannan zangqu yisilanjiao qingzhensi gaikuang* 甘南藏區伊斯蘭教清真寺概況 (Hezu: Gannan ribaoshe), 75–107.



### *Beyond Northern Tao*

Even though the battles never took place in Southern Tao, North Range and Back Range, the military *ulag* drew most able-bodied men from these regions to the battlefields in Gansu. Every household needed to provide a soldier, a horse and supplies. Only households with the money for bribery or who had good relationships with the *tsowa* headman, federation chief manager or banner accountant could offer up only a horse. When a household's horse or soldier died in battle, the family had to send another horse or man as a replacement. After multiple rounds of recruitment, the *tsowa* beyond Northern Tao were bereft of male members. A household without a strong male of working age and a patrilineal heir, meantime, would slowly collapse. In the sedentary *tsowa* of Southern Tao, to fill the slot of agricultural labor, a household could adopt a relative's son, uxori locally marry the daughter with a carefully chosen Chinese man or require the son who was an ordained monk to resume secular life. In pastoral *tsowa*, a household without protection of a mature male would become a target of thieves and robbers, who were usually from neighboring *tsowa*. Thus, an uxori local marriage for a daughter or young mother would be considered. In the worst case, if the herd of domestic animals shrank too much, the family would have no choice but to join another household via kinship or marriage.

This war also caused the adjustment of the administrative division between Xunhua and Taozhou subprefectures. The distance between the two frontier administrations was over 260km. The in-between the two was predominantly pastoral. Given their contributions to the war against the Hui troops, the Ala, Gyitsang, Zamtsa, Shitsang, Ngoktso and Mébo leagues abutting the Chone Kingdom and nominally governed by the Xunhua yamen were presumed, in the view of the provincial government, capable of raising militias to aid the imperial troops in Taozhou. Thus, as they were physically closer to Taozhou, the administrative jurisdiction

of these leagues was transferred to the Taozhou yamen in 1876.<sup>91</sup> As no tax and corvée had ever been imposed on the Tibetan households of these leagues by the Qing, the new administrative border scarcely affected the workload of the Taozhou yamen. On the ground, however, it led to the renegotiation of the pastoral boundary between the Chone Kingdom and the Mébo league. According to the oral histories of North Range recorded by KMT officials in the 1940s, the king, Trinle Dorje, gave a pastureland to the Mébo gönpo as a gift. Possibly out of appreciation of the Mébo cavalrymen who joined his troop in the 1860s, or perhaps due to being instructed by Qing officials, the Chone king, around 1878, returned to the Mébo gönpo the pastureland the twelfth gyelpo had seized from the Mébo league in 1744. His decision left the Zhongpa nomads disgruntled, since they had actually lost a portion of grassland. Thereafter, minor feuds between the Zhongpa and Mébo never ceased along this new, contested border. The *tsowa* of both sides had their interpretations. The Zhongpa elders indicated that the pastureland was a gift from the gyelpo, which could be taken back by the grantor when the two parties were not friendly anymore. This was consistent with traditional Tibetan concepts of gift giving. Yet those in Mébo insisted that the pastureland was awarded to the Mébo league by the Taozhou placatory commander who held a higher position than the Chone chieftain and represented the authority of the imperial government.<sup>92</sup> There was no room for compromise between these two narratives.

Not only were the Zhongpa nomads unsatisfied, but also the Drukchu and Southern Tao Tibetans resented the king, as well. As a stronghold on the Qing inner frontier, most Chone kings fought alongside the Qing army to suppress various “rebellions” in Amdo. The Chone troop typically played an adjunct and supporting role. Certainly there was no way Trinle Dorje could have foreseen or even imagined the heavy cost and destructive consequences of

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<sup>91</sup> These federations had mostly been conquered by the ninth Chone king and “presented to the Manchu emperor as a gift” in the late seventeenth century. They were de jure administered by Hezhou and then allocated to Xunhua in 1762.

<sup>92</sup> 'Jam dbyangs, *Co ne'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, 206; *Xunhua Ting zhi*, 20–21, 24; *TZTZ*, 921–922.

his participation in the Qing-Muslim war. Although he was promoted to a high official rank and presented with the first-rank hat button and peacock feather, it seemed that the influence of Chone gyelpo as a strong political and religious figure began to decline precipitously, at least in the eyes of Back Range and Southern Tao Tibetans. With the saying “the ancestors of Chone gyelpo traded our ancestors’ heads for their official hats,” local elders expressed a profound discontent and sorrow about their losses.<sup>93</sup> Yet, the king himself was traumatized by the violence. He informally abdicated in 1875, turning to devout Buddhist practice. He died of chronic illness in 1886. His son Tsewang Sonam Tobgyel was enthroned as the eighteenth ruler of the Luchu and Drukchu valleys, inheriting a realm that was seemingly falling apart.<sup>94</sup>

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have elaborated the involvement of Tibetans in this “irrelevant” war and the complex social, economic, political and cultural consequences that they confronted afterward. I highlighted the destruction of Tibetan *tsowa* in Northern Tao and the decline of the Tibetan population in eastern Amdo during the wartime, and the adaptability of Tibetan common people to survive the war and continue their lives by merging households, relocating the remnant family members and converging *tsowa*. Also, this chapter has shown the influx of the non-Tibetan population into the *tsowa* territories. It has specified that the Northern Tao rulers utilized a new land system, which tied military corvée, tax, household and land together, to take in the Han and Hui families for the purpose of solving the revenue and manpower crises.

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<sup>93</sup> Fieldwork in Drukchu, July 5–10, 2017; Zhao Erxun, *Qingshi gao*, j517.14307.

<sup>94</sup> Tsewang, “Xian daren,” 4–5.

However, the horror of the tragic years did not end with the war. There was no satisfactory outlet for the loss, grief and resentment; most local inhabitants continued to believe that blood must atone for blood. Each community memorialized and narrated the events of this traumatic period, doing so in terms that reinforced and intensified powerful feelings of enmity against those perceived as “cross-generational enemies”—many who at this point lived or had resettled in neighboring villages. The multisided ethnic tension had not abated through the horrors of war; the articulation of the anguish of this era of violence would only fuel new conflict.

From the late 1870s onward, the military corvée system of the Chone Kingdom was semi-paralyzed along with the depopulation and the Tibetan commoners’ diminishing faith in the Chone ruler. The late Qing frontier policy, which strengthened rather than weakened the presence of the Qing state in Inner Asia, sought to replace the local state characterized by the chieftain system, leading to the direct confrontation between the imperial center and *tsowa* societies. Not much room was left for the local state, which submitted to the Great State, to ward off the intrusion and penetration of external power. Because the contemporary kings either executed the Qing order to suppress local Tibetans or stayed out of such events, the authority of the ruling house was seriously challenged by the *tsowa* societies that attempted to detach themselves from the kingdom.

### Chapter 3 The Settled and Unsettled Pasts: Tsowa Societies on the Margins of the Chone Kingdom, 1879–1907

*Stag spu gzig spu smad la song nas. Khyi spu phag spu stod la 'deg dus.*

The furs of tiger and leopard came down. The hairs of dog and pig came up.

—A Saying in the Chone Kingdom

#### Introduction

As seen in the local saying above, local Tibetans, in the wake of the Qing-Muslim war, had come to be disillusioned with the Chone gyelpo family. In contrast to their predecessors who were largely respected as heroic warriors, powerful rulers or devoted Buddhists, the heirs of the Chone throne were popularly seen as weak and disgraceful because of their Tibetan-Chinese hybrid blood, for which they were derided as having the “hair of a dog and a pig.” Behind this saying was the fact that many *tsowa* challenged the authority of the Chone ruling house after the eighteenth king ascended the throne. It reflects the concern in *tsowa* societies when the overlord deviated from the customary notion of tax and tribute, and was impotent to ward off intrusive external powers.<sup>1</sup>

On account of the synthesis of dharma and secular throne, the gyelpo was revered by his subjects just the same as a high-rank reincarnation. When the gyelpo came to a *tsowa*, all *tsowa* members would kneel in front of their settlement to show reverence and receive blessings. When the gyelpo presented at the dharma assembly on the fifteenth day of the first month, the people in the crowd would plead with him to bless them by touching their heads.

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<sup>1</sup> Group interview, the *bshag pa* narrators, Chone, June 10, 2015; April 4–14, 2019.

Those who did not get a blessing from the king at that event often waited for him to pass by, then took the dirt from his footprints or in the tracks of his horse and sprinkled it on their foreheads. If someone raised their eyes and looked directly at the gyelpo, then she or he would be certainly whipped.

However, after the Tongzhi Muslim Revolt, Tibetans in the Luchu and Drukchu valleys struggled to return to their normal lives. For the remaining families, the long-term economic aftermath was hard to overcome. The emotional shock, misery and grief did not easily fade away. To cope with the post-war difficulties, which overlapped the natural disasters, the traumatized residents across the kingdom sought comfort in religion, evaded tax and tribute, avoided the military *ulag* and endeavored to protect their own communities by all means possible. Inevitably, their interests were in line with neither the king, his officials, nor the Qing authorities.

Therefore, this chapter analyzes the initiatives of *tsowa* societies in responding to the frontier social unrest, the king's suppression and the Qing state's incorporation. I use three cases to argue that local Tibetans employed *tsowa* societies to demonstrate the collective will, launch collective action, and cope with both the Great State and the local state. The first case analyzes the social and political consequences of the Jiezhou Earthquake in the war-torn lower Drukchu valley, and explores the ways that the king and local *tsowa* tackled the Qing frontier administration and utilized the Qing incorporative policies to serve their own ends. The second case probes into the Tébo looting and robbery incidents, and shows the cooperative actions of the Tébo *tsowa* to resist the Qing punitive troops and the king's corvée, tribute and tax. The last case scrutinizes the process through which a Chone monk rose to power of the national political stage, became an influential religious authority and shaped the political landscape in eastern Amdo. It unfolds a covert dispute between Chone and Labrang with respect to the right over Chépa Monastery, and the struggle of Chépa

Tibetans to detach from the kingdom by altering their religious identity affiliation. Overall, this chapter explores the waning of the Chone ruling house's power on the margins of the kingdom. It articulates the agencies of *tsowa* societies in different ecological-social niches when local Tibetans handled the natural disasters, Qing frontier policy and regional power struggles from 1879 to 1907.

### **Drukchu: Earthquake, Revolt and Tax Reform**

Trinle Dorje had four daughters and one son. He married the eldest daughter to a maternal nephew in Chone. The second daughter was married to the Tangbar pönpo Ma Chenglie, who was a cousin's son. He gave the tax and corvée levied on the *tsowa* of Sanjiaoping, Wuping and Baleng in Drukchu as the dowry. The other two daughters were engaged to the sons of two wealthy Han gentry clans. In the 1870s, his brother Könchok Damtsö Gyatso (b.1824), who was the Chone khenpo and a reputable lama, passed away on the Senggang position. The king and Sonam Tobgyel were under pressure to send an heir to take up the ecclesiastic throne in Ganden Shédrupting. But, Sonam Tobgyel only had a daughter. In 1880, owing to his father's chronic illness, Sonam Tobgyel was officially enthroned as the eighteenth gyelpo. Following the precedent of the sixteenth king in 1814, without a son, he concurrently held the khenpo position and became the gönma, the religious king. This move was strongly opposed by the Buddhist authorities in Chone Monastery.<sup>2</sup>

From when Trinle Dorje fell ill in 1875 to the time he passed away in 1886, he had intended to cultivate Sonam Tobgyel to be a filial son, an ethical official and a qualified ruler. In his mourning essay, Sonam Tobgyel depicted the king as a traditional Confucian official of the Qing and a scholastic Chinese patriarch of the chieftain lineage, who modeled himself on

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<sup>2</sup> Tsewang, "Xiandaren," 5–6; *Tanchang ma tusi jiapu* 宕昌馬土司家譜, manuscript, 23–64; TZZ, 841; David Ekvall, *Outposts or Tibetan Border Sketches*, 188–193.

the Song scholar Yuan Cai 袁采 (1163 *jinshi*) in managing his family and on the loyal Ming scholar-official Yang Jisheng 楊繼盛 (1516–1555) in governing people. Confucian ethics and self-cultivation practices had not much resonance in the Tibetan value system. The values he upheld were not appreciated by local Tibetan religious authorities, chiefs, headmen and ordinary people. Unlike Trinle Dorje who balanced the roles of gyelpo, Buddhist and Qing official, Sonam Tobgyel experienced a serious identity crisis. His mother was a Han concubine, and those of mixed Tibetan-Chinese blood were despised in local Tibetan social context. He was educated in the family school run by a reputable Confucian teacher. He was fascinated by Chinese culture and particularly skillful in Chinese painting. He showed interest in neither Tibetan Buddhism nor spoke Tibetan language. He scarcely resided at the Senggang yamen and dealt with religious affairs. Given that the kingdom was seemingly collapsing in his reign, Sonam Tobgyel developed his own reflective self-justification in his writing about the former king, concluding that he was a filial son but an incapable ruler.<sup>3</sup>

### *The Jiezhou Earthquake*

The first challenge the newly enthroned king encountered was a natural disaster, and this was followed by an eschatological movement (or the state-defined millenarian rebellion) on the southern margin of his realm. Aside from the king's four Black Tibetan banners, Tibetans of the region were ruled by the Tangbar pönpo or nominally governed by the Xigu yamen. On the tenth day of the fifth lunar month of 1879, an earthquake estimated magnitude eight struck south Gansu during the latter half of the night. The epicenter was in Wenxian of Jiezhou, only fifty *li* south of the Drukchu Four-banners of the Chone Kingdom. With few exceptions, the yamens, temples, houses, markets, city walls and numerous villages were destroyed in the first quake, burying hundreds of thousands of people straightaway just in

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<sup>3</sup> Tsewang, "Xiandaren," 5; Yang Shihong, *Zhuoni yang tusi zhuanlüe*, 77–78, 82–83, 87–88.



Jiezhou.<sup>4</sup> Over the next twelve days, southern Gansu was struck by several strong aftershocks. As a contemporary newspaper reported:

...until the twenty-second day of this month, the earth of more than thirty prefectures, subprefectures and counties of Gansu and Guanlong 關隴 (western Shaanxi) drastically quaked. In the lightly struck area, walls and houses collapsed and domestic animals were injured. In the heavily struck area, cities, city walls and markets fell down at once. The old and young not escaping timely were buried and died or fell down and injured. Even though staying in the open area, people on the ground were like in thousands of waves, and feet could not stand. So, local people lay down on the ground together in the open field once the earth quaked. Afterward, high platforms and gorgeous houses suddenly became rubble. Even warfare and conflagration could not destroy as quickly as this.<sup>5</sup>

Following an official investigation into disaster damage conducted two months later, the imperial government began the official relief process. With an eye to preventing famine and unrest, the Guangxu Emperor instructed the Shaan-Gan governor-general to placate refugees and distribute grain in the eleventh month. Residents of major towns and nearby valleys in Jiezhou gradually received supplies in early 1880.<sup>6</sup>

At this time, Qing frontier policy underwent some significant changes. Zuo Zongtang was concerned about Russian and British expansion into Xinjiang. He insisted on bolstering inland frontier defense and prevailed in the policy debate with Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 (1823–1901) who stressed developing coastal defenses.<sup>7</sup> Gansu became the main logistics channel and crucial rear zone to repress Yaquq Beg, recover the territory Russia had seized in Ili, institute the regular administrative system in Xinjiang and secure the far western outer frontier in the late 1870s.<sup>8</sup> General Zuo had stationed the Hunanese troops in all strategic subprefectures and counties to maintain peace and stability on this war-torn inner frontier. He

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<sup>4</sup> “Dizhen qingxing qixiang 地震情形祈詳,” *Wanguo gongbao* 萬國公報 567, 1879, 13; “Shanbeng dizhen 山崩地震” *Yiwenlu* 異聞錄 13, 1879, 75.

<sup>5</sup> “Guanlong dizhen 關隴地震,” *Yiwenlu* 18, 1879, 106.

<sup>6</sup> *Jiezhou zhilizhou xuzhi* (1886), j19, 5b–6b, j33, 15a–17a. 565.

<sup>7</sup> See James Millward and Peter Perdue, “Political and Cultural History of the Xinjiang Region through the Late Nineteenth Century,” and James Millward and Nabijan Tursun, “Political History and Strategies of Control, 1884–1978,” in Starr Frederick ed., *Xinjiang: China’s Muslim Borderland* (London and New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 27–98.

<sup>8</sup> Zuo Zongtang, *Zuo Wenxianggong zoudu xubian*, j74.1a–4a; j75.1b–5b; j76.3b–6a, 8b–10a.

responded to every revolt and all potential unrest in Gansu and Amdo with an iron-fist. The *tsowa* of Drukchu Four Banners were under the jurisdiction of the Chone chieftain, and the deep valleys adjoining Wenxian and Xigu were outside of the Jiezhou magistrate's jurisdiction, where the anti-tax revolt that spread across the Gansu-Sichuan borderland had just been suppressed a few years before.<sup>9</sup> Hence, Zuo stressed that unlike civilized *min*, "the nature of Gansu barbarians differed from human beings." Those who inhabited the lower Drukchu valley were particularly, in his view, malicious and sly. To prevent them from rebelling and troubling the state like the Tibetan rebels in Xunhua who had just been quelled several months earlier, Zuo ordered Sonam Tobgyel to alleviate the post-disaster difficulty of his Drukchu subjects.<sup>10</sup>

However, the Chone king and his officials could not care less about the earthquake victims. From the eighth to the tenth month, in the process of collecting annual tributes from *tsowa* in Drukchu, which included a pig per banner, a *dou* of wheat or rice per household and various wild products for the king, the accountant habitually extracted domestic animal, grain and cash to increase his own income. Taking every opportunity, he collaborated with local hereditary federation chief managers to exploit villagers. As an official record shows, local Tibetans who probably attempted to justify their later revolt accused the accountant not only of having taken the best domestic animals, but also of having seized local young women at will to satisfy his sexual desire. In the eleventh month, a Bon ritual specialist and several villagers in Gotsa Valley (*Mgo rtsa*; Guzigou 瓜子溝), which was under the jurisdiction of the Xigu yamen, claimed the earthquake was an apocalyptic sign and called for "accomplishing the great matter through rebellion." Although their goal was unclear,

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<sup>9</sup> *GNQSL*, j21.12b–13a.

<sup>10</sup> Zuo Zongtang, *Zuo Wenxianggong zoudu xubian*, j76, 1a.

undoubtedly, the earthquake inflamed huge anxiety among local people. The Bon priest Gudanba 古旦巴 declared the cause of the natural catastrophe and the method to be saved.<sup>11</sup>

Soon, the Chone king's accountant noticed the gathering of armed Tibetans moving along the lower Drukchu valley to worship a Bon reincarnation. The villagers of Drukchu Four-banner also joined and sought audience in Gotsa. A rumor implied that a revolt against the accountant and chief managers was secretly planned by the Black Tibetan *tsowa*. He reported the matter to Sonam Tobgyel. As the Bon religion was considered sinister and long suppressed by the Chone royal family, the gyelpo instructed the accountant and federation chief managers to disperse the pilgrims.<sup>12</sup> With little changing, a report on the atypical gathering of Black Tibetans in Gotsa *tsowa* was submitted by the king's representative through Jiezhou relief officials all the way to Zuo Zongtang's hands in the second month of 1880. Zuo's imperial memorial after the event stated,

In Guazi valley ninety *li* from Jiezhou, the indigenous official's barbaric subjects (*fanmin*) spread a rumor that a living buddha (*huofo*) was born. The crowd [Tibetans] assembled, pilgrimed, brandished broadswords and danced while in spirit possession. They proclaimed that the apocalypse will come, and the only method to flee for life was doing possession dance. The barbarians lost their minds and deluded themselves to folly. They spread rumors to others. More and more people gathered day by day. Based on the report of Taozhou chieftain Yang Zuolin and Tanchang chieftain Ma Chenglie, they assigned indigenous battalion head Li Fuxi to accompany relief committee member to distribute silver and grain to the earthquake afflicted barbarians. Li found that a rumor was circulated in the Black Tibetan sunny-mountain banner [*tshow gang dmag ru*] of Guazi valley. This claimed that a reincarnation (living buddha) was born on the twelfth day of the fifth month last year according to the [reincarnation's] father Gudanba's divination. Gudanba took this an opportunity to incite and bewilder near barbarians to worship [his son] in morning and evening. He declared that the living buddha's admonition indicates [the earthquake was caused by] the swords and spears. The swords and spears should be brought to Guazi valley and inspected. Soon, barbarians received the "feather-bamboo instruction arrows." They were coerced to participate. The rumor was spread everywhere. The chieftains' forbidden order was ignored so that they requested to overawe [the barbarians] with the mighty manner of the official army. After Long Xiqing and others presented the official announcement and illustrated weal and woe, the barbarians still did

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<sup>11</sup> Li Ying, *Jiaoban gansu jiezhou guazigou fanfei yi'an* 剿辦甘肅階州瓜子溝番匪一案 (manuscript), 5–7.

<sup>12</sup> *QSL*, Dezong, j120.10b–1a.

not dissolve. I liegeman [Zuo] and others instructed local officials to supervise the chieftains to conciliate first. If they were still unrepentant, the army would be immediately dispatched to quash and arrest.<sup>13</sup>

The crowd was threatened by Sonam Tobgyel's battalion head with the coming Qing military pacification. Yet, they were not dispersed. A local federation chief in his 90s reported that "people were so scared. They remembered that the Chone militia and the Qing troops from Sichuan and Shaanxi burned villages and killed local people" to suppress the Songpan and Baima Tibetans during the Hui rebellion. As he explained, Drukchu Tibetans saw the Chone gyelpo was no more than the government's running dog. They intended to defend themselves by force.<sup>14</sup>

Following Zuo's order, Sonam Tobgyel summoned five-hundred soldiers from Southern Tao and advanced toward Gotsa. At this point, the whole lower Drukchu valley had been mobilized by Gudanba through the soldier-horse *ulag* system, divination and coercion. Hali 哈里, a Tibetan of Sergyen (*Gser rgyan*; Xicha 西岔) *tsowa* in Four Banners ruled by the Tangbar pönpo, reported in his subsequent confession in Qing custody,

his friend Gudanba said that his wife gave birth to a boy the same day of the earthquake. When the son was born, he immediately spoke and announced that he was a living buddha and in charge of the earthquake. Gudanba instigated all *tsowa* to become pilgrims for the living buddha. The worshippers would suddenly tremble all over and could barely stand up straight. Some people trembled and jumped at certain moments, and others did so when they returned to their homes. The trembler shook one or two hours without consciousness every time. Gudanba said that a revolt could begin as the immortal (*zhenren* 真人) was born in his family. Catastrophe would befall on all who fled. The earthquake would not stop. Followers would not be disturbed. Over four-thousand people promised to join.<sup>15</sup>

Arrested and tortured, Hali spared no effort to avoid the death penalty and blamed his friend.

As one of the earliest leaders of the revolt, Hali employed the communal *ulag* practice to enlist able-bodied men from every household of the four Tangbar banners and organized a

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<sup>13</sup> Zuo Zongtang, *Zuo wenxianggong zoushu xubian*, j76, 1a–b.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Chief Dörjé, Drukchu, July 25, 2016.

<sup>15</sup> Zuo Zongtang, *Zuo Wenxianggong zoushu xubian*, j76.1b–2a.

militia of over 1,000 Tibetans. They waited for Gudanba's uprising signal. His confession also shows the mixture of various religious practices in the lower Drukchu. The revolt had some eschatological and soteriological characteristics. It was inspired by Chinese folk Buddhist and Daoist concepts of universal salvation, mixing some Tibetan Bon elements. The attitude toward iron weapons suggested the participants were traumatized by the recent wars and natural disasters that had decimated their population. On the twenty-eighth day of the second month, Hali received a feather-arrow token, which ordered all followers to revolt on the third day of the third month. Every household was required to provide one or two men. Deserters would be killed. Gudanba planned to attack the lightly defended Han Chinese forts first. Then, they would charge into Xigu and Jiezhou from where they could proceed toward Songpan to ally with local Tibetans who yearned for vengeance against the Qing officials, soldiers and local Han Chinese.<sup>16</sup>

As Xigu Commander regarded the followers who “wore red turbans, danced around, claiming to be possessed and insanely screaming” as rebels, he deployed the Qing garrison troops and Chinese militia in advance to guard Shazeiqiao 沙賊橋, the main pass between Xigu Town and Tibetan areas. When Gudanba and Hali broke into Haheba Fort 哈河壩堡 on the sixth day, the Xigu militia and “law-abiding barbarians” (*liangfan* 良番) of Hendé (*Han bde*; Shatan 沙灘) and Aupé (*au pe*; Wuping 武坪), who were once ruled by the Serpo lapön and now managed by the Xigu yamen, promptly counterattacked Gudanba. The insurrection was defeated and dispersed. Hali and the nineteen revolt leaders were arrested and beheaded after a brief trial. Gudanba and seven to eight hundred remaining insurgents fled to Özerpa (*Od zer pa*; Heisongping 黑松坪), a Tibetan village in the deepest part of Nanyu Valley 南峪 in the south of Xigu. On their route, they attacked the Chinese fort of

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<sup>16</sup> QSL, Dezong, j113.12a; Zuo Zongtang, *Zuo Wenxianggong zoushu xubian*, j76.1b–2a.

Nanyu at the entrance of the valley on the ninth day. Later, Nanyu Chinese requested reinforcement from the Qing troop under the command of Chen Zaiyi 陳再益 from Qinzhou, which had just arrived at Shazeiqiao. Chen reached Nanyu valley and deployed troops to secretly besiege Özerpa and attack rebels the next day. It was too late when Gudanba noticed the encirclement. The insurgents were slaughtered. Familiar with local terrain, Gudanba and some followers scattered and escaped into the dense forests. To prevent the revolt from spreading like the Songpan revolt in 1861, a Sichuan imperial force was deployed to keep the rebels from crossing the provincial border. Meanwhile, Zuo dispatched the official forces garrisoned at Taozhou, Gongchang, Lanzhou and the Hui cavalry of Ma Zhan'ao to assemble in the lower Drukchu valley in order to tightly control the revolt scale and repress the insurgents once and for all. He assigned the Lanzhou circuit intendent Liu Ao 劉璈 (d.1889) to lead the campaign, differentiate the law-abiding Tibetans from the insubordinates and commence a large-scale hunt for the remaining rebels.<sup>17</sup>

Few sources indicate a clear aim of this revolt. Although Zuo saw it as an apocalyptic movement, it seems that Gudanba showed no interest in overthrowing the Qing or the Chone king. Owing to the involvement of local Han militias, several battles in the deep Drukchu ravines soon exposed the longstanding Tibetan-Han hatred in the Sichuan-Gansu borderland. Like the anti-tax revolt in the 1860s, the anti-Chinese feelings swiftly led to the massacre of local Han villagers. On the seventeenth day, to avenge their dead, more than two thousand Tibetans gathered and burned down the Han villages in the vicinity of Shazeiqiao. Afterward, Chen Zaiyi baited the insurgents with the Han militia and ambushed Tibetans nearby Dazhaizi 大寨子, where the Tibetan force was vanquished again. Chen destroyed dozens of Tibetan settlements as he pursued the fleeing insurgents. In the meantime, the Qing

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<sup>17</sup> Zuo Zongtang, *Zuo Wenxianggong zoushu xubian*, j76.2b; *QSL*, Dezong, j113.10b–11a; j113.1b–2a; Lü Zhennan and Ye Enpei *Jiezhou zhilizhou xuzhi*, j33.15a–17a.

reinforcements arrived at Xigu and began to suppress the rebels systematically in the crisscrossing branch gorges of the lower Drukchu valley. Considering the difficulties of logistics in the steep mountains, Zuo instructed the official troops to end the war as soon as possible. The battles in the north of Xigu left behind “several dozen *li* of rebel corpses.” Frightened Tibetans who blocked roads and defended themselves inside villages were brutally slaughtered. Many gorges witnessed the wiping out of Tibetans whether they revolted or not. As fewer and fewer “rebels” could be hunted down, the relief forces were subsequently removed from the front to Shazeiqiao in late third month. Then Zuo ordered Sonam Tobgyel to select some law-abiding Tibetans as messengers to spread official announcements to local *tsowa*. According to the official instruction, the only standard of marking the law-abiding Tibetans off from the rebels was to tie up the escaping insurgents and turn them in to pay allegiance to the government.<sup>18</sup>

### *The Aftermath*

In the wake of this violence, communal panic in Drukchu lasted to the fifth month of 1880. Zuo ordered Sonam Tobgyel to capture Gudanba. He did not expect that the pursuit would last more than a month and soon his soldiers ran out of supplies. Since the Chone troops had once received supplies from General Zuo in repressing the Hui revolt, he sought help from the Qing force in Xigu. In the meantime, to punish those who were involved in this riot, Sonam Tobgyel demanded local *tsowa* to supply grain and meat to his militia. For Tibetans, it was customary that the defeated party provide compensation for the casualties and costs of the triumphant party. In accord with traditional practice, wherever the Chone gyelpo arrived, his subjects also presented gifts and pleaded for blessing since he was the khenpo of Ganden Shédrupting. However, in the Qing officials’ eyes, his “greedy behavior”

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<sup>18</sup> Zuo Zongtang, *Zuo Wenxianggong zoushu xubian*, j76.2b–3b.

and “rascally barbaric soldiers” seriously jeopardized the punitive and placating campaign.

The Jiezhou magistrate instructed Sonam Tobgyel to return to Chone and impeached the chieftain, requesting the implementation of *gaitu guiliu*. On the twenty-fifth day, the magistrate received a court reply:

The Taozhou Chieftain Yang Zuolin is young and inexperienced. He is incompetent at controlling [barbarians] in peacetime, inept at suppressing rebels in wartime. Yet, he connived in indigenous soldiers’ harassment [of local people]. As a warning, he should be punished. As to the revolt of Gudanba, it was under the guise of a reincarnation, instead of being instigated by the chieftain’s extortion and illegal taxation. It is discerning to replace the indigenous chieftain with a government-appointed official according to the memorial. Since the pacification is preliminarily complete, it should be gradually planned with further consideration. It will be practicable to control chieftains with local officials and replace them with indigenous magistrates (*tu zhizhou*) on the modeling of the cases of Yunnan and Guizhou in the future. The rehabilitation is the most important matter [at this point] because the barbaric rebellion has just been quelled.<sup>19</sup>

Notwithstanding, Jiezhou officials longed to supplement local revenue by replenishing the taxable population. In several months, they collected evidence to prove that the ungoverned borderland extending over two-hundred *li* from Jiezhou to Minzhou should be governed by imperial circuit officials. Based on the memorial sent from Jiezhou in the twelfth month, the view was conveyed to Beijing that the region was inhabited by various *zu* of Tibetans who were “witless and easy to delude” ought to be civilized and administrated by Qing officials. The magistrate pointed out that this region was too far from Chone Town and had been “harboring malice” since the Shunzhi reign. He asserted that the Chone chieftain was “fatuous and indulging in his hobbies, his native officials were cruel and bellicose, and the barbaric people suffered the chieftain’s exploitation and envied Han Chinese’s light duty and tax.” Therefore, he pleaded with the emperor to appoint some officials to govern the “Tibetan territories” (*fandi* 番地) abutting Jiezhou, Wenxian, Xigu and Minzhou.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Li Ying, *Jiaoban gansu jiezhou guazigou fanfei yi'an*, 5.

<sup>20</sup> *GNQSL*, j24.15a; Li Ying, *Jiaoban gansu jiezhou guazigou fanfei yi'an*, 6, 12.



At the end of 1880, this request was approved by the Guangxu Emperor. The aim was to eradicate the source of the trouble permanently by “civilizing” Drukchu Tibetans and placing them under direct imperial rule. The chieftains and headmen were ordered to draw maps and register households along the lower Drukchu valley. The imperial edict suggested the Jiezhou magistrate “warn Yang Zuolin and Ma Chenglie of their misconduct if they were reluctant to cede territories.” The maps, household and tax records were to be transferred to the yamens of Gongchang Prefecture and Jiezhou Subprefecture. On the principle of proximity, *tsowa* in Drukchu were to be separately governed by the Minzhou and Jiezhou yamens. Tibetan households placed in the jurisdiction of the Qing officials were either organized into new *lijia* or merged into local Chinese *lijia*.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, the policy was only recorded in the provincial official bureau for reference after Zuo left Gansu. The shortage of local officials and clerks suspended implementation of the *gaitu guliu* in the Drukchu valley. As is evident in the local gazetteers from 1880 to 1908, neither Tibetan household (*fanhu* 番戶) nor Tibetan farmland (*fandi*) in Drukchu was actually registered under the jurisdiction of any Chinese yamen. The administrative boundaries between the *min* and *fan* remained unchanged. On the ground, Tibetans of the region did not even know that they were not ruled by the Chone gyelpo and the Tangbar pönpo anymore.<sup>22</sup>

This nominal incorporation of Drukchu Tibetans under direct imperial administration should not be considered evidence of state weakness resulting in nothing substantial. The case reference archived in Lanzhou was soon used by the new Shaan-Gan governor-general Tan Zhonglin 譚鐘麟 (1822–1905) as the standard policy for coping with frontier Tibetans. In the early 1880s, the Minzhou Lüjin 閭井 chieftain Hou Zhenxing 后振興 was sued by

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<sup>21</sup> For the cases of *gaitu guliu* in 1727 Duona, 1728 Wenxian and 1870 Cuandugou, see Hou Gui, *Minzhou cuandugou hou tusi zongtu* 岷州攢都溝后土司宗圖 (manuscript, 1890); *Houshi jiapu* 后氏家譜 (manuscript, 1779); MZXTZ, 260; Lü Zhennan and Ye Enpei, *Jiezhou zhilizhou xuzhi*, j9, 4a.

<sup>22</sup> In Jiezhou, around five-hundred “barbarian households” that “yearned for civilization submitted” to the Qing in 1728. Lü Zhennan and Ye Enpei, *Jiezhou zhilizhou xuzhi*, j9.1a–6a; j10.1a–4b.

his subjects for tearing down their houses, ploughing up their graveyards, and levying exorbitant taxes. Tan instructed a commissioner to investigate secretly. The commissioner confirmed that the indigenous subjects suffered from the chieftain's harsh duties. They petitioned the Minzhou yamen seeking to affiliate with Minzhou as *min*. A hearing, then, was held in Gongchang and the testimony of the Lūjin Tibetans was heard and supported by the prefect. Chieftain Hou was taken to Lanzhou for the rehearing whereupon Governor-General Tan learned the reported misconduct had been fabricated. In fact, no extra tax but only the conventional apportioned tax had been levied. Because of the Qing-Muslim war, the Guangxu Emperor exempted Gansu civilians from paying the outstanding tax in the Tongzhi reign as well as all regular taxes before 1883.<sup>23</sup> Tibetan native officials were unwilling to follow the imperial government's tax adjustment. Thus, the Minzhou Tibetans sought to evade taxes by removing their chieftain from this hereditary position. After consulting as to precedent, Tan adopted a mild way to handle this case. He changed the chieftain position in Lūjin into an appointed-official position. Considering that these indigenous subjects had become used to the native official, Tan displaced Hou Zhenxing and selected a new one from the Hou ruling lineage.<sup>24</sup>

Tan's policy was intrusive enough to intimidate the Chone chieftain, who observed that the imperial court aimed at consolidating control in the Tibetan region through progressive *gaitu guiliu*. He stopped appointing an accountant to collect tributes from Drukchu Four-banner. In his cautiously-worded mourning article, Sonam Tobgyel stated that he followed his father's instruction and exempted grain and copper coins imposed on the region for the calamity of Gudanba's insurrection.<sup>25</sup> Yet, he did not transfer the household registration and map to the superior yamens. The Qing system of circulating officials in China proper turned

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<sup>23</sup> *QSL*, Muzong, j364, 6a-b; Dezong, j162.11b; *GNQSL*, j23.35a-b, j24.30a-31b.

<sup>24</sup> Tan Zhonglin, *Tan wenqingong zougao* 譚文勤公奏稿 (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1968), j11.3a-4b.

<sup>25</sup> Tsewang, "Xiandaren," 5.

into a loophole for Tibetan native officials to remain in power. As Kent Guy points out, the evolution of the Qing provincial governmental system accomplished in the eighteenth century, by which the governor was regularly appointed and systematically evaluated, did not bring consistent policies to Shaan-Gan-Chuan because of the shifting strategic position of this inner frontier in the Qing Empire.<sup>26</sup> These provinces often served as the launchpad of the Qing conquests in Inner Asia. Like elsewhere, the frequent circulation of officials (three years in a post on average) in Shaan-Gan left the former governor-general's policies incompletely and inconsistently implemented by his successor. The personnel changes of magistrates also rendered local policies incomplete and unsystematic. When Tan Zhonglin, Yang Changjun 楊昌濬 (1825–1897), Tao Mo 陶模 (1835–1902), Songfan 崧蕃 (1837–1905) and Wei Guangtao 魏光燾 (1837–1916) successively governed Shaan-Gan, neither these governors-generals nor their Gongchang and Jiezhou inferiors steadily enforced the administrative regularization at the southwest edge of Gansu. It was noticeable that after the displacement of the Tibetan native officials, their families usually remained in power.<sup>27</sup>

Hence, Sonam Tobgyel reassigned an accountant to collect in-kind tributes in Drukchu when the Qing official taxation resumed in Gansu. At this point, the social-economic foundation of Drukchu Tibetans had been significantly damaged in the Qing punitive campaigns. Although many houses were burned and males slaughtered, local *tsowa* still needed to pay various tribute. Worse yet, the king registered the Black Tibetan households and levied 200 “imperial copper coins” (*guanqian* 官錢) on every local household as the regular tax in order to cooperate in the enforcement of the administrative regularization. As this tax was still not recorded by the nearby Chinese yamen, he kept this for his own

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<sup>26</sup> For the “evolution of the Qing provincial government,” see Kent Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces: The Evolution of Territorial Administration in China, 1644–1796* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2010), chapter 6.

<sup>27</sup> Qian Shifu, *Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao* 清代職官年表 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), j2.1490–1502.

revenue.<sup>28</sup> The accountant and federation chief managers were similar to the “entrepreneurial broker” that refers to the intermediary between the state and village community in northern China who pursued his own profits instead of protecting the interests of the village.<sup>29</sup> They kept feathering their own nests in the gyelpo’s name. Possibly due to the currency inflation, Sonam Tobgyel raised the regular tax to 300 copper coins per household by the 1890s. This became the last straw that pushed the Drukchu *tsowa* to revolt. For local Tibetans who barely made ends meet, Qing currency was rare. To pay tax and rebuild houses destroyed in the war, many households borrowed money from chief managers or Hui merchants. The Jiezhou magistrate signified that a Sichuan Hui merchant He Tingzheng and local *zongguan* lent money at usurious rates. He underlined that “if a twenty-year old man borrowed ten big coins of a thousand face value (*dangqian daqian* 當千大錢), he could not pay off the loan until he was sixty or seventy. When he died, the debt would be automatically transferred to his son.”<sup>30</sup> The post-war Drukchu Tibetans were harshly exploited. In 1895, no longer willing to suffer this treatment, Tibetans of Gönpa Banner killed their chief manager. Sonam Tobgyel swore vengeance and sent a small force to arrest the murderers. He expected to handle this case in a conventional way by executing the leading figures. Instead, the bloodshed between his militiamen and local inhabitants lasted for several months.<sup>31</sup>

As the lower Drukchu valley was nominally under the jurisdiction of the Jiezhou yamen from 1881, local Tibetans reported the case to the Jiezhou magistrate. They sought help from Qing officials, the very group they had long expected the gyelpo to keep at a distance from their valley. To reform “corrupt customs” and deter vengeance killing, the magistrate reconciled the conflict. He enacted ten regulations and set up a monument in Gönpa in the

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<sup>28</sup> “Yongchui buxiu bei” (1896), in *ZQXZ*, 736.

<sup>29</sup> Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China, 1900–1942* (California: Stanford University Press, 1988), chapter 2.

<sup>30</sup> “Yongchui buxiu bei,” 736.

<sup>31</sup> *ZQXZ*, 28; *ZNXZ*, 19.

spring of 1896. According to these regulations, the tax collected by the chieftain was reduced to 200 copper coins per household. The custom which required local Tibetans to pay precious wild products as tribute to the chieftain was abolished. The amount of horse fodder extracted by the accountant was halved. When the accountant arrived, every household was to pay up all tax and grain levies within twenty days. The accountant was required to leave Drukchu within ten days after receiving the taxes. The only *ulag* he could levy was a mule or 2,000 coins instead. To prevent the accountant from taking bribes and demanding yamen fees, the requirement was that if both the involved parties in a suit were at fault, each paid him a thousand coins; if only one party was in the wrong, this party paid 2,000 coins. When a suit was settled by a local chief manager, the fee was to be halved. All hereditary chief managers were dismissed. Every banner elected four candidates to draw lots in Taozhou. The Taozhou yamen issued the selected one a wooden badge, by which he obtained the formal certificate of appointment known as “tiger-head token” (*stag thob*) from the Chone chieftain to serve as the new chief manager for three years. The usurious interests charged by the Hui merchant and former chief managers were spared. The borrowers were asked to pay off their loans in three years.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, the imperial intervention altered the power structure and operation of local authorities in Drukchu. The rehabilitation regulations displaced the hereditary chiefs even as they installed powerful elder councils in local federations. The Jiezhou magistrate restrained the power of the accountant and tremendously weakened the king’s authority. Along with the Qing state’s gradual substantializing of the policy of administrative regularization, the gyelpo’s independent juridical power was soon no longer intact.

At the same time, Sonam Tobgyel was faced with an expansionist Labrang Monastery. To keep Chone out of the wars initiated by Labrang that arose from Amdo to north Kham, he

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<sup>32</sup> “Yongchui buxiu bei,” 735–736.

gave way to the Jamyang Zhépa's religious incorporation of Drukchu. The religious ties between Ganden Shédrupling and the Gelukpa institutes in the lower Drukchu valley, notably Ongsum, Gyakhartang and Aupé monasteries that were founded upon Bon temples with the Chone royal lineage's religious reform and financial support, were soon broken. As a lay man, the religious king rarely handled religious matters. He ceased assigning abbots to manage the subordinate monasteries in Drukchu as early as the 1880s. The authority of the khenpo and the religious influence of his central university monastery rapidly declined in this remote corner of the kingdom. Labrang Monastery promptly strengthened its religious power by cultivating Drukchu monks to take over their communal Gelug institutes. When the Labrang-trained monks restored local monasteries that were destroyed in war, they established the prime-subordinate monastery system with Labrang. The prime status of Ganden Shédrupling thereby was replaced by Labrang Trashikhyil in Drukchu.<sup>33</sup>

In addition, the hot and humid weather in Drukchu was ideal for opium poppy cultivation. General Zuo's strict ban on poppy planting across Shaan-Gan since 1875 made the Gansu-Sichuan borderland a paradise of opium production. Opium traders and Chinese migrants brought seeds to Xigu, and from there the red opium poppy flowers blossomed all over the Drukchu valley in just a few years. Even after the provincial government lifted the ban and taxed poppy plantation from the third month of 1881 onward, the region continued to be the best origin of production as it was exempted from paying tax to the Qing local yamens.<sup>34</sup> The lure of high profits led Drukchu Tibetans to join the developing Gansu-Sichuan opium production commercial system at the turn of the twentieth century. Local geographic circumstances and political conditions transformed this administrative and ethnic border region into a center of opium production and distribution. To ensure their territories

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<sup>33</sup> *Kan lho'i bod brgyud nang bstan dgon sde so so'i lo rgyus mdor bsdus* vol.3, 152–178.

<sup>34</sup> *GNQSL*, j23.28b–29b.

would be immune from the chaotic opium policies and avoid the increasingly heavy opium taxes imposed on their Chinese neighbors by Gansu officials (and later by warlords), Drukchu Tibetans made a point of preserving their political identity affiliation. From the local Tibetan perspective, they willingly and spontaneously paid the *guanqian* to the gyelpo. And the Chone king served as a mediator and protector to keep Chinese officials and other potential intruders at bay.<sup>35</sup>

## Losing Control Over Tébo

### *Tébo Tibetans: Heroic Warriors or Treacherous Bandits?*

In the late Qing, the imperial government launched punitive expeditions, consolidated vast borderlands and presented the image of a more powerful state in Inner Asia than it had in the eyes of Westerners. Gansu officials increasingly interfered in affairs of the Tibetan native officials' domains. Backed by the repeated deployment of Qing military force, the imperial policy of *gaitu guiliu* was certainly transforming the indigenous rule toward imperial direct rule. Indeed, the visit of the Russian explorer Grigory Potanin (1835–1920), who travelled to Chone with the permission of the Xining amban in the sixth month of 1885, by no means indicated that foreign imperialist powers, like Russia, had gained the upper-hand over the Qing emperor and his governors.<sup>36</sup> For the Chone gyelpo, such foreigners were similar, in some respects, to Qing mandarins. He was obligated to accommodate these special travelers who carried letters of introduction from high officials and protect them as they crossed through his realm. He would receive additional similar orders in the coming years. Whenever such travelers arrived, he instructed the *tsowa* headmen and federation chief managers to

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<sup>35</sup> ZQXZ, 28–29; Interview with Chief Dörjé, Drukchu, July 25, 2016.

<sup>36</sup> Royal Geographical Society (Great Britain), *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* vol.9 (London: Edward Stanford, 1887), 234; Grigory Potanin, *Tangutsko-Tibetskaia okraina Kitaia i Tsentral'naia Mongoliia: Puteshestvie G.N. Potanina 1884–1886* (St. Petersburg: Izdanie Imperatorskago Russkago Geograficheskago Obshestva, 1893), vol.1, 237–244.

prepare lodging and food. Curious Tibetan villagers often surrounded and watched the foreigners escorted by the king's accountant and armed guards. Sometimes, local *tsowa* were assigned the *ulag* of providing transportation horses and yaks. The duty was taken by households in turn. Since the Drukchu valley had been in turmoil since the 1860s, Sonam Tobgyel arranged safer routes for these travelers. He prevented them from entering Tébo, which had long been treated as a “nest of bandits, robbers and thieves” (*tufeiwo/zeiwo* 土匪窩/賊窩) by his family and Front Range inhabitants.<sup>37</sup>

Up to the eighteenth century, the Chone royal lineage had launched several wars against Tébo Tibetans, who could barely sustain themselves on farming in the upper Drukchu valley. The repeated incursions were often triggered by the Tébos “wrongdoings,” such as robbery, tax dodging, and the illicit practice of Bon religion. Punitive campaigns commonly resulted in the killing of hundreds of Tébos, but could not keep them from rising again before long.<sup>38</sup> It is notable that Tébo residents sporadically raided Tibetan and Chinese villages alike along the Luchu and lower Drukchu valleys, and robbed caravans passing through their territories when the Chone king was too young or otherwise incapable of commanding a militia against them. The royal lineage would only respond with a campaign of vengeance upon receiving orders to do so from a Qing superior authority and when his militiamen outnumbered the Tébo opponents. If the king was too young, his grandmother or mother would customarily serve as regent and command the Chone troops. The majority of federation chief managers and *tsowa* headmen were elected in Tébo. Unlike their Drukchu colleagues, they worked closely with elder councils in a relatively egalitarian society. Resembling the “protective brokers” in northern China, they aimed to protect the interests of the federations and *tsowa*.

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<sup>37</sup> Joseph Rock, “The Principality of Choni,” *Unpublished Manuscript*, AAL, [Box 1], RTF9 1t, 3–4; Fan Changjiang, *Zhongguo de xibei jiao*, 44.

<sup>38</sup> Wim van Spencen, “Chone and Thewu: Territoriality, Local Power, and Political Control on the Southern Gansu-Tibetan Frontier, 1880-1940,” in *Tibetan Borderlands*, ed. Christiaan Klieger (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 209–230.



In a bad year, the *tsowa* stopped paying tribute altogether. They would not fulfill the soldier-horse *ulug* of an impotent ruler. For instance, no Tébo men responded to Sonam Tobgyel's feather-arrow token calling to subdue the Drukchu insurrection in 1880. The Chone kings never intended to directly meddle with local affairs, not to mention that the physical distance and geographical barriers left him few options to do so. The accountants, who needed armed guards to collect tribute, had not much to say in Tébo as well. The result was, in effect, that Tébo was left to its own devices.<sup>39</sup>

Local *tsowa* overall abided by the broadly recognized local laws and customs to manage communal affairs in the upper Drukchu valley. Bitter inter-*tsowa*/federation feuding was a common scenario. When a family's flock crossed a territorial boundary and grazed on the meadow of an adjacent *tsowa*, when a herd damaged the cropland of a neighboring village, or when a household's animal was stolen, any resulting minor brawl between members of different *tsowa* could lead to a feud and flare up into bloodshed which could last for months and even years. Such issues were either resolved by negotiation of *tsowa* elders, headmen and religious mediators, or were carried on as tit for tat vendetta across generations. As long as the gyelpo obtained annual tribute from the fourteen banners, Tibetans of the upper Drukchu would not be disturbed by other state agents. Once a small-scale looting or robbery was reported by victims to the Taozhou, Minzhou or Jiezhou yamen, the king would be ordered to pacify them. In the case of major raids on frontier Han residents reported to the provincial governor-general, a significant punitive force from Gansu and Sichuan would be dispatched to Tébo.

The stories of ferocious Tébo robbers, which were often sensationally exaggerated by travelers and the Tibetan and non-Tibetan communities around Tébo, distorted everyday

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with Kelzang Döndrup, Tébo, April 4, 2020. For the "protective broker," see Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State*, chapter 2.

reality of village life in Tébo. Their raiding and robberies were a sideline enterprise deeply conditioned by local circumstances. It was not the main occupation of local Tibetans. In fact, following a punitive campaign in the eighteenth century, a Chone regent enacted a rule requiring every Tébo household with two sons to send one to study in a Gelug monastery. The rule was engraved on a stele in Tébo and enforced for over a century and a half, and it clearly impeded population growth in local *tsowa*.<sup>40</sup> On top of this, repeated Qing state or Chone gyelpo-led punitive expeditions not only left physical destruction to local settlements, but also accelerated a sharp population decline in this area. The small-sized, low-yield farmland and limited manpower further impoverished Tébo people. According to Western explorers and missionaries who testified to the extreme poverty of this region, the summer blizzard, autumn hail or rainy weeks of the seventh lunar month could easily turn Tébo farmers into “thieves and robbers” who obtained grain and necessities by force. As the traditional tea, artifact, dairy and livestock trade was enlarged by the international wool-trade, the main tea-horse route across Upper Tébo flourished in the late nineteenth century. Robbing the caravans there gained Tébo people “extra money” known as “external wealth.”<sup>41</sup> Typically, several men of a *tsowa* carefully chose a target, laid an ambush in a strategic spot, robbed goods, money and weapons, and then fled and hid elsewhere. If their first strike was not successful, they followed and attacked again. When the robbed party fought back, the

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<sup>40</sup> Brag dgon pa, *Mdo smad chos 'byung*, 742.

<sup>41</sup> “There were not a great many travelers. Now there were areas where there were caravans...grain caravans and wool caravans and that sort of thing would come down the valleys, from the high plateaus down through the valleys to the Chinese border areas. And in there, the tribes, such as the Drangwa or the Tebus [Tébo], would try to extract toll from those who went through, or if it was a small caravan or lightly defended, why, they might actually try to take it. But it wasn't...it was a sideline, not the main business or the main occupation of the people.” See “Interview with Robert Dean Carlson,” ABGC, collection 205, T2 Transcript, 2. On the flourishing Kansu-Tibetan wool trade, see Jonathan Lipman, “The border world of Gansu, 1895-1935” (University Microfilms International, 1987), chapter 3. For a witness of wool traders passing through Chone Town, see *Rock Diaries*, AAL, [Box 14], Series VIII, vol.3, April 12, 1926.

Tébo men did not hesitate to kill them. When climbing over the mountain pass between Southern Tao and Upper Tébo, even lamas carried swords for self-defense.<sup>42</sup>

In 1887, a Tébo robbery was reported to Governor-General Tan Zhonglin. A few sentences in the *Qing Veritable Records* note that the Chone chieftain was ordered to promptly “pacify” the Tébos and register households and compile *baojia* along the upper Drukchu valley. Tan believed the reciprocal surveillance system could prevent further unrest in Tébo.<sup>43</sup> Given the fact that Sonam Tobgyel was not a strongman type of king and expected no trouble, he satisfied Taozhou and Minzhou officials with bribes as usual. After Tan resigned from the Shaan-Gan governor-general position because of illness several months later, the gyelpo did not bother to institute the *baojia* system in Tébo.<sup>44</sup> In the subsequent years, once a Tebo brigand case was reported to Minzhou or Taozhou, local officials saw it as an opportunity to extort bribes from the chieftain. Official troops might be sent to Lower Tébo, but they rarely advanced to Upper Tébo where most of the *tsowa* with the raiders were located. Similar to the Qing troops encountered by the French missionaries Régis-Evarist Huc and Joseph Gabet in the Huangshui valley, the Tao-Min Green Standard soldiers often pretended to chase brigands, but actually just harassed Tibetan settlements and hunted in the wild. When the troops returned, a report was faked and the Chone king was extorted, paying up to sweep under the rug the banditry of his subjects.<sup>45</sup>

The situation became even less stable in the 1890s when the Chone ruling lineage encountered a succession crisis again. Sonam Tobgyel and Consort Yang only had a daughter. Although he had married a concubine surnamed Zhang and had a son around 1886,

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<sup>42</sup> For a description of his own experience of fighting against the Tébo robbers, see Rock, “The Land of the Tebbus,” 119–120; *Rock Diaries*, AAL, [Box 14], vol.2, July 6, 7, 1925. For a vivid illustration on the Tébos who made agreement and paid compensation to Samatsa nomads after an affair, see Robert Ekvall, *Tibetan Skylines* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Young, 1952), 67–78.

<sup>43</sup> *QSL*, Dezong, j230.6a, j243.8a–b.

<sup>44</sup> *QSL*, Dezong, j252.16a.

<sup>45</sup> Régis-Evarist Huc, *Souvenirs d'un voyage dans la Tartarie et le Thibet* (Paris, 1851–1954), Charles de Salis trans., *Lamas of the Western Heavens* (London: The Folio Society, 1982), 78–81.

the infant did not survive. When Sonam Tobgyel was on his deathbed in the late 1890s, he discussed the issue with a trusted friend—the red-brush adviser Li Yangshan 李養善.<sup>46</sup> The result was that, based on the hereditary rule of Chinese clans, as Ropa the second branch had no male heir, he decided to pass the crown to Lobzang Tendzin Namgyel Trinle Dorje, the heir of Böyül the third branch. No one dared to question this decision at the moment. As Lobzang Tendzin was too young to take up the duties of the Qing official, the gyelpo and the khenpo, Consort Yang, a Chinese lady from a prestigious clan of Lintao, became the regent after the king's funeral. Then, Ugyen Nyima (*O rgyan nyi ma*; Yang Ying 楊楹), the heir of Shotsang of the fourth branch, opposed his nephew's assumption of the position. According to Tibetan hereditary rule, he was the lawful gyelpo. He reported the issue to the Taozhou yamen and demanded justice. However, it was advantageous for the Qing officials nearby the chieftdom to have a child in this important position. It gave them a perfect excuse to manipulate and extort the powerless chieftain and the widow of the wealthiest family in the region. They ignored the request of Ugyen Nyima and reported to the court that Lobzang Tendzin inherited the positions of chieftain and Chan master in 1902.<sup>47</sup> David Ekvall (d.1912) noted this peculiar political scenario, writing:

in recent years the neighboring Chinese mandarins have been unmercifully bleeding the present chief of Chone, who is but an unprincipled boy. The constant troubles between Chinese and Tibetans give the former many occasions, when hard up for money, to supply themselves from this never-failing source, and a systematic method of squeezing, facilitated by means of intimidation, is the result.<sup>48</sup>

Tébo Tibetans essentially ignored all prohibitions and threats of punishment from the Chone yamen. Unlike former regents who were Alaša Mongol princesses or daughters of other Tibetan regional rulers who commanded Chone troops in local wars, Consort Yang was a foot-bound Han woman. Tébos derided her as a “Chinese grandma” (*apo*) who could not

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<sup>46</sup> Yang Shihong, *Zhuoni yang tusi zhuanlüe*, 87.

<sup>47</sup> Tsewang, “Xiandaren,” 5; *TZTZ*, 841.

<sup>48</sup> David Ekvall, *Outposts or Tibetan Border Sketches* (New York, Alliance Press Co., 1907), 125.

even ride a horse. They knew that the boy on the Chone throne and the consort could do nothing against them, and so went about their sideline raiding business more blatantly than ever.<sup>49</sup>

### *A Seven-Year Drought*

Coincidentally, severe drought around 1900 in northern China caused famine in Gansu, which continued to deteriorate as subsequent drought, hail and other disasters followed over the next several years. Believing that the telegraph poles set up by the government in recent years caused the drought, many Gansu villagers pulled down the poles.<sup>50</sup> In the Luchu valley, there were no telegraph poles yet. Some ritual specialists and elders recalled that the drought lasted for seven years. Local inhabitants employed all means to pray for rain. The “Green Seedling Association” (*qingmiaohui* 青苗會), which was organized by the Taozhou Han gentry, urged the desperate Taozhou magistrate to punish the “eighteen dragon deities” (*shiba longshen* 十八龍神) who were supposed to prevent natural calamities. After a three-day parade on Dragon Festival, he whipped the god statues in front of the City God Temple on the sixth day of the fifth month. Nevertheless, not a single drop of rain fell that early summer. Traditional rain-praying rituals were repeatedly conducted in rural and urban areas. The Taozhou magistrate ordered the Daoist priest Yu, who was the most famous rain seeker and hail evictor of the region, to pray for rain. Yu built a high platform (*fatai* 法臺) with 72 tables in New Town. Every household of the town was required to put a pot of clean water around the platform. After the preparation work was done and the priest Yu stood on the *fatai*, Taozhou officials instructed yamen runners to pile oil-soaked firewood beneath the

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<sup>49</sup> Interview with Tubthen, Tébo, February 5, 2019.

<sup>50</sup> *GNQSL*, j24.37b–39a, j25.46a–b, j26.3a.

platform. If the rain did not come, Yu would be burned alive along with his platform. As

Lama Gyatso related to me with the well-known story relayed through generations:<sup>51</sup>

Yu recited mantras and wielded his wooden sword. The clean water around the platform was magically sucked up in the air. A massive dark cloud emerged to the southeast of New Town but immediately disappeared. The phenomenon repeated several times. Then, Yu fell off the platform and died instantly. The diviners in Taozhou soon revealed the causes of the drought and the death of Yu. An old Bonpa (lay Bon priest) of Laboshi Banner in southeast Taozhou, who possessed great supernatural power and knew the time of his death, passed away in his reclusive cave around 1900. When the members of Bonpa household found the deceased priest, they saw him crossing his legs and sitting in the lotus position. His nails and hair grew like those of a living person. They made the small cave a humble shrine, presented offerings and worshipped the Bonpa regularly. Taozhou Chinese believed that the undecayed corpse was a zombie (*jiangshi* 殭屍), the drought demon (*hanba* 旱魃) who dispelled Yu's clouds. Unlike the Chinese notion of zombie, the Tibetan religious perspective held that the deceased Bonpa did not disturb local Tibetans and could not be categorized under any of the three types of "rising corpses" (*ro langs*). Hence, several Chinese Daoist "officers of the rites" (*faguan* 法官), who were the lay exorcists and had expertise in dealing with ghost and demon matters, gathered at Golungnang *tsowa* of Laboshi. The Taozhou magistrate also sent a brigade of Chinese soldiers to support them. Yet, the Bonpa household and its brother-houses stopped them from proceeding to the sacred cave. Under pressure from Taozhou officials, the Chone yamen, the Green Seedling Association and Gelug monks, the Bonpa household agreed to cremate the corpse only if the deceased Bon priest permitted it to be so. Complying with the ritual for relocating tombs, a symbolic sedan-chair was made of a tea table and two rolling pins were put in front of the cave to examine whether the Bonpa was willing to be moved. Four young and brawny men were instructed to carry the empty sedan to a chosen cremation site. Yet, they were not able to lift and control the sedan. As no other choice remained, the exorcists decided to bring the drought demon down by force. They loudly recited mantras and used the magical weapons called thunder balls (*leiwán* 雷碗) and thunder rulers (*leichí* 雷尺) to attack the zombie. In the meantime, the soldiers shot the Bonpa with several rounds. When black blood bled from the corpse, they believed that the demon was killed. As no one dared to remove the corpse, they set fire to the cave and burned the zombie to ashes. Soon, the rain came to Taozhou.<sup>52</sup>

The scene of spiritual combat in Taozhou is evocative of the desperation in the Chinese society in Northern Tao. It was not unusual for Tibetan and Han groups along the valley to

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<sup>51</sup> TZTZ, 975–976; ZNXZ, 19–20; Group interviews with the mediums of the eighteen dragon deities, Xinbao, Zhaojiashan and New Town, June 18–21, 2015.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Lama Gyatso, Taoyan, October 19, 2016. This is a widely told story in Middle Stream and Lower Stream. Lama Gyatso works as a ritual specialist in Tibetan and Chinese villages of Laboshi. As he tells this story and interprets the phenomenon from both the Chinese and Tibetan religious perspectives, I use his narrative here.

make scapegoats of each other and so blame each other for the natural disasters. In this case, the Golungnang *tsowa* was blamed. A local conspiracy suggests that the Han migrants in Laboshi were frightened of the Bon priest, who was said to cast powerful spells and kill people instantly. A Han large house reported the drought demon to the Chinese diviners (*guashi* 卦師) since it was cursed for encroaching on the communal monastery's land. Han-Tibetan ethnic tension could escalate in these ways, especially in times of natural catastrophe.<sup>53</sup>

Meanwhile, the Han, Hui and Tibetan elites worked together again and prevented a multifocal Hui rising from erupting in Taozhou when the Third He-Huang Muslim Revolt was instigated by the Islamic sectarian feuds in 1894. Salar, Dongxiang and Hui insurgents assaulted Hezhou, Lintao, Gongchang and Lanzhou in 1895 and thereafter until the insurrection was fully suppressed in the summer of 1896. In those years, Front Range and North Range became the only peaceful places along the Amdo-Gansu frontier. Another tide of Han and Hui refugees from within southern Gansu flooded into the Luchu valley. Some Han families even sought refuge in Upper Stream. In addition to this, during the seven drought years, the famine was made even worse by the prevalence of the relative profitability of opium poppy cultivation throughout Gansu from the late 1890s onward. At the highest point, the price for a 100 taels of opium reached 30 taels of silver. With many fields given over to poppy growing and with sudden population increase with the coming of the refugees from the insurrection, serious grain shortages resulted in the Luchu valley and adjoining regions. Incidents of cannibalism were again heard about everywhere in southern Gansu.<sup>54</sup> Inhabiting the most densely forested valleys on the Gansu-Amdo frontier, Tébo Tibetans did

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<sup>53</sup> Interview with Lama Gyatso, Taoyan, October 20, 2016.

<sup>54</sup> *GNQSL*, j24.13b–14a, 40a–49b, j25.1a–36b, j36.3a.

not directly suffer from the drought. They never even heard about the religious drama in Taozhou. Yet, they experienced some famine conditions.

Unless driven to desperation, few Tébo residents would seek to plunder the Luchu valley at the risk of their lives, as the site of their main grain market. When a Tébo *tsowa* faced grain shortages, similar to the nomadic *tsowa*, the householders organized a small caravan to Taozhou or Minzhou in the early winter to sell or barter cattle, sheep, fur, leather, butter and other local products for grain through a long-established host household system. The hosts were often the brother-house relatives or trustworthy friends. In most *tsowa* on the Luchu River banks, at least one householder per village indicated that their Tébo *sha nye* used to come and purchase grain before the 1950s. The host normally provided his Tébo guests accommodation and food for several days. If his cash and grain were insufficient, he also served as middleman to sell Tébo products, bought grain and could make a profit in the process. This reciprocal mechanism was maintained for several hundred years and survived through the Hui revolt since most brother-houses of the Tébo *tsowa* were not directly attacked by the Muslim insurgents.<sup>55</sup> Tebos had multiple strategies to manage the challenges of making a livelihood in this environment; but now their options ran out.

The harvest season of 1903 was the breaking point for the desperate Tébos. By the sixth month, many Tébos could not maintain self-sufficiency or purchase grain anymore. Local *tsowa* united and formed bands of raiders. Every able-bodied man was obligated to participate in the communal action. They mounted their horses and poured into the Luchu valley, plundering villages in Minzhou and Taozhou. The Manchu Shaan-Gan governor-general Songfan arranged a suppression campaign. Around the same time, the Mongols of Wula Banner ruled by the Alaša prince were so concerned with a gang of horse thieves that

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<sup>55</sup> For a description of Tibetan nomad-farmer trade of the region, see Ekvall, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border*, 80–81. Interviews with former host households in *tsowa* of Middle Stream, May 20–24, 2015; October 15–19, 2016.



they raised a militia with more than 1,000 armed men and, believing the thieves to be Christian converts, announced an attack on the Catholic Church of the CICM (Congregatio Immaculati Cordis Mariae) missionaries in Bayannur. To avoid the diplomatic troubles of a “missionary case”, the Qing court immediately ordered Songfan to calm the incident, and he dispatched elite troops to Alaša.<sup>56</sup> Local imperial troops were reluctant to fight the Tébos. Minzhou officials were at the same time occupied with a riot sparked by the Elder Brothers Society (Gelaohui 哥老會). For unclear reasons, Regent Yang and the teenage king were kept out of the whole event. This campaign against the Tébo raiders was not in the least bit effective. The English botanist Francis Kingdon-Ward, who visited Chone yamen and skirted the Drukchu valley shortly after the incident, wrote:<sup>57</sup>

On one occasion having stolen the entire baggage train, they [the Tébos] finally stole the very horse which the chen-tai himself rode! —but it needs a Chinaman to fully appreciate the humiliating position of the poor military official who had to walk back to Tow-chow [Taozhou] and explain his inglorious case. Later, a squad of cavalry fared no better, all their animals being stolen by these ingenious filchers during the night. On hearing of this outrage, some responsible official sent a bombastic message to the Tepo [Tébo] chief, intimating that if the animals were not restored at once things really would happen; whereupon the horses were sent back to the Chinese camp. But alas! When they arrived, all the tails were found to have been bobbed by the jokers.<sup>58</sup>

As Kingdon-Ward was hosted by the Christies in Chone Town, the missionary family sent their Tibetan servant, a local monk Aku Sangye and a confidential converter, as the guest’s interpreter. As the Chone king prohibited his subjects from converting to Christianity, and local Buddhist authorities requested villagers not to mingle with or work for missionaries, Sangye faced cruel physical abuse and exile once his new belief was known by the public. He and local missionaries admired any opponents of the gyelpo, which affected the view of

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<sup>56</sup> *GNQSL*, j26.6a; *QSL*, Dezong, j518.11b–12a.

<sup>57</sup> See Francis Kingdon-Ward, *On the Road to Tibet* (Shanghai: Shanghai Mercury Ltd., 1910), 62–63. For the Gelaohui incident of Minzhou, see David Ekvall, *Outposts or Tibetan Border Sketches*, 109–112.

<sup>58</sup> Kingdon Ward, *On the Road to Tibet*, 63.

Kingdon-Ward. Yet, the plant hunter and his interpreter well understood a basic fact: such expeditions of local official troops were never successful in Tébo.<sup>59</sup>

This notion became solidified again after Songfan resolved the incident of the Wula Mongols and deployed nearby Sichuan and Gansu official troops to pacify the Gansu-Sichuan border in 1907.<sup>60</sup> Available Tibetan and Chinese sources are limited as to the details of this campaign. However, the German geographer Albert Tafel (1876–1935) and his Tibetan interpreter Brdyal Lango happened to witness this event. His account indicates that a wealthy Hui Muslim caravan was robbed by the Upper Tébo *tsowa* earlier in the year. An allied Gansu-Sichuan pacification force was deployed immediately after the robbery case was reported. From Songpan, 800 Chinese soldiers approached, blocking the valley pass between Upper Tébo and the steppe in the north. Another 2,200 soldiers from Lanzhou approached Upper Tébo from the southeast and planned to force the Tibetan insurgents to retreat northward into a prepared encirclement. However, the deep ravines, steep gorges, dense forests and scattered Tibetan settlements proved major obstacles for the Qing force. The Lanzhou troops were ambushed, harassed and dispersed in the narrow valleys.<sup>61</sup> Without any chance of successfully punishing the Upper Tébo *tsowa* by force, the Qing officials sought negotiation instead. The eight federation *tsowa* of Upper Tébo played a leading role in the summer-long meetings of 1907. The negotiation was carried out in the Tibetan way. Several headmen from nearby *tsowa* and eminent Bon monks of the region served as mediators. By the ninth month, an agreement was finalized under which the Tébos gave up a hundred swords, fifty gabled flintlock guns (Tibetan rifles) and fifty spears; yet, they could keep the 12,000 taels of silver they took from the Muslim caravan. The Qing relief army returned and

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<sup>59</sup> For the story of Aku Sangye, see David Ekvall, *Outposts or Tibetan Border Sketches*, 49–51, 135–138.

<sup>60</sup> *QSL*, Dezong, j518.6a; j530.3a.

<sup>61</sup> Albert Tafel, *Eine Studienfahrt durch das nordwestliche China und durch die innere Mongolei in das östliche Tibet*, vol.1, 299–301

the commander declared that the fierce Tébos were suppressed. The “confiscated weapons” were self-evident with respect to their success.<sup>62</sup>

By defeating the Qing troops and protecting their gains of “external wealth,” the Tébo residents saw their rather mixed reputation circulate widely among traders and neighboring Tibetans, Chinese and Muslims. They were often talked about as brave, strong and loyal people, but also lawless and bellicose bandits, as well as vengeful and capricious “beasts” at the same time. Following the event, a loose alliance of nine federations was organized in Upper Tébo. Local Tibetans planted opium poppies in the thin stretches of farmlands and regularly traded with Sichuan and Gansu opium merchants. Thus, they enriched themselves and upgraded the weapons. They kept pursuing the “extra money” and warding off the accountants. Their resulting reputation for “feral behavior” led the young Chone king to perceived them as his worst and most troublesome subjects. As to Lower Tébo, the situation for the ruling house was not much better. The official connections between the king and the eight banners were intermittently exercised by the Chone-designated accountants and abbots. The Qing bungling of the replacement of the *tsowa* with *baojia* and their failed attempts to repress Tébo brigands only facilitated the increasing separation of local *tsowa* from Chone. Without substantial coercive power to levy corvée, tribute and tax, the authority of the gyelpo significantly declined in Tébo. Afraid of being killed by the Tébos, the accountants tended to stay in Taozhou or Minzhou instead of assuming their posts in Tébo, and the granary officers dared not even leave Chone Town.<sup>63</sup>

## **The Dilemma of Chépa Banner**

### *The Legacy of Lama Karpo*

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<sup>62</sup> Albert Tafel, *Eine Studienfahrt*, 299.

<sup>63</sup> Joseph Rock, “The Principality of Choni,” 3–4.

The Chone royal house been bled by the Qing frontier officials, troubled by the disobedient *tsowa* along the Drukchu valley, and encroached on the religious domain by Labrang Monastery. Worse yet, it encountered the separatist movement of Chépa Banner in the northwest of Front Range. In contrast to the violent incidents in Back Range, the parties involved in this event, in which the central issue was the ownership of the newly established Chépa Monastery, were relatively restrained. From the 1880s onward, repeated quarrels concerning this issue in Chépa Valley had evolved into a quiet dispute between the Chone and Labrang major religious authorities. Owing to the complex relationship between the gyelpo family and the Jamyang reincarnation lineage, the two overlords never directly and openly tackled this issue. Up to 1907, as with many disputes in the Tibetan world, the dispute was settled in an unsettling way.

During the Tongzhi Muslim Revolt, the Hui troops demolished Chépa Gönpa and its three branch institutes—the dominant regional monastery in Upper Stream, which belonged to the Chépa khenpo lineage. The position of khenpo known as monk preceptor was transmitted from uncle to paternal nephew, and ratified by the Ming and Qing courts. Without colleges and dorms for their studies, the remnant monks either returned to communal monasteries or joined Labrang to continue their training and make a living. Only 21 *tsowa* of 120 households ruled by the khenpo survived the war. As the region was impoverished, the khenpo had no funds to restore the monastery, which remained in ruins for two decades. In 1883, a Chépa *dge shes* studying in Lhasa visited his fellow townsman Lama Karpo Künga Gyeltsen (1835–1895), who was born into a household of Zhingkham, one of the eighteen *tsowa* of Chépa Valley. The latter was famous for leading Mongol cavalry in combat against Muslim insurgents and Russian invaders in Xinjiang, and had received the title of Hotoktu 呼圖克圖 and that of Devout Chan Preceptor (*duxin chanshi* 篤信禪師) from the Qing emperor. To preclude this lama general from bonding with Dzungarian Mongols, the court

subsequently sent him to offer tea (*aocha* 熬茶) in Lhasa. As Lama Karpo was welcomed by the Dalai Lama and Kashak officials with a high-standard protocol, and especially after he donated large amounts of silver on various occasions and handled the Tibetan-Nepali dispute, the stories of his wealth and power widely circulated among Lhasa residents. Hence, the *dge shes* sought financial and religious support from Lama Karpo.<sup>64</sup>

The Chépa eighteen *tsowa* consisted of two semi-pastoral federative units, Yagak (*ya 'gag*) and Magak (*ma 'gag*), which co-organized militia in moments of crisis and collaborated in dealing with religious affairs. As they had formed a religious community of the Chépa khenpo since the fifteenth century, Lama Karpo immediately made the decision to sponsor the reconstruction. Following every procedure originally performed by the First Jamyang Zhépa to establish Labrang Monastery, Lama Karpo conducted fasting rituals at Pabongkha Hermitage (*Pha bong kha*) and consulted the highest Buddhist authorities about the location and protocol of construction in the spring of 1884. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama suggested he first build the Kālacakravajra College (*Sa ris grwa tshang*). The Oracle Néchung (*Gnas chung*) selected a site on the geomantic map of Chépa. After getting the certificate letters and the authenticating objects of the “great three monasteries” in Lhasa, Lama Karpo entrusted his elder brother Könchok Tendzin with the rebuilding task. Chépa Tibetans were thrilled by the silver, certificates and precious gifts from Lhasa. Könchok Tendzin invited two reincarnations from Labrang to organize a communal meeting, in which local monastic representatives, headmen and elders decided the building materials and laborers apportioned for each *tsowa*. In the eighth month of 1885, Chépa Tibetans started the construction.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *QSL*, Muzong, j134.14a–b; Dezong, j.104.13a. “Gunga zhalecan fengzhi ruzang aocha 棍噶札勒參奉旨入藏熬茶” (1883), Qindai gongzhong dang zouzhe ji junjichu dang zhejian 清代宮中檔奏摺及軍機處檔摺件, National Palace Museum, 408010038; Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las, *Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo*, 1707–1708.

<sup>65</sup> Skäl bzang legs bshad, *Rje btsun byams pa mthu stobs kun dga' rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 1994), 359–422.

At the same time, the lama general left Lhasa and travelled across southern China to Beijing. He met provincial governors, powerful officials and eventually had an audience with the Guangxu Emperor in 1886. For almost two years, he visited the central yamens one after another and waited for an imperial appointment. The court was unwilling to grant Lama Karpo a formal official position in Xinjiang. His political status was not decided even when he planned to return to Dzungaria in 1888. At this point, because of the British campaign on the southern border of Tibet, Sichuan Governor-General Ding Baozhen 丁寶楨 (1820–1886) and his successor Liu Bingzhang 劉秉璋 (1826–1905) suggested the emperor assign Lama Karpo to handle the Tibetan-British issue. They recommended the lama to serve as the regent of Tibet. His journey to Xinjiang was suspended again as the imperial bureaucratic evaluation lasted for several months. Due to Lama Karpo caused a diplomatic friction with Russia before the treaty negotiation that the Qing aimed to retrieve Ili in 1878, the officials of the Grand Secretariat (*dorgi yamun* 內閣) asserted that he was reckless, war-oriented and unqualified. Thus, Lama Karpo resumed his former plan and embarked on the journey to Dzungaria in the spring of 1890.<sup>66</sup>

It was at this time that the construction of Chépa Monastery required funding to proceed. Lama Karpo could not secure a stable income in Beijing. He petitioned the Guangxu Emperor for alms by stating that the monastery under construction was for celebrating the sixtieth birthday of the Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧太后. The emperor assigned Encheng 恩承 (1820–1892), the former Manchu secretary of the Ministry of Rites (禮部滿尚書), to inquire into the matter. Later, the investigation report from Taozhou confirmed that a monastery was being built in Chépa Banner under the jurisdiction of Chone Chieftain. Lama Karpo thereby was bestowed the emperor's handwritten plaque with “Jiqing-si 集慶寺” and 7,000 taels of

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<sup>66</sup> QSL, Dezong, j60.22a–23a, j235, 6b–7b; j240.13b. Skäl bzang legs bshad, *Rnam thar*, 348–360.

silver. In the official meeting with Lama Karpo, Encheng asserted that the emperor sponsored the construction and the monastery belonged to the Great Qing. He urged the lama to treat it as a project of the state, build an enormous compact of halls and temples, and recruit all yellow-hat monks of the region to recite sutras for the emperor and empress dowager. What Encheng was articulating was a bureaucratic cliché. But Lama Karpo needed to take these words seriously. He planned to create another regional university rather than affiliate the monastery with those of Chone or Labrang.<sup>67</sup> With the imperial funds flowing in, the project was carried on.

In the fourth month of 1890, Lama Karpo arrived in Lanzhou and planned to visit the homeland that he had left thirty years before. Local religious authorities well acknowledged Lama Karpo's wealth, political achievements and religious reputation. The Fourth Jamyang Kelzang Tupten Wangchuk (*Skal bzang thub bstan dbang phyug*, 1856–1916), an enthusiastic traveler and progressive leader who rapidly expanded the ecclesiastical realm of Labrang, dispatched a huge escort cavalry to greet the lama general. The Chone king was least interested in this religious figure. For him, Lama Karpo was a subject and an ordained monk in one of the Seventeen-Parish Houses. No Chone escort cavalry was dispatched to Lanzhou. Expecting the recognition from his home institute, the lama general declined Labrang's protocol escort that used the northern road from Lanzhou to Labrang via Hezhou. He took the southern route and returned to Chone via Minzhou, where the etiquette team of 48 Banners customarily received prestigious religious teachers to Chone. Only the escort cavalry of Labrang was in Minzhou.<sup>68</sup>

Lama Karpo abided the old customs and visited the king and briefly stayed at the Yongdü Palace, where the Chone rulers historically hosted many eminent Buddhist teachers

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<sup>67</sup> Skal bzang legs bshad, *Rnam thar*, 423–425; *QSL*, Dezong, j254.9b–10a.

<sup>68</sup> Skal bzang legs bshad, *Rnam thar*, 455–459.

and spiritual leaders. He learned of the intense political atmosphere in Chone Town. Since the king had ascended the religious throne, the five factions in Ganden Shédrupting fell to feuding frequently. Without any status and authority in the monastic community, the religious king was reluctant and unable to mediate these conflicts. Sonam Tobgyel and the religious authorities did not attach him enough importance. Yet, they were unsatisfied with his association with the Jamyang Zhépa, especially those generous donations to Labrang Monastery. In a casual conversation with his disciples later, he clearly belittled Chone as “a small place without foresight and erudite people,” and further commented that “Chone Monastery did not have a well-educated lama to properly teach the gyelpo and so he gave up learning Tibetan [language and religion].”<sup>69</sup> Lama Karpo sojourned at Labrang in the six month of 1890, where he received a ceremonial welcome. The Jamyang Zhépa endowed him with a second-rank residence (*nang chen*) and substantialized Lama Karpo’s religious affiliation with Labrang. Lama Karpo accepted this offer and became a leading reincarnation of Labrang. However, being a high-rank Hotoktu from Chone, his choice inevitably produced regional political consequences. Quarrels between Chone and Labrang arose in the religious domain.<sup>70</sup>

In the ninth month, Lama Karpo left Gansu for Urumqi to carry on the imperial mission and resolve the brewing grassland dispute between his Tarbagatai (Tacheng 塔城) Mongol followers and Uriankhai (Wulianghai 烏梁海) Mongol-Kazakh leaders. It turned out that this was a scheme of Qing officials to fully gain control of the Altai region. They considered the lama general a political opponent and strove to diminish his influence in Dzungaria. After relocating Chenghua Monastery 承化寺 built by him in the 1870s and the leading Tarbagatai Mongols to return to their homeland, Lama Karpo stayed shortly among these

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<sup>69</sup> Gazang, *Lama garao huofu zhuanlüe* 喇嘛噶繞活佛傳略 (Hezuo: Gannan ribao, 1990), 56; Skal bzang legs bshad, *Rnam thar*, 649–654.

<sup>70</sup> Zhazha, *Labulengsi huofu shixi* 拉卜楞寺活佛世系 (Lanzhou: Gansu minzu chubanshe, 2000), 240–243.



Mongol patrons as an eminent lama, a ritual master and a Buddhist teacher. He received abundant donations and sent them back to Chépa to complete the construction of the exoteric, esoteric and medicine colleges. In the sixth month of 1894, he departed for his new monastery in Chone, which was named as Trashī Chökhörling by the Dalai Lama.<sup>71</sup>

In the tenth month of 1894, Lama Karpo returned to Chone and waited at the new Chépa Gönpa for the coming sixtieth birthday of Cixi. He held a grand ceremony for the Empress Dowager and performed Buddhist initiation rituals in the eleventh month. In the fifth month of 1895, the Qing court ordered him to return to Xinjiang. As a sectarian conflict between the Yihewani and Khafiya orders led to a massive Muslim revolt in the Huangshui valley, Gansu-Xinjiang transportation was paralyzed. The Chinese, Tibetan and Muslim groups were coerced into revenge killings again in Gansu and Qinghai. Lama Karpo commanded Chépa Tibetan militia and attacked the Hui force in Lintao.<sup>72</sup> Two months later, he received the imperial instruction to handle the issue concerning British trade with Tibet. As the Thirteenth Dalai Lama assumed complete ruling power and the enmity between the Qing amban and Kashak officials became irreconcilable at this point, Qing China's sway over Tibet declined sharply. The Qing court needed a reliable Tibetan middleman. The recklessness of the lama general seemed no longer relevant and important. From the seventh month to the tenth month, the Guangxu Emperor sent multiple telegrams to urge Lama Karpo to depart for Lhasa. Unfortunately, Lama Karpo fell ill and his condition deteriorated. He died on the thirtieth day of the tenth month, leaving behind Lama Karpo title, Trashī Chökhörling and a series of unsettled matters as his legacy.<sup>73</sup>

### *Dilemma of Chépa Tibetans*

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<sup>71</sup> Gazang, *Lama garao huofu zhuanlüe*, 69–71; Skäl bzang legs bshad, *Rnam thar*, 550–68.

<sup>72</sup> Jonathan Lipman, *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China*, 142–154. For the activities of Lama Karpo, see *GNQSL*, j25.11a.

<sup>73</sup> *QSL*, Dezong, j368.12b, j372.8b, j375.12a, j376.2b–3a; Skäl bzang legs bshad, *Rnam thar*, 629–631.

After a century-long expansion, Labrang reached the margins of the Chone Kingdom and penetrated its religious influence into local *tsowa*. A jurisdictional border was drawn by the two political-religious powers from North Rang to Upper Stream. The border was superimposed on many controversial territorial boundaries of the *tsowa* separately ruled by Chone and Labrang. Owing to the seasonal mobility, land disputes and robbery/theft/raid practices of the pastoral and semi-pastoral *tsowa* along this border, inter-*tsowa*/federation feuds often broke out. Surprisingly, no direct confrontation erupted between Chone and Labrang. As the Chone ruling family had patronized every Jamyang Zhépa in the past two centuries, it never meddled in such conflicts. In contrast to its aggressive incorporations elsewhere, Labrang also did not integrate *tsowa* along the outskirts of the Chone Kingdom. Most disputes were mediated by esteemed local leaders and lamas, and settled by the involved *tsowa* in accordance with traditional customs.<sup>74</sup>

Yet, Labrang had become the most attractive monastic university, pilgrim destination and market in nineteenth century Amdo, whereas the religious influence of Chone had declined considerably. In the Chone-Labrang borderland, the shift of religious identity affiliation was common among *tsowa* under the jurisdiction of the Chone king. Tibetan householders and communal monasteries in Drukchu, North Range and Upper Stream preferred to send pupils and advanced students to Labrang. Conventionally, the seventeen-parish residences (*khang tshan*) managed pupils from different religious communities in the kingdom, and advanced monks pursued higher degrees in Lhasa. As receiving ritual and scholastic training at whichever institute was a personal choice, the Chone parish-assembly house did not interfere with the choices of local monks. Although Labrang cultivated these monks and some outstanding students became abbots of their communal monasteries, it never openly declared the prime-subordinate monastery relation with any communal monasteries in

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<sup>74</sup> Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 120–124; ZNXZ, 158–161.

the Chone Kingdom. There was never a problem as long as Labrang did not designate dharma-seat holders to manage religious affairs in the religious domain of Ganden Shédrubling. Notwithstanding, the spectacular ascendancy of Lama Karpo and the establishment of Trashi Chökhörling altered the policies of Chone and Labrang towards Chépa.<sup>75</sup>

Within three decades, the lama general accumulated remarkable military merit, economic wealth, political power and religious capital. In 1865, the Qing government conferred the Hotoktu title on Lama Karpo for his protection of Tarbagatai. This title was designed by the Qing to bestow on the highest rank Buddhist reincarnations. Being confused by the imperial award, Lama Karpo sent an attendant to consult Labrang authorities about the unprecedented case. The Jamyang confirmed that he was a reincarnation of the Dési Sanggyé Gyatso (*Sde srid sangs rgyas rgya mtsho*, 1653–1705), the regent of the Fifth Dalai Lama. Thereby, the Mongols of Tarbagatai revered the lama as an incarnation, and requested the Qing court to ratify the search for a reincarnation in 1896. The Shaan-Gan governor-general forwarded this petition to the emperor, who issued an edict that recognized Lama Karpo as the incarnated lama of Chenghua Monastery in Xinjiang.<sup>76</sup> The Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama performed rituals to supplicate his early rebirth and predicted the birth place would be in Amdo. In the process of legitimizing the reincarnate lineage, twenty-eight famous kings and saints were identified as the previous lives of Lama Karpo. Hence, as Lobsang Yongdan remarks, a *sprul sku* lineage was invented.<sup>77</sup>

A new spiritual lineage meant the inflow of political, religious and economic capital and the reconfiguration of local human, material and immaterial resources. Religious influence could easily turn into political power in the Tibetan region. The situation was quite sensitive

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<sup>75</sup> Group interview, Chone Monastery, June 25, 2017.

<sup>76</sup> The attendant was sent to Labrang from Xinjiang much later mainly because the Hui Muslim Revolt was fully repressed in Gansu in 1872. Skäl bzang legs bshad, *Rnam thar*, 322.

<sup>77</sup> Lobsang Yongdan, “The Invention of a Tibetan Lama General,” 87–89.

in such a border area. Chone authorities had long been dissatisfied with Lama Karpo for his generous donation of statues and silver to Labrang but nothing to Chone.<sup>78</sup> When Labrang led the construction of the new monastery in Chépa, the ecclesiastic leaders in Chone were alarmed. They were concerned with the interference of Labrang in all matters regarding Lama Karpo. Notwithstanding, the factional feuds escalated time and again at Ganden Shédrubling. The five factions had no intention to contend with the issue and offend the Fourth Jamyang. As a result, Chone Monastery was not pleased with Labrang, but it tolerated its religious infiltration.<sup>79</sup>

In 1895, this simmering Chone-Labrang friction evolved into a multifaceted contention gaining in intensity behind the scenes. As Lama Karpo never explicitly indicated the status of Trashî Chökhörling, the Chone authorities, Labrang lamas and Chépa Tibetans all seized the opportunity to interpret the ownership of this monastery. The eighteen local *tsowa* and their monks insisted that the monastery was their communal gönpa. They contributed land, material and labor to establish the monastery and dedicated it to Lama Karpo. It was not a restoration of Chépa Monastery which was owned by the Chépa khenpo and subordinated to Chone Göñchen. Instead, it was a regional Buddhist institute sponsored by the Qing emperor. For Labrang authorities, Lama Karpo was a second-rank reincarnation of their central university monastery. The construction was coordinated by the reincarnate lamas of Labrang. The new gönpa that adopted educational system, curriculums and monastic regulations and invited religious teachers of Labrang was a subordinate institute of Trashikhyil. Thus, the Jamyang assigned a dharma-seat holder to Chépa after Lama Karpo passed away.<sup>80</sup> Chépa villagers welcomed Labrang's appointment of *khri pa* to their valley, which would transform Chépa Banner into a religious community of Labrang so as to dissociate it from Chone.

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<sup>78</sup> Zhazha, *Labulengsi huofu shixi*, 240.

<sup>79</sup> David Ekvall, *Outposts or Tibetan Border Sketches*, 148–49.

<sup>80</sup> Zhazha, *Jiayang hutuketu shixi*, 243.

Because the Chone king fielded militia time and again to repress the Muslim revolts, the Chépa *tsowa* lost many men in battles and suffered miserably in the aftermath of the war. They intended to alter their religious affiliation and avoid the militia *corvée*.<sup>81</sup>

The Chone temporal and ecclesiastic authorities were alerted by the alliance of Chépa Tibetans and Labrang religious leaders who increasingly undermined Chone's political-religious sovereignty over Chépa Valley. From their perspective, the eighteen *tsowa* formed a banner ruled by the king and a religious community supervised by the parish-assembly house. The communal monastery of Chépa Banner was one of the three branch institutes managed by the Chépa *khenpo*, who himself was supervised by the Chone Senggang. This notion was buttressed by the Taozhou magistrate. A dharma-seat holder was sent from Chone to the Chépa valley straightaway. The *khri pa* assigned by Labrang had to retire from the post. As neither confrontation nor negotiation was an appropriate option, the Labrang regime decided to employ the Lama Karpo lineage to reassert control over the monastery. With the Jamyang Zhépa's divination, the searching team found Kelzang Ts trim Tenpé Gyeltsen (*Bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan bskal bzang tshul khrims*, 1896–1911) born in the north of Xining was the matching child. In 1901, the six-year old boy was enthroned as the Second Lama Karpo in Chépa. He was trained in Labrang and expected to take over the monastery after his eighteenth birthday. Nonetheless, Lama Karpo's disciples and patrons in Tarbagatai requested the reincarnation to ascend the dharma throne at Chenghua Monastery in accordance with the imperial edict. Urged by the governor-general, the young *sprul sku* departed for Xinjiang even though the Chépa Tibetans were unwilling to do so.<sup>82</sup>

As the Chépa monks could not count on the Jamyang to displace the abbot designated by Chone, they turned to the Taozhou magistrate for help. From 1897, the emperor granted an

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<sup>81</sup> Li Zongxian, "Shiqidai tusi yang yuan shuaibing hanwei taozhou," in *ZNWSZL* vol.7, 130.

<sup>82</sup> *QSL*, Dezong, j405.4b.

annual donation of 600 *dan* of grain to Chépa Gönpa. The grain was allocated by the Taozhou yamen. From the Taozhou magistrate's point of view, Jiqing-si was under his jurisdiction and Labrang was subject to Xunhua. The administrative border between the two subprefectures was clear. Labrang Monastery had no position to meddle in the religious matter in Taozhou. The emperor never conferred the eighteen *tsowa* to the Lama Karpo lineage. Therefore, the magistrate dismissed the Chépa representatives.<sup>83</sup> It was in 1905 that opportunity knocked for the Chépa *tsowa* when the first Gospel Church erected in Taozhou. In order to free themselves from the Chone rule, the eighteen *tsowa* sought help from the missionaries. In the local context, the foreign priests were respected by the king and the Chinese officials.<sup>84</sup> The Chépa representatives reached out to the church. David Ekvall commented on this bold move in immoderate, boastful tone:

A bitter animosity has for years existed between the lamaseries of Chone and Cheh pah kuh [Chaspa valley], for the heads of the former insist on exercising temporal power over the latter, which is the smaller *Gomba* [dgon pa]. This feeling was intensified when Chone *Gomba* authorities attempted to appoint the religious heads of Cheh pah kuh *Gomba*. Such authority was stoutly denied and resisted, and rather than yield to numbers and monies influence, Cheh pah kuh appointed a delegation to wait upon the missionaries at Tao cheo [Taozhou], for the purpose of offering, with properly drawn up deeds, the lamasery and all the property connected with it, to the *Fuh yin Tang* [Gospel Hall].<sup>85</sup>

However, Ekvall and his colleagues were well aware of the covert wrangling between the two predominant Tibetan powers in relation to this new intrusion of Western Christian missionary evangelism. The true intention of the Chépa monks was to upset the Buddhist authorities in Chone Monastery, who were antagonistic to the Christian missionaries and the locals working for it. As their mission relied on the acquiescence of the gyelpo and the Jamyang, the missionaries turned down the delegation's request despite it was a promising opportunity

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<sup>83</sup> *TZTZ*, 985–986.

<sup>84</sup> Robert Ekvall, *Gateway to Tibet*, 54; Howard Van Dyck, *William Christie* (Shelbyville: Bible & literature Missionary Foundation, 1956), 64–67.

<sup>85</sup> David Ekvall, *Outposts or Tibetan Border Sketches*, 148–149.

for them to set up a station in the Tibetan hinterland.<sup>86</sup> Consequently, the Chépa monks and *tsowa* continued to resist the religious control of Ganden Shédrupting and the military corvée of the Chone king. The ascendancy of Lama Karpo created a turmoil in local politics. His legacy left a pool of resources for Labrang to continue its religious expansion; it allowed Chone to maintain the hereditary control over a banner; and it permitted the Chépa eighteen *tsowa* to obtain more robust religious support and so resist the military *ulag*. Without any foreseeable solution, the case remained unsettled until a new twist occurred in the 1910s.

## Conclusion

This chapter, on the one hand, has illustrated that the *tsowa* societies adopted disparate tactics to survive unrests, handle crises and preserve themselves. Employing the communal initiatives and collective actions, as the Drukchu and Tébo cases show, the *tsowa* societies often achieved their goals through extreme and violent ways. The case of Chépa displays the dynamics of the overlord-subject relations, and the ebb and flow of powers in eastern Amdo. It is evident that local Tibetans sought solutions from external authorities such as the Qing officials and missionaries, and utilized the imperial policies to fight back when their lives and communities were disturbed by the overlord.

On the other hand, this chapter has shown that the kingdom was collapsing from its margins. Encountering the *tsowa* societies took various approaches to protect communal interests, the Chone king's rulership and Chone Monastery's authority were largely weakened by some *tsowa* societies. The gyelpo was criticized by the emperor, accused by the provincial officials and ransomed by the frontier mandarins. The banner system with respect to military *ulag* and taxation basically dissolved in the Drukchu valley. The Chone prime-subordinate monastery system also faced serious penetration of Labrang Monastery. All in

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<sup>86</sup> David Ekvall, *Outposts or Tibetan Border Sketches*, 149.

all, the natural catastrophes, local unrest, the rise of local and regional religious authorities and the Qing attempts at administrative regularization gradually undermined the political and religious authorities of the Chone ruling house and central university monastery.

Meanwhile, this chapter has introduced some novel phenomena and new players moving toward the center of the historical stage. The opium poppy plantation played an increasingly crucial role in transforming the agricultural economy of Drukchu and Tébo. In the coming decades, the *tsowa* societies, Gelaohui, opium traders and anyone having an armed force dominated the Drukchu valley. More and more Western missionaries and explorers came to the Amdo-Gansu borderland. They brought Christianity, modern weapons, Western medicines as well as troubles to this frontier, actively engaging in local affairs. Also, current money and guns came to be important to all households of the kingdom along with the militarization and the development of the wool and opium trades in Amdo-Gansu. For Tibetans on this violent frontier, the once loose local territorial identities and group solidarities were strengthened and expanded through various inter-*tsowa* relations over time.

This chapter also lays the groundwork for the fourth chapter. The deterioration of ethnic relations in this region eventually led to the devastating Tibetan-Hui conflict in the 1920s, and caused another tide of refugees flooding into Southern Tao, North Range and Drukchu. The following chapter will elaborate on how the *tsowa* societies navigated themselves in the turbulent Republican era, interacted with other historical players such as the Han and Hui warlords, and expressed their own voices when the nineteenth Chone king attempted to build up a stronger presence and maintain control over all 48 banners.



## Chapter 4 Encountering Western Travelers, White Wolves, Warlords, Rifles and Opium, 1908–1929

### Introduction

From 1908 to 1913, the Gansu provincial government carried on the late Qing policy of administrative regularization to displace the Tibetan native officials. Due to the power struggle between the Gansu Muslim military leaders, who propagated the “Gansu people governing Gansu” (*gan ren zhi gan* 甘人治甘), and the Han officials and warlords of the Anhui-Hunanese faction and the contemporary Anhui Clique 皖系, the administrative incorporation of the Tibetan region was not realized until the Hui warlords waged wars to take over Amdo from 1916 to 1925. Interestingly, the Luchu and Drukchu valleys were outside the areas of major turmoil. It seems that the Chone Kingdom was the most peaceful place in the broader region when the warlord conflicts, banditry problems and Tibetan-Muslim warfare devastated the Tibetan and Chinese regions all around it. In 1926, the power struggle in Gansu, which was further entangled in the political and military contention between the Beiyang militarists and the Nationalist regime, eventually evolved into a Muslim-Chinese war. In this marginal kingdom, the peace vanished, a major period of ethnic cleansing and massive destruction was unleashed, and more Han refugee-migrants resettled in the Chone Kingdom except a few areas.

This chapter illustrates the recovery of the commensal relationship between *tsowa* societies and local state to handle the offshoots of the revolution, warfare and political campaign in China proper. It argues that a higher level of autonomy emerged in Back Range and North Range when local *tsowa* societies’ interests were compatible with the local state’s need, the Great State was less intrusive and the regions surrounding the kingdom underwent

an extremely violent period. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section highlights Lobzang Tendzin, an adopted heir who encountered multiple dilemmas when he was enthroned ascended to power and restored the overlord-subject relations in Back Range. The second section elaborates how the Chone king took all chances to maintain good relations with various political and military players in the power struggles in Gansu, and endeavored to keep his realm outside the Tibetan-Muslim war centered around Labrang. In this process, he controlled Chépa Banner again. The third section focuses on the Fourth He-Huang Incident and examines its destructive social, economic and religious consequences in the Chone Kingdom. The fourth section covers the social and economic changes in the *tsowa* societies along with the development of the wool and opium trade on the Gansu-Amdo frontier, and the population increase of Chinese refugee-migrants in the Luchu and lower Drukchu valleys.

## **The Troubled Kingdom, 1908-1917**

### *The Rise of the Adopted King*

In 1908, Lobzang Tendzin attained maturity, and in keeping with the family tradition, officially was conferred the power to rule the kingdom at a grand ceremony presided over by the regent, Consort Yang, and witnessed by Qing officials and Tibetan lay and Buddhist authorities on the Gansu-Amdo frontier, the federation chief managers, *tsowa* headmen and reputable elders across the kingdom, as well as the Han and Hui social elites of nearby subprefectures. As a juvenile not yet twenty, and not a warrior-like person, he would be not regarded as a mature man in local society, so the adolescent nineteenth gyelpo was not considered a qualified ruler yet. Had the ruling house declared that Lobzang Tendzin was the son of Sonam Tobgyel, it could not control the spread of the information indicating that the newly enthroned king was an adopted boy. “The hairs of a dog and a pig came up,” as local

Tibetans remarked; only the pure Tibetan bone of the Yongdū Palace mattered. As discussed above, Sonam Tobgyel, the nineteenth king, was the child of a Chinese woman, and Tibetans considered Han bones unclean. In addition to the fact that he was adopted from the Böyül yamen of the third royal branch, he was not taken seriously by the *tsowa* subjects.<sup>1</sup>

In the religious domain, his authority was also at stake. Since his predecessor took up the secular and religious thrones concurrently, as a new practice of inheritance utilized by the ruling house, he possessed the combined political and ecclesiastic sovereignty in the Luchu and Drukchu valleys. The practice had inevitable flaws. With neither monastic training nor born religious authority like a reincarnation, a secular gönma had very limited influence in Chone Monastery and its prime-subordinate monastery system. Along with the secular and half-Chinese gyelpo who consecutively inherited the khenpo position, the religious influence of Ganden Shédrupling plummeted rapidly. In contrast to the former king, Lobzang Tendzin favored Buddhism.<sup>2</sup> He was aware of the key role of Chone Monastery in preventing disobedience of *tsowa*, the religious-political penetration of Labrang and the infiltration of missionaries. However, as a lay man, he had little ecclesiastical authority to deal with the inter-factional feuds in the central university monastery and most religious affairs across his realm. When the Thirteenth Dalai Lama Thubten Gyatso (1876–1933) was deprived of the title and was left in Xining awaiting an audience with the Guangxu Emperor in 1907, the gyelpo attempted to invite the spiritual leader to visit Chone. The king did so on the basis that his realm included the hometown of the Tsemönlings and many famous Gelug teachers and so was the place from which the ruling house accommodated Ü-Tsang authorities and had escorted them to China proper in the past. He intended to restore the authority of the Chone khenpo through Lhasa's recognition. Owing to the long-standing pro-Qing reputation of the

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<sup>1</sup> Yang Shihong, *Zhuoni yang tusi zhuanlüe*, 77–78, 82–83, 87–88; Interviews with the former yamen families in Böyül and Maru and elders of the twelve inner base-villages, May 20–24, June 2015; November 18–22, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Howard Van Dyck, *William Christie: Apostle to Tibet*, 64–67.

Chone rulers as local Tibetans suggest, the Dalai Lama declined this invitation.<sup>3</sup> Without any change to the status quo, the king basically conceded to Labrang assigning an abbot to Chépa Gönpa and absorbing monks from the Chone seventeen parishes.

In the meantime, as David Ekvall claimed, Chone was a “gateway” for missionaries who longed for the Christian evangelization of Tibet. In 1905, the first Tibetan mission station was set up near the Yongdū Palace at the foot of Chone Monastery by William Christie, an American of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) inspired by the Pentecostal movement. At this point, Gansu officials were slowly implementing the New Policies (*xinzheng* 新政). Based on the ten regulations issued by the Provincial Police Department to establish the official *baojia* mutual responsibility system and modern police system, an important duty of local police force was to “protect foreigners” (*baowei yangren* 保衛洋人). The Taozhou magistrate ordered the Yang chieftain to organize a patrol militia and protect the missionary family.<sup>4</sup> Having amicable relations with local and provincial officials, missionaries known as “foreign lords” (*yang laoye* 洋老爺) were regarded not only as religious opponents, but also as possessing political influence from a perspective of Chone Tibetans. The Chone yamen had to permit their work at the core of the kingdom. Although local villagers and monks boycotted the missionaries’ preaching and the presence of foreigners in general, and the ecclesiastic authorities forbade all householders from leasing a house to any missionary, the ruling house under the pressures of the Taozhou magistrate and Christie had to play along.<sup>5</sup>

Yet, a twofold decision regarding domestic and foreign affairs was made by the ruling house. First, the abandoned residence of the second Tshemönling Hutuktu in Chone town was

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<sup>3</sup> Lobsang Dongrub and Böpa Tsering, *Anduo gucha chandingsi*, 148–158; Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.1.

<sup>4</sup> McGillivray, “The Work at Choni Station, Kansuh,” *The Alliance Weekly* 44, May 15, 1915; *TZTZ*, 493–501.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Ekvall, *Gateway to Tibet: The Kansu-Tibetan Border*, 54; Howard Van Dyck, *William Christie*, 64–67.

sold to Christie. Since a Tébo man was murdered in this house, locals believed that the vicious Tébo ghost would kill every occupier of the residence. Monks of Ganden Shédrupting had conducted a quelling and averting ritual, and constructed a massive stupa (*mchod rten*) next to the haunted house to curse the Christies.<sup>6</sup> Local Tibetans were sure that these secret arrangements would bring disaster to the foreigners. This inobtrusive resistance persisted for years, and, ultimately, proved ineffective and was much mocked by the missionaries and Western visitors.

The second strategy of the Chone authorities was more effective. To avoid serious “missionary case” incidents or extortion by Chinese officials, the Chone yamen maintained friendly relations with the missionaries even as it rigidly prohibited the king’s subjects from converting to Christianity. Under the strong influence of the gyelpo and monastic power over the *tsowa* on the banks of the Luchu River, Tibetan converts were usually tied up by his or her thumbs, beaten and exiled after his property was confiscated by the community. Over years, the Tibetan converts could be counted on the fingers of a hand.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, Shotsang the fourth branch continued with the friction to seize the throne from the third branch. A maiden and a chief manager of the Chone yamen recalled that the newly enthroned gyelpo was often rebuked and disgraced by his uncle Ugyen Nyima in front of subordinates and guests. As he lost a lawsuit against his nephew in the Taozhou yamen, Ugyen Nyima appealed to the provincial government.<sup>8</sup> At that point, the late Qing court had initiated reforms and was starting to implement the New Policies. Shaan-Gan Governor-General Shengyun 升允 (1858–1931), a conservative Manchu official who selectively carried out the reform policies, finally separated the judicial institute from the provincial

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<sup>6</sup> Ward, *On the Road to Tibet*, 53. Same story was also recorded in Robert Ekvall, *Gateway to Tibet*, 162; Dyck, *William Christie*, 59–86.

<sup>7</sup> Local Tibetan communities strongly opposed missionary activities. Tibetan convert was cursed, threatened and physically abused by other villagers. See Robert Ekvall, *Gateway to Tibet*, 39; David Ekvall, *Outposts or Tibetan Border Sketches*, 51–52, 139–142.

<sup>8</sup> Interviews with Benma Tso, Lanzhou, February 6, 2015.

administration in 1909. Ugyen Nyima sent in his complaint to the procurate. The king was concerned with this lawsuit, and used silver to buy the superior officials' favor. As a result, his uncle did not receive any positive response from Lanzhou.<sup>9</sup>

Following the 1911 Revolution and the Xuantong Emperor's forced abdication, Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1881–1916), the first president of the Republic of China, appointed Zhao Weixi 趙惟熙 (1859–1917) the temporary governor (*dudu* 都督) of Gansu to reorganize the government and control the Provisional Provincial Assembly (*linshi yihui* 臨時議會). Like many contemporary leading civil officials in Gansu, Zhao belonged to the Hunanese faction, supported the Republic, but did not have strong military background. The military force of Gansu consisted of four Muslim divisions (*zhen* 鎮) in western Gansu and four Chinese divisions in eastern Gansu, respectively commanded by the provincial *tidu* commander Ma Anliang and the provincial military governor (*dujun* 都軍) Lu Hongtao 陸洪濤 (1866–1927). Zhao quickly resigned from the position after failing to provoke conflict between Ma and Lu. The president did not trust Ma for his earlier pro-Manchu stance, suspicious connection with the KMT and Hui identity. He designated Zhang Guangjian 張廣建 (1864–1938), another official of the Hunanese faction and his supporter from Anhui, to take the governorship in Gansu.<sup>10</sup> For Ugyen Nyima, the power struggles in Lanzhou had nothing to do with his plan. He saw the “change of dynasty” as an opportunity. In January 1913, Ugyen Nyima immediately reported the “arrogation” (*jianyue* 僭越) of Lobzang Tendzin to Governor Zhang when the social and political orders were restored in Gansu. He requested the interference of the Republican government for justice.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> In the fifth month of 1909, Shengyun was removed from the position as he strongly opposed the Constitutional Movement. *GNQSL*, j26.30b–31a.

<sup>10</sup> *GNQSL*, j27.10b, 32a–33b, j28.10a. The appointment of Zhang Guangjian was not revealed until he practically controlled Lanzhou. See *GNQSL*, j28.16b; Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in North-West China*, 121.

<sup>11</sup> “Zhuoni boyu shibian de qianhou,” *ZNWSZL* vol.1, 13.

At this time, the policies to establish the new political, fiscal and judicial systems reached the Gansu-Amdo borderland. The prefecture was reconfigured and replaced by a circuit (*dao* 道) and the subprefecture was officially renamed a county (*xian* 縣). After bribing Zhao Weixi or Ma Anliang, the Qing local officials remained in their positions with only their titles changed.<sup>12</sup> For the indigenous areas, the Provincial Assembly, which was under the close supervision of Ma Anliang,<sup>13</sup> made a progressive policy to promote administration regularization. As early as in September 1912, the Gansu government abolished the “chieftain system” and ceased donating grain and silver to the officially registered Tibetan monasteries. All petty chieftains in the Chinese dominated counties were deposed from their hereditary positions. The state-sponsored lamas in Lanzhou, Liangzhou 涼州, Xining and Anxi 安西 were cut off from government support.<sup>14</sup> In Amdo, as the Gansu government had limited political sway over local Tibetans, the Assembly moderated the radical “*gaitu guiliu*” policy of establishing counties and replacing native authorities with Republican officials. According to the new resolution of 1913, the provincial government ceased paying the annual official silver-salary (*suifeng zhiyin* 歲俸之銀), which was highly symbolic but insignificant in value, to the more influential chieftains. Aside from the fifteen chieftains of Xining, Zhuanglang 莊浪 and Pingfan, the Chone gyelpo and other Amdo Tibetan rulers had never received official salaries anyway.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *GQNSL*, j27, 40a-b. Based on Reginald Farrer’s experience of visiting Gansu governor in Lanzhou from the winter of 1914 to early 1915, many local officials, including his friend Jang who was the Qing Xigu magistrate, hanged around Lanzhou and waited for Gansu governor to offer them new jobs. See Reginald Farrer, *The Rainbow Bridge* (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1922), 11.

<sup>13</sup> Ma basically controlled the Assembly after he instructed Ma Qi to assassinate Assembly Speaker Li Jingqing in April 1912, and sponsored to resume the provincial assembly in August. See *GQNSL*, j27.17a–8b.

<sup>14</sup> *GQNSL*, j19.1a–4b, j27.19a–b, 33b–4b.

<sup>15</sup> Trashi Chökhörling, the monastery built for Cixi’s birthday in Chaspa valley, continuously obtained grain from Lintan County till 1917. Had bribed Ma Anliang and Zhang Guangjian, Lobzang Tendzin remained in power to rule the largest chiefdom of Gansu. See Sun Min eds., *Gansu shengzhi* 甘肅省志 (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin chubanshe, 1989), 938–941; *GQNSL*, j28.9b; Gongjue Cairang, “Yige lao zangmin de huiyi 一個老藏民的回憶,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.7, 37; vol.9, 57.

Although most policies of the early Republican era never substantially affected this remote and isolated kingdom, the Taozhou Yang Chieftain was no longer recognized by the Beijing-based Chinese state. Chone was put under the jurisdiction of Lintan county government in New Town. Durkchu was administered by the newly set up Xigu County government. Under this political circumstance, Lobzang Tendzin tried to tackle the issue locally. He bribed Governor Zhang to make a decision in his favor, and brought Ugyen Nyima to the negotiation by endowing the latter with a title of hereditary superior headman (*shixi toumu* 世襲頭目). The uncle accepted this offer.<sup>16</sup> In addition, a new yamen was set up near Chone Town, which ceded a royal estate and so further diminished the young ruler's authority. In the 1890s, Consort Yang had betrothed her youngest daughter to the son of the Li lineage 李氏, one of the eight wealthiest Han lineages in Lintao. Right before the marriage ceremony around 1903, she learned that the son-in-law-to-be had drowned in the Luchu River when he and a crowd watched an execution of Hui "rebels" from an old bridge, which had suddenly collapsed. Bankrupted by an opium addict and in difficulty, the Li family substituted another boy for their deceased son without telling the chieftain family. Consort Yang found and furiously took her daughter back to Chone.<sup>17</sup> Later, she decided to marry the daughter uxorilocally. The wealthy and reputable Zhou lineage 周氏 of New Town made a perfect match. To support her daughter, she built a yamen in Maru, one of the sixteen base-villages, and gave the manorial estate to the young couple. Lobzang Tendzin was anxious about the new yamen. He was concerned that a male heir of the first branch would end his rule. Thus, he invited lamas to perform rituals and cast a spell, cursing the Maru yamen so no one could replace him.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Interviews with Benma Tso, Lanzhou, February 6, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> David Ekvall, *Outpost or Tibetan Border Sketches*, 188–193.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with the granddaughter of Consort Yang, Maru, May 2016.



In addition, the political circumstances of Gansu brought further uncertainty to the young Chone ruler. Gansu was a contested province between the Beiyang government, the Hui Muslim militarists known as the Ma family warlords, and the Nationalist Party (GMD). The Tibetan areas adjoining the Chinese districts from Longnan to Hexi were oftentimes drawn into the contention among these powers. On the one hand, the domineering presence of the Hui Muslim warlord Ma Anliang of Hezhou and, then, Ma Qi 馬麒 (1869–1931) of Xining, who coveted the markets, territories and taxable populaces of Amdo, had been altering the geopolitical circumstance on this Chinese-Tibetan-Mongol-Muslim frontier. On the other hand, the Chinese officials of the frontier counties endeavored to maintain the status quo by managing local affairs on behalf of the Hunanese faction that dominated the provincial government. Although they had no control over the Muslim areas, they pressed the Yang chieftain in a similar way to what had occurred in the late Qing.<sup>19</sup> As the British botanist Reginald Farrer pointed out, Lobzang Tendzin was “busily engaged in strengthening his position against his Chinese suzerain with the most suspicious coquettings between the Mahomedan leaders and the prelates of Labrang.”<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the young gyelpo had neither intention nor strength to challenge the Chinese suzerain or any other neighboring regional authorities.

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<sup>19</sup> For instance, Han Chinese people resided in Hezhou city (Daohe County), and the Hui Muslims were concentrated in Nanguan outside the walled Hezhou. Once anything happened in Nanguan, Hezhou Defense Commissioner (*Hezhou zhenshoushi*, 1919) Pei Jianzhun could do nothing to deal with it. The situation for Lintan magistrate was similar to Pei's. In northeast Amdo, Ma Qi organized his own army in 1912, expanded his influence toward west and south Amdo by 1914, elbowed out his political rival—Xining Amban Lianxing in 1915 and thus fully controlled present-day eastern Qinghai. See Ma Hongkui, *Ma Shaoyun huiyilu* 馬少雲回憶錄 (Taipei: Longwen chubanshe, 1984), 64; Qinghai shengzhengxie wenshi ziliao yanjiu weiyuanhui, *Qinghai sanma* 青海三馬 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 1988), Chapter 3 and 4; Xuan Xiafu, “Ela caodi de tiji 俄拉草地的蹄跡,” in *Gannan wenshi ziliao* (hereafter *GNWSZL*), vol.4, 18–19.

<sup>20</sup> Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.1, 165. Possibly due to his unpleasant experience in the Chone Kingdom, according to Reginald Farrer's self-glorified narrative, the Chone gyelpo had a very bad relationship with Governor Zhang. Notwithstanding, George Pereira indicated that the Chone gyelpo maintained quite amiable relationship with Governor Zhang, but was badly drained of money by Zhang's successor Lu Hongtao in the 1920s. See Sir Francis Younghusband, *Peking to Lhasa: The Narrative of Journeys in the Chinese Empire Made by the Late Brigadier-General George Pereira* (London: Constable and Company, 1925), 90.

In sum, the adopted king carefully handled the intricate domestic issues and sought chances to legitimize and consolidate his rulership. From his perspective, Front Range was the only region that he could levy tax and military corvée without too much trouble. Due to suspicious connections between the North Range federations and Labrang Monastery, he considered the chiefs and headmen of the “twelve banners outside pass” no longer to be trustworthy. The *tsowa* of Tébo Fourteen-banner were still beyond his practical control. In Drukchu, the power of the accountant, who could collect taxes and handle lawsuits on behalf of the king, was in effect restricted by the Chinese officials in Xigu and Jiezhou. Ruling a vast region on the margins of disparate powers, he had to make “suspicious” diplomatic moves to keep himself in power without offending anybody and by putting to use all resources that might enhance his image as a formidable ruler in the eyes of his subjects.

*Drukchu: White Wolves, Western Botanists and Tibetan Raiders*

In February 1913, the Gansu provincial government demarcated Xigu from Jiezhou and established a county on the foundation of the Qing Xigu Battalion. The new county bordered Minxian, Wudu and Wenxian. As the policy of *gaitu guiliu* had been put into effect, in theory, the county magistrate governed all Tibetan *tsowa* subjected to the Chone gyelpo and the Tangbar pönpo along the lower Drukchu valley. In actuality, the magistrate only governed local Han Chinese living in the lightly fortified villages near the county seat. Although he governed the cooked Tibetan *tsowa*, which were nominally registered into the four *lijia* of Xigu Battalion in 1730, he could only actually carry out taxation in a few *tsowa* on the banks of the Drukchu River in the vicinity of Xigu Fort. The *tsowa* in the branch valleys and high mountains were managed by local headmen and elder councils. The Qing policy of administrative regularization and limited power to enforce it on the ground generated a governance vacancy of state and overlord for these Tibetan *tsowa*. Likewise,

from 1913 onward, the nominal administrative incorporation of Drukchu also enabled some *tsowa* of the Tangbar pönpo's four banners to gain a more flexible political identity affiliation. In times when the native ruler collected tax, some Tibetans declared to be the subjects of Xigu County who paid tax to the Republican government, and claimed the reverse when the state collected tax in Tibetan areas.<sup>21</sup>

Normally, the Han and Tibetan settlements along the Drukchu River banks were raided by the Tébos of upper stream or the Tsagang Tibetans of Singka Banner when they suffered crop failures. These Han residents also faced excessive state extraction of grains, fees and corvées by Xigu officials come good or bad harvests.<sup>22</sup> Out of the need for protection, communal militia and sworn brotherhoods became common in this region. Local men often possessed weapons, practiced martial arts and admired the chivalrous spirit. The Elder Brothers Society had been developing in the Han, Tibetan and Qiang villages for years. In late 1913, some Drukchu inhabitants learned finally of the fall of the Great Qing. Inspired by the Gelaohui and historical romance (*yanyi* 演義) stories, a group of local famers enthroned a new emperor. In November, Gou Zhan'ao 苟占鰲 and Shi Yanlong 石彥龍, both Tibetans (or Qiang) of Gosta Valley, claimed that a “big-ear boy was the true dragon and son of heaven” (*zhenlong tianzi* 真龍天子).<sup>23</sup> They, on their own, appointed the left and right prime ministers (*zuo you chengxiang* 左右丞相) of the new emperor and raised an armed force. Although Farrer certainly exaggerated with his claims that the county government soldiers shot their muskets without aiming and believed that bullets automatically found their

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<sup>21</sup> Interview with Chief Dörjé, Drukchu, July 25, 2016.

<sup>22</sup> Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.1, 204.

<sup>23</sup> Even nowadays someone with two big ears is considered a blessed person. Resembling the iconography of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, big ears are also the auspicious sign of a reincarnated lama. Moreover, a category of ghost is also known by local people as “big-ear ghost,” which is especially vicious. The fate of anyone who encountered a big-ear ghost will be miserable death. Meanwhile, Tibetans along the main lower Drukchu valley had been long exposed to Chinese civilization. Daoism has been a part of local religion as well. Gou and Shi believed that a new emperor would be naturally enthroned as the Qing dynasty was over. They chose “big-ear” to be the major sign of the *zhenlong tianzi* largely on the basis of local religious and social context.

enemies, this force was assuredly poorly trained. They deserted when not paid or when sent on any perilous mission.<sup>24</sup>

Xigu Magistrate Zhang, an elderly and scholarly man who recalled the destructive Gotsa Revolt in 1880 and was fully aware of the limitations of his own troops, reported the incident to Lanzhou.<sup>25</sup> The Han-dominated provincial government lacked a deployable army. To prevent Ma Anliang from spreading his influence into the Tibetan region, the governor issued relief instructions to Lobzang Tendzin. The Chone gyelpo had no choice but to abide by the order from Lanzhou. He fielded a small militia, which was likely the police force known as his private guard (*huweidui* 護衛隊) recruited a few years before, and sent his uncle Ugyen Nyima and a superior headman as commanders to suppress the insurrection. As few responded to the call of the “emperor and prime ministers,” the insurgents were promptly arrested and beheaded.<sup>26</sup> Yet just as this incident concluded, another threat of insurrection approached Drukchu all the way from the Central Plains of China.

In the spring of 1914, news and rumours of the White Wolf Army (*bailang jun* 白狼軍) or the Wolf Bandits (*langfei* 狼匪) flooded into Gansu. White Wolf was the demonized pseudonym of Bai Lang 白朗 (1873–1914), a Henanese who organized bandits, Gelaohui members, deserters and famine-stricken peasants to plunder the rich and revolt against the Beiyang government.<sup>27</sup> The force attacked cities in central China, disrupted the rail lines to Beijing, and became an obvious threat to the Beiyang regime. Yuan thus deployed the elite army and drove the Wolves across northern China. Given Bai’s anti-gentry and anti-tax

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<sup>24</sup> Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.1, 259–60, 276.

<sup>25</sup> *ZQXZ*, 30.

<sup>26</sup> *ZQXZ*, 30.

<sup>27</sup> For using Bailang as a case study of “social banditry” in China, see Elizabeth J. Perry, “Social Banditry Revisited: The Case of Bai Lang, a Chinese Brigand,” in *Modern China* 9, no.3 (1983): 355–382; also see Phil Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China* (California: Stanford University Press, 1988), 54–61. For the activities of the Wolves and disparate local reactions in south Gansu, see *GQNSL*, j28.23b–33b; Jonathan Lipman, “The border world of Gansu, 1895–1935”, 191–203.

stance, the insurgent army grew rapidly along the routes through which they fled and pillaged. When Bai retreated to Shaanxi, Yuan appointed Lu Jianzhang 陸建章 (1862–1918) as the superintendent of the West-Route Pacification Force to eradicate the Wolves.<sup>28</sup> Pursued by Lu and blocked by local government troops, Bai was forced to enter southern Gansu in late April. At this point, the Gansu army was reduced by Zhang Guangjian; local police guards were poorly organized, and their Qing-era firearms were outdated. Most Gansu cities and counties were poorly defended. According to official reports, after storming Tianshui on May 3, the Wolves assaulted all counties between Wudu and Longxi.<sup>29</sup> Local officials, gentry and guilds often contacted the Wolves through local Gelaohui leaders and paid them off to not attack and loot their towns.<sup>30</sup> Oral histories of Tianshui and Wudu suggest that the Wolves only destroyed local magistrate yamen and fought government troops. Bai encountered astonishingly light resistance across mountainous southern Gansu. After receiving pay-offs and provisions from local communities, Bai's rag-tag force left the cities and towns intact and marched on to other places.<sup>31</sup>

In mid-May, Bai directed his army to Wudu, from where he attempted to advance southward and establish a stronghold in Sichuan. To thwart Bai's potential move toward Lanzhou, Amdo, Sichuan or Shaanxi, Governor Zhang planned to lay siege to the Wolves in the gorges of southern Gansu. Chased by Lu Jianzhang from the east, pressured by Zhang Guangjian from the north, and blocked by the Sichuan Army from the south, Bai turned toward the Luchu valley. The Wolves' arrival at Lianghekou 兩河口, the intersection of routes to Xigu and Minxian, destabilized the lower Drukchu valley. Whilst local Han residents were more worried about the Tibetans of Bōdé *tsowa* (Wuduguan 武都關) six *li*

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<sup>28</sup> NSHA, *Zhonghua minguo shi dang'an ziliao huibian* 中華民國史檔案資料匯編 (Nanjing: Jiangsu fenghuang chubanshe, 1991), vol. 3, 60–71.

<sup>29</sup> NSHA, *Zhonghua minguo shi dang'an ziliao huibian*, vol.3, 74–88.

<sup>30</sup> Jonathan Lipman, "The border world of Gansu, 1895-1935", 191–195.

<sup>31</sup> *GQNSL*, j28.23b–33b.

north of Xigu. Wang Guochang 王國昌 and Du Shizhong 杜世忠, two Tibetan or Qiang men who held the *xiucai* 秀才 degrees, called a gathering of 1,000 villagers of the four Tibetan *lijia* in the name of tax resistance and threatened to topple the Xigu yamen. Local people indicate that the revolt was stirred up by the excessive opium fines imposed by the warlord in Wudu, and that it was joined by many more raid-oriented Tibetans.<sup>32</sup> The leaders and most insurgents of this *tituan* 提團 (local term refers to a gathering and revolting group) were Gelaohui members. They contacted the Wolves and planned a joint attack on Xigu. The *tituan* would assault from the north once the Wolves appeared in the south. The soldiers of Xigu defensive force, among whom many were Gelaohui members, would shoot into the air and await the successful occupation of their sworn brothers. However, the White Wolves never advanced on Xigu. The Xigu magistrate dunned several merchants and gentry families of the town, raising funds for a pay-off that was sent to Bai at Lianghekou. They requested Bai to march toward Tanchang and Minzhou instead of trekking up the valley to the isolated and destitute Xigu town. Learning of Bai's betrayal, the *tituan* launched the assault on Xigu Fort on their own.<sup>33</sup>

Coincidentally, two Western plant hunters, Reginald Farrer and William Purdom (1880–1921), had just been expelled by Tibetans and were staying in Xigu to prepare for another floral exploration. A few days before, they had visited the Singka Banner of the Chone king to collect *Primula*. Choosing between the two trails entering the village where they lodged, their caravan adopted for the easier one descending the sacred mountain of Tsagang *tsowa*. In early May, the village had just conducted the most crucial communal ritual of summer. As the least accident of weather might destroy their whole yield, lamas of Kaha Monastery (Gaer-si) were invited to quell the wrathful earth spirit and request the mountain god to

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<sup>32</sup> The term “yamen” was widely used to refer to the government in south Gansu up to the 1950s. For the brief information of this revolt, see *ZQXZ*, 30; Group interview with the Bödé tsowa elders, July 26, 2016.

<sup>33</sup> Group interview with the Bödé tsowa elders, July 26, 2016.

protect the wheat and barley sprouts from hail and storm; male villagers celebrated the *laptse* Festival; elders gathered, recited mantras for two days and muted themselves on the third day. Afterward, to not offend the *yul lha*, domestic animals were restricted from grazing on the grassland of the sacred mountain's slope and villagers were forbidden to use that trail.<sup>34</sup> It was clear that the botanists' caravan seriously violated this local rule. After they lodged in a host household, the dharma-seat holder of Kaha Monastery came accompanied by monks and local elders to inquire as to the intentions of Farrer and Purdom, who had no clue of their misdeed.<sup>35</sup> From Farrer's perspective, although the monks were satisfied with his reply that he was a "Western Lama engaged in procuring Tibetan flowers to beautify the shrines of Europe," a plot was hatched by the monastery and village.<sup>36</sup> The next morning when Purdom approached a mass of lilacs on the hill trail amid the cropland behind Tsagang *tsowa*, the armed Tsagang men arrested him. According to local custom, no one should step into the farmland from the *laptse* Festival to the weeding season. The botanists provoked the enmity of Tsagang villagers again. With many guns pointed at his back, Purdom was threatened with execution. In this critical moment, the monks of Kaha Monastery appeased the irate villagers, saved Purdom, and urged the botanists to depart Tsagang as soon as possible and avoid entering these Tibetan mountains ever again. Farrer and Purdom thereupon returned to Xigu town in mid-May. When the Bödé Tibetans besieged Xigu Fort, they decided to aid the magistrate to defend the county seat with their repeating rifles.<sup>37</sup>

During the battle, the insurgents stormed the city gate, the official soldiers fired in the air, but the botanists aimed at the attackers. Wang was instantly killed by weapons reported to

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<sup>34</sup> Interviews with the Tsagang elders, July 27, 2016.

<sup>35</sup> Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.1, 178–180. In the meantime, Farrer was drying his shoes on the fire brazier in the middle of the traditional Black Tibetan living room. Based on local custom, hearth is where the birth deity (*skye lha*) and stove deity (*thab lha*) dwell. Females maintain a very intimate relation with these deities who protect parturition of woman, health of family members and fortune of the household from the disturbance of vicious spirits. Drying shoes will definitely irritate these protector deities and cause disasters on the household in accordance with local customs.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., vol.1, 182.

<sup>37</sup> Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.1, 187–189; Interviews with the Tsagang elders, July 27, 2016.

sound like “constant thunder.” The *tituan* quickly dissolved into chaos and the participants fled. Yet, killing Tibetans in combat had consequences for all involved—Chinese, Tibetans, and the foreign botanists. Farrer and Purdom’s Gansu-Tibetan Track of plant hunting was impossible to continue due to these disturbances. The Chinese soldiers resented the two Westerners for their intervention. Their anti-foreign feeling burst to the surface. In the following days up to September, these soldiers deserted, wearing civilian clothes, and threatened to kill the foreigners. And along the valley Tibetans prepared themselves for the relief force and any chance to hunt down the botanists.<sup>38</sup>

The first punitive force to arrive at Xigu was from Sichuan. Falsely informed the Gansu Muslims and the Wolves were cooperating as they looted civilians when pursuing Bai, the Sichuan commander avoided confrontation with General Ma Anliang and redirected his mission to punishing the Tibetan rebels. Tibetans around Wuduguan mobilized all able-bodied men, and dug disguised water-pit traps along the paths to their hamlets. They soon trapped a squad of Sichuan soldiers, stoning and burning them alive. Thus, the outraged commander led a revenge attack before which the Tibetans fled into the forests and gorges. The commander vented his fury on the empty villages by setting them alight. Then he informed the Xigu magistrate of the success of the “pacification” and continued to passively pursue Bai Lang.<sup>39</sup>

The second punitive force, indicated by Farrer, was a Muslim military unit that had happened to be in the vicinity of Wudu. When Governor Zhang learned that two foreigners were threatened and almost killed by the Tsagang monks, and sent the army to investigate the issue. Actually, the troop was sent to deal with the *tituan* incident and rehabilitate Xigu insurgents. During its month-long stay, the punitive force ransacked the Chinese and “cooked

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<sup>38</sup> Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.1, 263–264, 281; vol.2. 232; Group interview with the Lianghekou elders, July 25, 2016.

<sup>39</sup> Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.1, 278–281, 285–286; vol.2, 39.



Tibetan” settlements much like a particularly devastating raiding party. Even though distant from the turmoil of the lower Drukchu valley, Tsagang Tibetans packed up in panic as well and fled. A monk was sent to spy on the Muslim troops. Teased by a Hui peddler who deliberately informed the monk that the relief force targeted Tibetans, the monk’s report led to the Tsagang headman asking the gyelpo to mediate on behalf of the *tsowa*. Based on Farrer’s narrative, Lobzang Tendzin inflicted a heavy penalty on Tsagang Monastery for offending the foreigners, then, paid off the Muslim commander and the government’s inspector to conceal the incident from Governor Zhang.<sup>40</sup>

From the Xigu magistrate’s viewpoint, the Sichuan troops smashed the existing mutual tolerance between the Xigu yamen and local Tibetans. This was a result of the Xigu yamen’s inability to expand its governance beyond the Han areas, and the *tsowa* societies’ resistance toward every form of state penetration. Farrer romanticized the magistrate’s explanation and described this practice as the custom which “prescribed a course of mutual and perfectly amiable brigandage, each party robbing the other discreetly, and nobody conceiving bad blood against anyone else.”<sup>41</sup> In effect, the magistrate collected tax from the cooked *tsowa* adjoining local Chinese settlements; some cooked and raw *tsowa* raided the Chinese villages on a small-scale in bad harvest years; the Han and Qiang populaces were too small to resist the raiders or revolt against the yamen; thus no terrible bloodshed resulted. After the Sichuan troop’s incursion, the magistrate assumed that the “amiable” situation would be replaced by one marked by vengeance. Nonetheless, the Tibetan-Chinese tension never broke into another revolt in the lower Drukchu valley because Tibetan casualties were fewer than those of the relief force and they didn’t consider the revolt a failure. Afterwards, the Xigu government had less and less authority in Drukchu.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Interviews with the Tsagang elders, July 27, 2016; Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.1, 288; vol.2, 98, 222.

<sup>41</sup> Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.1, 288.

<sup>42</sup> Interviews with Chief Dörjé and the Bödé *tsowa* elders, Drukchu, July 25–26, 2016

### *The Wolves Across the Luchu Valley*

On May 19, the scouts of the Minzhou magistrate found the marching Wolves about a hundred *li* northwest of Xigu. The messengers were so frightened at the prospect of being caught by Bai that they returned to report straightaway when they only saw one or two hundred of them. As the Wolves were often divided into small brigades, Magistrate Zhu Zhaogui instructed the militia to seal the gates and defend against the Wolves. The braves drove off the initial attack of the vanguard at the east gate. Then seventeen Wolves scaled the city wall and ascended from the north gate, where they were repelled again with one killed and three wounded in the brief exchange of shots. At that moment the Wolves appeared in full force with around 20,000 men. Enraged at the death of their fellows and the resistance of Minzhou, Bai launched a full-scale attack at the north, west and south gates. Missionaries at Minzhou station indicated that the Wolves “brought medieval warfare with modern weapons.”<sup>43</sup> They stuck swords into the interstices of the bricks in the city wall to form escalades, climbed to the top of the wall, and quickly captured this market town.<sup>44</sup> After several rounds of shooting at Minzhou, they broke into shops and looted civilian houses. The panicked townsfolk hid their children, ladies and valuables in closets, potato pits or hay chapels. But Minzhou was too small to accommodate this army, and the Wolves shifted eventually just to demanding animals, foods and clothes, even women as night fell, from all households including the mission station. In four days local people suffered one of the worst banditry assaults in local history. Thousands of farm cattle were butchered, horses and mules stolen, hundreds of young women raped, and over a thousand men slaughtered. Many townspeople and villagers escaped from the horror, fleeing in the middle of the night. They

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<sup>43</sup> Dyck, *William Christie*, 82.

<sup>44</sup> Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.2, 75.

crossed the Luchu River, trekked on the mountain trails under the cover of darkness, and took refuge in Chone.<sup>45</sup>

The encirclement undertaken by the Beiyang government was taking final shape in the Luchu valley. The Gansu, Sichuan and Shaanxi armies blocked the Wolves in the east and the south. Ma Anliang deployed his West Army (*xijun* 西軍) in the north to impede White Wolf advancing to Lanzhou from Hezhou.<sup>46</sup> Taking the topographical advantage of the Luchu River and the Taizishan Mountains as physical barriers, Bai was forced into a snare in Northern Tao. Both Old Town and New Town were in no condition to mount a resistance. As Ma's troops were primarily stationed in Hezhou, he only dispatched Ma Qi along with a brigade to Old Town. The latter did nothing but openly announced that "White Wolf comes to slaughter Hui people and eradicate the Islamic religion" (*bailing laile shahui miejiao* 白朗來了殺回滅教). Therefore, the imams of the local Huasi and Beizhuang *menghuan* proclaimed that those who died in combat against the Wolves would attain Shahid (martyrdom). The spirit of stiff resistance was high in Old Town.<sup>47</sup>

Meanwhile, the Lintan Magistrate, Lin Fengshao 林鳳韶, and the Chone gyelpo were ordered to restrict Bai from marching further to Labrang and Didao. Apart from a small official force, Lin and the Han-Hui social elites promptly fielded a militia. The plan was for the defense forces of the twin towns to cover each other in accordance with the changing circumstances. The Chone troop would surprise the Wolves from behind. On May 22, 1914, eight of Bai's scouts arrived at New Town and demanded provisions for the full army. Lin allowed them to stay overnight at an inn outside the south gate and had them killed at dawn.

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<sup>45</sup> Dyck, *William Christie*, 81–88; Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.2, 74–76; William Simpson, *Missionary to Northwest China, 1892–1949* (unpublished manuscript, Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Missouri), 18–19. Margaret H. Jamieson, *Kansu: Some Old Ways of China* (unpublished manuscript of the diary, The Christian and Missionary Alliance Archives, Colorado Springs), 128–129.

<sup>46</sup> NSHA, *Zhonghua minguo shi dang'an ziliao huibian*, vol.3, 83, 95, 89.

<sup>47</sup> Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 109–111.

The same day, the Wolves crossed the Luchu River at Yehuqiao 野狐橋, the only bridge connecting Minzhou and Northern Tao. To obstruct the Gansu Army that had just arrived at Minzhou, Bai destroyed the bridge. Ma Qi secretly directed his brigade to escape toward Hezhou. Knowing little about Bai Lang, many Chinese fled to Southern Tao and North Range. Some claimed that “a giant wolf is coming” and some stated that the “Hui Muslims rebel again.” Hence when the Wolves proceeded toward Taozhou, there was just the waiting die-hard Muslims and local militia.<sup>48</sup>

In the early morning of May 24, the Wolves climbed over the rammed-earth city wall of New Town and sacked the county government. They smashed store doors, broke into houses, burned the mosque and temples amid a tumult of screaming and shooting. Magistrate Lin fled to Old Town and deployed the *menghuan*, Xidaotang and Han militias at the strategic passes along the approach to Old Town. The following morning, the militias clashed with the modern rifle-equipped Wolves. Except for the Hui Muslims armed with gabled flintlock guns (*danguaizi* 單拐子), most local men were equipped with swords and farm implements. The militia was vanquished and withdrew to Old Town. To prevent the insurgents ascending the city wall, the militia demolished houses abutting the outside city wall. Seeing the 20,000 Wolves flooding in to the valleys, Lobzang Tendzin retired to Chone Town, from where he fled to Böyül. In the afternoon, Bai laid siege to Old Town. A negotiation was carried out. Bai’s commander stated that they would immediately leave once they had taken supplies. A Hui militiaman shot at him while he was talking. Bai thus launched a full-scale assault on the town, encountering the fierce resistance that sealed its fate.<sup>49</sup>

The battle continued for the whole day and through a rainy night. Farrer and Purdom, who arrived in Taozhou later and heard about the fighting from local residents, wrote that

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<sup>48</sup> Xidaotang ed., *Xidaotang shiliaoji* (Xining: Qinghai minzu xueyuan, 1987), 11.

<sup>49</sup> Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 109–111

“the bodies of men that went out to attack the invader lacked coherence and generalship, and not their fiercest efforts could stem the advance of the conqueror.”<sup>50</sup> At dawn on May 26, the Wolves succeeded in taking the top of the south wall. They shot down into the crowds of militia and townspeople. The official soldiers and policemen retreated northward and took refuge in Shentsa *tsowa*. Brutal street fighting followed:

Tao-jô (Taozhou) was taken by storm, and the Wolves immediately set themselves deliberately to destroy every living thing within the walls, not only the men and women, the cattle and horses, but down to the very dogs and cats in the lanes. The gates were stacked up to their arches with carrion, and the streets a chaos of corpses. Lust and fire played their part, and the women of the place, when they had served their turn, lay scattered limb from limb. The missionaries...escaped betimes in a wild flight upon the Alps (Lubasi)...they could see the glare of the burning city, to which for many weeks after they were not able to return, owing to the stench of corpses that stretched far out of the country like a miasma.<sup>51</sup>

In this Muslim dominated commercial town, after many Hui males had died for Shahid, more than 2,000 of the aged, female and children Hui Muslims gathered in Upper Mosque (Shangsi 上寺) and Lower Mosque (Xiasi 下寺), barred the gates from inside and immolated themselves. As both sides lost several thousand people during the siege of Xidaotang Mosque, Bai and the leader of this Islamic sect called a truce. The Xidaotang agreed to provide horses and supplies. When the Hui men delivered the horses, four of them were shot by the Wolves. Around thirty men of each party were killed in the following gunfight. Then the Xidaotang followers fled to Southern Tao and sought refuge in Naktselga *tsowa*.<sup>52</sup>

Both local inhabitants and the Wolves suffered terrible losses during the sacking of Old Town. Every house was either burned to the ground by the local militia or by the Wolves. Several news reports noted that around 10,000 corpses were left unburied for

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<sup>50</sup> Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.2, 101–102.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. Farrer indicated that Taozhou was captured on May 25. Chinese official reports and other sources suggest that the Wolves seized Old Town on May 26 and left for the neighboring Zhangxian and Gangu counties on May 27. See Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 111; NSHA, *Zhonghua minguo shi dang'an ziliao huibian*, vol.3, 84–86.

<sup>52</sup> Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 111; Xidaotang ed., *Xidaotang shiliaoji*, 11.

months in this small border town.<sup>53</sup> Frustrated by the resistance at Taozhou, the Bai Lang leaders determined to return to Henan. Taozhou became the turning point of their rising. They split into two divisions and proceeded eastward to Longxi via Zhangxian 漳縣 and Minxian on May 27. At Yehuiqiao, the bridge destroyed by the Wolves four days before, the place was now guarded by the Chone troops. Several hundred insurgents were drowned crossing the river while under the gunfire of the Tibetans. Those that made it subsequently ran into the Gansu, Sichuan and Shaanxi relief armies all over southern Gansu. Only a few thousand of Bai's original force successfully made it back to Henan a month later.<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, on the Gansu-Amdo frontier, the consequences of the violence swirling around Bai Lang's foray into the area stirred up further troubles in the Chone Kingdom.

### *Reconquering Tébo*

Knowing that the Bai Lang force was approaching, the missionaries at Taozhou took refuge at Tagé Gönpa (*ta rge dgon pa*; Lubasi 录巴寺), a small Tibetan monastery of Southern Tao, fifteen *li* northwest of Chone Town and five *li* south of Old Town. As the Minzhou mission station was demolished like other fine buildings of the town, local missionaries moved to Tagé.<sup>55</sup> The abbot of Tagé Gönpa was an incarnated lama, who had passed away among his Mongolian patrons in 1906. Given that the Tagé, Lupa and Gyangba

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<sup>53</sup> David Plymire indicated there were "seven thousand bodies", see his *High Adventure in Tibet* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1959), 41; a newspaper report stated that 10,000 people were killed in Old Town alone. See "'White Wolf' Kills 10,000", *The New York Times*, June 19, 1914. Lipman estimates that people died in the sack of Taozhou was between 8,000 and 15,000. See "The border world of Gansu, 1895–1935", 197–198.

<sup>54</sup> NSHA, *Zhonghua minguo shi dang'an ziliao huibian*, vol.3, 86–91, 108–123; Dyck, *William Christie*, 89–90; Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.2 103–105; Ding Junru, *Lintan huizi shi*, 111–112.

<sup>55</sup> The missionary party of Minzhou was saved by two young female converts who gave themselves to the Wolves when the raiders threatened to shoot William Christie while the latter insisted that no woman was in the station. They fled out of the town under the cover of darkness and returned after the Wolves raided toward Taozhou. Dyck, *William Christie*, 90–91; Robert Ekvall, *Gateway to Tibet*, 64–66.

*tsowa*, which patronized the Tagé reincarnation, were full of Chinese refugees who were less interested in donating money or sending their sons to the monastery, Tagé Gönpa was on the edge of bankruptcy.<sup>56</sup> With little income and few pupils, the regent/treasurer (*srid skyong* or *phyag mdzod*) could not afford to search for the reincarnation after his master's death. The C&MA missionaries William Christie and William Simpson had taken refuge and learned Tibetan language at Tagé in times of social unrest.<sup>57</sup> They were friends of the treasure and familiar with the condition of Tagé. In order to cross the border and work among Tibetans, they purchased the monastery on behalf of the C&MA with 250 dollars from the treasurer in 1907. Through this "amazing bargain," they attained the whole estate consisting of two huge assembly halls, several monks' residences, 100 *mu* of farmland and forests, and an elaborate collection of artistic items which ended up in Chicago's Field Museum.<sup>58</sup> It seems that the deal was concealed from the Tibetan villages in the Luchu River. No missionary worked at Tagé Gönpa until late 1911. The C&MA, CIM (China Inland Mission), Assemblies of God (AG), and Swedish Pentecostal (SP) workers in south and west Gansu were concerned about the violence of the 1911 Revolution, the potential rebellions of Hui Muslims and the threat of the local Gelaohui, so that they all took refuge at this monastery. A destructive "renovation" was carried out over the winter. They scrubbed mural paintings, tossed statues into the Luchu River, drifted the timbers from the assembly hall down river to Lintao for the construction of a new church, sent some wood carvings to America, named the monastery the Lelacheur Memorial Station, and believed that the gate for the evangelization of Tibet had been opened.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> William Simpson, *Missionary to Northwest China*, 14–15.

<sup>57</sup> Christie Letters, July 2, 1895; Robert Ekvall, *Gateway to Tibet*, 26–28, 58–59.

<sup>58</sup> The whole collection was brought to America by Christie on his 1907 furlough. Dyck, *William Christie*, 73–74; William Simpson, *Missionary to Northwest China*, 13.

<sup>59</sup> Robert Ekvall, *Gateway to Tibet*, 58–62; "Interview of Robert Dean Carlson," ABGC, Wheaton College, Collection 205, T2 Transcript, 3. "Some of the carved wood ended up in Chicago's Field Museum through the agency of Dr. Berthold Laufer who happened to be in the area." See Spengen, "Chone and Thewu", 226, also see Jamieson, *Kansu: Some Old Ways of China*, 98.

However, the missionary work was long foiled by the Chone gyelpo, lamas and Tibetan villagers. Located near the ferry-crossing of upper Southern Tao to Northern Tao, Tagé Gönpa was a pilgrimage site and main lodge for the Valley Drokpa, Titima and Tébo Tibetans who travelled to Old Town or Chone. In early 1912, Chone and Tébo Tibetans learned about the bizarre deal and the destruction of Tagé Gönpa through pilgrims and caravans. Although many monks and lay people were infuriated by this desecration and destruction of the missionaries, except for occasional cursing or throwing stones at the missionaries, no serious revolt against them erupted. This seems to have been because the king's prohibition was effective in Front Range; and also, the missionary refugees had either returned to their original stations or taken furloughs from 1912. Moreover, Tagé Gönpa was supported by the Druktsa Seven-banner and, hence, the issue, properly speaking, ought to have been handled by the prime manager of this alliance. The king was restrained from meddling in the affairs of Druktsa by the imperial court. And, the prime manager ratified by the Taozhou yamen dared not provoke the "foreign lords." Thus, the case remained unresolved until the missionaries and some Han converts from Lintan and Minxian sought refuge at this small monastery again in 1914. At this point, as Ekvall explained in his own terms, "there merged a strangely concerted and malignantly directed attempt to wipe out the missionaries and forever prevent missionary occupation of Tibetan territory."<sup>60</sup>

According to the C&MA missionaries, the gyelpo and lamas intrigued with some Tébo *tsowa* with a message emphasizing that the missionaries had fled to Tagé with all their valuables.<sup>61</sup> A local tale indicated that foreigners discovered hidden silver beneath the ground of Tagé Gönpa and so had acquired the monastery.<sup>62</sup> In either case, the Tébos were convinced that a great fortune awaited them there. The missionaries reported that "the

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<sup>60</sup> Robert Ekvall, *Gateway to Tibet*, 58, 60, 67.

<sup>61</sup> Dyck, *William Christie*, 95.

<sup>62</sup> "Interview of Robert Dean Carlson," T2 Transcript, 3.



sorcerers and religious leaders prophesied success, the living Buddhas blessed the effort...

Thus it came that seven hundred Te-bus (Tébos) crossed the passes—the largest raiding party that had ever come down into the border country.”<sup>63</sup> On one June night, a Chinese woman of Upper Stream, who understood Tibetan, noticed the approach of a large Tibetan band, learned of their plan and warned the missionaries in advance. The Tébos counted the men and firearms of Tagé Gönpa during the daytime and launched the attack in the evening. The monastery was advantageously situated on high ground and was fairly well defended by the staff of the different missions.<sup>64</sup> Although use of firearms was controversial among missionaries, Christie had obtained rifles and ammunition from the Lintan government. The SP protestant missionary Jens Rommen had a repeating rifle, which would prove a serious problem for the raiders.<sup>65</sup> Farrer wrote that:

Instantly rose the clamour of battle. The Tebos had their loaded guns, and torches in hand to fire the temple. The missionaries flew valiantly to arms in defence of their lives, wives and goods. Shots and shouts and screamings filled the quiet night, and dazed the dog to silence. Very sensibly ignoring any prehistoric and un-Christian remarks about “if a man would take your coat, give him your cloak also,” the missionaries so pressed their victory out on to the hillside that when the vanquished raiders at last gave ground and fled they left five corpses on the field, beside the wounds they carried with them to their own lawless land away out in the western wilds.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Jamieson, *Kansu: Some Old Ways of China*, 79; Robert Ekvall, *Gateway to Tibet*, 67; Dyck’s source suggests that the band was numbered 170 people. *William Christie*, 93. Robert Carlson indicates that “a couple of hundred” attacked the mission. See “Interview of Robert Dean Carlson,” T2 Transcript, 4. Ivan S. Kauffman (missionary of Taozhou) stated that 160 to 170 raiders attacked the monastery. See “Miraculous Deliverances from Raiders and Robbers Through Nights of Terror and Days of Famine,” *The Latter Rain Evangel*, April 1915, 23.

<sup>64</sup> Wim van Spengen mistook Farrer’s narrative which reads “the Topos have very obligingly announced that they meant to wipe out the missionaries at Rou Ba Temple on some convenient date between the ninth and the sixteenth of August.” This was the revenge announcement of the Tébos instead of the plotted attack around June, shortly after the sack of Taozhou. Spengen, “Chone and Thewu”, 226. Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.2, 159.

<sup>65</sup> Dyck, *William Christie*, 92–93, 95; “Interview of Robert Dean Carlson,” T2 Transcript, 4; Kauffman, “Miraculous Deliverances from Raiders and Robbers Through Nights of Terror and Days of Famine,” 23–24.

<sup>66</sup> Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World* vol.2, 97. Farrer frequently criticized missionaries for their misconducts and preaches in long paragraphs. He also constantly worried about a surprising robbery of the Tébos when he hunted flowers at the outskirts of the upper Drukchu valley in July. As to the casualty of the Tébos, Robert Carlson states that only one was killed. Dyck revealed that the Tébo left three casualties. Dyck, *William Christie*, 96; “Interview of Robert Dean Carlson,” T2 Transcript, 4.

Afterwards Christie submitted a report to the Lintan magistrate, who investigated the incident and appealed to Governor Zhang for pacification. In the aftermath of the failed raid, a punitive force from Lanzhou was soon sent to the upper Drukchu valley. Since the Tébo federations had long adopted a practice of mutual warning, the Tébos would have known in advance about the arrival of the Chinese soldiers and fled into the old-growth forests. As it was not clear which *tsowa* participated in the attack, all of Tébo was the target of this punitive campaign.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, the Chinese troops tentatively entered Tébo, burned three empty villages and returned to Lanzhou. Learning that the punitive expedition was perfunctory and without any practical achievement, Zhang required Yao Bingyi 姚秉義, a Chinese commander of Lu Hongtao's Zhenwu Army (*zhenwujun* 振武軍), to “properly punish” the Tébos.<sup>68</sup> But instead of sending his men against the warlike Tébos, Yao instructed the Chone gyelpo to suppress his own subjects. Lobzang Tendzin regarded this as a chance to re-subdue the Tébos and please the provincial governor. He recruited 2,000 soldiers through the soldier-horse *ulag* from the thirty banners of Front Range.<sup>69</sup> The Tébos remembered the kings who integrated Tébo into the banner system with several bloody campaigns. With the presence of the gyelpo, the *tsowa* of Upper Tébo Six-banner abided by the practice of “depending on ruler and circumstance” and yielded without resistance. They guaranteed to pay taxes and joined the Chone force. However, the sixteen *tsowa* of Takra

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<sup>67</sup> In the course of an organized raid, if it was a communal decision, at least one able-bodied man of every household attended the action compulsorily. As Takra banner did not have a good reputation amongst other Tébo banners, the *tsowa* of Takra valley tended to cooperate with their neighbors of the same federation instead of the unfamiliar and even hostile *tsowa* of other federations. If there were 700 raiders, it means that Takra banner and some *tsowa* of Upper Tébo participated in the looting together. If the looting band had 160 to 170 Tébos, it means that either only Takra banner launched the attack since they were the final target of this expedition and their household number was approximate to the number of the raiders, or it was not a communal decision and only some young men of Upper Tébo executed the plan. George Pereira (1865–1923) specified that a Takra village had 25 families (the average household number of a clan *tsowa* of the region) when he crossed Takra valley from northern Songpan in 1922. Sir Francis Younghusband, *Peking to Lhasa*, 90.

<sup>68</sup> Dyck, *William Christie*, 96; Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.2, 97.

<sup>69</sup> *Rock Diaries*, AAL, [Box 14], Series VIII, vol.3, July 21, 1925. The Chone gyelpo was also assisted by the Nyentsa gönpo Zan Tianxi, who provided a small militia. ZNXZ, 20.

Banner, who were either the main pillaging force or the scapegoat of the Tagé incident, determined to resist the punitive force by every means.<sup>70</sup>

When the militia approached Lower Tébo in early September, local banners expected Takra to submit to the king. It was the first time that such a large force had actually entered the region since they had affirmed their allegiance to the Chone regent Tsünmo Sonam Gyangdzom a century before. The Takra Tibetans had barred the trail into the Takra valley with huge logs. For years they had benefited from opium poppy cultivation and the sideline in robbery; thus, out of necessity, they had mostly replaced their locally-made muskets and armed themselves with modern military rifles. They conducted opium business with the Gelaohui members of Sichuan and purchased advanced rifles from Hui Muslim merchants. On the gyelpo's side, most soldiers were Han Chinese recruited from the Riverside Tibetan villages where his influence was dominant. As this militia had not upgraded their firearms for years, the fate of these poorly trained and equipped militiamen was predictable. The Takra Tibetans seized the high ground and concentrated fire down from behind the logs; the Chone militia suffered severe casualties. Thereupon Lobzang Tendzin abandoned the expedition and withdrew from Takra. He had little choice but to negotiate peace with the Takra *tsowa*. Meanwhile, he bribed the Chinese commander into reporting the success of the expedition to the Gansu governor.<sup>71</sup> The headmen and prestigious elders of the Banner, and eminent lamas of Tébo mediated the negotiation. Chone and Takra agreed to secure a thirty-year truce.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> In his diary, Rock did not indicate the precise date of this expedition. According to the oral histories of knowledgeable Chone and Tébo elders, nonetheless, there was no other punitive expedition against the Tébos launched by the Chone gyelpo between 1912 to 1927 except the one in 1914. After this expedition, Lobzang Tendzin re-controlled the in-kind tax of the whole Tébo valley except the Takra banner. Liang Chongwen, "1944 nian yang fuxing zai diebu de wuzhuang jinyan huodong 1944 年楊復興在迭部的武裝禁煙活動," in *ZNWSZL*, vol.3, 69; vol.7, 43–46; also see *ZNXZ*, 20.

<sup>71</sup> "From which followed many months of tangled bribery and intrigue between the Mahomedan soldiers, the Tepos, the Chinese authorities, and the Prince of Jo-ni;" see Farrer, *On the Eaves of the World*, vol.2, 98.

<sup>72</sup> "The method for getting anywhere was to get a friend through an introduction from a mutual friend. That was the only way that you could operate." See "Interview of Robert Dean Carlson," T2 Transcript, 6. For examples of this norm of "travel by introduction," see Rock to Potter, July 20, 1925, RIVaF3-8t, 1–2.

Consequently, the Chone throne restored control in terms of taxation again in the fourteen Tébo banners. According to the negotiated terms, Tara Banner continued to pay the annual tribute, a cow valued at thirty silver dollars (*yinyuan* 銀元) for Lobzang Tendzin, who, in turn, would ward off any of the Republican government's further attempts at punishing these Tibetans. To appease Christie and the missionary party, the king guaranteed that travelling in the Luchu valley would be safe for foreigners. As the traditional way of control over his distant and unpredictable subjects in the upper Drukchu valley was not suitable to timely protection of Western travelers, Lobzang Tendzin often emphasized the danger of the Tébos to persuade foreign explorers to avoid the Tébo region and so not risk any diplomatic trouble. Hence in Western accounts, the Tébos were assumed to be extremely dangerous even though they never crossed the limestone range of the Dieshan and troubled the Luchu valley ever again.<sup>73</sup> For most Tébo Tibetans, they were assured that the Chone troops never entered their *tsowa*. They greeted the gyelpo on the main route, promised loyalty, received his blessing and joined his militia against the Takra *tsowa*. As their settlements were not disturbed by the Chone soldiers, they derisively recalled this with the humorous phrase: “the army of Chone never arrived, (like) the alcohol of beans never fermented” (*Co ne dmag la yong rgyu mged. Sran ma'i chang la langs rgyu myed*).<sup>74</sup>

## **The “Most Peaceful Place” on the Turbulent Frontier, 1918–1927**

### *On the Fringe of the Tibetan-Muslim War*

In March 1916, the Third Belmang Tsang (1854–1918) served as the Labrang regent after the Fourth Jamyang Zhépa passed away. Gaining the support of most monastic officials, the regent was inclined to follow the traditional practice by which the Secretariat (*yig tsang*)

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<sup>73</sup> Rock, “The Principality of Choni,” 2; Edwin Carlson, “Our warlike Tibetan neighbors,” *The Alliance Weekly* 63, March 24, 1928, 186; Dyck, *William Christie*, 97.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Kelzang Döndrup, Tébo, April 4, 2020.

autonomously handle monastic and civil matters, and let Xunhua continue to monitor military affairs. The treasurer Li Zongzhe 李宗哲, an ethnic Monguor, was in alliance with the Henan Mongol prince and the Muslim warlords.<sup>75</sup> Disputes arising between the two factions escalated into mutual scorn and reached an apex when a poster stating the treasurer had illicit sex with the consort of the deceased Henan prince appeared on the wall of the Labrang market in May.<sup>76</sup> The young Mongol princess urged the regent to investigate the rumor and restore her parents' reputation. A monastic joint assembly was held in July. Apa Alo (Huang Zhengqing 黃正清, 1903–1997), the eldest brother of the Fifth Jamyang, recalled that the Mongol princess' representatives claimed that either the officials or monks of Labrang had circulated the scandalous rumor. They declared that the supervisory monastic official (*tshogs chen zhal ngo*) of Labrang was deaf to all evidences. Furious, the monastic officials abruptly seized and imprisoned the Mongol representatives and broke into the treasurer's household to capture Li Zongzhe the next day. Warned in advance, Li fled to Xining and called on Ma Qi to repress Labrang monks.<sup>77</sup>

As Ma Qi was appointed by the Beiyang government as Ninghai Defense Commissioner of the Gansu Frontier (*ganbian ninghai zhenshoushi* 甘邊寧海鎮守使) to replace the Xining amban in late 1915, he was endowed with the authority to handle the Tibetan and Mongolian affairs in Amdo. He sent Ma Shou 馬壽, a Tibetan monk who resumed secular life, became an herbal medicine dealer, served Ma Qi and soon self-identified as a Hui Muslim, to mediate the incident. He also sent the Xining inspector Li Dan 黎丹 to investigate in Labrang. The

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<sup>75</sup> The 'Jam dbyangs's main estate was managed by his chief attendant (*sku bcar mkhan po*), treasurer (*phyag mdzod*), internal affairs manager (*nang mdzod*) and tutor (*yongs 'dzin*). Under them were the representatives (*sku tshab*) nominated from the eighty monk-attendants (*zhabs phyi*). See Miao Zishu, *Labulengsi gaikuang* 拉卜楞寺概況 (Lanzhou: Gansu minzu chubanshe, 1987), 17–24, 139–141.

<sup>76</sup> At this time, because the eighth Mongol Prince Penjor Raptan did not have a male heir, his daughter Kunga Penjor inherited the position of the ninth Mongol Prince. Her mother was the fourth Jamyang Zhépa's sister, the eighth Prince's consort. For this incident, also see Nietupski, *Labrang Monastery*, 174.

<sup>77</sup> Huang Zhengqing, "Labuleng siyuan yu ma qi douzheng de jingguo 拉卜楞寺與馬麒鬥爭的經過," in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 9–10.

Belmang Tsang summoned the eighty monk-attendants to hear about the decision of the monastic community, which was to reject Ma Qi's interference. After being almost killed in an attack by unknown parties, Li Dan hustled back to Xining.<sup>78</sup> Given that Ma Qi was preoccupied with a succession of military campaigns against Tibetans, Mongols and Manchus respectively in Yushu, Kokonor and Guide, he left the incident unsettled until he consolidated control over Amdo from north to south in early 1918. Immediately, the following summer witnessed 1,000 Ninghai cavalymen armed with Western rifles defeating the Belmang Tsang, who had hastily raised a Tibetan militia of the thirteen divine communities of Labrang Monastery.<sup>79</sup> Retreating to his base in the Amchok league, the Belmang Tsang organized another militia of several thousand men, including Rebgong Tibetans, and launched a counterattack on the Muslim barracks. Without proper coordination, this poorly trained and equipped force was defeated by the Ninghai Army (*ninghai jun* 寧海軍). To solve the problem once and for all, Ma Qi sent his brother Ma Lin to command 6,000 Muslim soldiers and attack Amchok in November. The Belmang Tsang's monastery, Achok Gönpa, was burned to the ground. More than 700 monks and local residents were slaughtered, and the eight *tsowa* were plundered. On its triumphant return, Ma Lin's army wandered through the steppe, demolished over thirty monasteries, raided *tsowa* and killed Tibetans in eastern Amdo. Thereafter, a Muslim battalion was stationed in Labrang. Ma Qi appointed the Fifth Gungtang Tsang and the Gendün Dargyé Tsang as the regent and the treasurer, and announced that the Belmang Tsang was an illegal incarnation.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Apa Alo indicated that Li Dan was attacked by Ma Shou and his attendants, who disguised as Tibetans to plot the Belmang Tsang. "Labuleng siyuan yu ma qi douzheng de jingguo," in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 11.

<sup>79</sup> In the following section, there are some different details in contrast to Nietupski's narrative. See *Labrang Monastery*, 175–182. For the detailed accounts of the combats, see Huang Zhengqing, "Labuleng siyuan yu ma qi douzheng de jingguo," in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 11–12.

<sup>80</sup> Huang Zhengqing and Shi Lun, *Huang zhengqing yu wushi jiamuyang* 黃正清與五世嘉木樣, published as vol.30 of *GSWSZLXJ*; "Jiamuyang ji xinan fan ge toumu xiang buyuan zongzhang de kuchen shu 嘉木樣及西南番各頭目向部院總長的哭陳書," in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 35–38.

In 1920, the Gungtang Tsang initiated the search for the reincarnation of the Jamyang. A four-year old boy born in a Tibetan minor official's household in Tsema village of Litang 理塘 (Lihua County 理化縣), west Kham, was recognized as the rightful *sprul sku*. Ma Qi expected the Jamyang to be his representative and strengthen his control in Amdo, and so maintained amicable relations with the Fifth Jamyang's father Gönpö Döndrup (Huang Weizhong 黃位中). He approved the latter's request for the withdrawal of the Muslim battalion before the reincarnation arrived in Labrang. In November, the Tsema boy ascended the dharma throne. His father and eldest brother respectively became sworn brothers with Ma Qi and Ma Bufang 馬步芳 (1903–1975).<sup>81</sup> Once a chieftain under Zhao Erfeng 趙爾豐 (1845–1911) at the end of the Qing, Gönpö Döndrup had been displaced and forced into exile by the Sichuan warlord Chen Xialing 陳遐齡 (1873–1950). It is said that he was an aggressive leader envisioning independent rulership. After Ma Qi turned down Gönpö Döndrup's request to replace the Labrang regent, the division between them was revealed, especially when Xining appointed Ma Shou instead of him as Labrang commander in 1921. Their relationship deteriorated rapidly as Ma Qi instituted the Chief Bureau of Goods, Grain, Tea and Live-stock (*baihuo liangcha shengchu zongju* 百貨糧茶牲畜總局) and imposed a grass tax on the *tsowa* directly and indirectly ruled by Labrang. Ma Shou heavily fined monastic officials who participated in the 1916 incident, and banned the Secretariat. As a result, the Jamyang family was turned into mere figurehead suzerains of Labrang.<sup>82</sup>

This was the final stage of Ma Qi's territorial expansion and tightening of trade controls cloaked in the language of modernizing Qinghai. The Golok league bordering Central Tibet and Kham (Xikang 西康) was the last piece to be incorporated into Qinghai, where he

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<sup>81</sup> "Labuleng siyuan yu ma qi douzheng de jingguo," in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 14–15.

<sup>82</sup> "Labuleng siyuan yu ma qi douzheng de jingguo," in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 16–17.

intended to establish a new province. The C&MA missionary Albert Fesmire, who worked in Amdo, wrote at the time:

One of the chief natural reasons for the incursion was the killing, by the Goloks, of several soldiers carrying official dispatches and seizing four or five thousand yaks belonging to the High Commissioner [Ma Qi]. The Goloks consisted of three tribes and were a most haughty people, considering themselves impregnable, since they had never been subdued by the Chinese in all their history. But the Mohammedans with their up-to-date firearms practically annihilated one tribe, and the other two hastened to capitulate. It is reported, though, that the first and most crushing blow was struck through treachery. The three tribes were called together to tender their submission, suddenly attacked, and a large number killed. The remainder fled without making any attempt in their weakened condition to avenge their fallen friends. Then followed a chapter of awful bloodshed and cruelty. Men, women, and children were ruthlessly put to the sword and thousands were driven into the Yellow River to perish in its muddy water. A heavy indemnity was extracted, thousands of sheep, yaks and horses driven away, and tons of wool confiscated...<sup>83</sup>

Afterwards, Ma Qi exerted substantial control over Amdo. He deployed the Ninghai troops in strategic locations, set up the Chief Bureaus in Tibetan market towns, levied various taxes upon Tibetan *tsowa* and extended his administrative boundary to the north of Chone. His conquests, raids and taxes fueled Tibetan resentment against Muslims. From 1922 to 1924, the Tibetan multifocal resistance to Ma Qi erupted across Amdo.<sup>84</sup>

Meanwhile, Gönpö Döndrup and Apa Alo finally armed the Labrang militia with new weapons. They strove again to remove the pro-Muslim regent of Labrang, especially to suppress the faction of Li Zongzhe and remove the Labrang Commander Ma Shou. In response, Ma Qi arrived at Labrang with a cavalry force of 5,000 men, assaulted the Jamyang family, and announced five punitive demands which dismissed the Secretariat, confiscated guns from the thirteen divine communities and the Jamyang's attendants, and harshly fined every monk of Labrang. Over 2,000 monks fled elsewhere. The Jamyang family was put under close surveillance. Gönpö Döndrup secretly reported the event to the new Gansu

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<sup>83</sup> Albert Fesmire, "New Openings in Tibet," *The Alliance Weekly* 56:21 (1920), 328. The case is also cited by Nietupski in *Labrang Monastery* and "Islam and Labrang Monastery," to elaborate the deteriorating Muslim-Labrang relation. This was an inducement for Ma Qi who was eager to integrate Golok into Qinghai.

<sup>84</sup> "Labuleng siyuan yu ma qi douzheng de jingguo," in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 17–18.



governor Lu Hongtao and an investigation was initiated by the provincial government.

Thereupon Ma Shou was made the scapegoat and was recalled to Xining.<sup>85</sup> Still, the Muslim force remained occupying Labrang and the Jamyang family continued to seek unfettered authority there in the religious, political, economic, civil and military realms. In June, the Ninth Panchen Lama (1883–1937), who was being squeezed by the Dalai Lama for military expenses, escaped to Lanzhou en route to Mongolia. Gönpö Döndrup brought the whole family to Lanzhou and beseeched the Panchen Lama and Governor Lu for mediation.

Although Apa Alo indicated, in his explicitly Tibetan revolutionary and anti-warlord account, that Ma Qi disregarded Lu's instructions to negotiate over the following months, and that this long period of inaction only proved the weakness of the Beiyang government, the Jamyang family was guaranteed Chinese military support.<sup>86</sup>

In the early spring of 1925, the Jamyang family moved to North Range and raised a Tibetan force to fight against Ma Qi. Apa Alo stayed in Lanzhou to ensure they would have Chinese reinforcements. The animosity of the Tibetans toward the Muslim warlords thus evolved into a full-scale Tibetan-Muslim war. A Tibetan force consisting of *tsowa* militias across east Amdo, numbering 10,000 men, assembled in May. Gönpö Döndrup planned to advance in two columns, one by the northern route from Ngülra, Amchok, Nyinma and Sangtso to block Ma Qi's reinforcement in Khagyé and one by the road from Mébo, Tsö, Tsayül and Bora to recapture Labrang.<sup>87</sup> Hui Muslims at Labrang were driven away. Several were captured and disemboweled alive. The battle in Khagyé plain was bloody and brutal. Joseph Rock, who passed by these battlefields, later recounted, in his own terms and with his own Western understanding of a Tibetan national unity, his understanding of events:

[Tibetans] threw themselves furiously into the midst of the Moslem soldiers  
[commanded by Ma Bufang] and attacked them with swords, axes and huge knives

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<sup>85</sup> Li Zhenyi, *Gannan jianzhi*, 138–139.

<sup>86</sup> Li Zhenyi, *Gannan jianzhi*, 139; “Labuleng siyuan yu ma qi douzheng de jingguo,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 24–25; Rock to Sargent, June 24, 1925, RIVaF3-5t, 1.

<sup>87</sup> “Labuleng siyuan yu ma qi douzheng de jingguo,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 25.

and nearly scattered them. The Moslems could not even reload their guns, and thus it happened that the Mohammedans lost more (dead) men than the Tibetans. The Moslems finally rallied and opened fire with machine guns which the Tibetans could not stand. Among the many Tibetan tribes who have gathered together to oppose the Moslems was one tribe known as the Amchok. Their leaders have taken bribes from the Moslems, and they sat on the hill watching the fight without participating and even, when they saw the Ugura [Ngülra] tribe retreating to their encampment and looted it. The Tibetans blame the Amchoks for losing the battle, as the Amchoks numbered 5,000 men, on whom they had counted. There were a great many traitors among the Tibetans... the Living Buddha of Heitso [Tsö] Lamassery was pro Moslem and so were a number of lamas who had houses outside the Heitso Lamassery which they rented to Moslems. These the Tibetans burned and the Lamas who owned them they stoned. The chiefs of the elders of Heitso and the advisor of the Living Buddha of Heitso they strung up on the Heitso plain in front of the Monastery where he was left hanging all day as a warning.<sup>88</sup>

Ma Qi scattered Tibetan soldiers with machine guns, massacring the old and young nomads of the Sangtso league, and occupying Labrang in early June. All monks fled, and the market closed. Then, he dispatched his son Ma Buqing 馬步青 (1901–1977) to launch an expedition against the anti-Muslim Tibetan force slowly rallying in Tsö pastureland. The sixty-seven *samadrok tsowa* of Tsö were demolished, Tsö Gönpa was destroyed, forty monks were slaughtered. Gönpo Döndrup and the Jamyang Zhépa sought refuge in the Chone Kingdom, the most peaceful place on the chaotic Sino-Tibetan frontier.<sup>89</sup>

### *The Chone-Labrang Relation*

The promised help of the governor never materialized. Lu Hongtao suffered paralysis and went into semi-retirement. His commanders fought each other and tore apart his army. Lu wired Beijing about the rioting situation and bought a way out of Gansu in September 1925.<sup>90</sup> As Lobzang Tendzin had agents providing him information from the cities of Gansu

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<sup>88</sup> Rock to Potter, July 20, 1925, RIVaF3-8t, 1–2; Rock, “Tibetan-Moslem war in West Kan-su,” *Unpublished Manuscript*, RIF191t, 1–6,

<sup>89</sup> “Labuleng siyuan yu ma qi douzheng de jingguo,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 25–26.

<sup>90</sup> After interviewing Lu, Joseph Rock concluded that “his generals did not allow him to go...He turned over all the opium revenue for 1925 to his beloved generals, whereupon they allowed him to leave.” See Rock to Sargent, December 20, 1925, RIVaF4-16t, 2. Wei Shaowu, “Lu hongtao du gan shimo 陸洪濤督甘始末,” in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.1, 61–63; Wang Zizhi, “1926 nian longdong zhang zhaojia fan feng zhanzheng 1926 年隴東張

to such major metropolises as Lhasa, Beijing and Tianjin, he had a clear understanding of the current political situation.<sup>91</sup> Either when the Fifth Jamyang ascended the Labrang throne or when he fled to North Range, Lobzang Tendzin carefully eluded the political and military storm engulfing this Kham family and the Ma warlords. He believed that Gansu would be left as devastated as in the Tongzhi Muslim Revolt or the 1895 He-Huang Incident if the provincial government declared war against the Ma family warlords. The Chinese provincial authorities thought the same way. They would blame the Jamyang for instigating the conflict and would not provide any actual help.<sup>92</sup>

Hence, the king endeavored to keep the simmering war out of Chone. He expected the Fifth Jamyang family to observe the 1844 Chone-Labrang agreement, which demarcated the administrative and religious border between the two powers. He refused Gönpö Döndrup's request to join the Tibetan-Muslim war, but guaranteed him a temporary refuge in Khyagé Monastery at the northern edge of his kingdom adjoining Mébo. He explained that his militia only could join the battle in accordance with the Gansu governor's instructions. The outcome was the long-standing but concealed friction between the Fifth Jamyang and the Chone gyelpo families.<sup>93</sup>

Disappointed by the Gansu government and the Chone king, Gönpö Döndrup propagated the idea that all Tibetans should unite to strike back at the Muslim warlords who called out to “eradicate Tibetans and annihilate Buddhism” (*jianmie fanzu, jinjue fojiao* 殲滅番族，禁絕佛教).<sup>94</sup> Over that summer of 1925, the Jamyang Zhépa travelled across the

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兆鉅反馮戰爭,” in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.1, 77–80; “Zhang zhaojia panju longdong 張兆鉅盤據隴東,” in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.4, 51–55.

<sup>91</sup> Lobzang Tendzin's subordinate, Chinese travelers and Joseph Rock all confirmed about the intelligence network of the Chone king. See Gongjue Cairang, “Yige lao zangmin de huiyi,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.7, 38; Fan Changjiang, *Zhongguo de xibei jiao*, 42–44; Rock to Sargent, March 26, 1926, RIVaF5-16t, 1.

<sup>92</sup> Rock to Sargent, June 24, 1925, RIVaF3-5t, 1.

<sup>93</sup> Interviews with Lobzang Tendzin's grandson and Lama Gyatso, February 17, 2019; Li Zhenyi, *Gannan jianzhi*, 139; also see Rock to Sargent, June 24, 1925, RIVaF3-5t, 1.

<sup>94</sup> “Labuleng siyuan yu ma qi douzheng de jingguo,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 26–27.

eastern Tibetan Plateau and persuaded many federations to protect Buddhism. The war fomented outside Chone finally crossed the fringe of Lobzang Tendzin's realm and brought another period of chaotic consequences to his subjects. In July, Gönpo Döndrup convoked an inter-federation convention at Samar *tsowa* of Chone. The nomads of Aba Six-federation, Dzögé Twelve-federation and Chukha Three-federation of Kham joined the Tibetan force in Amdo. The Zhongpa federations of Chone did not hesitate to fight against the Hui Muslims either. A Tibetan force of over 20,000 men was organized under the banner of the Fifth Jamyang.<sup>95</sup>

The Tibetan force was loosely organized and only armed with 3,000 rifles, encamping near Labrang. On the morning of August 26, Ma Qi launched a surprise attack. The Ninghai Army, armed with machine guns and mountain guns, crushed the motley Tibetan troops, and mowed down around 7,000 Tibetans in subsequent battles and massacres. The Chone king's sixteen *tsowa* around Samar were set on fire and the inhabitants slaughtered. The Jamyang family awaiting news at Mount Lotus on the Lintao-Chone border, then, fled toward Lanzhou.<sup>96</sup> It was a horrific calamity for the Tibetans. In a letter to Joseph Rock, Colonel Rauschner related the story he had learned from the Jamyang family when they sought national attention in Lanzhou:

I have written you that Tibetans were defeated, but I did not hear all the truth. The wounded and the prisoners were collected together and were disemboweled and their stomachs filled with hot stones, after which they were beheaded. Women and girls were violated and then killed. All the Tibetans in an area of 60 Li around Labrang have been killed. The present Governor, who has promised to help the Tibetans is now degraded and General Feng, the Christian General, is being sent to Kansu to take the Governorship. His troops are now at Ninghsia. There are two other pretenders who are after the Governorship and one is to arrive on Sep. 16<sup>th</sup>. The Tibetans are demanding the head of Machi (Qi) and his brother and seven Colonels responsible for the outrages. The Panchen Lama who is still in Peking

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<sup>95</sup> Rock indicated that the around 40,000 Tibetans joined the war. Rock to Sargent, June 29, 1925, RIVaF3-6t, 1.

<sup>96</sup> Rock to Sargent, June 29, 1925, RIVaF3-6t, 1; September 4, RIVaF4-2t, 1; November 10, RIVaF4-9t, 2; Li Zhenyi, *Gannan jianzhi*, 13–40.

demands that the Chinese help the Tibetans against Machi the Mohammedan General.<sup>97</sup>

Chinese military support, in the form of the the Northwest Army (Xibeijun 西北軍/Guominjun 國民軍) commanded by Chief Defense Commissioner of the Northwest Frontier (*xibei bianfang duban* 西北邊防督辦) Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥 (1882–1948) did finally materialize.

In autumn 1925, Beijing instructed Feng to stabilize the situation in Gansu. Securing the acquiescence or at least neutrality of the leading Hui generals, Feng assigned Liu Yufen 劉郁芬 (1886–1943) as chief commissioner and sent a division of the Northwest Army to Gansu. The Tibetan-Muslim conflict might have been the least of Feng's reasons to control Gansu. Yet the presence of the Guominjun certainly altered the complex political circumstances on the Gansu-Amdo frontier. Liu forced Ma Qi to negotiate with Gönpö Döndrup. Both parties took hardlines regarding the withdrawal of the Ninghai Army, the replacement of Ma Qi, the punishment of Ma Shou, and the compensation for the 7,000 Tibetan casualties in the first meeting. The negotiation was deferred as Liu was handicapped by the Chinese warlords of eastern Gansu and his influence on Ma was very limited.<sup>98</sup> At this point, Liu plotted the murders of Lu's subordinates in Lanzhou and mobilized all forces to crush the commanders Kong Fanjin 孔繁錦 (1880–1951) and Zhang Zhaojia 張兆鉅 (1871–1937) who aimed at claiming the governor position and had besieged Lanzhou. These political circumstances generated a serious political dilemma for the Chone gyelpo.

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<sup>97</sup> Colonel Rauschner to Rock, enclosed in Rock to Sargent, September 12, 1925, RIVaF4-4t, 1.

<sup>98</sup> Ma Peiqing (the chief staff of Ma Tingxiang's 79 cavalry regiment), "Liangzhou shibian yu ma tingxiang 涼州事變與馬廷勳," in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.2, 35–52; "Labuleng siyuan yu ma qi douzheng de jingguo," in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 30–32.

He could not risk offending Ma Qi and Liu Yufen who suspected his collaboration with Gönpo Döndrup and the Longnan commander Kong Fanjin, a close friend.<sup>99</sup>

Accordingly, Lobzang Tendzin fielded 3,000 men to participate in the campaign against Liu's rivals. He was conferred the Tao-Min Route partisan commander (*youji siling* 游擊司令), and instructed to secure Lanzhou from Lintao. With Kong defeated, he closed the Minzhou-Chone border to block the fleeing Longnan troops.<sup>100</sup> Later, to back up his stance and avoid further souring relations between Chone and the Muslim warlords, the gyelpo deployed his guard of 50 soldiers to arrest those Tébos who attempted to join the Tibetan-Muslim war and had only been prevented from doing so by the autumn floods of the Luchu River in 1925.<sup>101</sup> The Chépa eighteenth *tsowa* that strove for the exemption from militia corvée, and the Upper Tébo *tsowa* were enlisted to join the campaign. It seems that Takra Tibetans, who often openly disparaged the gyelpo as a half cast, became the target of this suppression. But this time, they fled and let Lobzang Tendzin have an easy victory when the militia arrived at the empty villages of Takra Banner.<sup>102</sup> In addition, the gyelpo instructed all accountants and banner-chiefs to arrest those who had fought for Labrang. Those arrested were imprisoned in the narrow, cramped Chone dungeon along with lamas who had attempted to change religious affiliation. The prisoners were physically abused, some were crippled and others beheaded.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Rock to Sargent, August 10, 1926, RIVaF5-26t, 2; “Zhuoni tusi zhidu,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 4; Yang Jiying, “Kong Fanjin zai Longnan,” in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.1, 51–57.

<sup>100</sup> Rock to Sargent, August 10, 1926, 2; 24 August 1926, RIVaF5-31t, 1.

<sup>101</sup> Rock indicated that the Tébos crossed the Dieshan Mountain to raid Taozhou. He witnessed the marching of the Tébo militia when he managed to exit Gansu. Rock to Sargent, July 10, 1925, 1; also see Li Zhenyi, *Gannan jianzhi*, 139.

<sup>102</sup> Rock to Sargent, December 14, 1926, RIVaF5-55t, 1–2.

<sup>103</sup> Miao Zishu, *Labulengsi gaikuang*, 17–24; 139–141; Huang ZhengQing, “Labuleng siyuan yu ma qi douzheng de jingguo,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 9–12. Nietupski, *Labrang Monastery*, 174–182.

For Labrang, the situation improved when the 60,000 Guominjun soldiers took over Gansu. Ma Qi retreated before the provincial government's incorporation of Amdo. Negotiations resumed, and a Tibetan-Muslim accord was reached in spring 1927. In light of the settlement, Ma Qi recalled his army. The Jamyang family compromised as well. The Chinese jurisdiction of Labrang was transferred from Xunhua to Lanzhou. Liu installed a defensive brigade (*baoan dadui* 保安大隊) of Guominjun troops in Labrang, which was officially renamed Xiahe. The Republican government rapidly established the Xiahe provisional government office (*shezhiju* 設治局). The director of Shezhiju was designated by the provincial government, who was given the power to handle the military, jurisdiction and taxation of Xiahe. In June, the Fifth Jamyang returned to his dharma seat. Only religious authority remained in his hands.<sup>104</sup> However, the settlement left the intensified Tibetan-Muslim enmity unassuaged, simmering, with many who would be satisfied by nothing other than blood for compensation. Those Tibetans involved in this war suffered heavy losses. They often criticized the Jamyang family, which came from Kham, for its “warlike enterprises” that destroying the peace in Amdo.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, it raised a succession of territorial disputes among *tsowa* in eastern Amdo. As Labrang was never enclosed by a clear administrative boundary, the Gansu government arbitrarily drew the jurisdictional border of Xiahe Shezhiju across the territories of federations managed by the Chone Kingdom, the Henan Mongol principality, Taktsang Lhamo Monastery and the Xunhua, Hezhou (Daohe 導河) and Lintan counties.<sup>106</sup> The

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<sup>104</sup> “Labuleng siyuan yu ma qi douzheng de jingguo,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 32–33; Rock to Sargent, 24 September 1926, 2.

<sup>105</sup> Hans Stübel, *The Mewu Fantzu: A Tibetan Tribe of Kansu*, 54.

<sup>106</sup> *XHXZ*, 116, 124–125.

conditions for future range wars between Xiahe Tibetans and these federations were produced this way.

During this period, the Chone king attempted to assert considerable deterrence against troublesome *tsowa* and defecting monasteries. Yet, the Chone-Labrang dispute over the ownership of Chépa Gönpa remained unresolved. Like many such festering local conflicts, expedient practices were pursued until a solution became possible. It is not clear if Chone and Labrang reached any new agreement when the Jamyang family sought refuge in North Range. In accordance with later expedient practice, Labrang appointed the dharma-seat holder to Chépa, acknowledged the monastery as a subordinated institute even as it never claimed Chépa Banner as its *chos sde*. Chone yamen levied tax and corvée on Chépa Tibetans and recognized the status of their communal monastery. This compromise in practice likely conformed to the needs of both Chone and Labrang, dominating local narratives. The awkward relationship between the two ruling lineages was kept quiet and their dispute was concealed from the outside world. Today, Chépa Tibetans no longer treat the dispute as a problem. They proudly assert that they “receive Buddhist teaching from Labrang, political resources from Chone and grain from Taozhou” (*chos 'go blab rang, srin 'go co ne, 'bru 'go the rgyu*).<sup>107</sup>

## **The Fourth He-Huang Incident**

### *The Republican Eighteenth Year*

From 1926 to 1928, Chiang Kai-shek toppled the Beiyang government with the Northern Expedition, defeated or allied with most militarists of northern China under

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<sup>107</sup> “Zhuoni chebagou gongbasi qingkuang 卓尼車巴溝貢巴寺情況,” 6-1-95, November 23, 1951; Interviews with the Chépa elders, Gönpa, June 8–9, 2015.



the flag of the GMD, and established Nanjing as the national capital. The Nationalist government sought to realize the long-held national aim of forming a strong, unified Chinese nation-state with a secure national center, uniform, modern governmental system, fixed administrative boundaries and well-defended national borders. Thus, Chiang undertook the task to centralize national political, military and fiscal power. He aimed at weakening regional warlords, drawing provincial revenues to the national treasury and increasing state investment in domestic development. This meant not much choice for Chiang but to retrench the military budget by reducing over half of the 2.2 million troops. His plan apparently curtailed regional militarists' forces that were organized into National Army (*guomin gemingjun* 國民革命軍 or National Revolutionary Army before 1928) in the Northern Expedition (*beifa* 北伐).<sup>108</sup> Given that the Nanjing regime limited the quota of troops in every province, Chiang's major collaborator Feng Yuxiang sophisticatedly fused his personal interest into the national political agenda to retain his enlarged Northwest Army.<sup>109</sup>

By 1928, Feng had control of Henan, Shaanxi and Gansu. He deployed his manpower in local governments and extracted taxes to supply the Guominjun.<sup>110</sup> In September, he requested the Central Political Committee (*zhongyang zhengzhi weiyuanhui* 中央政治委員會) to separate Qinghai and Ningxia as independent provinces from Gansu for the purpose of consolidating national defense and developing Gan-Qing-Ning.<sup>111</sup> This strategic inner frontier was crucial for China to prevent the independence of Tibet, Mongolia and Xinjiang—China's outer frontier

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<sup>108</sup> Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 84–86.

<sup>109</sup> *Gansu sheng zhengfu gongbao* 甘肅省政府公報, 1 (July 1927). Wang Zanting, *Gensui Feng Yuxiang ershi yunian* 跟隨馮玉祥二十餘年 (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe), 39.

<sup>110</sup> *GQNSL*, j31.37a–38a.

<sup>111</sup> "Gansu, Ningxia, Qinghai huajie shishi banfa caoan," in *Gansu shengzhengfu zhengling leibian* 甘肅省政府政令類編 (Lanzhou: Gansu shengzhengfu mishuchu, 1929).

where the independent movements grew vigorously with the intervention of Britain and the Soviet Union throughout the Republican era. Chiang made no concession in issues concerning China's heritable territorial integrity even though the military force and political sway at his disposal in no circumstance could extend to the outer frontier. Although he was aware of the risk of making Feng a powerful rival in the northwest, he compromised to maintain the reunification of China. The provincial boundaries of Gan-Qing-Ning were drawn in early 1929.<sup>112</sup>

After Feng seized Gansu, the provincial and local governments were staffed by tax-oriented officials who bled the region dry. To secure official positions and get promotions, county magistrates extorted their districts by every means to increase local revenue.<sup>113</sup> Compared to the 1.7 million annual silver dollars of the military budget in 1925, the military expenditure of Gansu floated over 5.2 millions in 1927, which was 70 percent of the total provincial revenue.<sup>114</sup> Opium production, trade and consumption had become the pillar of Gansu's economy. Poppy plantation had taken the best farmland in the province for over two decades. Grain stores, from those of farming households to the official granaries, were mostly empty. In addition, ceaseless wars broke out among various Gansu local militarists, who were then targeted by Feng Yuxiang for elimination. The province was also devastated by natural disasters. In 1927, an earthquake struck western Gansu and caused over 40,000 deaths in Liangzhou alone. From 1926 to 1928, consecutive severe droughts crippled agricultural yields in over 58 counties.<sup>115</sup> Worse still, local magistrates

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<sup>112</sup> Qinghai shengzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Qinghai lishi jiyao* 青海歷史紀要 (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1987), 115; Ye Zu'e, *Ningxia jiyao* 寧夏紀要 (Nanjing: Nanjing zhenglun chubanshe, 1947), 32–42.

<sup>113</sup> Feng Yuxiang raised military expense and Gansu local officials increased revenue mostly through extorting peasants, poppy plantation and opium trade. See *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.13, 71–91.

<sup>114</sup> Mu Shouqi, Yang Si and Zhang Wei eds., *Gansu tongzhi gao* 甘肅通志稿 (Lanzhou: Guji shudian, 1990), "Finance and Taxation."

<sup>115</sup> Zhao Shiyang, "Gansu lidai ziran zaihai jianzhi 甘肅歷代自然災害簡史," in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.20, 153–161.

rarely decreased apportioned funds (*paikuan* 派款) in their counties.<sup>116</sup> As a result, the overwhelming taxation, drought and the earthquake forced numerous Gansu farmers to either join brigand gangs or flee to seek refuge, wandering on the road of slow death. A flow of multifocal revolts that were regarded as instances of local banditry and so were ignored by the provincial government soon spread from eastern to western Gansu.<sup>117</sup>

At this point, the main Northwest Army—now named the Second Group Army—joined the Northern Expedition and fought the war in the Central Plains. Few of these forces were still stationed in the northwest. A power vacuum opened up in Gansu. In these years, following the death of Ma Anliang, Ma Qi became the leader of the Hui warlords in Gansu. He was alarmed by Governor Liu's demands for troops and funds.<sup>118</sup> He was discontent with Liu for accusing his repression of Tibetans, removing him from the position of the Qinghai Mongolian and Tibetan placation commissioner, forcing his battalion to withdraw from Labrang, and especially replacing the Hui generals in the Northwest.<sup>119</sup> Ma Tingxiang 馬廷驤, the elder son of Ma Anliang and the Liangzhou commissioner, shared Ma Qi's concerns. They chose to ally with Feng's rivals, and purchase weapons from Zhang Zuolin 張作霖

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<sup>116</sup> "[T]he chaotic Republican China drove governments to extract more of the farmer's surplus production to supply their expanding armies. The most hated of the new taxes was levied by warlord regimes of doubtful legitimacy: the new, ad hoc tax known as "apportioned funds" (*tankuan*). Lacking reliable registers of taxable land, authorities simply required a village to pay a certain sum, leaving it to the local headman to "apportion" the payments." See Philip Kuhn, *Origins of the Modern Chinese State* (California: Stanford University Press, 2002), 101. A Hezhou folksong, or flower (*hua'er*) of the late 1920s vividly described the heavy burden of different apportioned funds imposed upon local farmers. It says, "it was a bad year in the sixteenth year of the Republic; the National Army came from the lower region (south); farmland, green shoots and horse funds; the folks were scraped (extorted) to jump up and down."

<sup>117</sup> *GQNSL*, j31.39a–b.

<sup>118</sup> According to Li Dan, who was Zhao Weixi's secretary, became Ma Lin's adherent in 1913, then was appointed as Xining Inspector (*Xining daoyin*), Ma Lin had a very strong influence on Ma Tingxiang's political stance. Yao Lingjiu (Liu Yufen's secretary, 1965), "Guominjun ru gan ji liu yufen zai gansu de junshi huodong 國民軍入甘及劉郁芬在甘肅的軍事活動," in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.9, 89.

<sup>119</sup> Ma Peiqing, "Liangzhou shibian yu ma tingxiang," 39; Liu Yufeng to Huang Weizhong, telegram, February 8, 1927, in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 45–46.

(1875-1928) in Manchuria. This plan somehow came to be known in public. Learning of these conspiracies, Feng urged Xining and Liangzhou to send 1,500 cavalrymen to the frontline of the Northern Expedition in the winter of 1927.<sup>120</sup> Later, Feng speeded up the incorporation of the Muslim warlord-occupied regions. A National Army battalion was deployed in Hezhou, the center of Muslim societies in Gansu and Qinghai. The pro-Muslim chief commissioner Pei Jianzhun 裴建準 was replaced with Liu's adherent Zhao Xipin 趙席聘 (1878-1957). In late 1927, under the growing pressure of the provincial government, Ma Qi agreed to reorganize the Ninghai Army and let the National Army be stationed in Xining.<sup>121</sup>

In March 1928, the petition of local Hui gentry and social elites for tax exemption was rejected by the Hezhou defense commissioner Zhao Xipin. Hezhou Muslims sent a delegation to plead with Zhao in Lanzhou. Zhao wired to Liu Yufen that Hezhou Muslims dodged tax and schemed riots. When the delegation arrived in Lanzhou, Liu immediately executed the eight representatives.<sup>122</sup> A month later, Zhao detected that a considerable number of Muslims gathered and communicated in the Dongxiang (Mongolic) language. It was said to be a feud between the Old Teaching and New Teaching Muslims in Xixiang 西鄉 and Nanxiang 南鄉 of Hezhou. Zhao believed that it would lead to a Hui rebellion. He arrested and killed the leading figures of both sides.<sup>123</sup> The anti-Zhao sentiment was brewing in local Muslim communities. A Hezhou folksong (*hua'er* 花兒) compares Zhao to a “poisonous snake” (*duchong* 毒蟲) and encourages people to “pack up guns and take action,

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<sup>120</sup> Fan Manyun (secretary of the General Headquarter of the Seventh Division of Nationalist Army), “Liu yufen yu hezhou shibian 劉郁芬與河州事變,” in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.9, 112; Yao Lingjiu, “Guominjun ru gan ji liu yufen zai gansu de junshi huodong,” in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.9, 88-91.

<sup>121</sup> Yao Lingjiu, “Guominjun ru gan ji liu yufen zai gansu de junshi huodong,” in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.9, 96-97.

<sup>122</sup> Ma Xiaorong, *Linxia wenshi ziliao* (hereafter *LXWSZL*), vol.8, 192; “Gansu huimin panbian zhi yinguo 甘肅回民叛變之因果,” *Shenbao* 申報, August 17, 1928.

<sup>123</sup> Yao Lingjiu, “Guominjun ru gan ji liu yufen zai gansu de junshi huodong,” in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.9, 97.

expel Zhao and live a better life” (*shoushi qiangzhi jiu qishen, nianguo zhaojun hao huoren* 收拾槍枝就起身，攆過趙君好活人).<sup>124</sup>

Based on the memories of his subordinates and attendants, Ma Qi implicitly motivated young military officers to resist Liu and Zhao through mutiny. In late April, his seventeen-year old nephew Ma Zhongying 馬仲英 (b.1910) proclaimed an anti-National Army slogan and revolted in Xunhua. Three battalions of the Ninghai Army reinforced Ma Zhongying covertly. The cavalry sent by Ma Qi and Ma Tingxiang to facilitate the Northern Expedition, and the Chinese soldiers newly conscripted by Zhao Xipin happened to have deserted in the Huangshui valley. Ma Zhongying enlisted these troops on the way to Hezhou.<sup>125</sup> Meanwhile, under the cover of the excuse of attending his uncle Ma Guoliang’s funeral, Ma Tingxiang returned to Hezhou and instructed the six battalions of the Western Army to join the war on May 8. His brother Ma Tingxian 馬廷賢 utilized the family’s silver dollars and munitions in Dahejia 大河家 to sponsor Ma Zhongying, whose proposition of anti-tax and “Killing no Han, killing no Hui, just killing National Army” (*bushahui, bushahan, zhuansha guominjun* 不殺回，不殺漢，專殺國民軍) attracted many Hui, Salar, Dongxiang and Han farmers to join the war against Zhao in May.<sup>126</sup>

Junior General (*ga siling* 尕司令) Ma Zhongying and Deputy General Ma Tingxian, as they self-designated, enlarged their force from 10,000 to 60,000 men, and named it the Northwestern Frontier Defensive Allies. In the next three months, they besieged Hezhou city three times. Ma Tingxiang commanded his force from

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<sup>124</sup> Wang Shumin, *Shu'an wenshi zazhu* 曙庵文史雜著 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), 430.

<sup>125</sup> Liu Hualu, “Ma Zhongying weigong ninghe cheng 馬仲英圍攻寧河城,” in *LXWSZL*, vol.1, 95–97.

<sup>126</sup> *GQNSL*, j31.40a–42a; Mu Wenyun (Mu Shouqi’s son), “He-Liang shibian zhuiji 河涼事變追記,” in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.24, *Ma Zhongying shiliao zhuanji* 馬仲英史料專輯, 47–49; Jia Yuqin, “Minguo shiqi nian hezhou shibian jishi 民國十七年的河州事變記事,” in *LXWSZL*, vol.3, 191.

Liangzhou to attack the provincial capital. Governor Liu deployed all available troops to rescued Hezhou and counterattack the Liangzhou Muslim force.<sup>127</sup> In this course, Junior General's prohibition of Han-Hui revenge killings was immediately challenged on the battlefield. Some Han residents nearby Hezhou had their homes plundered, were tortured and killed by the Muslims during the first siege. In return, Zhao Xipin instructed the Han militias to burn down the densely-built Bafang 八坊 district—the symbol of the Muslims' faith, history and economic prosperity.<sup>128</sup> Their slogans “killing Hui and eradicating Islam” and “eliminating Hui people in sight” (*jianhui buliu* 見回不留) worsened the situation.<sup>129</sup> During the second and third sieges of Hezhou, the insurrectionary force became purely Muslim. Alongside the breakdown of every negotiation between Ma Zhongying and Liu Yufen, Hui massacres of Han occurred all around Hezhou city. Based on eyewitness accounts, Han villagers were killed regardless of age and sex, oftentimes seemingly just for the blood-lust of it.<sup>130</sup>

In the mostly devastated Xixiang and Nanxiang, near 100,000 Chinese were in a panic and seeking to flee. Those who escaped from the massacre fled toward Tibetan regions. Many Han refugees arriving at Labrang, Tsö, Khagyé, Taktsang Lhamo, Mébo, Zhongpa and Chone alive were alone. They had lost connection with other family members and did not even know whether they were alive or not.<sup>131</sup> For months, many Han refugees and their horrifying stories flowed into the Luchu valley. The memories of the 1860s and 1890s Muslim revolts exacerbated anxieties and rendered the atmosphere of Lintan and Chone extremely intense. In mid-May, Liu

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<sup>127</sup> *GQNSL*, j31.42a–50a.

<sup>128</sup> Su Zhenji, “1928 nian suijun zai Hezhou de jianwen,” in *Ma Zhongying shiliao zhuanji*, 84–88.

<sup>129</sup> Jia Yuqin, “Minguo shiqi nian hezhou shibian jishi,” 197.

<sup>130</sup> For a detailed description of the violent and brutal methods of Hui massacres of Han, see *GQNSL*, j31.50; Mrs. William Simpson, “China's Famine,” *The Latter Rain Evangel*, November 1928, 13; Jonathan Lipman, “Ethnicities and Politics in Republican China,” in *Modern China* 10, no.3 (1984): 310.

<sup>131</sup> Xu Zhaofan, *Xuxiu daohe xianzhi* (manuscript, 1931), “bianyi.”

appointed Lobzang Tendzin the Commander of Tao-Min Route Security (*taomin lu baoan siling* 洮岷路保安司令) and instructed him to attack Ma Zhongying from the rear. The king, as an officially appointed commander, reformed his traditional Tibetan militia, on the model of the National Army, into a brigade (*lǚ* 旅). He organized the Chone militia into three regiments (*tuan* 團) and designated three colonels (*tuanzhang* 團長) to manage the troop of 3,000 men. The soldiers were summoned in the name of military *ulag*, who only served temporarily.<sup>132</sup>

In Lintan, to distinguish themselves from *rebels*, local Hui elites swore to uphold the Tibetan-Han-Hui blood-pact, which kept the region outside the He-Huang Incident in 1895. They provided 30,000 silver dollars, sheep, cattle and tons of grain to the Chone troops, that then proceeded to the Hezhou-Amdo border at Tumen Pass 土門關. On May 30, the three regiments confronted a Muslim force and was dreadfully crushed. The soldiers fled to their *tsowa* via Lintan. Thereupon, local Chinese scattered toward Southern Tao and North Range, leaving the ripe crops behind for months. For fear of reprisal, the Chone king promised to send funds to Ma Zhongying, who, in return, designated him the Commander of South Route (*nanlu siling* 南路司令).<sup>133</sup>

The riots around Hezhou were not dealt with by Governor Liu until he defeated Ma Tingxiang in Liangzhou. In November, Liu ended the fruitless negotiation with the Junior General and launched a full-scale assault, which pressed the Muslim force into a retreat southwestward. In revenge for the excessive Hui massacre of Han, Liu demolished the Muslim towns of Hanjiaji 韓家集, Chuimatan 吹麻灘 and Dahejia.

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<sup>132</sup> “Zhuoni boyu shibian de qianhou,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 13–14.

<sup>133</sup> *ZNXX*, 21; Ma Tong, *Zhongguo yisilan jiaopai yu menhuan shilie* 中國伊斯蘭教派與門宦史略 (Yinchuan: Ningxian renmin chubanshe, 2000), 130; Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 112–113.

He induced the official troops and Han militia to slaughter and pillage Muslim districts for flour, fodder and silver.<sup>134</sup> In the face of this suppression, Ma Zhongying and 6,000 followers fled into the Taizishan Mountains, crossed the North Range pasture, and stormed Old Town.<sup>135</sup> After a brief exchange of fire with a brigade of Guominjun in Lintan, Ma occupied Old Town and New Town on December 5. Most Hui men, like Ma Gaxishun 馬尕西順 who was a local petty headman (*xiaotoumu* 小頭目) of the Gelaohui, joined the insurrection out of coercion or voluntarily. They backed Ma Zhongying with 3,000 local men. Later, General Ma had a Taozhou C&MA missionary deliver a letter to the Chone gyelpo to pay up the promised funds. As the king had fled to Böyü and secured the strategic passes to Southern Tao, he ignored Ma's demand.<sup>136</sup> Thus, the furious Junior General attacked Chone Town and killed several monks. However, closely pursued by the 30<sup>th</sup> Division of General Ji Hongchang 吉鴻昌 (1895–1934), he soon moved on to Minxian after burning down the Chone yamen, the Chone Khenpo Residency and the main assembly hall of Ganden Shédrupting.<sup>137</sup>

Taking revenge on the destruction in Chone, Lobzang Tendzin ordered his cavalry to ransack over twenty Muslim villages and destroyed eight mosques in the southwest of Old Town. Hui historians regarded this incident as a result of the gyelpo's ambition to annex Taozhou.<sup>138</sup> In fact, these Hui settlements and mosques

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<sup>134</sup> Mu Wenyun, "He-Liang shibian zhuiji," 57–58. For the aftermath and rehabilitation of this event, see the dairy of Hezhou intellectual Wang Zhen. The diary was first titled *Sanjie weicheng ji* 三解圍城記, then renamed as *Longshe leihen* 龍蛇淚痕 and published in *Ma Zhongying shiliao zhuanji*, 28–45.

<sup>135</sup> Ma Pilie (experienced the event), "Ma Zhongying de qishi yu sanwei hezhou 馬仲英的起事與三圍河州," in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.1, 73; Li Zhenyi, *Gannan jianshi*, 144.

<sup>136</sup> William Simpson, "The Suffering in Kansu," *The Pentecostal Evangel*, June 29, 1929, 14–15; *LTXZ*, 18.

<sup>137</sup> Li Zhenyi, *Gannan jianshi*, 144–45; Yao Lingjiu, "Guominjun ru gan ji liu yufen zai gansu de junshi huodong," in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.9, 105.

<sup>138</sup> According to the leading Hui scholars, this incident and the latter Lintan Massacre against Hui Muslims were a part of the Chone chieftain's plan to expand territory. Ma Tong, *Zhongguo yisilan jiaopai yu menhuan shilüe*, 130; Ding Rujung, *Lintan huizu shi*, particularly chap.3.



were in the Tibetan *tsowa* belonging to the Marnyung and Chokro khenpos, who rented the empty large houses or sold farmland to the Hui families for revenue after the 1860s Muslim Revolt. Inside these villages were Hui families bonded by blood, friendship and religion. In the eye of local Tibetans and Chinese, the Hui settlers displayed impressively strong solidarity (*qixin* 齊心). The ecclesiastical rulers of Marnyung and Chokro monasteries could not collect tax or rent from the Hui households for decades. As they were religiously subordinated to Chone Monastery and politically affiliated to the Chone throne, Tibetans considered this revenge to be an act of expelling Hui Muslims from Tibetan territory.<sup>139</sup>

In Minxian, Ma Zhongying gathered over 20,000 Muslim men that had escaped from Hezhou and Lintao. Few places in Gansu could support the presence of such a large military force. Drought, opium poppy planting and local official exploitation left the Muslim force little to take from local farmers. With the pursuing troops not far behind them, Ma's force roved across this vast region plundering as they went. They wore colorful clothes, carried guns, spears and broadswords, and stormed cities and towns in southern Gansu. In Tianshui, they were defeated by General Ji, and driven into a retreat toward Minxian, where they again took over the market town.<sup>140</sup> At this point, having confidence in the long amicable relation with the Yang Chieftain, Ma Tingxian and his family members took a shortcut across North Range to join the Junior General in Minxian. However, as a large official reward for him had been publicized in this region, Mazhou Tsering led the Tibetans of Akhor and Samarpudo banners to hunt for them just as Ma was traveling through Shingtsang valley on

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<sup>139</sup> Group interviews in New Town, Chokro, Liushun, Shuimochuan, Changchuan, Guzhan, Azhatang and Old Town, May 25–31, 2017.

<sup>140</sup> For the eyewitnesses and personal experiences of Han officials, soldiers and commoners regarding Ma Zhongying's massacres of Han across Gansu and Qinghai, see *Ma Zhongying shiliao zhuanji*, 103–132; also see William Simpson, "War, Resilience, Famine!" *The Latter Rain Evangel*, February 1929, 22–23.

December 19. The Tibetans found and slaughtered most of Ma's family members. Ma himself sliced open the silver bags on his horse so he could ride at full gallop, and escaped for his life as the Tibetans gathered up the silver dollars. Ma's fourth concubine and his nephew's wife were taken to Böy , violated, then locked up in Lali and starved to death. Afterwards, local Tibetans insisted that Ma stirred up the fight because his attendant shot a dog in Akhor.<sup>141</sup>

Eventually fleeing to Minzhou, Ma Tingxian demanded that the Junior General take revenge on his behalf. As southern Gansu was blocked by government troops, they returned to Lintan in January 1929. The Muslim force besieged New Town, butchered local Chinese, and indulged themselves in robbery, rape and killing in the Han districts.<sup>142</sup> To avenge his family members, Ma Tingxian also led troops to loot the *tsowa* of Akhor, Samarpudo, Chubo, Banglungshi and Paboshi banners. After destroying Samar, Akhor, Marnyung, Gyelkhar and Yerba monasteries in the vicinity of Old Town, they raided Tibetan nomads in the further pastoral areas to gather food supplies.<sup>143</sup> The panic-stricken Tibetans and Chinese suffered terrible losses. In Northern Tao, those young and strong enough got away to the other side of the Luchu River. Those who could not escape, mainly foot-bound Han women and infants hid themselves in potato pits or fodder chambers. Many were quickly found and seized by the insurgents, women ravished and disemboweled alive, and infants killed with various methods for entertainment. Phrases like “fleeing from Hui” (*pao huihui* 跑回回), “extorting silver by baking [people]” (*kao yinzi* 烤銀子) and “kid sings opera” (*wawa changxi* 娃娃唱戲) were associated with these most horrific memories of the

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<sup>141</sup> This is a widespread story in Chone, Taozhou and Minzhou.

<sup>142</sup> Fan Changjiang, *Zhongguo de xibei jiao*, 41.

<sup>143</sup> *Gannan jianshi*, 145; Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 128–129; *Kan lho'i bod brgyud nang bstan dgon sde so so'i lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, vol. 1, 115–127; vol.2, 235–246; vol.3, 227–234.

non-Hui inhabitants along the Luchu River.<sup>144</sup> An eyewitness, the AOG missionary

William Simpson, wrote:

Although as before neither I nor the Alliance missionaries suffered any loss, still it was difficult to see all the suffering of the people around us. The bandits (for such they really are) burned about half a hundred Chinese and Tibetan villages, massacring probably six or seven hundred people, most of whom were women and children. What they did not burn they looted, taking all the worldly goods from probably thousands and tens of thousands of homes. Thousands were driven out of their homes to hide in the forests and mountains in the bitter cold of a Tibetan winter. Most of them had insufficient clothing and almost nothing to eat. The ferocious cruelty of the rebel soldiers is unspeakable...I shall never forget standing and pleading in vain for the lives of some innocent Chinese women and children, nor shall I forget the shrieks and groans of those who were tortured to death.<sup>145</sup>

Later, Ma Zhongying sent David Ekvall to deliver a message to the Chone king, for releasing the abductees and recompensing Ma Tingxian's loss. The gyelpo denied the accusation of kidnapping, refused to pay a penny, and firmly guarded Southern Tao. When Muslims of Old Town rumored that the militias of Chone 48 banners were assembling, Ma Zhongying struck first. He attacked Chone Town, set fire to the esoteric assembly hall of Shédrupting, and demolished the remarkable Tengyur and Kangyur print houses. Then his soldiers moved toward Böyül from Northern Tao. Relying on the upland and narrow pass, the Chone troops repelled Muslims in Ngakbodo *tsowa*. The Muslim force thus turned around, pillaged and set fire to *tsowa* on both banks of the Luchu River from Ngakbodo to Dartsédo. The Northern Tao refugees and the Southern Tao residents scattered into forests of the branch valleys.

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<sup>144</sup> "Fleeing from Muslims" refers to the behavior of frightened Taozhou Chinese and Riverside Tibetans when the Muslim "rebels" moved toward Taozhou and Chone. Chinese and Tibetans usually took their family members and valuables to hide in the forests of Southern Tao. "Extorting silver by baking" refers to a "technique" that the Muslim insurgents adopted to torture people for getting their valuables. When the Muslims caught people of a well-off household, they often bound the "prisoner" on the pillar of his/her house, lit up a huge fire in front of him/her and interrogated the person where the silver was hidden. More often than not, the "prisoner" would be baked to death. "Minzhou kid sings opera" refers to the brutal behavior of the young Muslim insurgents. When they captured Minzhou, they poked the children on the top of their spears and laughed the dying crying of these children as "singing opera." Interviews with the refugee households in *tsowa* of Middle Stream and Lower Stream, May 20–24, 2015; October 15–19, 2016; May 20–23, June 7–25, 2017.

<sup>145</sup> William E. Simpson, "The Suffering in Kansu," 14.

Nobody dared to return home until a brigade of the 30<sup>th</sup> Division under the command of Feng Anbang 馮安邦 (1884–1938) took over the ruins of Lintan and the Junior General fled to Labrang on January 28.<sup>146</sup>

Thereafter, the Muslim forces destroyed cities and towns and massacred non-Muslim civilians across the Hexi Corridor and northern Gansu. Before Chiang Kai-shek incorporated Ma Zhongying and Ma Tingxian into anti-Feng Yuxiang force later that year, this fleeing force laid waste half of Gansu, leaving fresh scars of deep hostility among Han officials toward Muslims. The incident swept everything into a catastrophic pattern of change. Everywhere the Junior General had devastated, the Han magistrates and military officers resolutely implemented a rehabilitation policy that “eliminated” all Muslims from that district. Non-Muslim locals cried for revenge and joined in “eliminating Hui” as well. A succession of upheavals awaited all inhabitants along the Gansu-Amdo frontier. Peace was far from being restored in the Luchu valley. The rubble of houses and monasteries remained as continual visual instigation to the tensions of the postwar Tibetan-Han and Hui relationship. Avenging parents, wives, children, relatives and friends seemed to be the only outlet for Han and Tibetan survivors in Chone and Lintan.<sup>147</sup>

### *The Repercussions along the Luchu Valley*

To this point, the Taozhou Hui society had been divided into at least six groups because of their diverse sectarian identity affiliations. In the mid-eighteenth century, a considerable amount of Gedimu followers joined the Huasi *menhuan*, a suborder of the Khufiyya. In the early nineteenth century, some Hui followers of the Huasi were

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<sup>146</sup> Lobzang Tendzin, “Laoxinlu 勞薪錄” (manuscript, 1929), 2; interviews in B , Droné, Changchuan and Taipingzhai.

<sup>147</sup> *Ma Zhongying shiliao zhuanji*, 106–172.

converted into the Beizhuang *menhuan*, another suborder of the Khufiyya. With the influx of Hui merchants from Gongchang and Didao, the Jahriyya sect built Laonan Mosque in Old Town in the 1890s. Around the same time, the reformist Ikhwan sect was transmitted to local Hui settlements on a small-scale. Moreover, several dozen Beizhuang Muslims separated from the suborder and joined the Jinxingtang founded by Ma Qixi 馬啟西 in 1902, which was renamed the Xidaotang in 1909. As Ma Qixi merged the Sunni and Han *kitab* traditions, his sect was called the Chinese Study Faction (*hanxuepai* 漢學派) or the New-New Teaching (*xinxinjiao* 新新教). Local Hui Muslims regarded the Xidaotang as New Teaching and the rest as Old Teaching. In general, the inter-sect relationship should be better described as corresponding tolerance. Close interactions such as inter-sect marriage was no different than a taboo. Besides, all sects were hostile toward the newly founded, and economically successful Xidaotang, partially for their having evaded the White Wolves while other Muslims were being slaughtered.<sup>148</sup>

On January 29, 1929, Governor Liu instructed the Chone gyelpo and Commander Feng to conduct “rehabilitation.” The following event, which is still today an extremely sensitive issue in the Luchu valley, was distorted in the accounts by every involved party for the own purposes. From the perspective of the communal memories of the Old Teaching Muslim groups, Tibetan soldiers burned 48 mosques and over 70 Hui villages in the name of “rehabilitation.” After arriving in Old Town, the Chone troop systematically ransacked Muslim households for three days. The gyelpo ordered the arrest and execution of local Hui men who were suspected of having assisted Ma Zhongying. Those who suffered miserably in the Tibetan massacre of Hui civilians, these accounts hold, had to appeal to the GMD government

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<sup>148</sup> *Gannan Zangqu yisilanjiao qingzhensi gaikuang*, 16–142.

to punish the Yang Chieftain. This view insists that the Yang Chieftain carried out the policy of genocide and that Feng Yuxiang was deceived into supporting this Chone force.<sup>149</sup> According to the Xidaotang Muslim accounts, responsibility lay with Feng's troops, who they claim "eliminated Hui" on sight.<sup>150</sup> In his own explanatory essay, the gyelpo explained that he simply played the traditional role of local assistant. He mentioned neither destruction, looting nor massacre, but only fierce resistance of Hui.<sup>151</sup>

When Old Town was looted, some Hui insurgents, refugees and ox-horse mongers (*niuma fanzi* 牛馬販子) gathered in Changchuan. They adopted the self-defense mechanism of the Hui traders against Tibetan robbers along the Amdo-Kham trade routes, and stubbornly battled with the official troop. Feng confronted a fierce resistance and lost sixty men. Thereupon he utilized mountain guns and razed all buildings of Changchuan to the ground. No Muslims survived the furious attack, which marked the end of rehabilitation. Then, Feng left Lintan and the gyelpo returned to Chone. Yet, the remaining Old Teaching Muslims launched a revenge attack when the soldiers of Chépa Banner decamped. When the Tibetan cavalrymen dispersed the Hui militia and captured two responsible leaders, one of them was skinned alive and the other was released by Lintan Magistrate Zhang Mingqing 張明清. In this process, Zhang endeavored to keep the anti-Hui feeling from evolving into the massacre of Hui. He was called the "*ahong* magistrate 阿訇縣長" by local Muslims but disdained as the "Huihui magistrate 回回縣長" by local Chinese.

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<sup>149</sup> "Wuci cansha huyushu," and "F Lintan huizu shi, 138–141.

<sup>150</sup> Xidaotang, *Xidaotang shiliaoji*, 137.

<sup>151</sup> Lobzang Tendzin, "Laoxinlu," 1–3.

*qi kongsushu* 婦女血泣控訴書," full-textes cited in Ding Junru,

Owing to the release of the Hui militia leader and have received a death threat, Zhang resigned from the position and left New Town.<sup>152</sup>

The situation deteriorated further when the new magistrate Wei Xizhou 魏錫周 came to Lintan. In accordance with the common official practice to “wipe rebels off villages” (*qingxiang* 清鄉), he made a blacklist to hunt the Hui rebels. A regulation of collective punishment was enforced to prevent Tibetan and Han villagers from providing refuge to the Hui civilians. The Xidaotang Muslims were classified as “law-abiding people.” The Old Teaching Hui were usually pursued and slaughtered in outlying villages and mountains of Northern Tao regardless of sex and age. Looking for food, these Hui hid and fled from place to place and occasionally robbed Han villagers at mills, which worsened their situation. In June, as part of a plan to return home to their villages to harvest the wheat, Ma Gaxishun, whose two sons had been killed in the Changchuan Battle, summoned several hundred Hui men and took over Old Town.<sup>153</sup>

As the security commander, Lobzang Tendzin was ordered to recapture this Hui Muslim center. He cooperated with the Xidaotang to recruit refugees and establish a defensive line in the western suburb of Old Town. He convened a negotiation to establish a ceasefire. The representatives of the “law-abiding faction” (*liangmin pai* 良民派) and the “rebellious faction” (*changhuan pai* 倡亂派) held the Quran and met in his camp. It turned out that Ma Gaxishun used the negotiation as a means of intelligence gathering. The following midnight, he assaulted the Chone cavalry. Nonetheless, he was repulsed twice. As mentioned, Ma was a headman of the Taozhou Gelaohui and so he invited the Han and Hui brigands led by Gelaohui

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<sup>152</sup> Xidaotang, *Xidaotang shiliaoji*, 137–138.

<sup>153</sup> Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 130.

headmen at the outskirts of Hezhou and Lintao to help his revenge for his sons.<sup>154</sup> With this reinforcement, the Chone king was defeated. The Xidaotang Hui, Han and Tibetans of Northern Tao fled toward the southern bank of the Luchu River. The only two ferries in Upper Stream were crowded with refugees and were soon damaged. As they were chased, several hundred people drowned in the summer floods of the Luchu River. Then Ma led the force to loot along the Luchu River's northern bank. They burned every village on the route to Chone Town, pillaging and demolishing every house. Arriving at the Ganden Shédrupling—the pearl in the Chone king's crown, the symbol of this kingdom and the historical religious center in the eastern Tibetan Plateau—they burned it to the ground.<sup>155</sup>

Lobzang Tendzin called on the provincial government for reinforcements. The brigade of Li Songkun 李松昆 (1894–1966) in Lintao was sent to suppress the Muslim and Gelaohui force in Old Town. Armed with repeating rifles, mountain guns and mortars, this brigade rapidly seized the Muslim town. The uprising leaders fled toward the Taizishan Mountains. The Old Teaching followers flooded into the Xidaotang Mosque to indicate they were submitting and law-abiding, whilst Commander Li, Magistrate Wei and the Chone gyelpo had planned a “cleansing” of local Hui people. The mosque was bombarded and left in rubble. Hui civilians fled along the same escape route to Taizishan, braving machine-gun fire as they retreated along Shingtsang Valley.<sup>156</sup> The gyelpo wired Commander Dai Jingyu 戴靖宇 to

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<sup>154</sup> Xidaotang, *Xidaotang shiliaoji*, 140–141.

<sup>155</sup> Gu and Wang cursorily surveyed this region in 1938 and mentioned the destruction of Yerba, Marnyung and Chone monasteries. The sections about Gansu in Gu's *Xibei kaocha riji* 西北考察日記 and Wang's *Longyou riji* 隴右日記 are published together and entitled *Gan qing wenjian ji* 甘青聞見記 by Gansu wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui. See *Gan qing wenjian ji* (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin chubanshe, 1988), 61, 178, 209. The C&MA missionaries, the Carlson family witnessed the Muslim troops burning Northern Tao Tibetan villages when they took refuge in Lupa Monastery. “Interview of Carol Hammond Carlson,” ABGC, Collection 58, T1 Transcript, 4.

<sup>156</sup> Lobzang Tendzin, “Laoxinlu,” 2; A Hui estimation stated that 5,000 to 6,000 Muslims were killed during the Ma Gaxishun incident. See “Wuci cansha huyu shu,” 139.



block these Muslims. Dai learnt that they were Hui refugees and reported the issue to Lanzhou. In the interim, as the military power struggle between Chiang and the major warlords such as Yan Xishan 閻錫山 (1883–1960), Li Zongren 李宗仁 (1890–1969) and Feng Yuxiang was intensifying, General Feng reassigned Liu Yufeng to prepare for the expected war in Shaanxi. He transferred the Qinghai provincial president Sun Zhonglian 孫仲連 (1893–1990) to run the Gansu government. Sun's approach to Muslim insurgents was less aggressive, and he now instructed Dai to issue law-abiding certificates to refugees and arrange for them to return to their villages (*shangzhuang* 上莊). Dai issued certificates to over 4,900 Hui households and ordered the Lintan government to assist the refugees. Receiving the instruction, in August, the gyelpo and magistrate convened a meeting, called up Tibetan rulers, chiefs and Han elites and discussed this issue. Blaming Muslims for the repeated riots, they decided to eliminate the Hui of the region once and for all.<sup>157</sup>

The refugees had assembled in Mébo and waited for the permission to return homes. The Tébo colonel Yang Xiling 楊錫齡 and the colonel Ugyen Nyima were in charge of escorting the refugees to Old Town. The colonels counted Hui males, charged each refugee a silver dollar “rehabilitation fee” (*shanhoufei* 善後費), and deliberately suspended the return trip of two days for twenty days. The Hui refugees prepared presents and sent a delegation to Böyül to pay allegiance to and ask the gyelpo about the returning procedure. As the delegation was executed and never returned, few Hui dared to depart for their hometown. To dispel the doubt of the refugees, Ma Shoushan 馬壽山, a reputable religious head of the Xidaotang, held up

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<sup>157</sup> “Gansu Lintan nanmin fusui ji 甘肅臨潭難民撫綏記,” *Tujue* 突崛 7, no.4 (1937), 8–13.

the Quran and promised that the delegation's mission was successful, and everyone could return home before the autumn harvest.<sup>158</sup>

Over these twenty days, Lobzang Tendzin obtained official permission to investigate and deal with the “rebels” among refugees—as a means to justify his planned continued “Hui cleansing.” He ordered the able-bodied men across the kingdom to prepare cold weapons and assemble in Old Town. He also hired hundreds of Minzhou Chinese men who had been miserably treated by Ma Zhongying's force and sought an opportunity for revenge against the Hui people. According to the widest circulated local oral account, when the starving and weak refugees arrived at the west gate of Old Town, women, children and elders were locked up in the mosques. Males aged ten to sixty went through the west gate one by one, told they could proceed to claim provisions. They walked between two lines of soldiers, Tibetans and Tao-Min Chinese. In front of the southern gate, they were all stripped of clothes, checked for weapons, and had their hands tied behind their backs. Then, they were marched through the south gate and immediately slaughtered. The corpses were disposed in thirteen huge pits dug several days before. The executioners were bathed in blood. “The edges of swords, spears and machetes were too blunt to cut or pierce by dusk,” recalled the sons of participants, and “when their arms were too heavy to raise up the weapons, a new group would take over.” Hearing muffled moans and seeing blood flowing through the gate, some Hui realized that this *shangzhuang* was a plot. They broke the walls of armed men and ran for their lives. Few escaped. Many were hunted down. When the darkness fell, a miserable fate awaited Hui females. Several hundred young girls were violated, tortured and killed. The next day, the gyelpo announced that those Hui men who were rebels had been executed. The Hui

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<sup>158</sup> Xidaotang, *Xidaotang shiliaoji*, 142; Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 134.

elders and women were allowed to claim the corpses. Those unclaimed bodies were buried in those pits.<sup>159</sup>

The following months witnessed the full flight diaspora of the Lintan Muslims. They either took refuge in Labrang, Tsö, Mébo, Zamtsa, Shitsang and Taktsang Lhamo or sought justice in Lanzhou, Beijing and Nanjing. They turned to newspapers, magazines and filed formal petitions to appeal to authorities to investigate and punish the atrocity of the Yang Chieftain.<sup>160</sup> However, the Nationalist regime was busy with fighting against its military and intra-party rivals. Although a provincial investigation team was sent to Lintan, the gyelpo bribed the commissioners and was eventually merely ordered to “protect refugees.” In 1933, the Gansu government defined the incident as an interethnic killing, and officially closed the case.<sup>161</sup>

In Amdo, Tibetans ravaged by the Ma family warlords for years praised this massacre of the Hui. Some Tibetans who had lost Muslim friends and fixed traders criticized the gyelpo’s cruelty. In the Luchu valley, the non-Muslim and Muslim hatred was ingrained deeply. The bloodshed left long-lasting scars in local communities. Mutual recrimination and resentment were so overt in everyday life that they almost became a trait to consolidate each group’s solidarity and define its ethnic identity. In Lintan, because the Xidaotang followers took refuge in Chépa and persuaded the Hui refugees to proceed to *shangzhuang*, they have been regarded as traitors by the Old Teaching groups ever since.<sup>162</sup> In Chone, my informants indicated

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<sup>159</sup> Interviews, Chone, New Town and Old Town June 2015; Lungsde, Shotsang and Lali, October 2017.

<sup>160</sup> Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 137–141.

<sup>161</sup> “Gansu sheng zhengfu wei Lintan shijian fu Beiping wu tuanti dian 甘肅省政府為臨潭事件赴北平五團體電,” *Yuehua* 月華 4, 1936; “Gansu sheng zhengfu bugao 甘肅省政府佈告,” December 31, 1933, Lintan.

<sup>162</sup> The Laojiao people indicated that the Xidaotang Hui employed Tibetans to avenge the murder of their sect founder Ma Qixi by Ma Anliang in 1914. The Xidaotang Muslims believed that the Old Teachings in Taozhou collaborated with Ma Anliang and plotted against the Xidaotang. See Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 134–135.

that their fathers returned home, shaking with fear. They fell to unknown sicknesses, lost strength day by day and died within a few years. “Karma,” as the daughter of a massacre participant sighed, “would not spare your misdeed.”<sup>163</sup>

Apart from the traumatized feelings and degraded ethnic relations, the destruction of this event was unprecedented. It took a fearful toll on the Hui population. Given that fewer than 1,000 Hui households remained after the war, local Muslims believed that Tibetans destroyed nearly 7,000 Muslim households and massacred over 20,000 Hui people.<sup>164</sup> The rough estimation used by Muslim periodical publications, official reports and Republican scholars’ dairies shows that 3,000 to 5,000 Hui people were probably slaughtered.<sup>165</sup> Ekvall witnessed the destruction and held that most Muslims in Old Town were murdered.<sup>166</sup> A local saying, though the number of casualties could be adjusted to serve the rhyme, suggests that “the 3,800 Huihui who came were not enough to be slaughtered by the Yang family in a day” (*Huihui lai le san qian ba, mei gou Yang jia yi tian sha* 回回來了三千八，沒夠楊家一天殺). The king insisted that there were 500 rebels among the 3,000 Hui refugees, and that he only had 280 unforgivable villains executed.<sup>167</sup> Regardless of these disparate estimates, the population decline was serious. A common observation by Lintan residents and contemporary travelers was that the *tsowa* occupied by the Hui people were emptied after this conflict. The Tibetan lay and Buddhist rulers of Northern Tao had long forfeited political dominance, economic

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<sup>163</sup> Interviews, Chone, New Town and Old Town June 2015; Lungsde, Shotsang and Lali, October 2017.

<sup>164</sup> “Gansu lintan nanmin lai han 甘肅臨潭難民來函,” in *Huimin* 回民 11 (1932), 23–27.

<sup>165</sup> See Ding Zhengxi, “Gansu lintan huimin xianzhuang ji shiba nian sunshi 甘肅臨潭回民現狀及十八年損失,” *Yuehua* 4, no.8 (1931), 12–14; Mu Ziqin, “Gansu lintan xian tusi yang jiqing tusha huimin 甘肅臨潭縣土司楊積慶屠殺回民,” *Yuehua* 4, no. 22, 23, 24 (1932), 19–23; Gu Jiegang and Wang Shumin, *Gan qing wenjian ji*, 70, 203.

<sup>166</sup> Robert Ekvall, *Gateway to Tibet*, 85.

<sup>167</sup> Lobzang Tendzin, “Laixinlu,” 3; “Kongsu shu 控訴書,” cited in Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 146–148.

connection and religious influence in these *tsowa*. As Tibetans cried out for eradicating Muslims and recapturing the land, they destroyed dozens of Hui villages and mosques in the Tibetan territories. The *tsowa* were taken over by the Chone gyelpo and subleased to Chinese refugees in the following years.<sup>168</sup>

The losses of Tibetan and Chinese communities were also massive. In his explanatory essay, Lobzang Tendzin stated that more than 6,000 Tibetan and Han households were destroyed by the Hui rebels.<sup>169</sup> According to the survey of Wang Shumin, only twenty percent of the households remained in Guzhan, a large Han village located on the main plundering route of the Hui force to the west of Old Town. In fact, many Chinese villages along the routes from Lintan to Hezhou, Lintao and Minxian experienced similar levels of destruction.<sup>170</sup> In the Tibetan region, some 60 *tsowa* in Middle Stream were ruined. In contrast to the Hui and Han communities, the population loss in the Chone Kingdom was less severe. Also, a new wave of Han refugees settled down in the further Tibetan areas. As the large houses were mostly refilled and the need for refugee labor satisfied in Northern Tao, a considerable number of Han families migrated to Southern Tao and Upper Stream, setting up small houses or refilling large houses. For instance, many Minxian Chinese moved to the *tsowa* on the lower southern bank of the Luchu River. The Hezhou refugees stayed in the northern part of Upper Stream. They still speak Hezhou Chinese dialect to this day. The wealthy Fan 範, Niu 牛, Zhou 周 and Wang 王 lineages in Lintan permanently migrated to Chone.<sup>171</sup> In sum, the ethnic composition in the *tsowa*

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<sup>168</sup> Gu Jiegang and Wang Shumin, *Gan qing wenjian ji*, 73, 175, 183, 185, 189, 211, 214–217.

<sup>169</sup> William Simpson, “The Suffering in Kansu,” 14; Lobzang Tendzin, “Laoxinlu,” 2.

<sup>170</sup> Gu Jiegang and Wang Shumin, *Gan qing wenjian ji*, 220.

<sup>171</sup> Interviews, Zhou family of Maru, Li family of Lali, Meng family of Lungsde, Fan family of Péngo. Also see *Toazhou fanshi zongpu* 洮州範氏宗譜 [The Ding Lineage Genealogy of Taozhou]. 2000.

societies along the Luchu valley underwent a tremendous change, leading to the eventual formation of a Chinese society inside this Tibetan kingdom.

### **Economic and Social Changes: Gun, Opium and New Brother-houses**

Apart from suffering the violent impact of the rise and fall of the various northwestern militarists, the White Wolf upheaval, the Tibetan-Muslim wars and the fourth Muslim uprising, the *tsowa* in the Luchu and Drukchu valleys experienced some less dramatic yet notable social, economic changes. These subtle and gradual transitions were shaping local daily life, ethnic composition and, most significantly, the traditional structure and customs in *tsowa* societies. From the Qing's enforcement of the New Polices to the Guominjun's military dominance in Gansu, the radically changing outside world intruded, periodically, into the Chone Kingdom and unloaded what we might see as packages of miscellaneous "modern" elements. One of these aspects is emphasized by Lipman: "the modern world arrived in the northwest primarily as military technology, wielded by leaders who fought their most important battles back east."<sup>172</sup> Alongside the extensive militarization and military modernization in warlord-period China, the Gansu Hui and Han warlords, who often nominally submitted to the more paramount warlords or the central government, imported the modern industrially manufactured firearms to upgrade the fighting capacity of their troops equipped with late-Qing rifles and cold weapons. These firearms were either the off-the-shelf weapons imported from Japan, the USA, the Soviet Union, the UK and other European countries, or the domestic armaments and ammunition made in Shenyang and Wuhan.<sup>173</sup> For the Chone king, the military *ulag* system and Tibetan guns were clearly outdated when they faced warlord forces armed with modern weapons.

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<sup>172</sup> Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 16.

<sup>173</sup> Anthony B. Chan, *Arming the Chinese: The Western Armaments Trade in Warlord China, 1920–28* (1982, reprinted, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 99–102; Bates Gill and Taeho Kim, *China's Acquisitions from Abroad: A Quest for 'Superb and Secret Weapons'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 13–14.

From the early 1900s, Lobzang Tendzin witnessed the swift ascendancy of the Hui militarists. He may have been neutral in the Labrang-Ma Qi war, but the Muslim warlords perceived him as a potential enemy because the Yang Chieftain family customarily collaborated with the Qing government to suppress Muslim revolts.<sup>174</sup> As his realm was located on the multiple margins of political and military powers, the Taizishan and Drukchu mountains were ideal bases for bandits. To secure his rule and ward off the potential Muslim invasion and bandits, he realized the urgency of building a reliable military force equipped with advanced rifles. Unlike the Guominjun, Xinjun, Xijun and Ninghaijun that materialized the firearm upgrade via central governments' supply and direct importation from abroad by the late 1920s, it was difficult for the gyelpo to purchase advanced armaments, which were also quite expensive, in the far interior of China. Yet, he was on good terms with some Han warlords in Gansu and Sichuan, and he maintained amicable relations with a few Westerners who had a channel to sell him rifles.<sup>175</sup> In the 1920s, he recruited 200 Tibetan and Han men as professional soldiers and organized a private guard funded by the ruling house. He managed to arm the guard with Hanyang 漢陽 rifles, Springfield rifles and other repeating rifles, three machine guns and mountain guns purchased from Kong Fanjin and the AG missionary Simpson. Joseph Rock, who claimed to have bought weapons from the Chone gyelpo rather than the other way around, was long suspected of furnishing Tibetans with munitions and arms during his two-year stay in Chone. As Rock had his own weapon supplier and his armed guard sometimes was short of ammunition due to the disrupted transportation, both transactions could be true.<sup>176</sup>

Besides, Lobzang Tendzin was concerned with the reliability of the soldier-horse military system. The passive resistance against military *ulag* among households in Front

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<sup>174</sup> Rock to Sargent, July 10, 1925, RIVaF3-7t, 1.

<sup>175</sup> Rock to Sargent, August 20, 1926, RIVaF5-29t, 4.

<sup>176</sup> Rock to Sargent, May 29, 1925, RIVaF3-1t, 1; April 14, 1926, RIVaF5-20t, 1.

Range was extensive enough to slow down and sabotage the assembly of his cavalry in the moment of crisis. Many households were reluctant to send soldiers to the battlefield. The situation was prevalent in Lower Stream and Northern Tao. Sometimes the able-bodied men hid in the forests until the end of war, and the housewives only provided horses to the king. Customarily, a man who shirked military corvée would be fined a cattle; if he fled in the middle of combat, he would be fined a sheep, and then, all *tsowa* members would be invited to feast on the cattle or sheep in order to humiliate the deserter. Surely, many soldiers deserted in the battles against the Wolves and the Tébos. Hence, Lobzang Tendzin decided to revive and consolidate the military *ulug* system. He deployed three colonels, who led the soldiers, to field militia from *tsowa* to *tsowa*. With this deterrence, he also instructed every household to breed horses and upgrade their guns. In doing so, he could raise a cavalry of 2,000 to 3,000 soldiers at any time.<sup>177</sup> However, this order, sent out at a time and into a range of *tsowa* societies along the Luchu and Drukchu valleys where few could afford to follow the order even if they wanted to, was never well implemented.

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, there was an explosive growth of the raw material and natural resource-oriented merchant companies (*shanghang* 商行) on the Gansu-Amdo frontier. The prominent Lintan, Hezhou, Lintao, Minxian, Tianshui, Lanzhou, and even Shaanxi, Henan and Tianjin merchants established several dozen companies in the major border markets. These companies usually had financial connections with different warlords of Gansu and other cliques. Each company had caravans of from 40 to over 200 armed fellows (*lianshou* 聯手) and several hundred to over 6,000 transportation yaks moving across northern Kham and Amdo. They channeled grain, tea, handicrafts and weapons to the deep Drukchu valleys and vast Amdo pastures. Two to three months later, they returned to Lintan, Hezhou or Minxian with opium paste, herbal medicines, wool,

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<sup>177</sup> “Zhuoni tusi zhidu,” *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 9–10.



feathers, and large flocks of oxen, sheep and horses. These companies quickly dominated trade in Amdo.<sup>178</sup>

In this process, the eastern Tibetan Plateau was connected with the eastern coast and major cities of China through caravans from Amdo to Lanzhou, sheepskin rafts on the Yellow River to Baotou and railways to Tianjin. Chone and broadly Amdo were incorporated into a cash-based system of trade. The merchant companies altered the economic structures or precisely, the self-supporting agricultural and pastoral productions in the Chone Kingdom. In this system, the main products of Upper Stream and North Range were wool and domestic animal products. The leading product in Back Range was opium. Aside from self-supplying grains, the main products in Middle Stream and Lower Stream were herbal medicine and a limited number of domestic animals. Except the wool that flowed into the international market from Tianjin Port, most products of the Chone Kingdom were locally consumed in the regional market of southern Gansu. As a result, the Tibetan trading networks based on the inter-*tsowa* relations and monasteries were replaced by the fluid Han and Hui caravans and fixed companies in the border market towns. Also because of the distinctions of local products, the divergence of economic conditions in *tsowa* of Front Range, North Range and Back Range occurred.<sup>179</sup>

From the 1900s to 1920, the Gansu government nominally adhered to the instructions of the central government to ban opium growing, selling and smoking. The British diplomat and explorer Sir Alexander Hosie (1853–1925) optimistically stated that the prohibition of opium growing was effective in Gansu in his 1911 survey on poppy growing in China. In fact, the opium producing was connived if not absolutely encouraged by local officials and petty

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<sup>178</sup> For the merchant companies in Lintan, see Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 246–265. On the Gansu-Tibetan wool trade, see Lipman, “The border world of Gansu, 1895-1935,” chapter 3.

<sup>179</sup> Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 246–265. For the similar issue of trade in Songpan, see Hayes, *A Change in Worlds on the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands*, chapter 2.

warlords on the ground.<sup>180</sup> As Lucien Bianco points out, the official ban on opium poppy plantation in Gansu offered the opportunity to local militarists to extort farmers, regardless of they were opium growers or not, in the name of opium fine (*yanmu fajin* 煙畝罰金). When Governor Lu Hongtao rescinded the official ban on opium production and trade to raise revenue in 1921, local warlords began to impose the “opium tax” (*yanjuan* 煙捐) on cultivators and the “lazy tax” (*lanyanjuan* 懶煙捐 or *lanjuan* 懶捐) that equaled to the tax paid by opium-growers on farmers who refused to plant poppies. The fine or tax was so high that local farmers had to rely on poppy cultivation to pay off or revolt against the tax collectors.<sup>181</sup>

In contrast to the opium-banned or heavily taxed Chinese regions, the Tibetan agricultural areas beyond the practical control of the frontier county governments were the ideal places of opium production. The sworn brotherhoods, geographic advantages, and weak control of government nourished the burgeoning of poppy cultivation and opium trade in the Shaan-Gan-Chuan borderland. Around the 1910s, the annual sum of opium sold to Shaanxi via Minxian was more than 100,000 taels. On account of the disastrous currency inflation in Gansu and the overissue of coin and paper money by different warlords, opium in different qualities usually served as currency. In 1920, a tael of opium was worth eight to fourteen taels of silver. Even when the opium price dropped considerably after Lu Hongtao rescinded the official prohibition of poppy planting and the opium trade to raise revenue in 1921, the opium producing and selling were still the most profitable business in the Tibetan areas.

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<sup>180</sup> Sir Alexander Hosie, *On the Trail of the Opium Poppy: A Narrative of Travel in the Chief Opium Producing Provinces of China* (London: George Philip Son, 1914).

<sup>181</sup> For a discussion of interactions between poppy famers and the state, also a brief mentioning of the situation in Shaan-Gan-Chuan, see Lucien Bianco, “The Responses of Opium Growers to Eradication Campaigns and the Poppy Tax, 1907–1949,” in Timothy Brook and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi eds. *Opium Regimes: China, Britain and Japan, 1839–1952* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 292–319; *Peasants without the Party: Grassroots Movements in Twentieth Century China: Grassroots Movements in Twentieth Century China* (2001, reprinted, London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 112–113.

Moreover, unlike the Xinjiang opium that was taxed by the Ma warlords along the Hami-Hexi-Lanzhou Road, the roads across the non-Han regions of northern Sichuan and southern Gansu were the convenient and untaxed channels. The valleys in this provincial borderland became the opium traders' favorite sources of production, supplying opium to many counties in Gansu and Shaanxi.<sup>182</sup>

In the Chone Kingdom, to impress Chinese authorities and Western visitors, and especially to avoid the accusation and extortion of neighboring magistrates, Lobzang Tendzin banned poppy planting in *tsowa* along the banks of the Luchu River. As he also intended to profit from the production of opium, the ban was not enforced in the deep branch valleys of Southern Tao and the whole Drukchu valley where the Chinese officials would not go on inspection tours. Consequently, from the 1900s to the 1920s, the opium poppy had been planted all over the agricultural and semi-agricultural *tsowa* along the Drukchu River and several remote Southern Tao valleys. Cultivating opium poppies earned local Tibetan households many times more than growing barley, wheat and beans. A practice based on the principle of reciprocity was adopted by the king and his *tsowa* subjects. The king was in charge of fending off any Chinese taxation on Tibetan opium-growers, in return, the *tsowa* headmen collected one to several silver dollars from each grower household and paid it as opium tax to Lobzang Tendzin.<sup>183</sup>

In Back Range, beyond the Chinese district was the forbidden zone for the Xigu, Minxian and Lintan magistrates, where the bustling villages were fueled by opium. In July, the opium harvest season, many Chinese came as hired labors to these perilous valleys in groups and worked for Tibetan opium farmers. The caravans of Taozhou, Hezhou and

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<sup>182</sup> Nie Fengnian, "Yapian weihuo gansu de huiyi 鴉片為禍甘肅的回憶," in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.13, 71–75; Wang Deqing and Jia Yuqin, "Jiefangqian yapian yan zai linxia diqu de liudu 解放前鴉片煙在臨夏地區的流毒," in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.13, 76–84; Zhang Shenwei, "Jingyuan de yanchang 靖遠的煙場," in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.13, 85–91.

<sup>183</sup> Interviews with the Tsagang and Böyul elders, Drukchu, July 25–26, 2016.

Minzhou merchant companies hired Upper Tébo guides and poured into the Drukchu valley for “opium fairs” (*yanchang* 煙場), paying silver dollars or exchanging necessities, grains, tea and firearms for opium paste. In August, caravans and Chinese laborers returned with opium paste, which would be processed in nearby Chinese counties. Some Tébo Tibetans carried on the robbery business along the valley routes. To overawe the robbers, once the whole Drukchu valley became a vast opium growing zone, these caravans expanded over time and the numbers of outside laborers increased steadily.<sup>184</sup> In this process, a considerable number of Han Chinese moved into the unpopulated mountains and branch valleys, reclaimed lands, cultivated opium poppies and built up settlements such as the “Four Places” (*sidifang* 四地方) and “Three Villages” (*sanzhuang* 三莊) in the realm of the Tangbar pönpo. Many more Chinese migrated into *tsowa* along the main lower Drukchu valley. They worked as loggers to fell the forests sold by *tsowa* to merchant companies. When local Tibetans terraced the deforested mountain slopes and cultivate poppies, they worked as hired labors and eventually settled down in Drukchu.<sup>185</sup>

In North Range and Upper Stream, the economic states of local nomadic and semi-agricultural households were improved through the wool trade. Tibetan households with herds conventionally sold their wool to Hui traders or in the border markets. Wool was considered difficult to transport and the price was low. Along with the increasing Western demand for wool to manufacture clothing in Europe and sell it back to China, as Lipman demonstrates, the Hui traders developed a trading channel between Amdo and Tianjin and boosted the wool trade to reach its height by 1929. Tibetans exchanged wool for grain, tea, guns and other handicraft products although the wool price was deliberately lowered by

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<sup>184</sup> Liang Chongwen, “1944 nian yang fuxing zai diebu de wuzhuang jinyan huodong,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.3, 67.

<sup>185</sup> Interviews with Chief Dörjé, Drukchu, July 25, 2016; Tsering, Tébo, April 4, 20, 2020; Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 13–14; *Wudu wenshi ziliao xuanji*, vol.1 (1986), 8–9.

traders.<sup>186</sup> In addition, some households in the *samadrok tsowa* also cultivated poppies and sold opium paste to the companies in Lintan, which brought relatively handsome incomes to Tibetan men. Aside from spending money on gambling and entertaining themselves in the market towns, buying weapons was often a priority consumer choice.<sup>187</sup>

Hence the Back Range, North Range and Upper Stream Tibetans certainly acquired some money. The elders in these areas commonly suggest that “every household grew opium, had silver dollars and possessed two to three rifles.” As they recall, before the 1920s, a father gave arrows, a bowl and a knife to his son at the age of sixteen (eighteen in Tibetan counting). In a well-off family, a father could give his son a flintlock musket. By the 1920s, however, every household presented rifles as the essential gift for the coming-of-age son. These rifles could represent the wealth and men’s social status. An able-bodied man without a gun would be looked down upon by his peers and easily taken down by his enemies.<sup>188</sup> The majority of these rifles were used military guns formerly belonging to troops of the Xinjun, Xijun and Guominjun troops. Some were manufactured in the Soviet Union, the USA and Japan. Opium and wool traders were also munitions suppliers when they traded with Tibetans. For Lobzang Tendzin, fielding militia in these areas was occasional. He expected that the households in Front Range, where he considered local residents obedient and levied military *ulag* frequently, could be better equipped. Nonetheless, many households in the Northern Tao and Southern could not afford the advanced weapons.

In comparison with Tibetans in “banners outside pass,” few Tibetans in Front Range dared to seed poppy and violate the king’s ban on opium growing. Here, Lobzang Tendzin never prohibited opium selling and smoking. Joseph Rock indicated that the gyelpo was a

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<sup>186</sup> Lipman, “The border world of Gansu, 1895-1935”, 109–131.

<sup>187</sup> Interviews with the Karchen, Chépa, Ala, Tsö, Khyagé and Khangtok elders, May 2015.

<sup>188</sup> Group interviews, Karchen, Chépa, Ala, Tsö, Khyagé and Khangtok, October 2016; Tébo and Drukchu, July 2016;

moderate smoker and his elder son Yang Kun 楊琨 (d.1937) was a heavy addict.<sup>189</sup> In the ruling family's estates and the agricultural area, Riverside Tibetans became the customers of opium dens (*yanguan* 煙館) in Lintan and Minxian. The religious authorities often condemned opium smoking as a habit weakening men, and criticized that the odor of burning opium would seriously offend the deities who accepted smoke sacrifices. For Drokpa and Titima Tibetans, especially those who valued a sturdy physique and sincerely venerated household deities, they might consume opium or poppy-heads to cure dysentery, but smoking opium was never an option of social or leisure activity. For local Riverside Tibetan and Chinese people, who enjoyed spacious wooden houses, delicate furniture and Han-style entertainment, the opium smoking was an expensive leisure culture and an emblem of high-class fashion. Opium addiction prevailed among the large-householders. The closer a *tsowa* was located to Chone Town, border markets and Chinese villages of opium growing, the more opium users were concentrated. Although most Riverside Tibetan households could live much better off than the Lintan and Minxian Chinese families by farming and a sideline of herding, opium smoking could easily lead to the bankruptcy of the opium-user families.<sup>190</sup>

Furthermore, for Riverside Tibetans, their role of trading middlemen between the steppe and the sown was completely replaced by the Hui traders and merchant companies. Based on the field report of Hans Stübel in North Range in the 1930s:

Trade is entirely in the hands of the Moslems and Chinese, chiefly the former. Many things are purchased with money; farther in the interior there is more barter...The nomads sell the Moslems and Chinese the following animals and animal products: sheep, horses, and yaks; sheep guts; horse and yak hides, horse and yak tails; skins of sheep, lambs, dogs, foxes, marmots, and, more rarely, skins of goats, gazelles, and wolves. After New Year's, for which pigs are slaughtered, they also sell pig bristles. Finally, they sell musk, field mushrooms, chüo-ma, and a plant used in making incense candles.

The Chinese sell to the Fantzu (Fanzu): dress goods (silk and cotton), leopard skins for the men's coats, ornaments, weapons, kitchen utensils, especially cooking

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<sup>189</sup> Rock, "Principality of Chone," 3.

<sup>190</sup> Interview with the Tibetan and Chinese elders of Lamarnang, Maru, Yarru, Shotsang, Lungside and Lubaka villages, September 5–15, 2016.

pots, needles, thread, matches, and bridles with bit and stirrups. Woodenware, especially saddles, eating bowls, and spoons, comes chiefly from the sedentary Fantzu who live in southern Kansu and northern Szechwan. Tsamba (cooked barley flour) is also purchased from the sedentary Fantzu...

The Moslem and Chinese traders come to the tent camps of the Mewu (Mébo) Fantzu, and the Fantzu also often go to the Chinese settlements adjacent to the temples on the caravan road from Ho-chou (Hezhou), and Ning-ho (Ninghe 寧河 or today's Hezheng 和政). In Taochow they buy metalware, such as copper and brass kettles. Yaks are used for carting. They bring wood from the sedentary Fantzu region to Ho-chou and Ning-ho and buy goods with the money they have earned.<sup>191</sup>

Although some of these practices had been carried out for a long period, the dominance of the Muslim and Chinese traders in cross-border trade observed by Hans Stübel was not an age-old phenomenon. It had multiple causes. In June 1917, the outbreak of the bubonic plague in eastern Amdo caused multiple cases of community infection in Labrang, Chone and Lintan. The Chone king closed the border passes and cancelled the biannual ten-day ox-horse fair in Chone Town. At the same time, the Labrang market was empty as a consequence of Ma Qi's occupation. It was the harvest season for opium growing and the fat-growing time for domestic animals. After several dozen trading companies requested the Lintan magistrate to open a new market, Old Town became the only and largest market in eastern Amdo. The temporary cancellation of the Chone market came to be permanent. Before it was demolished again in the 1929 Muslim revolt, the annual volume of trade reached six-million silver dollars, which was twice the annual revenue of the whole Gansu Province in the 1920s. Apparently, the merchant companies and caravans superseded Riverside Tibetan middlemen who had served as hosts and dominated the grain and domestic animal trade between the pastoral and agricultural worlds for centuries. Their brother-houses, maternal relatives, friends and trading guests in *tsowa* of Back Range and North Range were getting comfortable to directly trade with the Hui and Han merchants who often took various goods to their front

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<sup>191</sup> Hans Stübel, *The Mewu Fantzu: A Tibetan Tribe of Kansu*, 26–27.

doors and tents. Without the need to make the annual trading trip to the Luchu valley, the diverse inter-*tsowa* relations were usually disrupted.<sup>192</sup>

Hence, the consumption of opium and the changes to the cross-border trading mode had disastrous consequences for the cash-poor residents in Northern Tao and Southern Tao. On the one hand, many Tibetan families in the Middle Stream and Lower Stream could not rebuild or restore their houses destroyed or damaged by the White Wolves or the Muslim insurgents. A large number of Riverside Tibetan households lost their properties because of opium addiction. The scarcity of cash soon led to the bankruptcy of a large house. Indebted Tibetan householders gradually sold their lands and houses to some well-off Chinese families. Local elders frequently mentioned that two to several Tibetan families “smoked their lands.” On the other hand, the social turbulence and droughts in Gansu led more Chinese to seek refuge in Chone. The shortage of male labor was still an ostensible problem of Tibetan households that lost father or son in battles against the Wolves, Tébos and Muslim insurgents. For a Tibetan household without a male heir, a common practice was uxorial marriage or hiring a small householder to join the militia and fulfil the soldier-horse *ulag*.<sup>193</sup> Along with the development of this symbiotic Tibetan-Chinese relationship, the Chinese population growth was conspicuous in the Chone Kingdom.

The amount of Han-occupied large houses increased markedly. In the twelve inner base-villages, over half of the 320 households were occupied by Chinese in the 1920s. In Northern Tao, the majority of *tsowa* had fifty percent or more household filled by the Han migrants. In *tsowa* that were fully destroyed in the 1860s or emptied for reconfiguration during the aftermath, all householders were the Chinese men who signed the contract of soldier-horse land with the Tibetan rulers. In the agricultural *tsowa* of Southern Tao and North Range,

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<sup>192</sup> Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 246–265.

<sup>193</sup> Interview with the Tibetan and Chinese elders of Lamarnang, Maru, Yarru, Shotsang, Lungsde and Lubaka villages, September 5–15, 2016.



about one third of the Tibetan households were replaced with Han families. Meanwhile, the number of small houses increased again in the agricultural *tsowa*. The lower a *tsowa*'s location along the Luchu River, the more small houses were concentrated. In Northern Tao, most *tsowa* had over ten small houses. In lower Southern Tao, particularly Surunang, Lamarnang and Dikyik banners, the situation was not much different from the *tsowa* across the River. In upper Southern Tao from Lali to Karchen, as well as in the agricultural settlements of North Range, every *tsowa* had a handful of small houses. With years of diligent work, a well-managed small house could purchase land from a large house and replace the Tibetan family living in it. In either way, the Tibetan large house became a small house, sold labor to other large houses or sought refuge with relatives elsewhere. The Han family took over the name, status, rights and obligations of the Tibetan household, becoming the subject of the king.<sup>194</sup>

Consequently, some families living in the brother-houses were no longer bone-relatives. This change of economic status of Tibetan households resulted in the essential transition of the inter-household relations in the subdivisions and *tsowa*. The Han family, which refilled or purchased a Tibetan household, inherited both the mundane and religious rights and responsibilities of this household. It needed to fulfill the communal duties of the former Tibetan family, particularly the communal *ulag* concerning mutual aid in agricultural production. The Han family that worked with the families which were the former Tibetan family's brother-houses, thereby, was considered a *sha nye*. To distinguish the two different *sha nye* relations, the bone-related Tibetan families were called "people brother-houses" (*mi sha nye*), and the farming mutual aid-connected families were known as "land brother-houses" (*sa sha nye*). In contrast to the Han families filling Tibetan households after the

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<sup>194</sup> Younghusband, *Peking to Lhasa*, 91. Interview with the Tibetan and Chinese elders of Lamarnang, Maru, Yarru, Shotsang, Lungsde and Lubaka villages, September 5–15, 2016.

Tongzhi Hui Revolt, these new comers were considered to be less close and accomodating to Tibetans. They paid tax and corvée to the gyelpo but did not necessarily fulfil their communal obligations. Owing to the amount of Han large houses in many *tsowa*, these could form a subdivision in which Chinese families differentiated themselves and tended to work with each other rather than with the Tibetan land brother-houses. Also, they did not bother to learn Tibetan language and send sons to monasteries. The ethnic, religious and cultural divisions became overt. The *tsowa* solidarity was dissolved slowly. As a local saying perfectly summarizes, “the brother-houses are not relatives, the relatives are not brother-houses” (*fangqin ren buqin, renqin fang buqin* 房親人不親，人親房不親).<sup>195</sup>

In sum, the modern world arrived at the Gansu-Amdo frontier and caused divergent economic and social changes in different *tsowa* societies along the Luchu and Drukchu valleys. For its advantaged natural and political environments, Back Range became a large place of opium producing and attracted a large number of Chinese traders, laborers and settlers. For the international market demand, North Range and Upper Stream became a part of the wool trading system established by the Muslim traders. For the issues of opium smoking, losses in warfare, and the closing of the Chone market in Front Range, the host-household trading network was substituted by merchant companies. The bankrupted Tibetan households were replaced by Chinese migrants. In these semi-Tibetan and semi-Chinese *tsowa*, the practice of soldier-horse land might secure the king’s revenue, but seriously disturbed the inter-household relations and intra-*tsowa* networks. With the merchant companies dominating the cross-border trade, they sold advanced weapons to Tibetans in Back Range, North Range and Upper Stream. Although Lobzang Tendzin’s most obedient subjects were not in good condition to upgrade firearms, his idea to organize a well-equipped

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<sup>195</sup> Interview with the Tibetan and Chinese elders of Lamarnang, Maru, Yarru, Shotsang, Lungsde and Lubaka villages, September 5–15, 2016.

troop seemed optimistic as long as he could ward off the intrusion of the Chinese government and regional militarists.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analyzed the dynamics of the overlord-subject relation and the continuous social transitions in the *tsowa* societies of the Chone kingdom under a succession of direct and indirect impacts of major events in Gansu and China proper. From 1908 to 1929, Gansu was a political and military arena of the local Hui and Han warlords, as well as the Beiyang militarists and the GMD government. The Luchu and Drukchu valleys happened to be outside these contests. In handling the intricate domestic issues and external incidents, the Chone king consolidated his power during the turbulent Qing-Republican transition. Yet, the prime-subordinate monastery system almost collapsed after Chone Monastery was demolished in the Muslim revolt. The kingdom also underwent profound social transformations as more and more Han migrants signed the contract of soldier-horse land, the merchant companies dominated the cross-border trade, and the Tibetan population was still far from full recovery after the 1870s. The disparate relations between Tibetan households and the earlier and later Han large houses occurred in many *tsowa*. A Han society was taking shape inside the *tsowa* societies. The bone-related, fictitious kinship-based, reciprocal assistant, and communal responsibility-obligated inter-*tsowa* and intra-*tsowa* relations had been corrupted to different extents.

By 1930, the realm of Lobzang Tendzin was no longer the same one he had inherited. The political circumstance on the Gansi-Amdo frontier was changed again when Chiang Kai-shek defeated Feng Yuxiang in the Central Plains War, and put Gansu-Qinghai-Ningxia under the governance of the Nanjin central government. In Labrang, the Xiahe provisional government office had been set up three years prior. Tibetan leagues and federations in

middle and northern Amdo were administrated by the newly established Qinghai Province. The Chone Kingdom became the last piece of Tibetan territory beyond the governance of the regularized administration. As the following chapter shows, the GMD and CCP governments made more progressive attempts to enforce the *gaitu guiliu* in Chone, set up towns and villages, replaced the Tibetan tax, tribute and corvées with state taxation, and disrupted the land system in the Chone Kingdom. Yet, the state incorporation and top-down control were achieved through the co-optation of Tibetan authorities by the local government. The organizational principles of *tsowa* still retained their relevance.

## Chapter 5 The Demise of the Chone Kingdom: Dislocating the Tsowa Societies, 1930-1952

### Introduction

This chapter examines how the “*tsowa* societies” and local state survived the Chinese incorporation of this frontier and even the collapse of the Chone Kingdom. It asserts that Tibetan authorities remained in power when the Tibetan political system was replaced by the Chinese administrative system. It highlights that *tsowa* societies were crucial for Tibetans to resist and/or adapt to the incorporations of the GMD and CCP states when the commensal relation between the *tsowa* societies and the *gyelpo* was disrupted by the Great State and Chinese migration society. This chapter narrates a frontier version of history when China was in wars, and analyzes the links among the ongoing structural changes of the *tsowa* societies, Chinese state-building and the demise of the Chone Kingdom in the Luchu and Drukchu valleys.

This chapter has four sections. The first section addresses how the power struggle in the Chone yamen, the conflicts between the *gyelpo* and neighboring authorities, and the concerns of provincial officials about the last chiefdom in Gansu led to the murder of the Chone king. It examines the Nationalist enforcement of the *gaitu guiliu* policy, and incorporative project in Front Range when the powerful overlord died without a capable heir. The second section delineates how the Gansu government operated a provisional government next to the Chone Tibetan administration, and coped with local revolts and resistances alongside the uneven state-building in the North Range and Back Range banners. It analyzes how the *tsowa* societies utilized the commensal overlord-subject relation to ward off GMD officials, and how the *gyelpo*’s subalterns enriched themselves by tactically handling the *tsowa*, Chinese

officials and the Chone ruling house. The third section illustrates how the gyelpo cooperated with his officials to accumulate political capital, avoid GMD frontier officials' political suppression and economic extortion, and remained in power when the CCP took over the region and replaced the political system of the kingdom. The last section elaborates on the social transformations in the Luchu and Drukchu valleys, focusing on the formation of a Chinese immigration society, and the termination of the Tibetan taxation, tribute, corvée and land systems that defined the diverse overlord-*tsowa* relations.

### **The Murder of Lobzang Tendzin**

#### *The Nanjing Regime and New Gansu, 1930–1937*

By 1930, peace was restored on the Gansu-Amdo frontier after the Fourth He-Huang Incident. The Nanjing regime unified the troops of paramount warlords into the National Army consisting of the four army groups respectively under the command of Chiang Kai-shek, Feng Yuxiang, Yan Xishan and Li Zongren. The demilitarization policy of the central government, which aimed to control these army groups, take over the provincial revenues and cut fiscal expenditures, provoked a backlash of the regional commanders against Nanjing, catalyzed the formation of the anti-Chiang coalition, and led to the eruption of a civil war in the Central Plains. With the Communist forces expanding territory in the South, these paramount warlords defying the central government, and Japan accelerating the plan to seize the Northeast, the Nanjing regime intended to fully control China by primarily eliminating the internal enemies. The wars were brewing.

In May, Chiang launched attacks on Feng and Yan along the Longhai Railway. To disturb the rear zone of the Northwest Army, he encouraged the Muslim leaders of the He-Huang Incident and the Gansu Han militarists in opposition to Feng with official ranks to form the so-called Anti-Rebellion Force (*Gansu taonijun* 甘肅討伐逆軍). After Feng

transferred Sun Zhonglian to counterattack Chiang's Central Army, the only Guominjun force in Gansu was a brigade commanded by Lei Zhongtian 雷中田 (1893–1950). To prevent the local petty militarists from jeopardizing the security of Lanzhou, the provincial government requested Ma Qi to reinforce Lei. In the meantime, Chiang won a series of battles in northern China. With Zhang Xueliang 張學良 (1901–2001) declaring his support of the central government and directing the Northeastern Army to the Central Plains in September, most of the anti-Chiang armies were defeated by November. Feng and Yan were forced to resign from their positions, and Li was pushed back to Guangxi. The Nanjing regime thus laid hold of the North and could extend its political sway westward. Lei submitted to Chiang and kept connection with Feng. His brigade remained in Lanzhou and the establishment was expanded to a division.<sup>1</sup>

In early 1931, Chiang designated the Ningxia provincial president Ma Hongbin 馬鴻賓 (1884–1960) the Gansu president. As Ma Hongbin failed to incorporate the local Hui and Han warlords recognized by Chiang, Lei staged a coup and detained Ma to seize the presidential position in August. This was rumored to be schemed by Feng Yuxiang. In Qinghai, Ma Qi died of illness. His brother Ma Lin temporarily held the position of Qinghai president, whose mediation to solve the coup did not make any progress. At this point, Marshal Wu Peifu 吳佩孚 (1874–1939), who was defeated by Chiang in the Northern Expedition and had retired to Sichuan, went to Lanzhou and released Ma Hongbin. He regarded the event as a good opportunity to leave retirement when the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) launched their seizure of Manchuria-Chahar in September. In a month, he recruited followers and announced that Gansu, Sichuan, Ningxia, Qinghai and Xinjiang supported him to defend against the Japanese invaders. Yet, his nation-wide announcement

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<sup>1</sup> For the Central Plains War, see Philip S. Jowett, *The Bitter Peace: Conflict in China 1928–37* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2017), chapter 2 and 3.

irritated Chiang, who immediately instructed Yang Hucheng 楊虎城 (1893–1949) to send his division general Sun Weiru 孫蔚如 (1896–1979) to expel Wu. In November, Sun promptly drove away Marshal Wu, vanquished the 8<sup>th</sup> division of Lei, and seized control of the Gansu government. When Lei fled toward southern Gansu, he entrusted the remaining troops to his friend Lu Dachang 魯大昌 (1889–1962), a Han warlord who occupied Dingxi and Minxian.<sup>2</sup>

With the first Battle of Shanghai erupting with the Japanese and their founding of the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932, the Nanjing government planned for the defense against Japanese aggression and also deployed the consecutive encirclement campaigns against the CCP's Jiangxi Soviet. As Nanjing was so close to the Shanghai battlefield, the GMD party formally made Xi'an a secondary capital and speeded up the infrastructure constructions in the Northwest.<sup>3</sup> Many enthusiastic scholars, journalists and official investigators also trekked across the region, writing about local geography, ethnic groups, cultures, customs, products, politics, education and commerce. The Nanjing regime recognized northwestern China as an important base to stage a defense and counterattack against the more advanced Japanese armies.<sup>4</sup> In this period, Chiang assigned Zhu Shaoliang 朱紹良 (1891–1963) the Gansu president to keep Yang Hucheng and the Ma warlords from expanding their territories. The power of Gansu local militarists was considerably weakened as the central government undertook administrative reforms there. As the circuit system of the Beiyang government that replaced the prefecture system of the Qing dynasty was abolished in 1927, Zhu established

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<sup>2</sup> Li Shijun (Feng's representative to launch Gansu Coup in 1931), "Feng yuxiang yu leima shibian 馮玉祥與雷馬事變," in *GSWSZLXJ*, vo.21, 132. Also see Lin Hsiao-ting, "Nationalists, Muslim Warlords, and the 'Great Northwestern Development' in Pre-Communist China," in *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5, no.1 (2007): 115–135.

<sup>3</sup> *Guonan huiyi jilu* 國難會議記錄 (1932), in Shen Yunlong ed., *Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan xubian* 近代中國史料叢刊續編 (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1978), vol.49.

<sup>4</sup> Ju Zheng, "Dongbei lunxian zhong zhi xibei bianchui wenti 東北淪陷中之西北邊陲問題," in *Geming wenxian* 革命文獻, vol.88, 69; He Yingqin, "Kaifa Xibei wei woguo dangqian yaozheng 開發西北為我國當前要政," in *Geming wenxian*, vol.88, 34; also see Lin Hsiao-ting, *Modern China's Ethnic Frontiers*, 41.



eight (nine after 1944) administrative supervisory regions (ASR, *xingzheng duchaqu* 行政督察區) as the intermediary administration between the provincial and county governments in the province. Below the *duchaqu*, every county established a security force (*baogan tuan* 保安團) and promoted the *baojia* system of mutual responsibility and collective punishment to block the Red armies and restrain the locals from colluding with the Communists in 1935.<sup>5</sup>

However, the changing domestic and international political circumstances swiftly altered this optimistic attitude concerning the strategic advantages of the Northwest. The GMD government was concerned with the Soviet Union's far-east policy and the influence of Great Britain on Tibet. The GMD blamed the Soviet Union for inciting independence movements in Outer Mongolia, Tannu Uriankhai, Altai and Xinjiang. They also believed that Great Britain stirred up the Kashag government to separate Tibet from China, and wage the recent Tibet-Qinghai War in Yushu which had in fact been provoked by Ma Bufang. Along with the fact that the National Army tightened their control and influence in southern provinces while encircling and pursuing the CCP forces westward in the 1934–1935 Ten Thousand Li Pursuit, the Nanjing authorities increasingly attached importance to the Southwest as their most promising strategic rear-area anti-Japanese base.<sup>6</sup>

As a consequence, when the full-scale Sino-Japanese War broke out and the Japanese military assaulted Shanghai and advanced on major cities in Jiangsu and Zhejiang, the

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<sup>5</sup> “Gansu shezhi xingzheng ducha zhuan yuan fen quansheng wei qiqu xianshe sanqu 甘肅設置行政督察專員分全省為七區先設三區,” in *Kaifa Xibei* 開發西北 1, no.2 (1934), 110–111; *LTXZ*, 19.

<sup>6</sup> The war ended with the defeat of Tibetan Army. The tripartite conventions were signed by the Tibetan plenipotentiary and Qinghai-Sichuan warlords, without the presence of the Central Government again. See “Qing-Zang Convention,” in *Qinghai lishi jiyao* (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1980), 131; “Gongjue zhongni deng wei feng zhuan dalai lueshu kangbian xingqi jingguo qingxing lai lunshi zhi meng zang weiyuanhui cheng 貢覺仲尼等為奉轉達賴略述康邊釁起經過情形來論事至蒙藏委員會呈,” July 24, 1932, in *Zhongguo Zangxue Yanjiu Zhongxin* ed., *Kang zang jiufen dang'an xuanbian* 康藏糾紛檔案選編 (Beijing: Zhongguo Zangxue chubanshe, 2000), 277–278; Chen Bingyuan, *Ma bufang jiazuo tongzhi qinghai sishinian* 馬步芳家族統治青海四十年 (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1986); Merrill Ruth Hunsberger, “Ma Pu-fang in Chinghai Province, 1931–1949,” Ph.D. diss., (Temple University, 1978); Ma Chunjing, “Guomindang bashiyi jun yange 國民黨八十一軍沿革,” in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.21, 37–39.

Nanjing Government withdrew to Sichuan and made Chongqing the second capital. Chiang Kai-shek decided to stall and exhaust Japan by “trading space for time” and prepared to fight the long-term War of Resistance. As the Japanese force fostered puppet Inner Mongol troops, occupied Chahar 察哈爾 and advanced on Suiyuan 綏遠, northwest China was under the threat of the Japanese offence.<sup>7</sup> GMD authorities reevaluated the strategic role of northwest China. The development and colonization of borderland was urgently put on the official agenda. Former official investigations that demonstrated the extensive land and rich natural resources along the Inner Asian frontier refashioned the frontier rationale of the Chinese regime. Adjoining Sichuan, Gansu-Amdo became the “Great Rear” (*dahoufang* 大後方) of China in wartime.<sup>8</sup> To extort resources, levy conscription and prevent local revolt in the Great Rear while China at war, the official *baojia* system was strictly imposed on Chinese and Muslim areas by 1939. Along with the “new county system” (*xinxianzhi* 新縣制) that ranked counties on the basis of population and revenue that was put into effect, family members of each household were counted and their farmland acreage registered with exaggeration across Gansu. Local residents experienced a catastrophic increase in taxation and conscription comparing with that of the warlord period.<sup>9</sup>

### *The Rising Foes of the Chone King*

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<sup>7</sup> Zhang Siwen, “Ma hongbin shi e 馬鴻賓事略,” in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.21, 26–30; Han Zhesheng (a deputy colonel of the 81<sup>st</sup> Army commanded by Ma Hongbin), “Kangri zhanzheng zhong ma hongbin bu zai yikezhao meng de yici zhandou 抗日戰爭中馬鴻賓部在伊克昭盟的一次戰鬥,” in *GSWSZLXJ*, vol.21, 45–48. For the Inner Mongolia in the second Sino-Japanese War, see Liu Minghui, “The Inner Mongolian ‘United Autonomous Government’,” in Stephen MacKinnon, Diana Lary and Ezra Vogel eds., *China at War: Regions of China, 1937–45* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 148–171.

<sup>8</sup> For the rationales of the Republican government to control Qinghai, see Gregory Rohlf, *Building New China, Colonizing Kokonor: Resettlement to Qinghai in the 1950s* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 35.

<sup>9</sup> “Zizhi diaocha shixiang: Gansu sheng gexian biancha baojia hukou shumu yilan biao 自治調查事項：甘肅省各縣編查保甲戶口數目一覽表,” *Neizheng Gongbao* 內政公報 9, no.4 (1936), 82–87; Hua Shousong, “Zhuanti taolun (baojia wenti): Gansu sheng baojia gaikuang 專題討論（保甲問題）：甘肅省保甲概況,” *Fuwu* 服務 (Chongqing) 2 (1939), 54–56.

As mentioned, the Han militarist Lu Dachang occupied the counties neighboring the Chone Kingdom. Once a Hezhou soldier, Lu Dachang had fought in most of the Gansu wars from 1911 onward. With a gallant character in battle, he was promoted from lieutenant to colonel. Having ingratiated himself with Lu Hongtao and anti-Guominjun warlords, he was driven out of Gansu by Liu Yufen in the late 1920s. Yet, for his anti-Feng stance, he obtained a commander title from the Nanjing government in 1930.<sup>10</sup> With only his letter of appointment, a yak and two guns when he arrived in Lintan, Lu staged a coup against the unarmed county magistrate Wei Xizhou appointed by Governor Liu and seized control. Then, Commander Lu relocated the county government to Xinbao, a strategic town in Northern Tao. The new magistrate belonged to the Feng's faction. With most Guominjun leaving for northern China, he was so concerned with Lu's persecution that he entrusted the official seal to Lobzang Tendzin. As the gyelpo obtained the position of security commander, he attempted to control Lintan by designating his supporter the magistrate so as to keep the seal. So, Lu assigned a close relative as the Lintan magistrate and asked the gyelpo for the seal in June. With his demand unsatisfied, Lu attacked the *tsowa* in lower Southern Tao and advanced on Böyül.<sup>11</sup>

Lobzang Tendzin constructed 20 bunkers and made the Böyül yamen a stronghold. His First Colonel Yang Xiling commanded the guard to counterattack Lu. Yet the Chone guard was quickly defeated. The three colonels sent the feather-arrow tokens to the thirteen banners in Front Range and raised a force of more than 4,000 men to protect the gyelpo. The Luchu valley was in a turmoil again. Lu's force, however, was at this point defeated by new force and retreated to Xinbao 新堡. The two armies confronted each other on the Luchu riverbanks. To avoid a Chinese-Tibetan war, the Lintan and Minxian Han social elites

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<sup>10</sup> Song Maoting (Hezhou elite), "Lu dachang faji shi 魯大昌發跡史," in *LXWSZL*, vol.2, 113–117.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Ekvall, *Gateway to Tibet*, 90, 161.

appealed to Lobzang Tendzin to return the seal. Without the local elites' support, the gyelpo had little chance to control Lintan and so returned the seal.<sup>12</sup> After taking over Lintan, Lu recruited refugees, bandits and former soldiers of the warlord Kong Fanjin to enlarge his army in southern Gansu. In a few months, he used the county revenues for provisions, reorganized the local police force, and gained control of some ten counties. Since the Gansu government was caught up in the Chiang-Feng war and the Lei-Ma coup, the provincial authorities paid little attention to Lu's territory grab. In 1931, his army was granted the designation of the 14<sup>th</sup> division by the Nationalist Military Affairs Commission. After absorbing Lei Zhongtian's troops, Lu commanded the largest army in southern Gansu.<sup>13</sup>

To secure military funds, other than through just exploiting local farmers, merchant companies and caravans, Lu intended to control the source area of timber, domestic animal and wool in Upper Stream. Thus, his first campaign was to incorporate the *tsowa* of Kyitsang, Ala, Zamtsa and Chökhör federations under the nominal governance of Taozhou. These *tsowa* were the religious communities of Taktsang Lhamo Monastery and their communal gönpas were the subordinate institutes of Labrang. In the 1920s, Ma Qi extended his influence to this region and appointed the Chökhör federation chief Jampel Kyap as the local security commander. After the Labrang-Ma Qi war, the proposed Qinghai-Gansu provincial borderline demarcated these federations into Gansu and the region was under the administration of Xiahe County. By 1932, the county government tried to impose regular taxes on *tsowa* across Xiahe. This was strongly resisted by Chökhör federation.<sup>14</sup>

The situation brimmed with conspiracies. Given that their friendly relations with the Jamyang was restored in 1940, the Chökhör Tibetans avoided mention of the fact that the

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<sup>12</sup> Li Zongxian, "Junfa lu dachang yu tusi yang jiqing gange xiangjian zhi laiyou 軍閥魯大昌與土司楊積慶干戈相見之來由," in *ZNWSZL*, vol.4, 111–113.

<sup>13</sup> "Zhuoni boyu shibian de qianhou," in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 14–17.

<sup>14</sup> Song Maoting, "Lu Dachang fajishi," 116–117; *LTXZ*, 19; *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsodus*, 89–132.

Jamyang's father, Gönpö Döndrup, had incited a feud between Zamtsa and Chökhör by designating the Zamtsa khenpo, one of the four highest-rank reincarnations of Labrang, as the abbot of Chökhör Monastery. For Gönpö Döndrup, the high-ranking lama would assist him to collect tax and implement other policies in this region. Local Tibetans would listen to the lama's advice. From the perspective of Chökhör Tibetans, the khenpo was a leading Buddhist teacher and reincarnation whose religious status, teaching and ritual power could benefit their community. They welcomed this designation. For their part, the Zamtsa Tibetans believed that Jampel Kyap resisted Labrang for having their khenpo reside in Chökhör. Hence, the Zamtsa *tsowa* allied with the Amchok and Méshi federations that had disputes over pastureland with Chökhör, planned an attack. As part of this, they asked Commander Lu Dachang for reinforcements in May 1933. For Lu, it provided a perfect chance to annex these federations.<sup>15</sup>

However, the Zamtsa militia expected the Chökhör federation to lose the battle and never showed up. Unfamiliar with local terrain, Lu and his forces fought bitterly in the valleys and forests of Upper Stream against Tibetans fighting and maneuvering like guerrillas. When Lu occupied the *tsowa* settlements, they were merely empty villages. In reprisal, Lu robbed the Chökhör and Zamtsa monasteries, killed monks, and burned every building in sight. Then, he withdrew to Minxian and declared the launching of another expedition. At this point, Jampel Kyap turned to the provincial government for help. Governor Zhu Shaoliang assigned the Gansu first army commander Deng Baoshan 鄧寶珊 (1894–1968) and Apa Alo to mediate the case. Lu agreed to abandon his military action against Chökhör, and the Chökhör twelve *tsowa* compensated Lu 20,000 silver dollars for the

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<sup>15</sup> *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 89–132; Du Zifei and Zhao Xiaobian, "Luqu shier buluo zangzu tongbao fankang guomindang junfa lu dachang de douzheng 碌曲十二部落藏族同胞反抗國民黨軍閥魯大昌的鬥爭," in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 54–55.

lives of his 80 soldiers killed in battle.<sup>16</sup> Afterwards, Lu adjusted his strategy to incorporate the Luchu valley. He sought an opportunity to seize the “less barbaric” Middle Stream and Lower Stream.

Along with his segmentation of southern Gansu and confrontations with the northern Sichuan warlord, Lu increasingly recognized the advantages of the strategic location, taxation potential and affluent natural resources of the Chone Kingdom. He even made several attempts to assassinate the Chone king. His supporters in the county magistrate positions repeatedly requested the provincial government to abolish the chieftain system and establish a provisional government office in Chone.<sup>17</sup> In return, the Chone king launched political counterattacks against Lu Dachang. He reported to the provincial authorities that Lu Dachang forced Tao-Min farmers to cultivate opium poppies and excessively taxed local residents. At the provincial military meeting in 1933, the gyelpo’s first colonel Yang Xiling openly criticized Lu for his fund apportion and opium growing in southern Gansu. As a result, Lu assassinated this Tébo colonel and other four Chone officials for revenge on their way back to Chone.<sup>18</sup> The overall political situation was not favorable to the gyelpo. In the same year, provincial officials readdressed the issue of administrative regularization. Based on the instruction of the Executive Yuan (*Xingzhengyuan* 行政院), the “three native officials and five monastic officials” of Lintan were conferred new positions and titles. The Chone gyelpo was nominated as the director of Chone’s provisional government office, which would be transformed into the county government someday. The Nyentsa gönpo and Tsoksum gönpo were respectively appointed a district head (*quzhang* 區長) and a township head (*xiangzhang*

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<sup>16</sup> Li Zhenyi, *Gannan jianshi*, 141–143; Gao Zhimin and Li Chunyu, “Lintan xian jiefang qian sanshi nian dashiji 臨潭縣解放前三十年大事記,” in *Lintan wenshi ziliao* (hereafter *LTWSZL*), vol.3, 13.

<sup>17</sup> Fan Changjiang, *Zhongguo de xibei jiao*, 43; Jia Dajun (experienced the Zhuoni Incident and interviewed those who participated the murder of Lobzang Tendzin), “Guanyu tian kunshan chaban zhuoni shibian de jingguo 關於田昆山查辦卓尼事變的經過,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.2, 118.

<sup>18</sup> “Zhuoni Boyu shibian de qianhou,” 18.

鄉長) of Lintan County. As the Chokro khenchen, Chaspa khenpo, Marnyung khenpo, Tsordor lapön and Yerba lapön effectively lost their subjects, their rights over the incense land were reserved for the principle of “respecting the religion adhered to by the Tibetan nationality.”<sup>19</sup>

Although the political sway of the Gansu government was growing, Lobzang Tendzin still was passively able to resist the *gaitu guiliu* policy, in part due to his marginal geo-political location. He purchased advanced weapons, enlarged his guard, and continued to expand his contacts with GMD power-holders in Gansu and Sichuan. From 1933 to 1936, General Hu Zongnan 胡宗南 (1896–1962) complied with Nanjing’s military orders, and took command in the Shaan-Gan-Chuan borderland. The intent was for him to intimidate the Ma family warlords and, later on, blockade the communist Red Army. Following Hu’s order to improve transportation in the Gansu-Sichuan border area, the Chone king levied a temporary corvée to construct the Chone-Songpan Road. He also sent second colonel Ji Congzhou 姬從周 (d.1937) to convey the grain of his private granaries to Hu’s army.<sup>20</sup> The gyelpo maintained amicable relations with superior authorities to remain in power. In the meantime, he continued to press a strategy of finding a position between different powers with the purpose of avoiding external military conflict and political struggles.

In September 1935, the Central (also known as the First) and the Fourth Red armies split in a strategic divergence after they broke through the blockade of General Hu in Songpan in northeastern Ngawa. The Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee planned to control Minxian and develop the Communist power in southern Gansu. Zhang Guotao 張國燾 (1897–1979) was concerned with the logistical difficulties in

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<sup>19</sup> “Gaitu guiliu shixiang 改土歸流事項,” *Minzheng* 民政 6, no.4 (1933), 311–315.

<sup>20</sup> Feng Pingyuan and Luo Lengmei eds., *Hu Zongnan shangjiang nianpu* 胡宗南上將年譜 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 2014), 49–76; Fan Changjiang, *Zhongguo de xibei jiao*, 43.

northern Sichuan and the ethnic regions. He decided to occupy the Minjiang River 岷江 region and secure supplies. As a result, Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893–1976) and the First Army entered Upper Tébo. Hoping to wipe out the poorly equipped and supplied communist soldiers in these mountain valleys, General Hu Zongnan instructed Lobzang Tendzin to pursue the Reds from Tébo northward to Latsen where Lu Dachang would ambush the Communist force in a narrow gorge. For this, the gyelpo unprecedentedly fielded nearly 20,000 militiamen drawn from across the kingdom to convince Hu of his cooperation. At the same time, however, he secretly negotiated with the Communist leaders to keep what would come to be called their “Long March” out of Chone. He dispatched the Tsalung granary officer Yang Jinghua 楊景華, who was the son of Yang Xiling, to provide supplies of around 300,000 *jin* of grains to the Red Army. A Tibetan guide was sent to show the CCP the route across Tébo to Minxian. He also ordered Tébo Tibetans to hide in the forest and avoid conflict when the Red Army as it passed by their *tsowa*. Later that month, the Communist force won a pyrrhic victory over Lu Dachang at Latsen and arrived at Hadapu 哈達鋪 where Mao learned that Liu Zhidan 劉志丹 (1903–1936) had established a revolutionary base area in northern Shaanxi. As is well known, this made Mao change course, but it also changed local history, since he did not take Minxian and advance northward across Gansu. After several combats against the troops of the Ma family warlords, the First Red Army trekked to northern Shaanxi in late October.<sup>21</sup>

As a defensive measure against the Red Army, the Nationalists’ *baojia* system had been strictly put into effect in Lintan and Minxian to organize defense and prevent local residents from collaborating with or assisting the Reds. From February 1936 onward, the CCP Central Committee began to expand the revolutionary base area into the Shaan-Gan-Ning borderland

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<sup>21</sup> Gongjue Cairang, “Yige lao zangmin de huiyi,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.7, 40–46; Li Zhenyi, “Hongjun changzheng jing diebu de diaocha 紅軍長征經迭部的調查,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.2, 20–36.



region (*shaan gan ning bianqu* 陝甘寧邊區). With the Eastern Expedition and Western Expedition defeated by Yan Xishan and Ma Bufang respectively, the Committee was inclined to reunite all Communist forces. In July, the Second and Fourth Red armies unified together in Aba. Zhang Guotao agreed to march northward and complied with the military agenda of the Central Committee. In August, the Reds took the same route through Tébo, captured several counties in Longnan, and temporarily established local Soviet governments. In the Luchu valley, Lu had fled from Minxian. Zhu De 朱德 (1886–1976) and Xu Xiangqian 徐向前 (1901–1990) defeated one of Ma Bufang's brigades and the militia of merchant companies in Old Town. They launched the campaign against the "rich and local bullies" to amass supplies. Many Northern Tao residents fled to Southern Tao. The Chone king sent a letter and gifts to the Communist headquarters in New City. As Hu Zongnan commanded a large army and led a counterattack from northern Sichuan in early October, the Central Committee decided to join all Red forces in Huining 會寧 and soon crossed the Yellow River and entered the borderland between Ningxia and Shaanxi. Neither the Red Army nor the Communist work teams came to Chone. The GMD officials and commanders returned to their posts, immediately put an end to the local Soviet governments, and purged those who were associated with the Communists. Lu Dahang reported to the governor that Lobzang Tendzin secretly communicated with the Reds. Yet, for assisting General Hu, the gyelpo was invited to send a delegation to pay allegiance to Chiang Kai-shek in early 1937.<sup>22</sup>

Even so, a number of problems had been eroding the basis of the gyelpo's rulership. Over time Han migrants altered the ethnic composition in the *tsowa* within the pass, especially in the sixteen base-villages, which inevitably shaped the ethnic composition in the political system of the Chone kingdom. Customarily, the gyelpo conferred official positions

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<sup>22</sup> ZNXZ, 18; LTXZ, 19–20.

on the reliable men of the twelve inner base-villages. Few Tibetan officials dared to betray the king. As Lobzang Tendzin was a half-Han and adopted from the Böyül yamen, he was inclined to recruit Chinese-speaking officials. Throughout his youth, the prime managers and superior headmen of his predecessor dominated the Chone yamen. These highest-rank officials were loyal to Yongdū Palace and Ganden Shédrupting, and represented the traditional ruling class of Chone. They long regarded the adopted gyelpo as a temporary ruler instead of an orthodox sovereign with pure royal bone. Hence, Lobzang Tendzin spared no efforts to weaken their power over three decades. With more and more large houses held by Han families in the inner base-villages, he promoted Han householders and created a number of Han upstarts.<sup>23</sup>

Meanwhile, Lobzang Tendzin partially reformed the soldier-horse military system. He hired around 300 Han refugees, bandits and former soldiers, and organized them into a guard platoon (*jingweidui* 警衛隊). Given that the Chone militia was recognized as a semi-official brigade by the Gansu government, he imitated the GMD military organizational system and instituted the posts of lieutenant, captain, commandant and colonel in the military corvée-based troop. He conferred the power of the superior headmen and banner-chiefs to field militia on these new-type military officers.<sup>24</sup> After the Chone yamen was demolished by the Muslim force in 1929, he moved the king's residence to , and appointed the Han householders who served the second royal branch to the important positions. As a result, the private guard, the three regiments and the administrative departments of the kingdom were

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<sup>23</sup> In 1933, he endowed a large portion of land at the edge of Maru tsowa to the Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) Pastor James Harold Shultz without the consent of Maru yamen. James Horald Shultz, "Diary of Notable Trip by Our Brethren from Lanchow, into Tibetan Regions round about Choni and Labrang," *The China Division Reporter* 3:9 (September 1933), 11; Interviews with the son and daughter-in-law of Lobzang Tendzin's sister, Böyül, June 2017.

<sup>24</sup> Miao Zishu, "Zhuoni boyu shibian," in *GNWSZL*, vol.2, 100; Yang Fuxing and Yang Shenghua, "Zhuoni heping jiefang jishi 卓尼和平解放紀實," in *ZNWSZL*, vol.7, 23.

mainly staffed with Han officials favored by Lobzang Tendzin in the 1930s. The Tibetan officials of the Chone yamen were marginalized by the king.<sup>25</sup>

Over time tensions rose between the Tibetan and Chinese officials, and their grudges also grew against the king. Tibetan officials gathered around Prime Manager Saigao 賽高 allied with Caojiadai 曹家代 (Yang Ying 楊英), who was the adopted son of the Tsoksum gönpo and the king's third colonel. The Han officials led by Second Colonel Ji Congzhou formed another faction. In 1936, Ji was assigned to be the Chone anti-communist commander by General Hu Zongnan when he transported grain to Songpan. However as the king never allowed Ji to take up the position—and Ji believed this was because Caojiadai had bad-mouthed him to the monarch—Ji felt aggrieved and was seeking an opportunity to kill his rival.<sup>26</sup> Around the same time, the gyelpo's secretary Fang Bingyi 方秉義, a close friend of Ji Congzhou, often complained that Commander Yang was unwilling to put them in important positions. After raping a local girl and fleeing from Chone in 1936, he held a more obvious grudge against the gyelpo.<sup>27</sup>

In addition, the Dou lineage 陡氏 of New City intended to put Caojiadai to death. In 1930, Dou Ziming 陡子明 of this lineage served as the second colonel of the Chone troop. Since his soldiers raped several girls to the southeast of New City, Dou was arrested and executed by Caojiadai, who was the police chief of Lintan County under Lu Dachang. Given that the gyelpo forbade his men from accepting external appointments and rising to power, he recalled Caojiadai to Böyül and conferred on him the position of third colonel. The Dou family considered this to be the gyelpo's plot against them, as it had been Dou Ziming who

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<sup>25</sup> Fan Changjiang, *Zhongguo de xibei jiao*, 43; Interview with the daughter-in-law of Maru yamen, June 2017; Interview with the Quan family of Yarunyi, May 22, 2015; interview with the prime manager's daughter, Lanzhou, May 15, 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Yang Beichen, "Wo suo zhidao de boyu shibian 我所知道的博峪事變," in *GNWSZL*, vol.2, 108-10.

<sup>27</sup> Jia Dajun, "Guanyu tian kunshan chaban zhuoni shibian de jingguo," in *GNWSZL*, vol.2, 117-120.

had persuaded the king to return the magistrate seal to Lu earlier that year, and now Dou was dead and the follower of the king responsible for it had been protected from reprisal. In 1936, with the help of Lu Dachang, the Dou family organized a small petition party of the Lintan elites and requested the provincial government to enforce *gaitu guiliu* in Chone. They declared that the chieftain system was the main obstacle to modernizing Taozhou, and Chieftain Yang was responsible for inciting the Tibetan-Muslim war in 1929 and the Tibetan-Chinese conflict in 1930.<sup>28</sup>

Coincidentally, amid the escalation of the Sino-Japanese War, the majority of Gansu official troops were being dispatched to the frontlines in 1937. Already in June, Chiang Kai-shek instructed Lu Dachang to prepare for the coming war. His 14<sup>th</sup> division was reorganized into the 165<sup>th</sup> Division under the command of Hu Zongnan. Reluctant to send his forces to eastern China, Lu suspended the transfer of his army, offering the excuse to the central government that the Tibetan rear zone was too turbulent.<sup>29</sup> In the interim, the anti-Lobzang Tendzin faction built connections with He Yaozu 賀耀祖 (1889–1961), the new Gansu pacification commissioner who temporarily ran the office of the Gansu provincial president. At this point, after reporting in Lanzhou that the Chone Tibetan revolutionaries would overthrow the chieftain, the petition party led by the Dou family were told by Commissioner He to join with the Tibetan rising force and handle this local issue themselves. Thereupon, Lu Dachang instigated Ji and Fang to take action on behalf of Gansu government, and promised to offer military support.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Taozhou elites believed that Lobzang Tendzin interrupted the tripartite balance and corporation of Tibetan, Chinese and Muslim communities of Taozhou. Later, he led to the injury or death of the prestigious Tao-Min elders who intruded into the crossfire between Chone militia and Lu Dachang's troop to mediate a truce in 1930. Besides, they also had various disputes with the Chone gyelpo. They accused Commander Yang of defying the central government by the feudal separation; refusing to implement *gaitu guiliu* policy; communicating with Japanese invaders in Inner Mongolia and disturbing the anti-Japanese union; collaborating with the Communists and supporting the Red Army; and secretly selling China's territory to missionaries. See Miao Zishu, "Zhuoni boyu shibian," in *GNWSZL*, vol.2, 98–99.

<sup>29</sup> "Zhuoni boyu shibian de qianhou," in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 20.

<sup>30</sup> Miao Zishu, "Zhuoni boyu shibian," in *GNWSZL*, vol.2, 99.

### *The Murder of the Potentate*

Although the role of the provincial authorities in the later assassination of the Chone gyelpo was uncertain, Lu convinced Ji Congzhou that the Gansu government was determined to implement *gaitu guiliu* in Chone, and ratified their uprising to topple Chieftain Yang. In early August 1937, they convened a secret meeting in Minxian. The second colonel agreed to organize the Han officials and release the prisoners in the Böyül jail. Then, they killed the third colonel and prime manager, and blamed the murders on the released prisoners. Lu and Fang had another plan. On August 22, Lu sent a regiment to reinforce Ji from Xinbao at the ferry-crossing opposite Böyül on the Luchu River. He ordered Fang to command thirty undercover soldiers and hide nearby Böyül village. Three days later, Ji made his move in the rain at midnight. He released the prisoners, sent his men to arrest Caojiadai and Saigao, and blockaded the yamen gate with the gyelpo's hand-gunner platoon. Caojiadai was captured and shot dead. Saigao was released by a close friend, and escaped toward North Range. At this point, Fang took over the yamen gate and informed Ji that both the central and provincial governments instructed them to execute the chieftain. With two machineguns, several repeating rifles and pistols aimed at windows and doors, they strafed the living quarters of the ruling family for several minutes. This was followed by a chaotic looting of the king's residence.<sup>31</sup>

The shooting instantly killed the elder son, daughter-in-law, daughter and nephew of Lobzang Tendzin. Hiding his second son Pema Wangchuk under a blanket, the gyelpo climbed over the rear wall with his Chinese bodyguard Chen Wushi (陳五十一), and fled through the sacred forest of Böyül *tsowa*, hiding finally in a watermill. Later, he sent his bodyguard to check the situation in the yamen. As Chen knew of some hidden treasure of the

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<sup>31</sup> Interviews with son of Ji Congzhou, and nephew of Lobzang Tendzin in Böyül, June 4, 2015.

ruling family, he joined the looting party. Encountering a Han commandant, he was forced to disclose the hiding place of the chieftain. At dawn, Fang led a hundred soldiers and surrounded the watermill. After several rounds of shooting at the mill, a Han soldier of Jagö *tsowa* stoned the wounded gyelpo to death. The following morning, Böyül Tibetans were deeply shocked by the incident. Many fled elsewhere. A Lamarnang incantator (*sngags pa*), who had been imprisoned by the gyelpo and freed by the insurgents, found Pema Wangchuk and concealed him in a shack of Böyül valley. When this man refused later to hand over the gyelpo-in-waiting, Ji Congzhou cut his throat open on the bank of the Luchu River.<sup>32</sup>

On August 27, Lu telegraphed He Yaozu that Chieftain Yang fraternized with Japanese enemies in Manchuria, betrayed the state, and therefore was executed according to the will of the Tibetan people.<sup>33</sup> Fang and Ji organized a temporary maintenance committee. The officials of Böyül yamen signed a telegram about the overthrow of the chieftain, and it was sent to the provincial government.<sup>34</sup> To stabilize the situation, the temporary committee detained the remaining members of the ruling house as hostages at the Lingsar Khenpo Residence, and guaranteed the headmen of the sixteen base-villages and the banner-chiefs in Lower Stream that their position would remain unchanged.<sup>35</sup> In the meantime, as they awaited further instruction from Lanzhou, Lu deployed his army in New Town to defend against any potential attack by the North Range Tibetans. He urged the provincial authorities to integrate Chone into the regular administrative system as soon as possible.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, he sought to influence public opinion in Lanzhou with media accounts encouraging Taozhou Hui refugees who escaped the massacre of 1929 to return to hometown in force. A 20,000-

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with Derge Tso (daughter of the Lamarnang incantator) and interview with Sönam Tsering (son of the other safeguard, who was wounded while Lobzang Tendzin escaped), Lamarnang, June 3, 2015.

<sup>33</sup> The gyelpo had a close relation with the Fourth Martang Tsang, who owned monasteries in the Japanese occupied Chahar. Interviews with the Fifth Martang Tsang, May 31, 2015; June 10, 2016. Telegram from Lu Dachang to He Yaozu, August 27, 1937, 15-7-233, GSSDAG.

<sup>34</sup> Telegram from Zhuoni Shezhiju to He Yaozu, August 28, 1937, 15-7-233, GSSDAG.

<sup>35</sup> Interviews with Trashi, Yaru, May 23, 2015; Kelzang, Lungsde, July 7, 2017.

<sup>36</sup> Telegram from Lu Dachang to He Yaozu, August 30, 1937, 15-7-233, GSSDAG.

word article, “The Sound of Croak,” published in several magazines and newspapers, concocted a grim tale of Lobzang Tendzin’s cruelty and wickedness for public consumption. The temporary committee and Muslim refugees also posted the statement “Ten Crimes of Chieftain Yang” all over Old Town, New Town and Minzhou.<sup>37</sup> Considering the incident a “Tibetan revolution” to depose the hereditary ruler, the Gansu government expressed great optimism about these developments. In the Provincial Affairs Convention, He Yaozu announced a plan to regularize the administrative system in the last chiefdom of Gansu. He appointed Tian Kunshan 田崑山 (1891–1959), a Gansu Chinese selected as a leading official of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission in 1935, to establish a provisional government office in Chone Town. The commissioner instructed Lu Dachang, Apa Alo and the Chone temporary committee to settle the matter in Lintan County.<sup>38</sup>

At this point, Saigao arrived in North Range. He persuaded the Tsermoché Gowa Tsering (Yang Mazhou 楊麻周), who was called the Zhongpa gönpo by North Range Tibetans, to avenge the murder of the Chone gongma. Mazhou Tsering was a reputable *tsowa* headman and loyal to the ruling house.<sup>39</sup> He led 1,000 Tibetan men of the twelve banners in North Range to Chone Town, where several hundred armed monks were eager to rescue the heirs imprisoned in Lingsar. At dawn in early September, these monks and North Range militia launched a sudden assault on Böyül. Even as they braved the gunfire from the advanced firearms of the king’s guard, the militia rescued the wives and two sons of Lobzang Tendzin and took them to the newly constructed Ganden Shédrupling.<sup>40</sup> Then, Consort Yang, who was the second concubine of Lobzang Tendzin, sent the feather-arrow tokens to

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<sup>37</sup> “Chuanxi zhisheng 喘息之聲,” in Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 156–158.

<sup>38</sup> Telegram from He Yaozu to Lu Dachang, August 31, 1937, 15-7-233; “Gansu sheng zhengfu di wu nian er ci shengwu huiyi jueyi 甘肅省政府第五年二次省務會議決議,” September 22, 1937, 15-7-235, GSSDAG; Jia Dajun, “Guanyu tian kunshan chaban zhuoni shibian de jingguo,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.2, 124.

<sup>39</sup> “Yang mazhou zhuanl e 楊麻周傳略,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.3, 178–179.

<sup>40</sup> “Zhuoni boyu shibian de qianhou,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 24–25.

all banners of Front Range asking them to “capture the traitors.” Several thousand Tibetans converged on Chone Town in a few days. They pillaged the households and expelled the family members of those who participated in the murder. Yet, most *tsowa* were unwilling to fight for the royal family. The headmen cautiously watched for the Gansu government’s decision.<sup>41</sup>

On September 11, Tian Kunshan and his assistant Jia Dajun 賈大均 arrived in New Town. The Chone authorities suspected that the provincial government had collaborated with Lu Dachang to eliminate the chieftain system. They preferred to enthrone a new chieftain, secure the old way of governance, and especially maintain the tax system in the 48 banners. After deploying a Tibetan force to besiege New Town, Consort Yang and Saigao went to the Lintan county government and explained to Tian that the incident was irrelevant to revolution. They requested an investigation into the case and punishment of the murderers. Returning to Chone, they informed the Tibetan militia that the Chinese government would ratify the new chieftain and punish the murderers. The Tibetan force still besieged New Town and proclaimed their intention to assassinate Tian if he made any decision to Lu’s advantage. Also, the *tsowa* headmen carried out a full-scale assault on Böyül and the 165<sup>th</sup> Division.<sup>42</sup> Lu Dachang reinforced Xinbao and New Town, and requested Lanzhou to implement the administrative regularization immediately. When Tian decided to visit Chone, Lu also urged the Taozhou Muslim refugees, who were prohibited from *shangzhuang* by the gyelpo since 1929, to hold back the commissioner.<sup>43</sup> Nonetheless, his actions and strategies did not slow down the Chone militia.

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<sup>41</sup> Wu Mingtuo, “Zhuoni zhi guoqu yu weilai 卓尼之過去與未來,” *Bianzheng gonglun* 1, no.1 (1939), 94a–b.

<sup>42</sup> “Zhuoni boyu shibian de qianhou,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 24–25.

<sup>43</sup> Telegram from Lu Dachang to He Yaozu, September 12, 1937; Telegram from Tian Kunshan to He Yaozu, September 13, 1937; Telegram from Lu Dachang to He Yaozu, September 14, 1937, 15-7-233, GSSDAG.



At daybreak on September 14, the Tibetan force defeated the well-equipped guard and dismissed the temporary committee. Ji Congzhou and five leading figures were killed in battle. Their heads were cut off and hung at the entrance gate of Böyül *tsowa* for half a year. Fang Bingyi escaped to Xinbao where Lu's regiment repulsed the Tibetan force in pursuit. To this point, over 10,000 Tibetans had gathered in Chone Town. In the presence of Commissioner Tian, the eighty Chone representatives consisting of yamen officials, banner-chiefs, *tsowa* headmen and eminent lamas called for the summoning of the soldiers of Back Range, and organized a two-pronged campaign against Lu Dachang from both Drukchu and Chone.<sup>44</sup> To forestall the case from escalating into a major inter-ethnic conflict in the midst of the wider war, He Yaozu instructed Commander Lu to never transgress the Chone border again, and required the Tibetan militia to withdraw 40 *li* from Chone Town and New Town.<sup>45</sup> In the subsequent negotiation, Chone authorities requested that the Gansu government ratify the inheritances of the Chone gyelpo and khenpo, punish the murderers, and ensure that Tibetan socio-political customs remain untouched. To implement the *gaitu guiliu* policy, at least nominally, Tian suggested He Yaozu approve the eight-year old Pema Wangchuk to succeed to the title of Tao-Min route security commander instead of the Chone chieftain, or the gyelpo as Tibetans perceived it.<sup>46</sup>

Therefore, a compromise resulted. On the one hand, the GMD government set up the Chone Provisional Government Office or Shezhiju and so claimed the civil power of the chieftain yamen. The Lintan magistrate concurrently served as the director of the Chone Shezhiju. The chieftain title was eventually abolished. The Chone yamen was renamed the Tao-Min Security Command Headquarters (*baolan silingbu* 保安司令部) and was, in theory,

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<sup>44</sup> Jia Dajun, "Guanyu tian kunshan chaban zhuoni shibian de jingguo," in *GNWSZL*, vol.2, 124.

<sup>45</sup> Telegram from He Yaozu to Lu Dachang, September 15, 1937, 15-7-233, GSSDAG.

<sup>46</sup> Telegram from Tian Kunshan to He Yaozu, September 16, 1937, 15-7-235.

to retain the authority for security and armed forces now solely.<sup>47</sup> Pema Wangchuk inherited the security commander position. A Tibetan staff officer (*canmou* 參謀) was installed in the Security Headquarter to serve as the gyelpo's adviser and the middleman between the Silingbu and the Shezhiju. Moreover, the appointment of this Tibetan official in Chone would be validated only with the provincial government's permission.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, Tibetans were satisfied with this arrangement as Pema Wangchuk and his younger brother Dondrup were recognized as the Commander and the Khutuktu by the Chinese government. Equally importantly, the commensal overlord-*tsowa* relation to fend off the taxation and corvée of outside authorities was secured. Yang Shijun 楊世俊 (Yang Yijuan 楊一雋), who served as the secretary of the previous gyelpo, was appointed the staff officer by the Gansu government. Yang Rufeng, Saigao and Yang Jinghua obtained the position of the first, second and third colonels. They were all Tibetans. Most Han officials were elbowed out of the Headquarters.<sup>49</sup>

Undeniably, direct Chinese state control for the first time intruded into this frontier kingdom. In January 1938, the Henan Chinese official Wu Jing'ao 吳景敖 was appointed the Shezhiju director. He employed a few staff members to run the provisional government, and ten policemen to protect the office. He also recruited a hundred men from the Luchu valley, and planned to have them trained as professional soldiers to guarantee the implementation of government policies. To prevent the Shezhiju from fostering its own troop, the Tibetan colonels mixed their own soldiers in with the recruits.<sup>50</sup> With Wu promoted to the Lintan magistrate later that year, Liu Xiuyue 劉修月, a more progressive

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<sup>47</sup> Telegrams from He Yaozu to Jiang Zhongzheng, September 25, 1937, 15-7-235; November 6, 1937, 15-7-237; Telegrams from Jiang Zhongzheng to He Yaozu, September 28; October 17; November 11, 1937, 15-7-237, GSSDAG.

<sup>48</sup> Telegram from He Yaozu to Tian Kunshan, September 18, 1937, 15-7-235; Ma Jizhou, "Zhuoni shanhou banfa 卓尼善後辦法," 1937, 15-7-237, GSSDAG.

<sup>49</sup> Telegram from He Yaozu to Jiang Zhongzheng, November 5, 1937, 15-7-237, GSSDAG.

<sup>50</sup> Wu Jing'ao was the author of *Xichui shidi yanjiu* (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1948).

Hunanese official, was assigned as the Shezhiju director in early 1939. Liu was an experienced county magistrate and familiar with the political environment of the Northwest. Modeling the standard county governmental system, he set up the bureaus (*ke* 科) of civil affairs, finance, education and construction, as well as the offices (*shi* 室) of the secretary, police, accountant and corporative guidance in Chone Town. He divided the kingdom into four administrative districts, namely Zhuoni, Qiagai, Baishuijiang 白水江 and Tiebahe 鐵峽河, which were equivalent to the Chone, Zhongpa, Tébo and Drukchu areas. Liu appointed the three colonels to be the district heads of North Range, Tébo and Drukchu to gain their support. Then, he set up the Liulin Town 柳林鎮 government to manage the sixteen base-villages, and nine other township governments to replace the traditional banner system. The officials of these local administrations were mostly Han Chinese, who were despised by Tibetans. By 1940, the basic county governmental system was set up in Chone. The Shezhiju was staffed with around 100 salaried employees.<sup>51</sup> In this process, the colonels dominated the Security Headquarters and turned Pema Wangchuk into a puppet commander. Similar to the situation in the early 1900s, the young ruler and the widowed regent relied on the leading official to run the kingdom and sought to expand their influence. The staff officer and colonels practically controlled the revenue and military force for their own good.<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, the ecclesiastical authority of the ruling house became a mere symbol. After the destruction of Ganden Shédrupten, the majority of advanced students of the seventeen religious communities from all over the kingdom continued their training at Labrang Monastery. Most regional and communal monasteries were run independently by

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<sup>51</sup> The nine townships were Taonan, Taobei, Luzhu, Gongba in Front Range, Beishan in North Range, and Shangdie, Xiadie, Chagang and Gongba in Back Range. See Li Zongxian (a department director of the Shezhiju, and the secretary of Zhuoni Temporary Consultative Council since 1944), “Zhuiyi zhuoni shezhiju de shier nian 追憶卓尼設治局的十二年,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.6, 1–17; “Zhuoni shezhi quyu lüetu 卓尼設治局區域略圖” (1939), 26-3-330, GSSDAG.

<sup>52</sup> The biological mother of Pema Wangchuk and Dondrup was the fourth concubine of Lobzang Tendzin. Interviews with the Lamarnang Liang family and the Böyül Ji family, June 3–4, 2015.

local monks. For instance, at Wangtsang Gönpa, the monks rejected the abbot appointed by the Chone khenpo, and requested that the Jamyang Zhépa send them a dharma-seat holder. The prime-subordinate monastery system essentially collapsed. Also, the Fourth Martang Tsang, who owned an Amdo-to-Chahar caravan of 500 camels, became the cardinal patron and religious leader for the rebuilding of Chone Monastery.<sup>53</sup> With his support, the monastic authorities enthroned Dondrup as the Chone khenpo. The dharma throne was no longer held by a secular ruler after a century-long behind the scenes power struggle between monastic authorities and the ruling house. As Dondrup was too young to exercise the khenpo's power, the Tsador Tsang Song Khenpo and the Fifth Guryak Tsang sequentially served as the ecclesiastical regent to handle religious issues and monastic educational affairs of the kingdom.<sup>54</sup>

## **The Nation-State Building in the Great Rear**

### *North Range: Local Incidents and State Interventions*

The Gansu government adjusted the administrative divisions of the ASRs time and again to establish what they hoped would be increasingly efficient intermediary administrations overarching the provincial and county governments. In 1941, the nine counties around Lanzhou were demarcated from the First ASR and managed directly by the provincial government. The First ASR government was moved from Lintao to Minxian, which administered Minxian, Lintan, Wei yuan, Longxi, and Zhangxian. To increase revenue and conscription, Chone and Labrang were incorporated into the First ASR.<sup>55</sup> Although GMD

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<sup>53</sup> Interviews with the Fifth Martang Tsang, May 31, 2015; June 10, 2016.

<sup>54</sup> Yang Dondrup, "Wo de shaonian shidai 我的少年時代," in *ZNWSZL*, vol.4, 49-51. Zhang Shugong, "Guanyu leibafo de fu siling song hailin he song kanbu zhichi nongmin qiyi de youguan shiliao 關於勒巴佛的副司令宋海林和宋堪布支持農民起義的有關史料," in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 94-95.

<sup>55</sup> "Shicha minxian lintan zhuoni deng xianju yiban xingzheng baogao 視察岷縣臨潭卓尼等縣局一般行政報告," 4-8-440, GSSDAG, 1941.

local government had been set up in the Tibetan region, the commissioner Hu Gongmian 胡公冕 (1888–1979), a Hunanese commander who made his career in Gansu, was unsatisfied with its progress with respect to exerting practical control over Tibetans. Hence, he took the radical move to establish governmental control down to the *tsowa* organization in Chone and Labrang. In June 1941, he held a meeting with over 200 Tibetan religious and secular authorities of eastern Amdo in Tsö.<sup>56</sup> At the convention, he proposed ten resolutions and six accords to “modernize” this frontier by organizing *baojia*, mapping administrative borders, constructing roads, hospitals and a postal network, opening banks, and enlisting labor for reclamation projects, encouraging husbandry and commercial companies. He particularly required Tibetan authorities to complete the *baojia* registration within three to six months.<sup>57</sup>

At this time, a pasture dispute erupted in North Range. Because the administrative borders and *tsowa* territorial boundaries overlapped one another over time, a small quarrel could easily lead to an inter-*tsowa* feud and evolved into pasture dispute in this area. Both official record and local oral account indicate that the dispute was sparked by a butter theft at the end of 1940. Namuka, a Mébo man of Lungkhamzhöl *tsowa* stole twelve *jin* of butter from Tsemogya, a Zhongpa man of Khagya *tsowa*.<sup>58</sup> The thief was pursued and imprisoned by the gönpo Mazhou Tsering. Learning of this case, Huang Yingge 黃迎哥, the Chinese translator of the Mébo Gönpo Yang Buyun 楊步雲, rescued Namuka by force. Based on pastoral customary law, a thief would be beaten by the capturers, and the thief’s household or even *tsowa* redeemed for the capture. The successfully returned thief was held in high esteem by his peers according to the local norm. On the contrary, a failed thief was disdained and

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<sup>56</sup> Telegram from Hu Gongmian to Gu Zhenglun, June 1941, 15-8-301, GSSDAG.

<sup>57</sup> See “Heicuo si baoan xingzheng huiyi 黑錯寺保安行政會議,” in Ma Wuji, *Gansu xiahe xian zangmin diaocha ji* 甘肅省夏河縣藏民調查記 (mimeograph, Xiahe: Xiahexian dang’an guan, 1947).

<sup>58</sup> “Gansu sheng zhengfu tebie fating panjue 甘肅省政府特別法庭判決,” November 1945, 26-3-330, GSSDAG.

mocked by the whole community. Huang's rescue mission was highly inappropriate.<sup>59</sup> Thereby, the Zhongpa Tibetans demanded the return of the butter and the punishing of the thief and Huang Yingge. The Mébo leaders insisted that nothing would be paid as compensation. The elder councils of the two sides debated over this issue for many days but could not agree. The quarrels soon escalated to the stage of clearing up all historical conflicts and exchanges of gifts. The Mébo league demanded that the Zhongpa *tsowa* return the grassland in the middle place between the two parties which had long been grazed by Zhongpa stock. Throughout 1941, a Mébo-Zhongpa range war intermittently broke out in the pastureland between the Lodzer and Churöl encampment-circles. Both sides lost 26 men.<sup>60</sup>

By mid-1942, Huang Yingge, who was closely associated with the Jamyang family and regarded as a “running dog” of the GMD by Zhongpa Tibetans, threatened Mazhou that a Chinese pacification force would be sent to pacify North Range. The Zhongpa gönpo viewed this as Huang's provocation and intention to draw in Chinese troops to North Range. He decided to assassinate Huang. On May 11, six Zhongpa men mistakenly shot at the Mébo gönpo in the midst of the ambush meant to kill Huang.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, Yang Buyun's son Tatsang (Yang Shijie 楊世傑) appealed to the Gansu government for a force to pacify Zhongpa in revenge for his father. The First ASR commissioner Hu Gongmian instructed the Lintan Security Battalion to repress the Tibetan bandits in North Range. On June 9, the battalion commander and Tatsang launched a two-pronged attack to “wipe out rebels” of the Zhongpa *tsowa*. However, both assaults were repelled by small units of Zhongpa guerrillas, who managed to kill nineteen Chinese soldiers.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> “Zhuoni beishan shijian de qianyin houguo 卓尼北山事變的前因後果,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 35.

<sup>60</sup> “Gansu sheng zhengfu tebie fating panjue,” November 1945, 26-3-330, GSSDAG.

<sup>61</sup> Later the Zhongpa gönpo demonstrated that it was a manslaughter. The original plan was to shoot Huang Yingge, who provoked the Mébo ruler to sabotage local peace. See “Yang Mazhou zhuanl 楊馬州傳,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.3, 180–181.

<sup>62</sup> “Zhuoni beishan shijian de qianyin houguo,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 35.

Due to the failure of this effort, the Gansu government sent the provincial security director Ji Zhangjian 吉章簡 (1902–1992) to direct a division of soldiers to crush the Zhongpa Tibetans. Ji arrived in Chone and ordered Pema Wangchuk (then 12-years old) to suppress his nomadic subjects.<sup>63</sup> The Chone ruling family and Tibetan officials were concerned that the Gansu government would use the incident as an excuse to displace the gyelpo. Pema Wangchuk's tutor Xia Yutian 夏玉田, a reputable local Chinese scholar, was sent to inform Ji that the gyelpo had gone to eradicate opium poppy cultivation in Tébo. The Chone Tibetan officials employed Xia as the representative to persuade Ji to impose a fine on the North Range nomads instead of embarking on a large-scale conflict in the Great Rear of the Sino-Japanese war. As Ji Jianzhang was unwilling to tackle the incident, he left Chone after receiving 1,000 silver dollars, 15 horses and 15 rifles paid for by *tsowa* of North Range.<sup>64</sup>

The case was far from closed. Yet, new violence erupted simultaneously. In 1941, the provincial government established a township in Tsö, the popular transportation nexus at the geographic center of Chone, Lintan, Hezhou and Labrang, and the seat of the Tsö Gönpa. The Tsö league was ruled by the Trichen reincarnation, the dharma-throne holder of Tsö Gönpa. It had four *shog pa* and consisted of 21 *tsowa*. Although the Trichen lama was affiliated to Labrang Monastery, he was one of the most prestigious reincarnated lamas in eastern Amdo.<sup>65</sup> Under the impact of the First ASR commissioner's policy to develop the Tibetan borderland, a hospital, police station and post office were established in Tsö by 1942. In July, the hospital opened up a water source and cut the trees around it to supply fresh water. This was a sacred spring of the Tsö league. Since the spring deity is of the category of the vicious Tibetan guardians who can cause unfortunate death to local residents and their domestic

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<sup>63</sup> "Banning opium" was an excuse. The first time Pema Wangchuk visited Tébo was 1944.

<sup>64</sup> "Zhuoni beishan shijian de qianyin houguo," in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 36.

<sup>65</sup> *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 206–114.

animals if offended, over 500 Tsö Tibetans surrounded the hospital and expelled the Chinese officers, security troops and residents from Tsö township.<sup>66</sup>

Hence, Apa Alo commanded the Labrang cavalry to suppress the Tsö league in August. The Mébo gönpo raised a militia to reinforce the Labrang troops. As the Xiahe County government employed the Jamyang family to collect various taxes and funds from Tibetans, few *tsowa*, with the exception of those with active enmity toward the Tsö league, were willing to support Apa Alo. Mazhou fielded a militia to assist the Tsö league, which was the ally of Zhongpa. In the following days, Tsö Tibetans ignored Apa Alo's demand to dismiss the militia and relinquish the township. A standoff took place until Trichen Tsang recruited 2,000 men from his patron *tsowa* of Rebkong to counterattack the Labrang troop on September 11. Equipped with advanced weapons, Apa Alp defeated the Tsö, Zhongpa and Rebkong militias quickly and decisively. The Trichen Tsang and the Tsö league were forced to compensate the hospital. Taking advantage of this victory, the First ASR commissioner instructed the Xiahe officials to complete the administrative regularization in Tibetan areas. In November, the Tsö league was selected as the starting place to register households and compile *baojia*. Ten households were registered into a *bao*. Ten *bao* formed a *jia*. The *baojia* system was set up in all seven townships of Xiahe County within two months. Then, the commissioner aimed at driving direct state presence into the *tsowa* across the Chone kingdom.<sup>67</sup>

However, at this point, another insurrection broke out in North Range and interrupted the First ASR' plan. In winter 1942, a multifocal revolt was staged by the Gelaohui leaders of over 20 southern Gansu counties. The repeated drought, famines, common corruption and misappropriation of public funds by local officials, and the collection of five-years of taxes in

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<sup>66</sup> XHXZ, 69.

<sup>67</sup> XHXZ, 70.



advance finally provoked the Gansu farmers to take up arms against the GMD government.<sup>68</sup> Jinba Gyatso (*Sbyin pa rgya mtsho*; Lebafo 勒巴佛, 1916–1947), who was born in a hired-hand Han family and recognized as the eighteenth reincarnation of Songmingyan Monastery in the Zhongpa-Lintao borderland, organized the revolt in Chone and Lintan. Based on his biography, which was composed in the 1980s and portrayed the reincarnation as a Communist fighter and peasant uprising leader, Jinba Gyatso passionately opposed the GMD government as most of his family members died of the official extortion and injustice. When he received Tibetan Buddhist training in Khangtok Gönpa, he built connections with the Gelaohui bosses (*daye*) of the neighboring counties, became an estimable figure among the locals, and founded the “Seven-Federation Alliance” (*tsho bdun tsho ba*) in North Range.<sup>69</sup> In the beginning of 1943, as the First ASR authorities started to register households in the *tsowa* of North Range, Jinba Gyatso proclaimed the slogan that “the officials repress, the masses revolt, (as) every house-gate is nailed with a doorplate” (*guan bi ni, min fan ni, jia jia men shang ding ban ni* 官逼尼，民反尼，家家門上釘板尼). Some local Tibetan men joined this alliance. The reincarnation and his sworn brothers prepared to join the Gelaohui leaders in Gansu and revolt on the second day of the second month, the date when dragon raises its head.<sup>70</sup>

As the revolt plan of the Kangle Muslims was divulged in January, they made the move ahead of schedule. In Lintao, Wang Zhongjia 王仲甲 launched the revolt immediately. Jinba Gyatso sent tokens to the Chinese villages in the north of New Town, and required a man of each household to participate the campaign. In the past years, the Lintan, Kangle, Linao and Zhangxian famers who dodged the GMD taxes and conscription settled in this

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<sup>68</sup> “1943 nian Gannan nongmin qiyi de jiben shishi,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.2, 45–46.

<sup>69</sup> Gyatso Dolma, *Leibafo zhuan* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1989), chapter 5 and chapter 11; Wang Junying etc., “Guanyu gannan nongmin qiyi de diaocha 關於甘南農民起義的調查,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.2, 53–54.

<sup>70</sup> Li Zhenyi, “Zhuoni beishan shibian yu jimin tuan,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.2, 74–75.

densely forested area. They worked as loggers for the Lintan Gelaohui bosses who opened a timber merchant company in Yeliguan. Many became Gelaohui members. In a few days, around 2,000 Chinese, Tibetan, Monguor and Muslims gathered at the Dragon God Temple in Yeliguan. This force called itself the “Famine Victims Regiment” (*jimintuan* 飢民團). Jinba Gyatso was elected the commander. After worshipping the dragon god, they advanced toward New Town on March 28. Two days later, they entered the county seat, released prisoners, and killed the county magistrate. Then, this Regiment of rebels armed with sickles and axes proceeded to Minxian where they were defeated by the local security garrison. Jinba Gyatso directed the force to Weiyuan and united with the Longxi insurgents. He contacted the revolt leaders in other counties and proposed to join forces in southern Gansu. The Regiment was at this point renamed the “Gansu Peasants’ Anti-Japanese National Salvation Volunteer Army” (*Gansu nongmin kangri jiuguo yiyongjun* 甘肅農民抗日救國義勇軍), consisting of ten routes (equivalent to division). Their anti-conscription, anti-taxation, anti-apportioned funds and anti-corruption slogans attracted many peasants to join in the revolt.<sup>71</sup>

As the Gansu president Gu Zhenglun 谷正倫 (1889–1953) and the Eighth Military Region deputy general Zhu Shaoliang treated this revolt as multifocal rebellions and overlooked its strength, they ordered the county security troops to suppress these local uprisings. In April, Zhu realized that the situation was beyond his control when the insurgents seized southern Gansu and the Volunteer Army snowballed into a force of 50,000 fighters.<sup>72</sup> After a request was made for reinforcements from the central government in Chongqing, the six available divisions of Qinghai, Gansu and Shaanxi, an air squadron based in Lanzhou, and the security troops across middle and southern Gansu were disposed to exterminate the Volunteer Army. Given that internal conflicts caused divisions within the peasant ranks in

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<sup>71</sup> “Guanyu gannan nongmin qiyi de diaocha,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.2, 52–57.

<sup>72</sup> Li Zhenyi indicates that the revolt force was formed by 100,000 peasants. The number is exaggerated according to the official account. Li Zhenyi, *Gannan Jianshi*, 176; *ZQXZ*, 454.

Wudu, the insurgents were promptly crushed by the government troops and driven back to the places where the uprising began. Jinba Gyatso and members of the Seven-Federation Alliance escaped to North Range. From June onward, the provincial government combined the strategy of suppression with efforts at placation to restore social order. Local governments were instructed to provide disaster relief and loans to the surrendered peasants, and launch campaigns to pursue the rebellious leaders. Few revolt leaders survived the manhunt.<sup>73</sup>

In Lintan, the First ASR commissioner stationed a regiment in Old Town and ordered the Chone colonels to hand over Jinba Gyatso and cooperate in eliminating the rebels in North Range. The colonels stated that they had no information about Jinba Gyatso. The Zhongpa gönpo also declared that no Tibetans participated in the revolt. At this point, two divisions of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps chased after a group of insurgents to the Lintao-Chone borderland and caught several hundred young men. These insurgents were executed in Yeliguan to amazement of the locals who had complex relationships with the Gelaohui and the logger rebels. To arrest Jinba Gyatso, a regiment burned his residence and set a trap for him in Khangtok. A division was sent to search the entire North Range. In Khyagé *tsowa*, three scouts of the GMD army were killed by local Tibetans for unclear reasons. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps General Zhou Tiren 周體仁 (1892–1954) ordered Chone officials of the Security Headquarters and a regiment to handle the case.<sup>74</sup>

In late August 1943, a delegation of the major Chone officials started to negotiate the compensation with Zhou's commander in Khangtok Monastery. Local Tibetans considered that the meeting was held to register household and organize *baojia* in North Range. From his experience, Mazhou distrusted the colonels and Chone officials for they excluded him from

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<sup>73</sup> “Guanyu Gannan nongmin qiyi de diaocha,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.2, 59.

<sup>74</sup> Li Zhenyi, *Gannan Jianshi*, 180–181; “Zhuoni beishan shibian de qianyin houguo,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 38–39.

the Security Headquarters even though he contributed the most in dealing with the Böyül incident. He commanded 400 cavalymen to surround Chone Town and pleaded with the regent to move the yamen to North Range. In the interim, he also sent 40 Zhongpa Tibetans to assail the GMD regiment in Khangtok. Under cover of darkness, this squad killed more than 100 officers and soldiers with daggers, and successfully withdrew from Khangtok. It was said that the Chone delegation collaborated with Zhongpa Tibetans and plotted this sneak attack. The GMD commander imprisoned the Chone staff officer Yang Shijun and executed the six leading officials in the Chone delegation. When Zhou sent a division to North Range and began the manhunt, Mazhou anxiously waited for the decision of the regent in Ganden Shédrupling.<sup>75</sup>

Receiving the news through telegrams sent by Zhou Tiren and the Liu Xiuyue, the First ASR commissioner Hu Shouqian sent a regiment to capture Mazhou. Liu Xiuyue convinced the regent that moving the young commander to North Range would result in the termination of the central government's ratification. A stand-off between the regiment and the Tibetan cavalry took place in Chone Town. To avoid a head-on clash with the Tibetans, Liu sought to move against Mazhou. He stalled Mazhou's friend Liang Shula, who was the platoon captain of the gyelpo's guard, with the excuse of asking him to help manage an official affair. Liu deployed the regiment to encircle the gyelpo's office and Mazhou's temporary residence. With machine guns aimed at every entrance, six soldiers blocked the door of Pema Wangchuk. Liu informed Liang that the gyelpo's safety was at stake if Mazhou was not handed to the regiment commander in time. Then, Liang passed on Liu's words to Mazhou, who gave in and requested to exchange his life for the safety of the gyelpo on September 3.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> "Zhuoni beishan shibian de qianyin houguo," in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 40.

<sup>76</sup> Li Zhenyi, *Gannan Jianshi*, 183–184; Interview with Sönam Tsering, Lamarnang, June 3, 2015.

With Mazhou arrested, his cavalymen who failed to escape were disarmed by the official regiment. General Zhou had a meeting with local officials and Han elites in New Town. They enacted a rehabilitation policy to tackle the North Range incident, and mostly importantly, obtained funds from Tibetans. In light of this opportunistic policy, Zhou notified the Security Headquarters that the provincial government would only cease further punitive campaigns against the Zhongpa Tibetans when the North Range banners paid compensation, or a “financial penalty” as the locals called it, to the National Army. He demanded 500 guns, 500 horses and 100,000 silver dollars. The staff officer Yang Shijun was released and assigned the duty to come up with this compensation within a month. He was told it would be increased 50,000 dollars by each overdue month. Under the overwhelming military threat of a corps of Chinese soldiers, the Zhongpa Tibetans agreed to pay off the penalty.<sup>77</sup>

In the Chone Kingdom, silver dollars, silver bars and various copper coins were the main currencies. When Zhongpa Tibetans exhausted their savings, sold valuable items and substituted it with livestock, the amount was still not even close to paying off the fine. Another 100,000 silver dollars was imposed for the delayed delivery. The Security Headquarters imposed a temporary tax in the name of the GMD apportioned fund on all households of Front Range to pay the compensation. Here the large houses also lacked cash. Local *tsowa* thereby sold their forests to timber merchant companies or substituted the tax with their animals to pay the army to leave. As a result, the logistics department of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps received thousands of yaks, horses and sheep. The livestock were amassed in the densely forested Yeliguan valley. Without grasslands and enough fodder, the logistics soldiers slowly starved the animals to death. The following months witnessed a heartbreaking scene in Yeliguan. Tibetans were ordered to feed and redeem their animals. Hundreds of

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<sup>77</sup> “Zhuoni Beishan shibian de qianyin houguo,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 41–42. According to the exchange rate set by Zhou Tiren, 1 silver dollar equaled to 100 *yuan* “fiat money” (*fabi*).

Tibetan families mowed limited grass for their animals in Yeliguan, watching them die off one by one. When near half of the flock perished from hunger, Zhou was aware the Tibetans had no ability to make the redemption. He sold the rest of the herds to ox-horse traders by auction.<sup>78</sup>

In December, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps retired from Chone. Zhou Tiren returned with 183,000 silver dollars in 90 wooden cases. Yang Shijun and Mazhou were put in jail in Lanzhou. Yang was executed for instructing Tibetans to assault the National Army. Learning the Zhongpa gönpo was taken to the provincial capital, the Mébo gönpo Tatsang reported to the Gansu government that Mazhou murdered his father and occupied his pasture. A special tribunal thus was organized by the provincial court to handle this case. The trial and investigation lasted for two years. On the one hand, Mazhou was held as a hostage to prevent Zhongpa *tsowa* from resisting the state polices. In November 1945, Mazhou was sentenced to five-year imprisonment. On the other hand, GMD officials promptly mapped the disputed grassland and formalized a dividing line between Mébo and Zhongpa. The First ASR erected boundary monuments along this line, which served as the juridical border between Xiahe County and Chone.<sup>79</sup> The North Range Tibetans, once the most well-off residents in the Chone Kingdom, were completely bankrupted. According to the survey of the CCP work teams in the 1950s, most households owned less than 15 yaks. As a self-sufficient pastoral household possessed at least 50 yaks, the impoverishment of this region had become severe.<sup>80</sup>

### *Back Range: Opium Ban and the Baojia System*

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<sup>78</sup> *Gannan zangzu zizhi zhou jinrong zhi* 甘南藏族自治州金融志 (Lanzhou: Lanzhou daxue chubanshe, 1993), 43–46; “Zhuoni shezhiju beishan shibian zhoubu tijiao fakuan chuli jingguo qingxing baogao shu 卓尼設治局北山事變周部提交罰款處理經過情形報告書,” September 12, 1944, 37-1-400, GSSDAG.

<sup>79</sup> Li Zhenyi, *Gannan Jianshi*, 184; “Gansu sheng zhengfu tebie fating panjue,” 26-3-330, GSSDAG.

<sup>80</sup> “Wei bao zhuoni shujing beishan qu shiji qingkuang diaocha ziliao 為報卓尼屬境北山區實際情況調查資料 (fu Beishan weizi zhuang zangmin shenghuo qingkuang 附北山圍子莊藏民生活情況),” July 7, 1952, 138-4-6, GSSDAG.

With the dominant Tibetan officials of the Security Headquarters executed in the incident of North Range, the First ASR commissioner Hu Shouqian grasped this opportunity to carry on the administrative regularization and intended to make the Security Headquarters, or the Chone yamen, as it was still called by the locals, into a puppet institution. He allocated funds to construct a two-story building upon the ruins of the Chone yamen to be used as the offices of both the Security Headquarters and the provisional government. Pema Wangchuk and his officials were put under the direct supervision of the director. The building was a symbol of national state power. Tibetans gradually considered that the gyelpo's yamen was no different from the Chinese government.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, after arresting Mazhou in 1943, the commissioner reformed the Shezhiju into a militarized transitional administration to replace the Security Headquarters. The bureaus and offices set up by Liu Xiuyue were reorganized into three departments chaired respectively by the secretariat, adjutant and quartermaster (*mishu* 秘書, *fuguan* 副官 and *junxuguan* 軍需官). When Yang Shijun was killed, Hu immediately designated his own staff officer Liu Jiqing 劉濟清, a Sichuanese military officer, as the Chone staff officer. Since the person in this position simultaneously held the powers once conferred on superior headman, adviser and chief messenger of the Chone yamen, he had substantial power to manage the Security Headquarters.<sup>82</sup> To seize the military power of the Security Headquarters, the commissioner enlisted 120 local young men as professional soldiers on the government payroll. This military unit was named as the "Guard Company" (*jingwei lian* 警衛連). The military officers mostly were those Han Chinese who participated in the commander-training program in 1938.<sup>83</sup> The provisional government office had an unprecedentedly strong presence in Front Range and North Range.

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<sup>81</sup> "Zhuoni boyu shibian de qianhou," in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 26–27.

<sup>82</sup> "Zhuiyi zhuoni shezhiju de shier nian," in *GNWSZL*, vol.6, 10.

<sup>83</sup> "Yuan tao min lu baoan silingbu zhengshi wuzhuang budui gaikuang 原洮岷路保安司令部正式武裝部隊概況," in *ZNWSZL*, vol.3, 75.

In March 1944, the director Liu Xiuyue reckoned that political conditions were suitable enough to establish the *baojia* system in the Chone Kingdom. In a top-down manner, he sent out instructions to the three district heads, who further ordered the nine township heads to register households in their jurisdictional areas. The policy was smoothly implemented in Liulin Town, Taonan and Taobei townships, which administrated the sixteen base-villages and fourteen banners in Middle Stream and Lower Stream of Front Range. In local *tsowa*, the households were registered into five classes in accordance with their economic statuses, and ideally levied varied amounts of tax. Regardless of whether it was a small house or large house, every household had to pay the fee for a doorplate with a house number and complete the registration. Oftentimes, the householder having good relations with the township head would be chosen as the leader of the *bao* or *jia*, namely the *baozhang* 保長 or *jiazhang* 甲長. In cases when the new leader was a Han Chinese, the traditional authority of *tsowa* headman, subdivision leader or elder council was challenged and slowly replaced by the communal leader recognized by the provisional government.<sup>84</sup>

Soon, the director planned to register households in Drukchu, where the residents were considered less hostile toward the Chinese officials and easier to control in comparison with Tébo and Zhongpa Tibetans. This was the seventh year for director Liu to work in Chone. He long suspected that the Chone yamen and local Tibetans collaborated to sabotage state policies. To avoid the coordination between the *tsowa* societies and the remaining officials in the Chone Security Headquarters, Liu executed the plan to reform the four banners in Drukchu, achieved the goal of an opium ban in Tébo, and drove a wedge into the commensal overlord-subject relation at the same time. On the one hand, he instructed the commander Pema Wangchuk to eradicate the opium poppy cultivation in Tébo, and precluded them from

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<sup>84</sup> Liu Peifeng, “Chagang siqi zangzu renmin fankang guomingdang bianzhi baojia 插崗四旗藏族人反抗國民黨編制保甲,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 58; “Zhuiyi zhuoni shezhiju de shier nian,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.6, 10–13; *ZNXZ*, 77–78.



disrupting his plan. On the other hand, he sent the Tsang and Gönpa townships' head Zhao Guozhang, who was the former Drukchu four-banner accountant, and the vice township head as well as the director of household registration (*huji zhuren* 戶籍主任) to establish the *baojia* system in Drukchu.<sup>85</sup>

As early as 1935, the Nanjing regime launched the six-year campaign to eliminate opium production, transportation, trade and smoking in the northwestern provinces. The GMD government campaign made opium a major symbol of the obstacles impeding the building of a modern and civilized nation.<sup>86</sup> In Gansu, the provincial authorities put the national policy into effect two years later. The policy of "Five-Year Ban of Plantation and Two-Year Ban of Smoking" was enforced across the province. In Chone, the Shezhiju ordered the eight-year old Pema Wangchuk to lead the movement to uproot the poppy sprouts in Back Range and the remote Southern Tao valleys. The consort thus sent the colonels to deal with the issue.<sup>87</sup> Nonetheless, to pursue their own private interest, in addition to the opium tax collected by the murdered gyelpo, the colonels and banner-chiefs utilized the nation-wide opium ban to intimidate and extort opium farmers and opium traders. After several small clashes with a few opium growing *tsowa*, the colonels and banner accountants negotiated with federation chief managers and *tsowa* headmen to meet the interests of both parties. Based on the agreement, the chief managers collected the opium fine from opium farmers and paid the colonels. In return, Chone officials would not enter the *tsowa* territories and investigate the situation of opium cultivation. The fines imposed on different federations varied in respect to their firearms, geographic locations and attitude toward Chone

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<sup>85</sup> "Baojia zhidu zai chagang de pochan 保甲制度在插崗的破產," in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 45.

<sup>86</sup> Alan Baumlér, *Chinese and Opium under the Republic: Worse than Floods and Wild Beasts* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2012), 177–179.

<sup>87</sup> Ma Mozhen, *Zhongguo jindu shiliao* 中國禁毒史料 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1998), 1360–1371.

authorities. With the colonels turning a blind eye to the opium growing, the annual opium fair carried on in Back Range.<sup>88</sup>

In 1942, the progresses of opium prohibition elsewhere made the opium fair in Back Range an overt failure of the Shezhiju. The First ASR officials suggested eradicating opium cultivation in the Drukchu valley by force. The president Gu Zhenglun ordered the First ASR commissioner to shovel poppy sprouts in the Tibetan region by political means instead of provoking a war in the Great Rear. Hence, the Chone colonels were sent to handle the opium problem as a Tibetan internal issue. It turned out that Tibetan officials treated this order as an opportunity to squeeze poppy growers, and suppress the Wapa and Tara banners that refused to pay opium fines.<sup>89</sup> Although the poppy flowers blossomed in all Tébo lands, the colonels reported that only Wapa and Tara Tibetans cultivated opium poppy.<sup>90</sup> Because forcibly banning opium poppy growing was not an option, the issue was suspended until the Shezhiju were able to intimidate the Tibetan officials with the incident of North Range. In the summer of 1944, Liu Xiuyue sent the fifteen-year old Pema Wangchuk, the staff officer, the three colonels, 32 accountants and the Chone Guard Company to eradicate opium poppy sprouts in Tébo. The accountants raised a militia of 1,000 men from Front Range and North Range, accompanying the young gyelpo to the upper Drukchu valley. Based on the original plan of the colonels, this was an inspection tour for the gyelpo. He would visit each religious-political-trading nexus along the mainstream of the Drukchu River. Local chief managers and *tsowa* headmen would pay allegiance and receive the king's blessing. Then, the Tébo banners

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<sup>88</sup> “Jubao zhuoni baoan tuanzhang yang jinghua baobi zhongyan lepai yankuan yu fanmin chongtu deng qing xi bing cankao heban jian fu you 據報卓尼保安團長楊景華包庇種煙勒派煙款與番民衝突等情形並參考核辦復見由,” 1942, 15-10-230; “Ju xubao Zhuoni baoan tuan yu fanmin wuzhuang chongtu xian yi jieshu dian qing cankao you 據續報卓尼保安團與番民武裝衝突現已結束電請參考由,” 1942, 15-19-230, GSSDAG.

<sup>89</sup> “Dianfu yu tao min silingbu ji zhuoni shezhiju huishang chachan shangxia diebu yanmiao jingguo qingxing qiqing jianhe shizun you 電復與洮岷司令部及卓尼設治局會商鑷上下迭部煙苗經過情形乞請鑒核遵由,” 15-9-286, 1942; “Cheng wei juqing chengbao paiyuan daidui chachan shangxia diebu yanmiao qingxing qing jianhe you 呈為據情呈報派員帶隊查鑷上下迭部煙苗情形請鑒核由,” 15-9-287, 1942, GSSDAG.

<sup>90</sup> “Jinsui chachan shangxia diebu yandu chuzhi qingxing yilan biao 今歲查鑷上下迭部煙毒處治情形一覽表,” November 1943, 15-9-288, GSSDAG.

would pay the opium fine for the year and promise to stop growing to circumvent the intrusion of GMD officials.<sup>91</sup>

Nevertheless, Tébo Tibetans distrusted and despised the colonels. When the Chone troop arrived in Upper Tébo, the nineteen *tsowa* of Wapa Banner had constructed a defense work of huge logs in uplands to prevent the soldiers from entering their valley. The colonels were disgraced, and proceeded to bombard the upland areas with their 60 mm mortars. The Wapa residents were dispersed. Only one man was captured and executed immediately. The militia carried out the customary looting and burning. They demolished the Kyakra, Tsikkha, Nyagong and Wuzang *tsowa*, and uprooted the opium poppies. A week later, the opium-suppression force advanced toward the lower stream. The gyelpo stayed in every major monastery for a few days, met local chief managers and headmen, and blessed commoners. Wapa Tibetans undertook the intermittent assassination of Chone officials. After several militiamen and officers had been shot and killed by snipers, the Upper Tébo leaders were concerned with the colonels request for reinforcements from the army, and so persuaded the Wapa headmen to negotiate a truce. Chone authorities worried the situation would further deteriorate, and so agreed to employ the Buddhist authorities to mediate a quick solution in late August.<sup>92</sup>

A five-day negotiation took place at Dengkha Monastery where the monastic leaders mediated an agreement between the Security Headquarters and Wapa Banner. The nineteen *tsowa* of Wapa agreed to stop opium poppy growing, to pay a fine of 2,000 silver dollars and to hand over 80 *jin* of newly yielded opium paste. Then, Pema Wangchuk proceeded to Tara valley in Lower Tébo. The colonels were aware of the poor odds and huge sacrifice involved

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<sup>91</sup> Liang Chongwen, “1944 nian yang fuxing zai diebu de wuzhuang jinyan huodong,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.3, 67; “Song kanbu yu yang fuxing mocha zhenxiang 宋堪布與楊復興摩擦真相,” 1937, 285-9-15; “Yang fuxing jie chanyan zifei you 楊復興藉鑪煙自肥由,” 1942, 285-9-15; Interview with the Tibetan merchant household of Tsoksum village, March 21, 2019.

<sup>92</sup> Liang Chongwen, “1944 nian yang fuxing zai diebu de wuzhuang jinyan huodong,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.3, 69–71.

in conquering Tara Banner. No attempt was made to attack the log-fortifications at the entrance of Tara valley. As Tara Tibetans were concerned with the mortars, they also sought to avoid a direct clash. The eighteen *tsowa* of Tara invited the Zhaozang Lama of northern Songpan as their representative to negotiate with the Chone authorities. The two parties reached an agreement soon. The truce between the last gyelpo Lobzang Tendzin and Tara Banner reached thirty years before was renewed in late August. The eighteen *tsowa* paid a considerable fine in money and opium paste, and promised to stop their opium poppy cultivation. The colonels agreed to not enter Tara valley. In the eyes of the staff officer Liu Jiqing and the GMD inspectors, the campaign against opium growing was overall successful.<sup>93</sup>

At this point, Pema Wangchuk received a letter from Liu Xiuyue, stating that Tibetans almost killed the officials who were registering households in Drukchu. For long the chief managers and *tsowa* headmen of Drukchu four-banner maintained a mere face-relationship with the accountant. When the newly appointed township head Zhao Guozhang 趙國璋 arrived in Tsang and demanded local chief managers enforce the household registration in their *tsowa*, few local authorities would cooperate to complete this task. Later, Zhao convinced the chief manager of Sipkha Banner to serve as a model and register households in his home village, Ngamong *tsowa*. As the Chinese and Tibetan residents governed by Xigu County registered households around 1940 and experienced a boost of taxation and conscription, the Ngamong villagers refused to organize *baojia* in their *tsowa*. They feasted the Shezhiju officials and soldiers with two sheep, proposed to pay the doorplate fee (0.5

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<sup>93</sup> Liang Chongwen, “1944 nian yang fuxing zai diebu de wuzhuang jinyan huodong,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.3, 69–71; Liu Peifeng, “Chagang siqi zangzu renmin fankang guomingdang bianzhi baojia,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 62.

silver dollar per house), and begged to be exempted from the registration. Nonetheless, Zhao declined their request and a stand-off took place in Ngamong.<sup>94</sup>

When the Tibetans of Tépa Banner learned of the situation in Tsagang, a local meeting was held to discuss the strategy to cope with the *baojia* policy. Kelzang, a reputable hunter of Nyinkha *tsowa*, asserted that only the soldier-horse *u lag* and fixed tax existed in the past centuries. He was selected as the representative of Tépa to confirm with the gyelpo whether he permitted Zhao to organize *baojia* in the four banners, impose new tax and conscript soldiers for the GMD. Kelzang ran into a chief manager of Dora Banner en route to Chone. The chief manager had just returned from the trip to pay allegiance to Pema Wangchuk. Kelzang was told that the gyelpo did not know this matter. He returned with the information that the Shezhiju surreptitiously organized *baojia* in Drukchu. Tépa Tibetans decided to revolt against the ongoing household registration. In late August, 500 men besieged Ngamong *tsowa*. Failing to deploy a local lama to negotiate with the insurgents, Zhao Guozhang fired his gun to warn off Tibetans, which worsened the situation. The Tibetans assaulted Ngamong *tsowa*. The officials and a guard platoon shot and killed one Tépa man, but then they retreated into the forest, escaping toward Wudu. The insurgents killed a Chinese craftsman who happened to work in Ngamong, and Kelzang burned the chief manager Yin Zhanyi's house and the *baojia* register documents. After seizing Yin's sixteen cattle to recompense the "life price" of the Tépa man, the insurgents returned to their *tsowa*.<sup>95</sup>

Zhao Guozhang fled to Wudu and telegraphed the First ASR governments for reinforcements. The commissioner Zhang Yangwen 張仰文 immediately led a security regiment to Drukchu to quell the rebels. It was the harvest season and the Tibetan mutual-aid

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<sup>94</sup> ZQXZ, 68–69; Liu Peifeng, "Chagang siqi zangzu renmin fankang guomingdang bianzhi baojia," in GNWSZL, vol.3, 58–59.

<sup>95</sup> "Baojia zhidu zai chagang de pochan," in ZNWSZL, vol.1, 46; Liu Peifeng, "Chagang siqi zangzu renmin fankang guomingdang bianzhi baojia," in GNWSZL, vol.3, 60.

*ulag* was in full operation in order to harvest crops as soon as possible and avoid hail or weeks-long rain. After Zhao's retreat from Tsang, the morale of local Tibetans was very high. The *tsowa* of the four banners were determined to resist the GMD government as a whole. They adopted early warning and reciprocal defense systems to promptly organize reinforcements. Hence, an ambush awaited the government security force when it passed through the territory of Nyinkha Banner toward Tépa on September 2. More than 700 Nyingkha Tibetans took part in the sudden assault near Ludé *tsowa*. After the immediate chaos and confusion, Zhang regrouped his force and counterattacked. He occupied Ludé village, burned down several houses, built barriers with furniture and stone, and feasted his soldiers with the villagers' animals. The next morning, Kelzang arrived with reinforcements of 600 Sipkha and Tépa men. They besieged the security regiment, firing from a distance. The exchange of fire-fight did not cease until Zhang's force ran out of ammunition, which forced them escape to Wudu in the middle of the dark, rainy night of September 5.<sup>96</sup>

Thereupon, Commissioner Zhang sent a telegram to Liu Xiuyue and instructed Pema Wangchuk to handle the incident properly. The gyelpo was finishing the campaign against the opium cultivation in Lower Tébo. He ordered the colonels to deal with this revolt. Yet, the colonels had fresh memories of the GMD government's execution of Tibetan officials in the incident of North Range. They refused to comply with the young king's order. Pema Wangchuk had to send the Chinese staff officer Liu Jiqing, a friend of the commissioner, to tackle the anti-*baojia* incident. Since Liu was the gyelpo's representative, Tibetans greeted him with the traditional etiquette and received him in the small yamen office of the accountant in Gönpa *tsowa*. Zhang also arrived in Drukchu with a larger troop. Over the next two months, Liu served as a mediator between the four banners and the commissioner.

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<sup>96</sup> Liu Peifeng, "Chagang siqi zangzu renmin fankang guomingdang bianzhi baojia," in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 61–62; "Baojia zhidu zai chagang de pochan," in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 46–47.

Several thousand Tibetans of Sipkha, Nyinkha, Tépa and Gönpa banners gathered 3 *li* away from the First ASR officials' temporary office in Ngamong *tsowa*. In keeping with the principle of maintaining stability in the Great Rear, the opportunistic frontier GMD officials announced that the government would not launch a punitive expedition as long as the four banners complied with the “six demands” that required local residents to hand over Kelzang, organize *baojia*, establish townships, pay the financial penalty, construct roads, and build a school.<sup>97</sup>

Drukchu Tibetans took a hard line on resisting this Chinese national state incorporation. They only agreed to pay the penalty. They rejected the proposals that would facilitate Chinese officials and troops to control this isolated mountainous area. Sending children to school, which required tuition fees and supplies, was regarded as a form of official *corvée*. Having heard that Chone Tibetans hired Chinese children to go to school and fulfill this *corvée* for their families, local residents refused to build a school.<sup>98</sup> They explained their local understanding of the “chieftain system” and used it to shield their *tsowa* from direct Chinese government interference. In the coming negotiation, the federation chief managers explained that Tibetan people were accustomed to the governance of *tusi* and unwilling to replace the banner with *baojia*. “If the government insists on household registration,” they threatened, “the four banners would move to Songpan and stop being subjects of the Chone chieftain.”<sup>99</sup> The staff officer Liu Jiqing was conciliatory in the negotiation. He suggested the Tibetan leaders save the face (*mianzi* 面子) of the commissioner, and advised Zhang to take the practical benefit. As a consequence, every household of the four banners was apportioned 3 silver dollars to pay the fine of 150,000 *yuan* of fiat money. Each banner also

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<sup>97</sup> “*Baojia zhidu zai chagang de pochan*,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 47–52.

<sup>98</sup> “*Zhuoni zizhiqu beishan luzhu chagang baogao* 卓尼自治區北山条竹插崗報告,” 18-06-95, August 1952, GSSDAG.

<sup>99</sup> Liu Peifeng, “*Chagang siqi zangzu renmin fankang guomingdang bianzhi baojia*,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 63.

provided a mule per year to substitute for conscription. In the final meeting, three local chief managers feasted the First ASR officials and soldiers. They kowtowed and apologized to Zhang Yangwen.<sup>100</sup> With the commissioner and official troops leaving Drukchu, Liu Jiqing informed the gyelpo that the case was settled. In early November, Pema Wangchuk returned to Chone. The Shezhiju director Liu Xiuyue resigned to take responsibility for these incidents. Liu Jiqing was designated the new director of the Chone provisional government.<sup>101</sup>

Afterwards, commissioner Zhang pressured Chone authorities to execute Kelzang out of his own personal grudge. In April 1945, several Tibetan officials invited Kelzang to Gönpa yamen and murdered him. Learning from the anti-*baojia* incident that Tibetans would only abide by the order of the gyelpo, Liu Jiqing left the task of registering households and organizing *baojia* in Drukchu, Tébo, Zhongpa and Upper Stream to Pema Wangchuk. The gyelpo and his officials understood the limit of the Chone throne's power. Transgressing the boundary between overlord and *tsowa* would provoke more *tsowa* to revolt. They coped with the policy by simply renaming the federation as *bao* and the *tsowa* as *jia*. The township heads or accountants reported the numbers of household in their banners to the Security Headquarters. Then, the household register was compiled, or precisely speaking, fabricated by 1947. The settlement of every *tsowa* was called a *cun* or *zhuang* (village). Other than these nominal changes, with the exception of the *tsowa* in Liulin, Taonan and Taobei, the *tsowa* remained undisturbed by the Shezhiju.<sup>102</sup>

As to the prohibition of opium cultivation, which was a significant symbol of modern state building in this ethnic borderland, it was ignored by the growers and Tibetan officials. An accusatory report of a Shezhiju clerk sent to the provincial president states:

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<sup>100</sup> Liu Peifeng, "Chagang siqi zangzu renmin fankang guomingdang bianzhi baojia," in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 63–65.

<sup>101</sup> Liang Chongwen, "1944 nian yang fuxing zai diebu de wuzhuang jinyan huodong," in *ZNWSZL*, vol.3, 71.

<sup>102</sup> "Zhuiyi zhuoni shezhiju de shier nian," in *GNWSZL*, vol.6, 6–7.



The opium is almost eliminated in Gansu completely. In this year, the ban of opium growing in Tébo was still ridiculous. Tibetan officials deferred the date until the opium was harvested, then, negotiated with poppy growers. From each household was collected five silver dollars and ten taels of opium paste. It is said that the inspector (an official of the First ASR) showed up. What is his use, as he even did not understand the language? Would he report whatever (the Tibetan officials need him to say) by receiving a small present and several silver dollars? It is said that, as they told barbarians, the president imposed the fine of silver dollars and opium. I think it was all for swindling people. There are 3,000 to 4,000 households in Tébo. When Colonel Yang (Jinghua) returned, he shared the income with the other two colonels and several accountants. After calculating the income of this year, they will do it again next year. Getting the benefit of only some leftovers, Director Xue (Jinwen) does not speak out. If you do not believe this, please check the matter (poppy eradication) of the thirty-fifth year (1946). Did they not just hand in a bucket of opium paste to the provincial government? Only we are suffering with no good. President, do not be afraid. Send soldiers if you want to eradicate poppy sprouts... Tsagang people dare not grow poppies again after the eradication in last year. Tébo people were afraid of the shoveling and did not grow opium last year. Because President thinks about the nation, no one will rebel.<sup>103</sup>

As this report shows, the opium farmers continued producing the paste. The colonels kept collecting the annual fine. The opium ban became a structured mean of the colonels to extort the opium growers and satisfy their own personal interests. Those who resisted to pay the fine would be targeted as violators of the law, and their opium poppies would be destroyed. The opium issue lasted until 1953. The CCP work teams uprooted over 10,546 *mu* of poppies in Tébo and Drukchu.<sup>104</sup>

To conclude, the GMD government attempted to strengthen the direct control in North Range and Back Range by interfering in local incidents, forbidding opium cultivation and organizing the *baojia* system after its incorporation of *tsowa* in Middle Stream and Lower Stream. The gyelpo was too young to manage his subordinates. Straddling the provisional government and the *tsowa* societies, the Security Headquarter officials formed an interest group and oftentimes took advantages of the state policy to pursue personal interests on

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<sup>103</sup> “Zhuoni zhang zhidao hancheng weiqi paidui chachan yanmiao yiqi chedi jinjue jimian defang tuandui tanguan lieshen baobi you 卓尼張志道函呈為祈派隊查鑷煙苗以期徹底禁絕藉免地方團隊貪官劣紳包庇由,” 1948, 15-11-202, GSSDAG.

<sup>104</sup> ZNXZ, 26.

behalf of the king. The *tsowa* societies utilized the chieftain system to resist the governance of the state. A peculiar tripartite balance was achieved in this process. For the GMD government, the state power was strengthened in handling the pastoral disputes, the famine victim revolt and the incident of Mazhou; the ban of opium growing was successful; and the administrative regularization was accomplished when the nationwide governmental structure replaced the chieftain system and local banner system. For the Chone authorities, the three colonels dominated the Security Headquarters, took over the revenue of the ruling house and imposed opium fines in the name of the Nationalist state. For local Tibetans, they utilized the commensal relationship with the gyelpo and his officials to resist the state incorporative policy, which often meant heavy tax, conscription, opium ban and new corvées from their perspective. They fulfilled the financial demands of the GMD and Chone officials to maintain the autonomous status of the *tsowa* and federations. Consequently, the state building was unevenly carried out in the different parts of the kingdom.

### **The Demise of the Chone Kingdom: The Civil War and the Communist Takeover**

Although the Nationalist state-building policies were unevenly and intermittently enforced in the *tsowa* societies, the GMD regime had an increasingly influential presence in Chone. The provisional government put forward a series of projects to reform this kingdom into a modern county. It not only established the Nationalist political, administrative, judicial and fiscal systems to replace the native regime and control local tax, but also set up a party branch, forestry bureau, banks, Chinese schools and hospitals on this frontier to strengthen the GMD leadership, extract natural resources, and transform Tibetans into Republican citizens. As early as 1942, the GMD instituted a party headquarter in Chone, consisting of the departments of secretary, organization and propaganda (*mishubu* 秘書部, *zuzhibu* 組織部 and *xuanchuanbu* 宣傳部). Yang Shenghua 楊生華, the Gyeltang *tsowa* headman affiliated

with the Shezhiju, was selected as the party secretariat and temporary supervisory commissioner. In a year, six party branches were organized respectively in the Security Headquarters, the provisional government, Chone Hospital, Liulin Primary School and Chone Monastery. By 1948, another six branches were founded in the townships along the Luchu River. The party members increased to 300. The Youth League of the Three People's Principles (*sanmin zhuyi qingnian tuan* 三民主義青年團) was also established in Chone. Yang Shenghua served as the captain and Pema Wangchuk was selected as the deputy captain. The League had 220 members distributed in three district branches and five subordinate units. In 1948, the Youth League was incorporated into the Party Headquarters. Except a few pro-GMD Tibetan officials, the majority of the Nationalist Party members were Han Chinese officials and social elites working in Chone.<sup>105</sup>

Meanwhile, the Republican parliamentary and judicial systems were introduced to the kingdom, which further undermined the power of the gyelpo and his yamen. In March 1945, the First ASR set up a county-level temporary consultative council (*linshi canyihui* 臨時參議會) in Chone to ideally promote the democracy and supervise the provisional government. The townships and public organizations such as the Agricultural, Educational and Commercial societies elected their representative senators and formed the council. In fact, the positions of senators were taken by the staff officer, the three colonels, the Front Range township heads, and the North Range and Back Range banner accountants. In May, the Gansu government and the Provincial High Court instructed the Shezhiju to establish the justice department (*sifachu* 司法處), which had the same function of county court. The justice department was staffed by a judge, a directory clerk, three assistant clerks and six

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<sup>105</sup> ZNXZ, 77–78.

bailiffs, who were installed to take over the customary judicial power of the chieftain yamen.<sup>106</sup>

Following the Japanese surrender, the Nationalist and Communist parties reached agreement on establishing a political democracy in the Chongqing Negotiation from August to October. Perceiving the military conflict was inevitable, both parties prepared for the impending civil war while continuing to organize the Constituent Assembly and enact the democratic constitution in the following year. According to the Constitution promulgated by the central government in January 1947, the National Assembly (*guomin dahui* 國民大會) was organized as the authoritative legislative body to exercise the political rights on behalf of the people to elect the national president and supervise the government. The Constitution separated the power of the government into five branches, namely the Executive Yuan, Legislative Yuan, Judicial Yuan, Control Yuan and Examination Yuan. It blueprinted a representative democracy, which required that the representatives of the National Assembly must be elected by the local people. In Chone, no election was ever held. The Shezhiju selected Ma Quanren, a pro-Nationalist government Tibetan official, as the representative to attend the National Assembly in Nanjing. The Chone GMD secretariat Yang Shenghua was designated the legislator. Tibetan officials regarded this democratic reform as an opportunity to obtain official title and power. In doing so, the Shezhiju transferred the key Tibetan officials to the powerless positions and dissolved the authority of the Chone gyelpo considerably.<sup>107</sup>

In 1947, Ding Jianchun 丁劍純, who was described as a “greedy, corrupt, hypocritical and atrocious” Hunanese official by the contemporary Tibetan authorities, took the office of the Shezhiju director. As Ding levied the transportation yak tax (*tuojuan* 駝捐, a silver dollar

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<sup>106</sup> “Zhuiyi zhuoni shezhiju de shier nian,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.6, 9–10; *ZNXX*, 100–101.

<sup>107</sup> “Zhuoni jiefang qianhou de yang fuxing 卓尼解放前後的楊復興,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 62; “Zhuiyi zhuoni shezhiju de shier nian,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.6, 13–14.

per yak), opium fine, and other random apportion funds which damaged the interests of the Chone colonels and leading civil authorities, the Tibetan officials decided to make Pema Wangchuk a dominant political figure, like Apa Alo, so as to avoid the excessive financial demands of the Shezhiju and the First ASR officials. Therefore, with Pema Wangchuk entering adulthood and starting to handle official matters in the Security Headquarters, the first colonel Yang Jinghua and the second colonel Lei Zhaoxiang 雷兆祥 advised him to have an audience with Generalissimo Chiang. A Tibetan delegation of 48 banners and 100 monasteries was quickly organized by the gyelpo and colonels. They prepared a tribute worth of 10,000 silver dollars for Chiang. The practice resonated with the ruling house's tradition of paying tribute to the Ming and Qing emperors and receiving ratifications, which was expected to raise the political status of the gyelpo on the Gansu-Amdo frontier.<sup>108</sup>

In summer 1947, the delegation arrived in Lanzhou and appealed to the provincial president Guo Jiqiao 郭寄喬 (1902–1998) for the approval of this mission. Guo only permitted the gyelpo, the Zhozang Tsang reincarnation, two attendants and a translator to go sightseeing in Nanjing. When the Tibetan delegation flew to the capital, it was received by the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission. Pema Wangchuk requested the commissioner Xu Shiying 許世英 (1873–1964) to arrange the audience with Chiang. Later, they met the acquaintances such as the Control Yuan director Yu Youren 于右任 (1879–1964), former Gansu president Shao Lizi and the National Assembly central commissioner Tian Kunshan. In mid-August, they finally had a brief audience with Chiang Kai-shek. Pema Wangchuk reported the situation in Chone and requested to attend the Army Academy (*lujun daxue* 陸軍大學). The group photo of the delegation and the generalissimo was printed in several newspapers. With the gyelpo returning to Chone, as the Tibetan officials suggested,

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<sup>108</sup> Zhu Keqing, “Zhuoni qiyi qianhou 卓尼起義前後,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.3, 113–114; “Zhuoni jiefang qianhou de yang fuxing,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 63–64.

the frontier GMD officials altered their attitude toward the Security Headquarters and immediately gave up the pecuniary demands.<sup>109</sup>

Thereby, Pema Wangchuk strengthened his control of the Security Headquarters. The Tibetan authorities in the temporary consultative council shifted their allegiance to the gyelpo. Since the three platoons of the Guard Company directly led by the Shezhiju had deserted due to lack of provisions, the gyelpo and Tibetan officials began to undermine the power of the provisional government. In the consultative council of October, they criticized director Ding for extorting the people and levying heavy taxes to enrich himself, and imprisoned him afterwards. They also carried out the plan to establish a standing military force to protect the Security Headquarter and intimidate the frontier GMD officials. The Chinese Civil War gave them an opportunity to do so. The Gansu Provincial Security Headquarter instructed local security commanders to use local revenue, enlarge security troops, upgrade weapons and prepare for the anti-Communist war. The Security Headquarters collected the “self-defense special tax” (*ziwei tejuan* 自衛特捐) from the reincarnations, public societies, banks and Front Range *tsowa*. The fund was partially used to purchase 200 rifles and 20,000 bullets from the provincial security headquarter. In winter 1947, the Ministry of National Defense ordered Pema Wangchuk to receive training at the Army Academy. The new Shezhiju director Xue Jinwen 薛敬文, who was intimidated by the Tibetan authorities, only wished to end his term without any trouble, and the colonels’ attitude toward the gyelpo became ambiguous. They halted the project to reorganize the Chone security force and carried on with the matters that actually benefited themselves.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> “Zhuoni jiefang qianhou de yang fuxing,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 64–65; “Yang fuxing 楊復興,” *Waijiaobu zhoubao* 外交部周報 27, June 21, 1947, 2c; Qi Ke, “Huang zhengqing yu yang fuxing fen zhi xia de anduo zangmin qu 黃正清與楊復興分治下的安多藏民區,” *Xibei tongxun* 西北通訊 5, July 1947, 24.

<sup>110</sup> “Yuan tao min lu baoan silingbu zhengshi wuzhuang budui gaikuang,” in *ZNWSZL* vol.3, 76–77; “Gansu sheng zhuoni xian shezhiju juzhang renmian 甘肅省卓尼縣設治局局長任免,” 1948, Academia Historica Archives (hereafter AHA), 014-090202-0174.

At this point, the Civil War turmoil worsened in China. In northern China, the National Army initiated the full-scale attack on the Shaan-Gan-Ning Soviet region, gaining the symbolic victory of capturing the Communist base in Yan'an 延安. In 1948, the CCP tore apart the northeastern-northwestern cordon established by the Nationalist forces to suppress the expanding People's Liberation Army 人民解放軍 (PLA). Then, came the decisive battles of Liaoshen 遼瀋 and Huaihai 淮海 and the seizing of the Beijing-Tianjin area. The tide had turned and Nationalist troops retreated south and west toward Sichuan-Gansu. Nanjing was under direct threat of being taken in a major PLA offensive, or a "liberation" in the CCP narrative by the early spring of 1949.<sup>111</sup>

The military training of Pema Wangchuk ended in a rush. He flew to Lanzhou and had an audience with Hu Zongnan, Ma Hongkui 馬鴻逵 (1892–1970) and Guo Jiqiao. Chiang had instructed them to institute the Northwest Military and Political Executive Bureau (*xibei junzheng zhangguan gongshu* 西北軍政長官公署), and coordinate official troops in Shaanxi, Ningxia, Gansu, Qinghai and Xinjiang to defend the Northwest against the PLA offense. They had repelled the Communist general Peng Dehuai 彭德懷 (1898–1974) several times in the Shaan-Gan borderland. In February, with the CCP capturing the Central Plains and the eastern coast, the Northwest became a crucial strategic region for the Nationalist government. The region had 14 million Han, Hui, Tibetan, Mongolian and Turkish peoples. The Executive Bureau ordered the five provincial security headquarters to recruit and equip the ethnic troops.<sup>112</sup> Thus, Pema Wangchuk was instructed to build a

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<sup>111</sup> For the detailed analyses of the Civil War, see Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946–1950* (California: Stanford University Press, 2003), chaps. 5, 6; Diana Lary, *China's Civil War: A Social History, 1945–1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 142–150; Christopher R. Lew, *The Third Chinese Revolutionary Civil War, 1945–49: An Analysis of Communist Strategy and Leadership* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 129–130.

<sup>112</sup> "Chest-Thumper," *Time Magazine* 51, no.20, May 17, 1948, 35; Hu Zongnan, *Hu Zongnan Diaries*, January 1949, AHA, 149-010100-0001-001; "Foreign News: Ma v. Marx," *Time Magazine* 53, no.26, June 27, 1949, 27; Ma Hongkui, *Ma Shaoyun huiyi lu*, 227–230.

Tibetan army. He was unsure of the colonels' loyalty. He telegraphed them about the date that he would arrive in Minxian in order to check their attitude. The colonels were fully aware of their seemingly dominant yet awkward status. Although they commanded the three regiments organized upon the soldier-horse *ulag* system, which was near collapse, the militia was only fielded by the king in moments of crisis. They only managed a few dozen semi-private soldiers to maintain their own safety. As the gyelpo was coming to establish an official troop, they would lose their positions if they did not pay allegiance to him.<sup>113</sup>

Consequently, the colonels decided to affiliate themselves to Pema Wangchuk. They organized a thousand fully armed cavalymen in Tibetan formal costume to receive the gyelpo in Minxian. On his way back to Chone, the gyelpo was welcomed by the First ASR commissioner, Minxian and Lintan magistrates, as well as local social elite groups. In the Chone Kingdom, the archaic tributary practice was carried out by the federation chief managers and *tsowa* headmen. They kowtowed to the king, swore oaths of allegiance, presented local specialties and received blessings. The reincarnated lamas, abbots and dharma-seat holders of the subordinate monasteries of Ganden Shédrupting brought gifts and blessings to the gyelpo. The Muslim sectarian leaders, Han elites and leading merchants in Old Town and New Town also congratulated Commander Yang with presents and plaques. The banquets lasted for a month. The kingdom seemed to be united in this moment.<sup>114</sup>

In March 1949, Pema Wangchuk started to build his force. The Gansu government transferred Liu Jiqing to Chone and designated him its deputy commander. The legislator Yang Shenghua was appointed the staff officer. They recruited forty Tibetan and twenty Chinese soldiers, and opened a four-month Nationalist military course to train them to be non-commissioned officers. They enlisted 300 soldiers to organize a special battalion

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<sup>113</sup> “Zhuoni jiefang qianhou de yang fuxing,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 66.

<sup>114</sup> “Zhuiyi zhuoni shezhiju de shier nian,” in *GNWSZL*, vol.6, 14–17; “Zhuoni jiefang qianhou de yang fuxing,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 66–67.



(*tewuying* 特務營). The officers were assigned to different posts in this battalion. The soldiers were conscripted from the thirty banners of Front Range and North Range through the military *ulag*. Their service period was a year. The troop was financed by the Gansu government and the ruling house. In May, the gyelpo obtained 120 “Zhongzheng” rifles and 12,000 ammunitions from Hu Zongnan. A month later, Chiang Kai-shek appointed Ma Bufang the supreme commander of the Executive Bureau to protect the Northwest. According to the bureaucratic custom, Pema Wangchuk had an audience with Ma. He was provided 100 rifles and 10,000 bullets in a symbolic manner, instructed to enlarge the battalion into a cavalry brigade, and expected to secure southern Gansu. The equipment was too little for the Security Headquarters to execute the task but enough to dominate over the Shezhiju.<sup>115</sup>

By June, the PLA had taken Jiangnan and was pressing south, and the expanded First Field Army of 400,000 soldiers was moving to recapture Shaanxi and “liberate” the northwestern provinces. Peng Dehuai launched the Battle of Fumei 扶眉戰役 to pin down Ma Hongkui and attack Hu Zongnan. Peng vanquished Hu, inflicting over 44,000 casualties upon the GMD army in July. General Hu’s remaining troops retreated to the Shaanxi-Sichuan borderland. Ma Bufang still hoped to block the PLA from entering Gansu and sent the three corps of the Central Army in Lanzhou to southern Gansu, appointing Wang Zhiqi 王治岐 (1901–1985) commander in chief to guard the southern Shaanxi-Gansu borderland. On the marching route from Lanzhou to Wudu, this force passed through Northern Tao and looted the area. Many local residents fled and took refuge in Southern Tao. At the same time, Ma

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<sup>115</sup> “Zhuoni jiefang qianhou de yang fuxing,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 66–67; “Yuan tao min lu baoan silingbu zhengshi wuzhuang budui gaikuang,” in *ZNWSZL* vol.3, 77; Zhu Keqing, “Zhuoni qiyi qianhou,” in *GNWSZL* vol.3, 114–116.

deployed all operational armies of more than 60,000 soldiers around Lanzhou for a last-ditch defense of the city.<sup>116</sup>

On August 4, Peng distracted Hu Zongnan in Baoji and Tianshui, then launched a full-scale attack to destroy the Muslim army and “liberate” Gansu. The First Field Army captured every strategic city from Xi’an across to the middle of Gansu to eastern Qinghai within three weeks. It was also campaign of vengeance against the Ma family warlords, whose troops had killed over 20,000 Red Army soldiers of the West Route Army and horrifically mistreated captives in 1936. The First Field Army was instructed to eliminate the Muslim armies resolutely. Ma lost nearly half of these troops in the Battle of Lanzhou. With many Chinese soldiers surrendering, the remaining Muslim divisions either retreated to Hexi or fled to the Amdo pasturelands. Later that month, the PLA completed their seizure of Gansu and Qinghai. Ma Bufang fled to Chongqing, where the Nationalist government established the Southwest Military and Political Executive Bureau (*xinan junzheng zhangguan gongshu* 西南軍政長官公署) to coordinate all GMD forces in Guizhou, Yunnan, Sichuan and Xikang provinces.<sup>117</sup>

On August 29, Chiang Kai-shek held a military conference in Chongqing, attempting to organize a last-ditch defense of southwestern China. Expecting that the PLA would attack from the Shaan-Gan-Chuan border region, he instructed his generals to prepare for the decisive engagement in southern Gansu. After the Communist occupation of Lanzhou, Wudu was made the temporary political and military headquarters of Gansu under the command of Hu Zongnan’s secretary, Zhao Longwen 趙龍文 (1902–1968). Zhao showed no intention to

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<sup>116</sup> ZNXZ, 24; *Hu Zongnan Diaries*, August 1–3, 1949, AHA, 149-010100-0001-008; “Gansu sheng zhengfu weiyuan deng dian jiang zhongzheng lanzhou qishou jucu hexi yibin jieti qing sheaf chuli 甘肅省政府委員等電蔣中正蘭州棄守促河西已瀕解體請設法處理,” *Jiang Zhongzheng zongtong wenwu*, September 9, 1949, AHA, 002-020400-00032-019.

<sup>117</sup> “Jiang Zhongzheng jian hu zongnan yanjiu chuan shan zhanju yu xibei jinhou zhanl 蔣中正見胡宗南研究川陝戰局與西北今後戰略,” *Jiang Zhongzheng zongtong yiwu*, August 8, 1949, AHA, 002-060100-00255-028.e

capitulate. He reorganized the main corps of Hu Zongnan and Wang Zhiqi to block the PLA in southern Gansu and distributed ammunition to local troops. He ordered the Chone, Lintan and Minxian security headquarters to assemble troops, retreat to Tébo, and impede the Communist army from entering into northern Sichuan. He also instructed Apa Alo to deploy the Xiahe security battalion and Tibetan militias to prevent the PLA from breaking into Kham. Ideally, the three main routes linking Gansu-Amdo and Sichuan-Kham would be secured.<sup>118</sup> However, the Chone and Labrang leaders had neither the motivation nor they ability to accomplish these tasks.

Given that Chone and Labrang were the gateways for the PLA to seize Amdo and Kham, the CCP planned to launch the peaceful emancipation and showcase its preferential policy toward Tibetans. After several tentative contacts with Pema Wangchuk and Apa Alo via the underground communists of the region, the CCP sent political workers to instigate them to stage Tibetan uprisings. Straddling the Nationalist and Communist regimes, the Tibetan authorities went through the motions of carrying out their orders and bargained with the CCP for retaining the native political, social and religious systems and customs.<sup>119</sup> When the counties abutting the First ASR were taken over by the PLA, Pema Wangchuk sought advice from Jiang Yuntai 蔣雲台 (1905–1987), who was the deputy commander of the Nationalist force in Wudu and the sworn brother of his father. Suspected of being a secret Communist, Jiang was under the close supervision of Zhao Longwen. Jiang suggested that Chone should follow the lead of the First ASR. On September 5, a CCP political worker took the joint letter of the general Wang Zhen 王震 (1909–1993) and the GMD officials/underground Communists to Pema Wangchuk, informing him of the date of the

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<sup>118</sup> “Zhuoni jiefang qianhou de yang fuxing,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 71; *XHXZ*, 77–78.

<sup>119</sup> Zhu Keqing, “Zhuoni qiyi qianhou,” in *GNWSZL* vol.3, 116–117; “Zhuoni jiefang qianhou de yang fuxing,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.1, 71–72.

peaceful liberation of the First ASR. The gyelpo agreed to participate in the “glorious uprising” (*guangrong qiyi* 光榮起義).<sup>120</sup>

On September 11, the First ASR officials and Pema Wangchuk telegrammed Peng Dehuai regarding their acceptance of the peaceful emancipation and the reorganization of local troops. The gyelpo summoned the Security Headquarters officials, banner accountants, federation chief managers and *tsowa* headmen in Chone Monastery. He announced that the 48 banners were “liberated,” and the CCP would come soon. Then, after the years of dealing with the GMD, he arranged a Tibetan delegation entitled “108 monasteries and 48 banners” to receive the PLA in Minxian.<sup>121</sup> Nonetheless, the gyelpo’s announcement caused a chaos among his subjects:

Knowing that the CCP (*gung khran tang*) was coming and we were to be emancipated (*bcings ‘grol*), we were so in a panic. Few people understood what the CCP and emancipation were. Some indicated that the CCP is a kind of monster with eyes as big as the head light of a car and mouth as large as the bamboo winnowing fan. Based on our experiences of running away from the White Wolves, the Hui Muslims and Wang Zhiqi’s bandit troop, we put bedding and kids on the ox carts, took food and valuables, and rushed toward Southern Tao and hid in the forests. We sent scouts to watch over villages across the Luchu River every day until some strangers came to Chone Town. We were informed that they were a CCP work team. Ah, although we did not know what ‘work team’ meant, we finally knew the CCP were humans. Then, we dared to return home.<sup>122</sup>

It seemed that the lives of the Northern Tao residents remained unchanged. The CCP officials began the takeover of the Shezhiju and the Security Headquarter. Local elders believed that the CCP would leave eventually, just like the GMD.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> In December, Jiang Yuntai and Wang Zhiqi announced the peaceful uprising in southern Gansu and submitted Wudu to the new provincial government. *Gansu shengzhi*, 319–322.

<sup>121</sup> Zhu Keqing, “Zhuoni qiyi qianhou,” in *GNWSZL* vol.3, 117–119; Yang Dondrup, “Wo de shaonian shidai,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.4, 51. Learning the situation in Chone, the secular and religious leaders of Labrang negotiated with the Communist representatives and announced the peaceful emancipation of Xiahe County on September 20. See *XHXZ*, 78.

<sup>122</sup> Interviews with Benma Tso (daughter of the prime manager of Lobzang Tendzin), Lanzhou, February 6, 2015.

<sup>123</sup> Group interviews, Liulin Town, July 7, 12, 2015.

Along with the PLA ongoing the campaigns to completely capture the northwestern and southwestern provinces, Mao Zedong declared the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on October 1. The First Field Army occupied the Hexi Corridor and proceeded toward Xinjiang; the Second Field Army subdued the GMD forces in Yunnan and Sichuan. Hu Zongnan relocated the Southwest Military and Political Executive Bureau to Xikang Province and hoped to organize the Kham Tibetans to fight a last-stand. Yet, his plan was unsuccessful. When the battles resumed after the winter, the Communist force seized the territory up to the border of Central Tibet. The leading GMD commanders fled to Taiwan. Amdo and Kham were incorporated into the new China in late March 1950. As the CCP intended to inherit the Qing geo-political body, it undertook the project to recapture Ü-Tsang.<sup>124</sup>

Meanwhile, the Communist central government initiated the top-down political reform to exert control over China's immediate ethnic borderland. In Chone, the CCP regime instituted the county government by reorganizing the Shezhiju and the Security Headquarters. The GMD party branch was dismissed. Pema Wangchuk declared the end of the chieftain system. He was appointed the Chone militia commander and provisional county magistrate. Minxian Special Administrative Region (*Minxian zhuanqu* 岷縣專區) sent nineteen Communist officials to Chone. Their primary tasks were to win over the upper class, understand the local ethnic situation, promote CCP policy and reach out to the Tibetan grassroots. This official group opened a training course in Liulin Town and developed 47 local CCP members to staff the county government. As the training school provided free accommodation, food and salary, Han refugees and a few Tibetan young girls from

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<sup>124</sup> *Gansu shengzhi*, 327–328.

bankrupted households became trainees. The CCP officials particularly sought people of the poorest classes.<sup>125</sup>

In May, the Gansu government changed Chone County into Zhuoni Tibetan Autonomous Region (*Zhuoni zangzu zizhiqu* 卓尼藏族自治區) due to its vast territory and diverse inhabitants. The prefectural government consisted of the administrative committee, military headquarters, and the bureaus of culture and education, civil affair, finance, agriculture and animal husbandry, taxation, police as well as court. The administrative committee members were elected by the People's Representative Conference (*renmin daibiao dahui* 人民代表大會). Under the guidance of the CCP, theoretically, the committee exercised the power of the autonomous government on behalf of the Tibetan people. However, due to the shortage of manpower, the CCP relied on the co-optation of the existing Tibetan authorities to carry out the takeover and minimize local resistance. Some 75 Tibetan and Chinese officials of the GMD institutes were briefly trained in the party school and appointed to different posts of the new government. The 148 people's representatives "elected" by villages from across the kingdom were, in fact, the *tsowa* headmen and federation chief managers. They elected Pema Wangchuk as the administrative committee director to assure that the gyelpo was in the leading position.<sup>126</sup>

In 1951, the CCP inserted its political influence into the lower-level administration. The Communist officials reorganized the townships established by the GMD government. The six townships in Front Range and North Range were split into eighteen townships according to the traditional political-religious alliance and the geographic locations of the thirty banners.

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<sup>125</sup> Zhu Keqing, "Zhuoni qiyi qianhou," in *GNWSZL* vol.3, 119–120. Contemporary Tibetans despised the commoners who worked for the Chinese government in general. According to the interview with a Tibetan woman who received the training in 1949, she worked for the CCP when she was 13 years old. Her neighbors disdained her and spat when she passed by. Interview, May 23, 2017.

<sup>126</sup> *ZNXZ*, 25; "Yuan tao min lu baoan silingbu zhengshi wuzhuang budui gaikuang," in *GNWSZL* vol.3, 79–81; Zhu Keqing, "Zhuoni qiyi qianhou," in *GNWSZL* vol.3, 120.

In Back Range, work teams suppressed “counterrevolutionaries” made up of some GMD soldiers, bandits and poppy growers and set about reforming the eighteen banners of 33 federations into seventeen townships. The township heads and assistant officials were mostly the chief managers and the military officers trained by Pema Wangchuk in 1949. In this process, although Tibetan authorities remained in power, CCP officials dominated local politics. Tibetan officials were cooperative in the way they had been in the past. They saw the CCP to be another version of the GMD and abided by the official instructions to prevent further intrusions.<sup>127</sup>

Overall, the political power and military deterrence of the GMD regime were weakened in Chone during the Chinese Civil War. As the gyelpo and his regent were mere puppets of the three colonels, Tibetan officials grasped this chance to enrich themselves and obtain various official titles. With the young gyelpo ascended to full authority, they swiftly shifted their political stance. This period showed the dynamics of the relationship between the king and his subordinates. The Nationalist official institutes gradually shaped the understanding of this relationship among local Tibetan officials. The political reform of the CCP eventually caused the paradigm shift in terms of the gyelpo-subordinate relation. The ruler and servants became colleagues, or more precisely they became superior and inferior officials in the CCP bureaucratic system. In the first three years of the PRC, the banner system was formally retired from the historical stage. The military *ulag* ceased to exist after the professionalized Chone soldiers were dismissed by the CCP. A Chinese-style county took shape in Liulin Town. The *tsowa* became administrative villages under the jurisdictions of the 35 townships. The *tsowa* societies underwent even deeper transitions.

### **The Transformation of the Tsowa Societies**

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<sup>127</sup> “Co ne’ lo rgyus don chen, 1949–1997,” in *ZNWSZL*, vol.6, 1–5; *ZNXZ*, 78–79.

### *The Han Immigrant Society and the Dismantled Tibetan Social Relations*

In the aftermath of the Fourth He-Huang Incident, there was an explosive growth of the Chinese population in the Chone Kingdom. As Chapter four elaborates, the Muslim revolt triggered a tide of Han refugees surging into Mébo, Zhongpa, Southern Tao and Drukchu from Hezhou, Lintao, Minxian, Xigu and Wudu. Except the Tébo and nomadic *tsowa*, the Han settlers were distributed all over the kingdom. Moreover, the GMD regime's dominance over Gansu overlapped the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Chinese Civil War in the 1930s and the 1940s. This period was characterized as two decades of excessive conscription and taxation for the southern Gansu residents. A continuous inflow of Han farmers migrated to the Chone Kingdom in order to avoid conscription and apportioned funds, and survive the regional riots as well as natural catastrophes.

On both side of the middle and lower Luchu River, the Han migrants possessed the majority of large houses, and built more small houses. In the Chone Kingdom, the eighteen banners of Back Range were less affected by the Han migration. The twelve inner base-villages had around 400 households in 1936. The number increased to more than 500 in the 1940s. Apart from some 250 fixed large houses, which were mostly held by the Han people, the rest were small houses established by the Han migrants. In Southern Tao, a GMD frontier report of 1939 demonstrated that there were over 3,000 Han tenants living in the small houses of Ziboshi, Tongkhorsum, Dakyik and Lamarnang banners. In Upper Stream, many Hezhou Chinese refugees settled in the *tsowa* of Luchung or Mélung township, forming a couple of Chinese villages on the fertile sunny bank of the Luchu River. Between this area and Mébo-Zhongpa pasture, on account of Ma Tingxian's revengeful campaign and raid in local *tsowa*, the number of Tibetan households declined by half in Samarpudo, Bélungshi, Pawoshi, and Tangnang banners. A 1938 field report shows that only a handful of Tibetan households stayed in each of these nomadic *tsowa*. The pastoral population only slowly recovered when



the monks were forced to return home and monasteries were destroyed from the late 1960s onward. In North Range, the Han migrants steadily increased in the sedentary settlements. Most agricultural *tsowa* in Shoba, Samar, Toucho and Chöchen-Akhor banners had a few Han families. According to the accounts of the GMD and the CCP local governments from the 1940s to the 1950s, the Chinese population in Chone was around 20,000.<sup>128</sup>

Before the CCP takeover, the 76 *tsowa* of the Nyentsa gönpo had 1,150 Tibetans. On average, each *tsowa* had around three Tibetan households. The rest of the large houses were taken by the Han farmers. For the Tsoksum gönpo, his lineage leased the households and lands of its seven or more *tsowa* to the Han famers, who gradually refused to pay tax, tribute and soldier-horse corvée. During this period, he only controlled thirty large houses. And 26 of them were owned by Chinese. With the enforcement of the administrative regularization, the Nyentsa and Tsoksum rulers became the petty officials of Lintan County. Their *tsowa* were directly taxed by the county government in the late 1940s. For the Buddhist rulers, the 23 *tsowa* of the Chokro khenchen were occupied by the Hui Muslims and Han Chinese. He practically levied tax and corvée on 48 large houses nearby his residence, among which Han families were in the majority. In 1935, as the khenchen sold land to the Hui farmers again, and reclaimed the pasture of Rachak *tsowa*, his Tibetan subjects were so irritated that they separated themselves from the khenchen. The 23 *tsowa* were organized into three *bao* by the Lintan magistrate. In the domain of the Marnyung khenpo, the agricultural and semi-sedentary *tsowa* received a large number of Han migrants. The eighteen large houses taxed by the Yerba lapön were mostly occupied by Han farmers.<sup>129</sup>

The situation of Chinese demographic dominance faced by the Tibetan inhabitants within the administrative borders of Minxian and Xigu counties was similar to those in

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<sup>128</sup> Gu Jiegang and Wang Shumin, *Gan qing jianwen ji*, 217–219; Younghusband, *Peking to Lhasa*, 91; Clarence C. Crisler, *China's Borderlands and Beyond* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Company, 1937), 310; Wu Mingtuo, “Zhuoni zhi guoqu yu weilai,” 92a; ZNXZ, 179–180, 187.

<sup>129</sup> Ma and Wanma, *Kan lho'i bod kyi tsho shog lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 137–164.

Lintan. In the lower Luchu valley, Minzhou was the seat of the First ASR. Local Tibetans, who mainly sustained themselves with farming, no longer used Tibetan language, adopted Chinese cultural practices, and were treated as highly “Sinicized” by GMD officials. The administrative regularization was enforced more thoroughly in this region. In Drukchu, the *tsowa* administered by the Xigu government received many Han famers, who mainly worked as hired labors and settled down before 1952. A considerable number of Han migrants built new villages in the unclaimed mountain areas. In addition to the Chinese descendants of the Ming garrison and reclamation soldiers, the Xigu government account specifies that around 58,000 Chinese people resided in the lower Drukchu valley by 1950.<sup>130</sup> Hence, in the Chone Kingdom and the Tibetan areas affiliated to or allied with the Chone throne, local Tibetans were becoming the ethnic, demographic and political minority within an expanding Chinese immigrant society and amid accelerating Chinese state-building.

In this Chinese immigrant society, social relations and networks certainly differed from those in the *tsowa* societies. For more than a century, various long-term relations were bound between Tibetan host households and Han hosts, farm laborers, carpenters, loggers, timber transporters on the rivers, peddlers, grain brokers, ox-horse dealers, opium traders and so on in the neighboring Chinese counties. In moments of social and natural disasters, Han people took refuge and migrated to Tibetan territories by using these connections and the introductions of acquaintances. Over time, a Chinese “acquaintance society” took form inside the Tibetan world and developed into a mature form similar to other parts of the Chinese world. Although Han people were cautiously excluded from the Security Headquarters, some wealthy and prestigious Han families formed a Chinese group of social elites in Chone Town,

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<sup>130</sup> Gu Bao, “Hanren zenyang de dingju yu zhuoni fanqu 漢人怎樣地定居於卓尼番區,” *Xibei luntan* 西北論壇 1, no.1 (July 7, 1947): 13–14; “Zhuoni fanqu de hanfan 卓尼番區的漢番,” *Zhongguo bianjiang* 中國邊疆 3, no.11 (1947): 12–16; “Jiu chuantong he xin bianhua: gannan zangzu zizhihou zhuoni xian muer xiang de diaocha baogao 舊傳統和新變化：甘南藏族自治州卓尼縣木耳鄉的調查報告,” *Xinjiang shehui kexue* 新疆社會科學 4 (1986): 23; *ZQXZ*, 582, 713.

and became active political figures in the GMD and the CCP local governments. In this Chinese society, the networks of acquaintances, relatives, friends and sworn brothers of secret societies all served as reliable connections for the new migrants settling in suitable *tsowa*.<sup>131</sup>

The Tibetan rulers had less and less power to exploit the soldier-horse *ulag* system, and supervise the transaction of large houses in the 1930s and the 1940s. To evade the ritualized and expensive procedure of paying horse or sheep to the king while signing the “soldier-horse land contract,” Tibetan householders and Han migrants oftentimes secretly completed land transactions. Unlike the earlier migrants who needed their bonds with the *tsowa*, brother-houses and local deities through rituals in the formal communal occasions, the new-comers realized that they merely had to purchase houses and lands. With the internal social relations, communal solidarity and collective consciousness of *tsowa* weakening, most new migrants were no longer obligated to the secular and religious responsibilities tied with large houses. Also, the Han refugees no longer needed to obtain approvals of the *tsowa* headmen or elder councils to build small houses. They directly contacted relatives and friends who worked for or owned large houses for help. An immediate result was that the Han large houses in a *tsowa* formed mutual-aid groups of their own, or had sufficient small houses to hire farming helpers instead of cooperating with Tibetans. When the Han families took over the large houses which were the *sha nye* of Tibetan households in Tébo and pastoral areas, the inter-*tsowa* brother-house relations ceased to exist.<sup>132</sup> Therefore, the Chinese social networks replaced the functions of the Tibetan introduction system and host households. The formation of a Han immigrant society severely disrupted the “people brother-house” and “land brother-house”

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<sup>131</sup> Group discussions of the Tibetan and Chinese elders in Front Range, May 2015, June 2016, May and June 2017.

<sup>132</sup> Interview with the Tibetan and Chinese elders of Lamarnang, Maru, Yarru, Shotsang, Lungsde, Lubaka, Toucho and Chöchen villages, September 5–15, 2016.

relations, the inter-subdivision and inter-*tsowa* relations in the *tsowa* societies, as well as the land system and the overlord-subject relation in the Chone Kingdom.

### *Transforming the Tibetan Land, Tax, Tribute and Corvée Systems*

Historically, what kept the *tsowa* societies under the governance of the Chone gyelpo were not only the coercive power of the centralized yamen, banner system, the religious dominance of Ganden Shédrupting and the prime-subordinate monastery system, but also the consent of the *tsowa* that materialized the commensal overlord-subject relation by paying the specific tax, tribute and military corvée mutually agreed by different *tsowa* societies and the Chone ruling house after conflicts and negotiations. The operation of this system required both the ruling power and local Tibetans to comply with the customary political, social and religious norms. From the Shezhiju to the Chone Tibetan Autonomous government, the ruling house's power and its administrative system were replaced by the single-party led local government. The modern Chinese state's ethno-politics and governance on the ethnic frontier inevitably interrupted the Tibetan customary political practices and norms. Especially when the Chone gyelpo cooperated with the state in this process, the space for the commensal overlord-*tsowa* relation was compressed and even obliterated. Thereby, the *tsowa* belonging to the same federation and league utilized the banner system to form a niche of self-governance and collectively resist the Chinese taxation, conscription and state-building as well as Tibetan officials' extractions.

After the death of Lobzang Tendzin, the colonels and the Security Headquarter officials became an interest group and took every opportunity to enrich themselves when collecting taxes, tributes and opium fines. They also gathered the financial penalties and apportioned funds on behalf of the GMD government. These regular and random extractions burdened local Tibetans in the mid-1940s. Thereafter, in times of collecting tax and tribute, except in

the “obedient” base-villages and Lower Stream *tsowa*, a common scenario was that the alliances expelled accountants or township heads in Middle Stream, Upper Stream, North Range and Tébo. When the colonels led the armed guard to tackle tax-resistance, the alliances raised militia and usually prevented them from entering local villages. The Luchung, Chépa, Druktsa and Zhongpa alliances each could organize 500 to 2,000 cavalymen. They blocked the officials outside their settlements, called them the GMD’s “dogs” or “grandsons,” and declared that they were the subjects of Labrang. The officials returned without a coin or accepted whatever the *tsowa* paid them.<sup>133</sup> In Tébo, local Tibetans believed that Chone was occupied by the Chinese government, and the gyelpo family had fled somewhere unknown after the murder of Lobzang Tendzin. They refused to pay tribute, claiming that they were under the jurisdiction of Songpan or Labrang. Even after Pema Wangchuk’s tour of Tébo in 1944, the Tébos agreed to pay the fine and opium paste but would not allow the colonels to set foot in their territories. They evaded tribute, and stated that the opium fine covered everything they needed to pay.<sup>134</sup> Hence, when the young gyelpo was raised to power in 1949, the traditional military *ulag*, taxation and tributary practices, long inhering in the diverse intricacies of overlord-*tsowa* relations and land systems were near the complete collapse.

In around thirty *tsowa* in Northern Tao seized by Lobzang Tendzin after the massacre of the Hui people in 1929, the land dispute between the Hui Muslim survivors hoping to *shangzhuang* and the Chinese families newly enlisted by the Chone yamen brought the soldier-horse land system to the end. In the 1930s, the native authorities believed that these *tsowa* and territories belonged to Tibetans, whereas, the Hui survivors insisted that the lands were their ancestral properties purchased from the Nyentsa gönpo, Tsoksum gönpo and

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<sup>133</sup> Interviews with elders in Karchen, Chokro, Yarteng, Gönpa, Mélung, Khakya and Rapso, July 2016.

<sup>134</sup> Wu Mingtuo, “Zhuoni zhi guoqu yu weilai,” 95b–96a.

Chokro khenchen. Due to the deterrence of Lobzang Tendzin and his colonels, the Hui villagers dared not return. They appealed to the provincial government to deal with the *shangzhuang* issue for years. In 1937, the murder of the gyelpo provided them a chance to recapture their homeland. Supported by Lu Dachang, they armed a militia and declared they would return to their home villages by force if necessary.<sup>135</sup> Hence, the Gansu government sent a Muslim official of the provincial civil affair department (*minzheng ting*) and the leader of the Xidaotang sect to mediate the case.<sup>136</sup>

The Xidaotang continued to maintain amicable relations with Chone authorities, and rented lands and forests once seized by their Hui compatriots from the Chone yamen. The official mediation brought nothing definite. The *shangzhuang* issue, as minor as it was for the Gansu government, was shelved again. The bereft Hui farmers brought indictments against the Chone ruling house to the GMD commissioners visiting this border region regardless of their missions.<sup>137</sup> The petition of one Taipingzhai Hui farmer stated in 1938:

As my whole family were killed in the Eighteenth Year Lintan Riot, I drifted alone to other places, and survived by begging. Thanks to the virtuous government for repeatedly instructing (me) to return home. As it is hard to abandon one's homeland, I complied with the order and returned to my residence. When I arrived at my hometown, it was unexpected (to find) that the Chieftain Yang's barbarian subjects (Han tenants) had deceitfully seized the farmland and watermill purchased by my ancestor. I already implored the provincial government to recover (my property) time and again. Immediately (the government) granted and instructed Commissioner Zhang to investigate and deal with the case on the basis of the facts. Nonetheless, the commissioner office instructed the Chone Provisional Government Office and the Lintan county government to conduct the investigation and handle the case. It has been many days without clear instruction to return (my property). Now, the spring ploughing is over, and the autumn will come soon. Even though I have come back home for two years, the farmland and watermill are still held by others. In the long term, how can I survive and keep my ancestral property? Because refugees lost properties, barbarians tilled the land, and I am impoverished and starving, so I bring up the case again, and rely on you, Commissioner, to

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<sup>135</sup> Fang Changjiang witnessed the *shangzhuang* movement in 1935. See *Zhongguo de xibei jiao*, 42.

<sup>136</sup> Ma Jizhou, "Zhuoni shanhou banfa," 15-7-237; "Zhuoni shen-ganzang huimin shangzhuang wenti diaocha cailiao 卓尼申甘藏回民上莊問題調查材料," 7-1-95, 1951, GSSDAG.

<sup>137</sup> The directors of the Provincial Civil Affair Department such as Lin Jing and Wang Yingyu 1936 were sent to handle the Muslim *shangzhuang* issue in 1933 and 1936 respectively. In 1937, Ma Fengtu, a section chief of the Civil Affair Department was instructed to deal with the issue again.

investigate and recover my property accordingly. The refugees will express the fortune in a downfallen world. Taipingzhai refugee Zhang Liuwuer presents.<sup>138</sup>

This was one of the many indictments received by Gu Jiegang when he passed through the Luchu valley on a semi-official investigation trip in northwestern China. Neither he nor other commissioners could solve these land disputes. The Security Headquarters had no intention to cede the Tibetan land to their Hui enemies and give up local tax. Without the support of Lu Dachang, who was transferred to Lanzhou in 1938, the Lintan magistrate also avoided getting involved in these disputes.<sup>139</sup> It was in the 1940s that the situation began to turn in the Hui villagers' favor when the Chone Security Headquarters was handicapped by a succession of state-building projects. With the leading Tibetan officials executed in the North Range Incident, the Chone ruling house could not maintain the soldier-horse land contract with Han farmers and provide them protection in these *tsowa*. The Hui survivors tilled the land purchased or leased by their forefathers, and rebuilt their houses and mosques. The collective *shangzhuang* evolved into Han-Hui individual quarrels, feuds and negotiations. The Han and Hui social elites served as mediators and solved the land disputes case by case, leading to the formation of some Han and Hui hybrid villages. The Chone gyelpo family gradually exerted no control over these *tsowa*.<sup>140</sup>

In Front Range, with the Chinese administrative regularization carried out by GMD officials, the standardized state taxation disrupted the native systems of taxation, tribute and corvée. In this course, the land system was reshaped again in Middle Stream and Lower Stream, where the Shezhiju established township governments and *baojia* in local banners. Following the household registration, the Shezhiju began to measure the land of large houses in 1944. Based on the size of land, some 5,000 households would be classified into five

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<sup>138</sup> Gu Jiegang and Wang Shumin, *Gan qing wenjian ji*, 73.

<sup>139</sup> In 1938, Lu Dachang was conferred the New 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps Commander and transferred to Lanzhou. His 165<sup>th</sup> Division was retrained and sent to the anti-Japanese front.

<sup>140</sup> Gu Jiegang and Wang Shumin, *Gan qing wenjian ji*, 215–216; Ding Junru, *Lintan huizu shi*, 152, 174–176; “Suzhuang 訴狀,” *Huijiao qingnian* 回教青年 3, no.1–2 (1940).

ranks, paying different taxes accordingly. To cope with this policy and evade the impending tax, some remaining Songtsenmak Tibetan large houses dispersed in some 200 agricultural *tsowa* made use of a loophole of the GMD ethnopolitics. As early as 1933, the Gansu government announced that the Tibetan Buddhist authorities could be exempted from the *gaitu guiliu*, and retain the incense land and monastic revenue on the principle of respecting Tibetan religion. And the divine subjects of the monasteries were exempted from conscription. When the Shezhiju registered the soldier-horse land, Tibetan large houses sought help from Ganden Shéd ruling. They claimed their land to be incense land and obtained certificates (*bsko gzha*) from the Senggang yamen. The Han large houses promptly followed this practice. Even in Minxian and Lintan, the Chinese farmers living in the vicinities of the monastic estates of Ganden Shéd ruling also donated lands and became the tenants of the monastery. The monastic administration, particularly the parish-assembly house in charge of the monastic revenue, was paralyzed due to the destruction of the latest Muslim Revolt. The Senggang yamen lacked the force to collect the rent of incense land. These “tenants” in effect avoided paying rent and all official taxes. The Songtsenmak Tibetans were further detached from the *gyelpo* regarding the commensal relationship.<sup>141</sup>

Then, the CCP accomplished the administrative regularization and co-opted the *gyelpo* and Chone officials to serve the new government. The Tibetan native taxation and corvée systems were displaced. Both the tribute and military *ulag* were immediately abolished. In the manorial estates, all large houses of the sixteen base-villages were exempted from paying the manorial corvée and agricultural tax to the ruling lineage and its branches. The tax known as “official grain” (*gongliang* 公糧) was imposed on both large and small houses. In 1950, the Chone government collected 1,359,301 *jin* of official grains. It also amassed 182,935 silver dollars and various kinds of goods to support the war “to resist U.S. aggression and aid

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<sup>141</sup> Wu Mingtuo, “Zhuoni zhi guoqu yu weilai,” 53a–b.



Korea” (*kangmei yuanchao* 抗美援朝).<sup>142</sup> Commenting on the differences between the taxes of the king and the CCP, local elders stated that they paid “the grain to the gyelpo in a bag, and the official grain in a bullock-cart.” The state tax annually increased, reaching a peak during the Great Leap Forward.<sup>143</sup> The Tibetan tax, tribute and *ulag* practices and their implications of the diverse relations between the gyelpo and *tsowa* dissolved. It seems that Pema Wangchuk did not understand his relationship with the *tsowa* societies anymore.

In the meantime, the CCP government pushed a fundamentally new concept into the *tsowa* societies with their continual insistence that the land and forest in the *tsowa* territories belonged to the state, and that Tibetans were living on the territorial margin of the PRC. On the one hand, the Chone government took over the Taohe and Yeliguan tree farms, and established the Taohe Forestry Bureau (*Taohe linyeju* 洮河林業局) and seven forestry stations in the Luchu valley, announcing that logging without an official permit was illegal. On the other hand, the “land reform” (*tudi gaige* 土地改革) policy disrupted the land systems of the *tsowa* societies. When the Lintan government initiated the land reform in November 1951, Pema Wangchuk ceded the Han-Hui hybrid villages and the enclaves of *tsowa* within the historical Taozhou border wall to the Lintan county government as a gesture to actively respond to the state policy. In the enclaves, the large houses were instructed to redistribute 5,000 *mu* of land to small houses. In 1952, to demonstrate the enforcement of the land reform in Chone, the administrative committee organized “751 well-off households” (*fuyouhu* 富有戶) to provide assistance to small houses in Middle Stream and Lower Stream. Local small houses received 48,975 *dan* of seeds. Their rents were exempted as well. Chone

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<sup>142</sup> ZNXZ, 409, 444.

<sup>143</sup> Interview with the Tibetan and Chinese elders of Lamarnang, Maru, Yarru, Shotsang, Lungsde and Lubaka villages, September 5–15, 2016.

authorities implemented this policy in a modified manner, even though Tibetan regions were not required to launch the land reform, in order to avoid direct state interference.<sup>144</sup>

As a result, the state hegemonic power cut off the material side of the *tsowa*-territory relationship by the official institutes, laws and regulations. In the agricultural areas, the new policies of land management damaged the household-land connection, and began to change the social statuses of large houses and small houses. In this process, the local Tibetan concept of territoriality was challenged and underwent profound transformations. Tibetans were gradually marginalized on their own land.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have investigated the collapse of the Chone Kingdom and its *tsowa* societies in the turbulent period when China was engaged in regional and national wars. Instead of immediate destruction, these wars led to the GMD government's adjustments of national and frontier policies and brought more intrusive and systematic Chinese incorporative and state-building projects to the Luchu and Drukchu valleys. In the 1930s, the administrative regularization was carried out in Chone. It was entangled in the complex local and regional power struggles, and resulted in the murder of the king. The chieftain system was abolished, yet the expected replacement of the native regime was not realized. The *tsowa* societies having disparate relations with the ruling house were beyond the capacity of the Chinese officials to comprehend and manage. The provisional government could only exert limited control in the central agricultural zone densely populated by the Han migrants. It still depended on the traditional chieftain yamen, which was nominally stripped of civil power

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<sup>144</sup> "Zhuoni zizhiqu huafen chahua dijie yijian 卓尼自治區劃分插花地界意見," July 07, 1952, 138-4-6, GSSDAG.

and named as the Security Headquarter, to administer Upper Stream, North Range and Back Range.

In the early 1940s, official troops deployed to repress the southern Gansu peasant uprising and tackle the North Range Incident had a strong presence in Chone. The native regime was cooperative. Nationalist Party officials began to register household and organize *baojia* in the Tibetan areas to increase revenue and conscription. Other national and provincial policies, such as the ban on opium growing and the promotion of education, were also implemented to strengthen the political sway of the GMD government. As these top-down policies damaged the interests of the *tsowa* societies, the passive and violent Tibetan resistance was ensured. The *tsowa* and federation leaders utilized the native systems and customary practices to elude the Chinese intrusion. Pema Wangchuk's subalterns obtained official positions in the GMD institutes, uplifted themselves in the new bureaucratic system, and altered the gyelpo-subordinate power dynamics in the Security Headquarter. They worked for the Nationalist government, bought off opportunistic frontier officials and enriched themselves. The GMD incorporation of the kingdom was largely uneven.

In the late 1940s, the *tsowa* societies saw through the strategy of Chone officials. Apart from the central agricultural zone where the residents adapted to the household registration and state taxation, Tibetans in Upper Stream, North Range and Back Range often formed self-governing alliances to protect their communities. They fulfilled the pecuniary demands of GMD and Chone officials, and prevented the latter from entering to the *tsowa* territories and disturbing their lives. In this course, Pema Wangchuk gradually ascended to power during the Civil War, and dominated the Shezhiju with the decrease of the GMD power in 1949. However, the PLA vanquished the National Army in Gansu at this point. Chone authorities decided to submit the region to CCP and attempted to remain in power.

Following the CCP takeover, a series of state-building policies were enforced in the Luchu and Drukchu valleys. The Communist Party's local political system, which was adjusted to be suitable for the ethnic region, replaced the Chone central administration. The gyelpo and his subalterns became colleagues in the Chone autonomous government that was equivalent to the county government on the CCP administration strata. The CCP officials established townships to reform the banner system, systematically replace the federations, and manage the grassroots *tsowa*. The history of the Chone Kingdom came to an end. With the state taxation and land systems established, the household-land and *tsowa*-territory relations were destroyed. In addition to the influence of the Han immigration society, the social, religious, economic and political relations traversing the subdivisions, *tsowa* and federations were completely dismantled by 1952. The commensal overlord-subject relation between the gyelpo and the *tsowa* societies also vanished. As local elders recalled this period and complained, "the gyelpo did not care about his people, because he was addicted to being a Communist official."<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Interview with the Tibetan and Chinese elders of Lamarnang, Maru, Yarru, Shotsang, Lungsde and Lubaka villages, September 5–15, 2016.

## Conclusion: The Return of the Chone King

In the lunar new year of 2019, Yang Zheng 楊政 (b.1951), the only son of the last King Pema Wangchuk, was invited to attend the Monlam Great Prayer Festival (*smon lam chen mo*) by Ganden Shedrubling. Because his ancestral house, the two-story building and a large yard at the original site of the Yongdü Palace, had become the Yang Chieftain Museum (*yang tusi jinianguan* 楊土司紀念館), he stayed in a hotel with the eldest son of his sister. On the morning of the fifteenth day of the first month, the monastic authorities came to welcome them to the monastery. Outside the hotel window, the snow was melting. Pilgrims of all directions prostrated every three steps toward Chone Monastery. Some of them had spent more than ten days on the road. Yang asked a monk, “should we wear Tibetan clothes now or in the monastery?” The monk politely answered that it should be appropriate to wear the costumes now. Yang and his nephew had no clue of how to wear the traditional Tibetan wool fabric winter dress. The religious representatives had to get them properly dressed. Later, they were ushered into the main assembly hall of Ganden Shedrubling, which was rebuilt in the 1980s.

It was the largest religious ceremony restored in the last decade alongside the revitalization of Tibetan culture across the Luchu valley. Reincarnations, lamas and monks recited sutra and performed ritual in the front square yard of the assembly hall. To maintain the on-site order, the banner and *ulag* systems were brought to life again. According to the decision of the religious authorities and banner representatives, the banners will take turns and provide able-bodied men to assist the monastery and organize this festival. These men must wear colorfully embroidered thick bright-golden silk shirts, scarlet wool winter dresses and black leather boots, Tibetan swords, knives and rosaries. Most importantly, to address the

issue of Tibetan language attrition, they must speak Tibetan language during the festival. Speaking a Chinese sentence will be fined 100 *yuan*. Women of the banner prepare tea and foods for thousands of people in the monastery kitchen. For normal participants, it is the once-a-year time to pray. Wearing regional featured costumes, tens of thousands of Tibetans from near and far burned *bsang* (conifer twigs and barley), recited mantras, spun sutra wheels, offered butter and cash, prostrated in all assembly and deity halls, and then watched the dharma dance.<sup>1</sup>

Yang Zheng, like the Chone khenpo and religious kings, sat in the central back of the assembly hall, observing the ritual, though he could not understand a word of the religious text or a move of the dharma dance. Neither could he recite a mantra nor say a blessing phrase. Unlike his father Pema Wangchuk who was more or less familiar with local social, political and cultural contexts, he grew up outside the region. Given the eruption of the Tibetan revolt against the CCP in 1958, a moment referred to by Amdo Tibetans as “the year of 58” (*nga brgyad lo*) or by the Party and other ethnic groups as “the year of 58 of Tibetan Rebellion” (*wuba nian zangmin panluan* 五八年藏民叛亂), Yang Zheng and his mother Dazhifen 達芝芬 were escorted to Beijing out of the safety considerations. He stayed with his maternal grandparents, the Alaśa Mongol Prince Darijaya (Dalizhaya 達理札雅, 1904–1968), who was the contemporary vice chairman of Inner Mongolia, and Consort Aisin Gioro Yunhui 愛新覺羅韞慧, who was the second daughter of Manchu Prince Zaitao 載濤 (1887–1970) and the last Qing Emperor Puyi’s cousin. During the Cultural Revolution (*wenhua da gemin* 文化大革命, 1966–1976), his paternal and maternal families suffered seriously. Darijaya and Yunhui were killed by the Red Guards (*hongweibing* 紅衛兵) in the “struggle sessions” 批鬥. He was sent to Shaanxi and received “reform through labor”

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<sup>1</sup> Based on my observation, Chone, February 17, 2019.

(*laogai* 勞改). In 1981, he returned to Chone. He was assigned the vice county magistrate and promoted to the magistrate in 1986. He speaks standard mandarin, which was often privately mocked by local people. During this appointment, he was promoted to work at the Gansu Political and Law College (*Gansu zhengfa xueyuan* 甘肅政法學院) and reunite with other family members in Lanzhou.<sup>2</sup>

In 2000, Pema Wangchuk passed away. Following the funeral attended by over 100,000 people, Yang Zheng planned an inspective tour across the 48 banners, which was done by his father in 1945. Yet, the journey ended at the beginning point, where the Tibetans of a branch valley waited to receive the blessing from the one who carries on the bone of the last gyelpo. Seeing hundreds of people kneeling down on the road ahead, as one of his accompany says, Yang Zheng was frightened. He asked the driver to turn around the car and immediately leave. Thereafter, he did not arrange a formal visit to Chone. The outbreak of the Tibetan revolt in 2008 brought him to the ancestral homeland again. In addition to the monastic authorities, he was employed as the major political intermediary by the United Front Work Department (*tongzhanbu* 統戰部) for “stability maintenance” (*weiwen* 維穩) in Chone. He has been actively involved in various local affairs ever since.

In the Monlam Festival of 2019, Yang Zheng was invited to give offering, a ceremonial scarf (*kha btags*), to the protector deity of the royal household, the monastery and the 48 banners for the first time. In the main assembly hall, he introduced his nephew to the Buddhist authorities. “This is my son,” he announced the successor of the lineage in a tentative and informal way. The dharma dance continued to the sound of drums, cymbals and trumpets. The news was instantly leaked to the lay Tibetans in the front yard. Yang Zheng and the nephew left after the offering ceremony was completed, causing a fuss among the

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<sup>2</sup> Interviews with the relatives of the ruling house, Chone, February 12–17, 2019; May 20, 2019.

crowd. Yang Zheng walked toward the car and touched the heads of bowed Tibetans. He was like a reincarnated lama. When he stepped into the car, many men surrounded the car and tried to push a way through and touch foreheads on the car doors. With the car leaving, elders, women and children put the dirt in the wheel imprints on their foreheads as an expedient way to receive his blessing. People whispered that the middle-age man next to Yang Zheng is his son. The past and present overlapped at the very site and time, where the eighteenth king's adopted successor, Yang Zheng's grandfather, completed the offering, straddled the horse and left the monastery, leaving behind the crowd who grabbed dirt in the traces of his horse.

The news about the heir has been spread by pilgrims and monks to the valleys and pastures. A few Tibetans knowing that Yang Zheng only has a daughter are concerned with the fact that the son does not have the bone of the ruling lineage on the basis of the Tibetan norm of adoption. He is from neither the paternal side nor the uxori locally married daughter of the ruling lineage and its branches. This information is concealed from the public. In private and communal gatherings, Tibetans discuss this ongoing issue, refer to past stories, and address local concerns. Based on my observation, the opinions of the lay communities are in line with Chone Monastery. Although most monastic authorities have not explicated their attitudes, they agree that having an heir of the gyelpo lineage to play a religious-cultural role in ceremonious moment as a part of the revitalization of "Tibetan traditions" is for the public good. However, aside from this general positive response, Tibetan groups in the Luchu and Drukchu valleys have discordant voices concerning Yang Zheng's announcement of his heir.

In Back Range, the State Council (*guowuyuan* 國務院) of the PRC set up Diebu and Zhouqu counties in 1962. Tébo and Drukchu Tibetans were no longer administrated by the Zhuoni government. Following the Cultural Revolution and the "reform and opening-up"



(*gaige kaifang* 改革開放), the Yang family was considered irrelevant to the local political reality. Until recent years, a new official narrative of the past has been under construction. The Yang Chieftain family becomes a historical legacy and cultural symbol of the region. The nineteenth gyelpo is depicted as the “Red Chieftain” (*hongse tusi* 紅色土司) who assisted the Red Army during the Long March. Local government utilizes this narrative to buttress “Red tourism” (*hongse lüyou* 紅色旅遊) and develop the local economy.

In North Range, local Tibetans attach great religious importance to the Yang family and Ganden Shedrubling. The prime-subordinate monastery system, in which the Chone khenpo plays a crucial role, undergoes a slow restoration from the 1980s onward. Although the khenpo position is never taken by any male member of the ruling house, the communal and regional monasteries started recently to seek the ratifications of local reincarnations and abbots from Yang Zheng. “The influence of the Yang family is still paramount,” as a Gelug abbot of North Range points out, “we still have a strong faith in the descendant of the gyelpo.”<sup>3</sup>

In Front Range, the elders are unsatisfied with Pema Wangchuk and Yang Zheng, who were absent from local societies and politics for decades. They often criticize that the lineage carriers just wanted to be CCP officials and get promotions. In the *laptse* festival of the Druktsa Seven Banners to worship the league’s mountain god in 2019, the elders signify that the “intellectuals” (*mig yangs pa*), a term hinting at a group of political and religious leaders, gave advices to Yang Zheng to “test the water”—the reaction of local Tibetans by informally introducing the heir to the public.<sup>4</sup>

As current *minzu* policy increasingly emphasizes the stability maintenance in the Tibetan regions, the Yang family is considered important to influence Tibetans along the

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Dorge Gyatsen, Zhongpa, March 19, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Group Interview in Karchen, May 12, 2019.

Luchu and Drukchu valleys. The successor of the historical ruling household is employed as the intermediary of the CCP government again to “stabilize” Tibetans once ruled by the Chone gyelpo. The Chinese nation building is still incomplete. Local officials attempt to bring the imperial practice back, using this unofficial means to ease the tension between local government and Tibetans, and prevent any unexpected affairs that might jeopardize the borderland stability.

## Appendix 1

### Tibetan Glossary

Wylie	Phonetic	Pinyin	漢字
'ba' gtsang	Batsang	Bazang	巴藏
'brog pa	drokpa	zhuogua	卓瓜
'brug chu	Drukchu	Bailongjiang	白龍江
'brug chu	Drukchu	Zhouqu	舟曲
'brug rtsa dmag ru bdun	Druktsa makru dün	Zhuzha qiqi	朱札七旗
'byung rtsa	jungtsa	genpan	根盤
'cham pa grwa tshang	champa dratsang		
'dre	dré		
'drug ge	Drukge	Zhouge	洲格
'go ba	gowa	guowa	郭哇
'gro mgon chos	Drogön Chögyel Phagpa	Basiba	八思巴
rgyal 'phags pa			
'jam dbyangs bzhad pa	Jamyang Zhépa Könchok		
dkon mchog 'jigs med	Jikmé Wangpo		
dbang po			
'jam dbyangs nor bu	Jamyang Norbu	Yang Chongxiao	楊冲宵
'jigs med stobs rgyas	Jigme Topgye	Yang Zongji	楊宗基
'og sgang mar nang	okgang marnang makru	kounei shiba-qi	口内十八旗
dmag ru bcu brgyad	chugyé		
'og sgang mar nang	okgang marnang makru	kouwai shier-qi	口外十二旗
dmag ru bcu gnyis	chunyi		
'u lag	ulag	wula	烏拉
a 'khor	Akhor	Ahe	阿禾
a mchog	Achok	Amuquhu	阿木去乎
a mdo	Amdo	Anduo	安多
a myes rma chen	Anyé Machen	Anian maqing	阿念瑪卿
a pa a lo	Apa Alo	Huang Zhengqing	黃正清
a ra	Ara	Ala	阿拉
a zha	Azha	Tuyuhun	吐谷渾
a zha	Azha	Axia	阿夏
a zha thang	Azhatang	Azitan	阿子灘
au pe	Aupé	Wuping	武坪
bang tshang	Wangtsang	Wangzang	旺藏
bar lung	Barlung	Baling/Bayang	巴凌/把羊
bde thang	Détang	Diedang	迭當
bka' 'gyur	Kangyur		
bka' zhog	kazhok	gashu	尕書
bkra shis 'bum	Tashi Bum		
bkra shis rab brtan	Tashi Rabten	Yang Guolong	楊國龍
bla 'tshong	latsong		

bla brang	Labrang	Labuleng	拉卜楞
bla brang	labrang		
bla ma dkar po kun	Lama Karpo Künga		
dga' rgyal mtshan	Gyeltsen		
blo bzang bstan 'dzin	King Lobzang Tendzin	Yang Jiqing	楊積慶
rnam rgyal 'phrin las	Namgyel Trinle Dorje		
rdo rje			
blo bzang bstan pa'i	Lobzang Tenpé Gyeltsen		
rgyal mtshan			
blo bzang don grub	Lobzang Dondrub	Yang Wei	楊威
blo bzang rgyal mtshan	Lobzang Gyeltsen		
seng ge	Senggé		
bod yul	Böyül3	Boyu	博峪
bon po	bönpo	benben	苯苯
brag dgon pa dkon	Drakgönpa Könchok		
mchog bstan pa rab	Tenpa Rapgyé		
rgyas			
bsang chu	Sangchu	Xiahe	夏河
bshad pa	shépa		
bskal bzang dbang	Kelzang Wangchuk	Yang Kuiming	楊葵明
phyug			
bsod nams chos 'phel	Sonam Chopel	Yang Zhao	楊昭
bstan 'dzin rin chen	Tendzin Rinchen	Yang Zongye	楊宗業
bstan 'gyur	Tengyur		
bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan	Kelzang Tsültrim Tenpé		
bskal bzang tshul	Gyeltsen		
khrims			
bstan srung tshe ring	Tensung Tsering	Yang Sheng	楊聲
btsan po dpal legs	Tsenpo Pellek	Zan Xiuqie	贊秀乧
bya rtags	jatak		
byang sgang	jangyang	Beishan	北山
bzang 'bab	Zangbap	Sangba	桑坝
chab mdo	Chamdo	Changdu	昌都
chag ma	Chakma	Chama	岔麻
chas pa mkhan po	Chépa khenpo	Chuiba-si senggang	垂巴寺僧綱
chol kha	chölkha		
chos 'byung	chojung		
chos dzong dgon pa	Chödzong Gönpa		
chos gzhis	chözhi		
chos rje	chöjé		
chos sde	chödé		
chos srin zung 'brel	chösin zungdrel	zhengjiao heyi	政教合一
chu bo	Chubo	Shubu	術布
chu kha rgyud	chukhagyü		
co ne	Chone	Zhuoni	卓尼/著泥
co ne dgon chen	Chone Gönnen		
co ne khag lnga	Chone Khaknga		

co ne rgyal khab	Chone Gyelkhap	Zhuoni tusi	卓尼土司王國
co tshang	Chotsang	wangguo	
cog ro mkhan chen	Chokro khenchen	Zhuozang	著藏
dag yig	Dakyik	Zhuoluo-si dugang	卓洛寺都綱
dar rtse mdo	Dartsédo	Dayugou	大峪溝
dbang phyug	Wangchuk	Daziduo	達子多
dbon phran	wöntren	Yang Hong	楊洪
dbon po	wönpo		
dbus gstang	Ü-Tsang	Wusizang	烏斯藏
de pod	Dakpo		
dga'	Dak	Ga	噶
dga' ldan bshad sgrub	Ganden Shédруп Pékar		
pad dkar grol ba'i gling	Drölwéling		
dga' ldan khri pa	Ganden Tripa		
dga' ldan pho brang	Ganden Phodrang	gandan pozhang	甘丹頗章
dga' skyes	Gakye		
dge ldan bshad sgrub	Genden Shédруп Dargyé		
dar rgyas bkra shis gyas	Trashî Gyésu		
su 'khyil ba'i gling	Khyilwéling		
dge lugs	Gelug		
dgon chen	gönchen		
dgon chen dga' ldan	Gönchen Ganden		
bshad grub gling	Shédрупling		
dgon pa	gönpa	gongba	貢巴
dgon po	gönpo	hongbu	洪布
dgon po don grub	Gönpo Döndrup	Huang Weizhong	黃位中
dkar mdzes	Garzê	Ganzi	甘孜
dmag ru	makru	qi	旗
dmag ru bzhi bcu zhe	makru zhichu zhé gyé	sishiba-qi	四十八旗
brgyad			
dmag shog	makshok		
dmag zor mgon po	Makzor Gonpo	Yang Rusong	楊汝松
dme bo	Mébo	Meiwu/Mowu	美武/陌務
dngo thi'	Ngoti	Aodi	敖地
du chung	dujung	gafangzi	尕房子
du rgyal	dugyel	dafangzi	大房子
dzam bha	Dzambha	Banzha	半札
en 'dzi	Endzi	Anzi	安子
gan rgya	gengya		
gdung rabs	dungrap		
gla bo gshis	Laboshi	Laowushi	老吾什
gling gsar	Lingsar	Lisai	例賽
gnas chung	Néchung	Naiqiong	乃瓊
gnyen nye	nyennyé		
gnyer pa	nyerpa		
gnyer pa chen po	nyerpa chenpo		

gong ma	gongma		
gong so	Gongso		
grags pa bshad sgrub	Drakpa Shédруп		
grangs ka	drangka	zhangga	掌噶
grangs ka zhing kha	drangka zhingkha	zhangga di	掌噶地
grangs shes	drangshé	changxian	長憲
gro	dro		
gser po'i bla dbon	Serpo Shonggön lapön	Heiyu-si senggang	黑峪寺僧綱
gser rgyan	Sergyen	Xicha	西岔
gshen tsha	Shentsa	Shanzha	善札
gshing tshang	Shingtsang	Shenzang	申藏
gtsang pa ba	Tsangpawa	Zangbawa	藏巴哇
gtsos	Tsö	Heicuo/Hezuo	黑錯/合作
gur khang pa	gurkhangpa		
gzhis khag	zhikhak	xika	谿卡
gzhong pa	Zhongpa		
gzhong pa khag gsum	Zhongpa Khaksum		
gzhung ba	Zhunba		
gzi bo gshis	Ziboshi	Siwushi	思吾什
han bde	Hendé	Shatan	沙灘
ja lam	jalam		
kanlho	Kanlho	Gannan	甘南
kha pa	Khapa	Kaba	卡巴
khal	khel		
kham	Kham	Kangqu	康區
khang	khang		
khang ming	khangming	fangming	房名
khang thog	Khangtok	Kangduo	康多
khang tshan	khangtsen		
khral	trel		
khral skul	trelkül		
khri 'dzin	tridzin		
khri gtsug lde btsan	Tritsuk Detsen	Chizu Dezan	赤祖德贊
khri pa	Tripa		
khyā dge	Khyagé	Qiagai	恰蓋
khyā dge dgon dge ldan	Khyagé Monastery	Qiagai-si	恰蓋寺
legs bshad gling			
khyim tshang	khyimtsang		
klu chu	Luchu	Luqu	碌曲
klu chu	Luchu	Taohe	洮河
klu chung	Luchung	Luqiong	魯瓊
la li	Lali	Laligou	拉力溝
la mar nang	Lamarnang	Nalang	納浪
la rtse	Latsen	Lazikou	臘子口
ldon/'don/gdon/sdon	Dön		
lha	lha		
lha khang	lhakhang		

lha mchod	lhachö		
lha mo'i gser khri	Lhamo Sertri	Langmu Saichi	郎木賽赤
lha sde	lhadé		
lhag gi nang	lhakginang	senggang yamen	僧綱衙門
lhan grub	Lhündrup	Longbu	隴逋
ma 'gag	Magak		
ma ru	Maru	Muer	木耳
mag pa	makpa	nüxu	女婿
mar snyung mkhan po	Marnyung khenpo	Manu-si senggang	麻奴寺僧綱
mchod rten	chörten		
mchod yon	chöyön	tanyue	檀越
mdo kham	Dokham	Duokang/Duogansi	多康/朵甘思
mdo lam ring mo	Dolam Ringmo	Qilianshan	祁連山
mdo smad	Domé	Duosimai	朵思麻
mdzo	dzo	pianniu	犏牛
mdzod dge	Dzögé	Zuogai	佐蓋
mdzod dge smad ma	Dzögé Méma		
mdzod dge stod ma	Dzögé Töma		
mgo log	Golog	Guoluo	果洛
mgo rtsa	Gotsa	Guzigou	瓜子溝
mgon po dar rgyas	Gonpo Dargye	Yang Zhen	楊臻
mi nyag	Minyak		
mi ser	miser	baixing	百姓
mi sha nye	mishanyé		
mi sna bcu bdun	mina chudün		
mig yangs pa	mikyangpa		
ming btags pa	mingtakpa		
mkhar chen	Karchen	Kache	卡車
mnnga' ris	Ngari	Ali	阿里
mtshan nyid grwa	tsennyi dratsang		
tshang			
mtsho sngon po	Tsongönpo	Qinghaihu	青海湖
na to	Nato	Nadao	那道
nags khrod pa	naktröpa		
nags mdo dgon dga'	Nakdo Göñ Ganden		
ldan chos gling	Chöling		
nang ba	Nangba	Nangwa	囊哇
nang chen	nangchen		
nang grangs ka bcu	nang drangka chunyi	nei shier zhangga	內十二掌噶
gnyis			
nang mdzod	nangdzö		
nas	né		
ngag dbang 'phrin las	Ngawang Trinlé Gyatso		
rgya mtsho			
ngag dbang bsod nams	Ngawang Sonam Gyatso		
rgya mtsho			
ngas mdo	Ngédo	Nadao	那道

ngos sgang	ngögang	Qianshan	前山
nub ma gong ma	Nupma-gongma	Shangxilu	上西路
nyan tsha dgon po	Nyentsa gönpo	Zibao Zan tusi	資堡咎土司
nyin aos	nyinaö	heyang	河陽
o rgyan nyi ma	Ugyen Nyima	Yang Ying	楊楹
od zer pa	Özerpa	Heisongping	黑松坪
pad ma dbang phyug	Pema Wangchuk	Yang Fuxing	楊復興
pang lung gshis	Panglungshi	Balongshi	巴隆什
pha bong kha	Pabongkha		
phan po	Penpod	Pangbai	庞拜
phyug gyo	Pukgyo	Pojue	婆角
phyag mdzod	chakdzö		
phyi grangs ka bzhi	chi drangka zhi	waisi zhangga	外四掌噶
rab so	Rapso	Resuo	熱索
ral pa can	Ralpacan	Rebajin	熱巴巾
reb gong	Rebgong	Regong	熱貢
rgan gya	Khagyé	Ganjia	甘加
rgan po	genpo		
rgya ma bod	gyamabö		
rgya mkhar dgon pa	Gyakhar Gönpa	Jiangke-si	江可寺
rgya ne	Gyané	Jianni	尖尼
rgyab sgang	gyapgang	Houshan	後山
rgyal po	gyelpo	jiabo	嘉波
rgyal rtse	Gyantse	Jiangzi	江孜
rgyal sras	Gyelsé	Gusiluo	响厮囉
rgyud	gyü		
rgyud pa grwa tshang	gyüpa dratsang		
ri dwangs	Ridang	Ridang/Luoda	日當/洛大
ri khrod	ritrö	jingxiuyuan	靜修院
ri stod ma	Ritöma	Renduoma	仁多瑪
rin chen	Rinchen Tendzin Trinle	Yang Yuan	楊元
bstan 'dzin 'phrin las	Dorje		
rdo rje			
rin chen lhun po	Rinchen Lhünpo		
rnam thar	namtar		
rnga ba	Ngawa	Aba	阿坝
rngog	Ngok	Ehe	俄合
ro langs	rolang		
ro pa	Ropa	Luoba	洛巴
rogs pa	rokpa		
rol ba dmag ru bzhi	rölwa makru zhi	heifan/zhouqu si-qi	黑番/舟曲四旗
rong pa	rongpa		
rta 'dogs	Tadok	Dangduo	當多
rta dmag	tamak		
rten 'bul	tenbül		



ru skor	ru skor	zhangquan	帳圈
ru skor	ru skor		
rus ming	rüming		
rus pa	rüpa		
sa dag	sadak		
sa dmar	Samar	Shamao	沙冒
sa dmar phu mdo	Samarpukdo	Sangwang-pengduo	桑旺朋多
sa ma 'brog	samadrok		
sa ris grwa tshang	sari dratsang		
sa sha nye	sashanyé		
sa skyong	sakyong		
sangs rgyas rgya mtsho	Sanggyé Gyatso		
sba rdzong	Badzong	Bazang	巴藏
sbra/dbra	Ba		
sbun mched	bünché		
sbyin pa rgya mtsho	Jinba Gyatso	Lebafo	勒巴佛
sde ba	déba		
sde srid sangs rgyas	Dési Sanggyé Gyatso		
rgya mtsho			
sdong nag dgon po	Dongnak gönpo	Duona Zhao tusi	多納趙土司
sgro ne	Droné	Zhuonigou	卓尼溝
sha khrag	shatrak		
sha nye	shanyé	qinfang	親房
sho ba	Shoba	Shaowa	勺哇
sho tshang	Shotsang	Suozang	所藏
shog pa	shokpa	buyi	部翼
si gu rgya	sigugya		
skal bzang thub bstan	Kelzang Tupten		
dbang phyug	Wangchuk		
sku tshab	kutsap		
smon lam chen mo	mönlam chenmo		
sngogs pa	ngokpa	guanba	管巴
spel lung	Pellung	Bailin	柏林
sprul sku	trülku		
spyang thi'	Changti	Xiedi/Jiangdi	些地/姜地
spyi khang	chikhang	shangshulou	尚書樓
spyi pa	chipa		
srib aos	sipaö	heyin	河陰
strong btsan dmag	Songtsenmak		
strong btsan sgam po	Songtsen Gampo	Songzan Ganbu	松贊干布
stag ra	Takra	Dala	達拉
stag thob	taktop		
stag tshang lha mo dgon	Taktsang Lhamo Gönpa	Langmu-si	郎木寺
pa			
stod ma	Töma	Duoma	多麻
su ru nang	Surunang	Xinigou	西尼溝
sum pa	Sumpa	Supi	蘇毗

ta rge dgon pa	Tagé Gönpa	Lubasi	录巴寺
tang bar te rgyud dpon	Tangbar Tégyü pönpo	Tanchang Ma tusi	宕昌馬土司
po			
thang nang	Tangnang	Tana	他那
the bo	Tébo	Diezhou/Diebu	疊州/迭部
the bo smad ma	Tébo Méma	Xiadie	下迭
the bo smad ma dmag	tébo méma makru gyé	xiadie ba-qi	下迭八旗
ru brgyad			
the bo stod ma	Tébo Töma	Shangdie	上迭
the bo stod ma dmag ru	tébo töma makru druk	shangdie liu-qi	上迭六旗
drug			
tho'u cho	Toucho	Tuqiao	土橋
ti ti ma	titima	titima/niuzitou	提提瑪/鈕子頭
tsha sgang	Tsagang	Chagang	插崗
tshang	tsang	fang	房
tshe dbang bsod nams	Tsewang Sonam Tobgyel	Yang Zuolin	楊作霖
stobs rgyal			
tshe dbang don grub	Tsewang Dondrub	Yang Chaoliang	楊朝梁
tshe smon gling	Tsémönling		
tsho ba	tsowa	cuowa	措哇
tsho bdun tsho ba	tsodün tsowa		
tshogs chen sbyi ba	tsokchen jiba		
tshogs chen zhal ngo	tsokchen zhelngo		
tshogs sum dgon po	Tsoksum gönpo	Zhuoxun Yang tusi	卓遜楊土司
tshor dor bla dpon	Tsordor lapön	Yanjia-si/Caduo-si	閻家寺/擦多
		sengzheng	寺僧正
tsong kha	Tsongkha	Zongka	宗喀
tsung chen	tsungchen	zongcheng	總承
tsung gon	tsunggön	zongguan	總管
wa dmar	Wamar	wanmao	完冒
ya 'gag	Yagak		
ye shes dar rgyas	Yeshe Dargye	Yixi Daji	益西達吉
yer ba bla dpon	Yerba lapön	Houjia-si /	侯家寺/圓城
		Yuancheng-si	寺僧正
		sengzheng	
yig tsang	yiktsang	yicang	議倉
yongs 'dus	yongdü		
yul lha	yüllha	shanshen	山神
zam tsha	Zamtsa	Sanmuchu	三木察
zho tho'u	zhotou	xiaotou	小頭

## Appendix 2

### Chinese Glossary

ahong	阿訇
Aixin Jueluo Yunhui	愛新覺羅韞慧
Alashan	阿拉善
Anding	安定
Anxi	安西
aocha	熬茶
Bafang	八坊
Bai Lang	白朗
Bai Yanhu	白彥虎
baihu	百戶
baihuo liangcha shengchu zongju	百貨糧茶牲畜總局
bailang jun	白狼軍
bailian jiaofei	白蓮教匪
Baishui	白水
Baishuijiang	白水江
Baling	巴凌
banfanzi	半番子
banshi dachen	辦事大臣
bantou	班頭
banyi	班役
Bao Yongchang	包永昌
Baoan	保安
baoan dadui	保安大隊
baoan silingbu	保安司令部
baoan tuan	保安團
baojia	保甲
baowei yangren	保衛洋人
baozhai	堡寨
baozhang	保長
Bayankalashan	巴顏喀拉山
bazong	把總
beifa	北伐
Beizhuang menhuan	北莊門宦
bianjiang kaifa	邊疆開發
bianmin	邊民
bianqiang	邊牆
bing ma tian zhi	兵馬田制
bingbu	兵部
bu	部
buluo	部落

canmou	參謀
Cao Kezhong	曹克忠
Caojiadai	曹家代
Chabuyu Hou guoshi	茶埠峪后國師
Chahaer	察哈爾
chamasi	茶馬司
Chanding-si	禪定寺
Changchuan	長川
changluan pai	倡亂派
chanshi	禪師
Chen Wushi	陳五十一
Chen Xialing	陳遐齡
Chen Zaiyi	陳再益
Chengdu-fu	成都府
Chenghua-si	承化寺
chuanhao toumu	傳號頭目
Chuimatan	吹麻灘
chuyong	楚勇
Cixi Taihou	慈禧太后
Cuandugou Hou tusi	攢都溝后土司
Cui Yonglu	崔永祿
cun	村
da toumu	大頭目
da zongguan	大總管
dadui	大隊
Dahejia	大河家
dahoufang	大後方
Dai Jingyu	戴靖宇
Dalizhaya	達理札雅
Dan Dianchen	淡殿臣
dangqian daqian	當千大錢
danguaizi	單拐子
dao	道
Daohe	導河
daoyuan	道員
Datong	大通
Dazhaizi	大寨子
Deng Baoshan	鄧寶珊
Diaogou	鴛溝
Didao	狄道
Dieshan	迭山
Ding Baozhen	丁寶楨
Ding Jianchun	丁劍純
Ding Yong'an	丁永安

dingdai hualin	頂戴花翎
Dingxi	定西
dizhu tuanlian	地主團練
Dongxiang	東鄉
Dongxiang	東鄉
Dongzhiyuan	董志塬
Dorongga	多隆阿
Dou Ziming	陡子明
Du Shizhong	杜世忠
dudu	都督
dujun	都軍
dusi	都司
dutong	都統
duxin chanshi	篤信禪師
E'nengzuo	額能作
Encheng	恩承
Enlin	恩麟
er zongguan	二總管
faguan	法官
Fan Ming	範銘
fandi	番地
Fang Bingyi	方秉義
fangke	房科
fanhu	番戶
fanzi	番子
Fanzu/Fanshu	番族/番屬
fatai	法臺
Feng Anbang	馮安邦
Feng Guangming	馮光明
Feng Yuxiang	馮玉祥
fu toumu	副頭目
Fu Xianzong	傅先宗
fu zongbing	副總兵
fufan tongzhi	撫番同知
fuguan	副官
fuyi tongzhi	撫夷同知
fuyouhu	富有戶
ga siling	尕司令
gaige kaifang	改革開放
gaitu guiliu	改土歸流
gan ren zhi gan	甘人治甘
ganbian ninghai zhenshoushi	甘邊寧海鎮守使
Gansu nongmin kangri jiuguo yiyongjun	甘肅農民抗日救國義勇軍
Gansu taonijun	甘肅討伐逆軍

Gansu zhengfa xueyuan  
Gelaohui  
Gongchandang  
Gongchang  
gongliang  
gongma fanzu  
Gou Zhan'ao  
gouli zhuogua  
Gu Jiegang  
Gu Zhenglun  
guan'ai  
Guanghe  
guangrong qiyi  
guanqian  
guanyintu  
guashi  
Gudanba  
Guide  
Gulang  
Guo Jiqiao  
guochi  
guomin dahui  
guomin gemingjun  
Guomindang  
Guominjun  
guoshi  
Guowuyuan  
Guyuan  
Guzhan  
Hadapu  
Haheba-bao  
Hali  
Han  
hanba  
hanhua  
hanhui chouhen  
Hanjiaji  
hanshen  
hanxuepai  
Hanyang  
haoqian  
He Jianwei  
He Yaozu  
hehuang shibian

甘肅政法學院  
哥老會  
共產黨  
鞏昌  
公糧  
貢馬番族  
苟占鰲  
溝里卓瓜  
顧頤剛  
谷正倫  
關隘  
廣河  
光榮起義  
官錢  
觀音土  
卦師  
古旦巴  
貴德  
古浪  
郭寄喬  
國恥  
國民大會  
國民革命軍  
國民黨  
國民軍  
國師  
國務院  
固原  
古戰  
哈達鋪  
哈河壩堡  
哈里  
漢  
旱魃  
漢化  
漢回仇恨  
韓家集  
漢紳  
漢學派  
漢陽  
壕塹  
何建威  
賀耀祖  
河湟事變

heifan  
Heilunlai  
Heishu  
heitouyong  
Henan Menggu  
Hezheng  
Hezhou  
hongbi shiye  
hongse lüyou  
hongse tusi  
hongweibing  
Hou Zhenxing  
hu  
Hu Gongmian  
Hu Zongnan  
hua'er  
Huaihai  
Hualong  
Huang Yingge  
huangliang  
Huangyuan  
Huasi menhuan  
huayi zhibian  
Hui  
Huining  
huishang  
huishen  
huji zhuren  
huofo  
huweidui  
Ji Congzhou  
Ji Hongchang  
Ji Zhangjian  
Jia Dajun  
Jiang Yuntai  
jiangshi  
jianhui buliu  
Jiannan  
jianyue  
jiaofu bingyong  
Jiayuguan  
jiazhang  
jiduwei  
jiedushi

黑番  
黑侖來  
黑水  
黑頭勇  
河南蒙古  
和政  
河州  
紅筆師爺  
紅色旅遊  
紅色土司  
紅衛兵  
后振興  
戶  
胡公冕  
胡宗南  
花兒  
淮海  
化隆  
黃迎哥  
皇糧  
湟源  
華寺門宦  
華夷之辨  
回  
會寧  
回商  
回紇  
戶籍主任  
活佛  
護衛隊  
姬從周  
吉鴻昌  
吉章簡  
賈大均  
蔣雲台  
殭屍  
見回不留  
劍南  
僭越  
剿撫並用  
嘉峪關  
甲長  
騎都尉  
節度使

Jiezhou	階州
jimi	羈縻
jimintuan	飢民團
Jin	金
jingwei lian	警衛連
jingweidui	警衛隊
Jinjibao	金積堡
jinshi	進士
Jinshun	金順
Jiqing-si	集慶寺
Jitang	吉唐
Jiucheng	舊城
jiutao ying	舊洮營
junhu	軍戶
junxuguan	軍需官
kangmei yuanchao	抗美援朝
ke	科
Kong Fanjin	孔繁錦
kou	口
kounei	口內
kouwai	口外
Kunlunshan	崑崙山
langfei	狼匪
lanjuan	懶捐
lanyanjuan	懶煙捐
Lanzhou	蘭州
laogai	勞改
laojiao	老教
Lei Zhaoxiang	雷兆祥
Lei Zhongtian	雷中田
leichi	雷尺
leiwán	雷碗
li	里
Li Anzhai	李安宅
Li Dan	黎丹
Li Fazhen	李發珍
Li Hongzhang	李鴻章
Li Songkun	李松昆
Li Yangshan	李養善
Li Zongren	李宗仁
Li Zongzhe	李宗哲
Liang Qichao	梁啟超
liangfan	良番
Lianghekou	兩河口



lianghui	良回
liangmin	良民
liangmin pai	良民派
Liangzhou	涼州
lianshou	聯手
Liaoshen	遼瀋
Lifanyuan	理藩院
Lihua	理化
lijia	里甲
Lin Fengshao	林鳳韶
Lin Yaohua	林耀華
Lingzhou	靈州
linshi canyihui	臨時參議會
linshi yihui	臨時議會
Lintan	臨潭
Lintao	臨洮
Linxia	臨夏
linzhong shengfan	林中生番
lishi weiwu zhuyi	歷史唯物主義
Litang	理塘
Liu Ao	劉璈
Liu Bingzhang	劉秉璋
Liu Jintang	劉錦堂
Liu Jiqing	劉濟清
Liu Mingdeng	劉明燈
Liu Songshan	劉松山
Liu Xiuyue	劉修月
Liu Yufen	劉郁芬
Liu Zhidan	劉志丹
liuguan	流官
Liulinzhen	柳林鎮
Liushun	流順
Lixian	禮縣
Longbu	隴逋
Longnan	隴南
Longxi	隴西
Longyou	隴右
lu	路
lǔ	旅
Lu Dachang	魯大昌
Lu Hongtao	陸洪濤
Lu Jianzhang	陸建章
Lüjin	閭井
lujun daxue	陸軍大學

Luli  
lǔying jun  
Ma Anliang  
Ma Bufang  
Ma Buqing  
Ma Fang  
Ma Gaxishun  
Ma Hetian  
Ma Hongbin  
Ma Hongkui  
Ma Hualong  
Ma Liu  
Ma Qi  
Ma Qiwu  
Ma Qixi  
Ma Shou  
Ma Shoushan  
Ma Tingxian  
Ma Tingxiang  
Ma Zhan'ao  
Ma Zhongying  
Machanggou  
Maijiaji  
Mao Zedong  
Meng Shusi  
mianzi  
miehui  
min  
Min Dianchen  
Ming  
Minjiang  
Minxian  
Minxian zhuanqu  
Minzhou  
minzu ronghe  
minzu shibie  
mishu  
mishubu  
mu  
Mu Shouqi  
Mubo  
Mufuti  
muke  
Nalata Mutushan

魯黎  
綠營軍  
馬安良  
馬步芳  
馬步青  
馬芳  
馬尕西順  
馬鶴天  
馬鴻賓  
馬鴻逵  
馬化龍  
馬六  
馬麒  
馬七五  
馬啟西  
馬壽  
馬壽山  
馬廷賢  
馬廷驤  
馬占鰲  
馬仲英  
馬場溝  
買家集  
毛澤東  
蒙述思  
面子  
滅回  
民  
敏殿臣  
明  
岷江  
岷縣  
岷縣專區  
岷州  
民族融合  
民族識別  
秘書  
秘書部  
畝  
慕壽祺  
木波  
穆夫提  
木刻  
那拉塔穆圖善

nama fanzu	納馬番族
nanfan ershiyi zhai	南番二十一寨
nanlu siling	南路司令
Nanping	南坪
Nanxiang	南鄉
Nanyu	南峪
neibian	內邊
nianfei/nianzei	捻匪/捻賊
nidang	逆黨
nihui	逆回
ninghai jun	寧海軍
Ninghe	寧河
niuma fanzi	牛馬販子
paikuan	派款
Pangbai	庞拜
Pei Jianzhun	裴建準
Peng Dehuai	彭德懷
pidou	批鬥
Pingfan	平番
qi	旗
Qi'an Garong	七暗尕茸
Qiang	羌
qianhu	千戶
Qianjiazhai	千家寨
qin bu liu hui	秦不留回
Qinfeng	秦鳳
Qing	清
Qinghai Menggu	青海蒙古
qingmiaohui	青苗會
qingxiang	清鄉
Qinling	秦嶺
qinwang	親王
Qinzhou	秦州
Qiqi-bao	戚旗堡
qixin	齊心
qizhang	旗長
quzhang	區長
Remin jiefangjun	人民解放軍
Ren Naiqiang	任乃強
renmin daibiao dahui	人民代表大會
renmin gongshe	人民公社
safei	撒匪
Saigao	賽高
Salar	撒拉

san zongguan	三總管
sanfan zhiluan	三藩之亂
sanmin zhuyi qingnian tuan	三民主義青年團
sanzhuang	三莊
shaan gan ning bianqu	陝甘寧邊區
shahui miejiao	殺回滅教
shanghang	商行
Shangsi	上寺
shangzhuang	上莊
shanhoufei	善後費
shaoshu minzu diqu	少數民族地區
Shazeiqiao	沙賊橋
Shen Zhaolin	潘兆霖
shengfan	生番
Shengyun	升允
shezhiju	設治局
shi	室
Shi Yanlong	石彥龍
shiba daying	十八大營
shiba longshen	十八龍神
Shibazu	十八族
shibian	實邊
shichou	世仇
shixi toumu	世襲頭目
shoubei	守備
shoubei xuxian	守備虛銜
shufan	熟番
Shuimochuan-bao	水磨川堡
sidifang	四地方
sifachu	司法處
sizhi	四至
Songfan	崧蕃
Songpan	松潘
suifeng zhiyin	歲俸之銀
suijiao	隨教
suiying youji	隨行游擊
Suiyuan	綏遠
Sun Weiru	孫蔚如
Sun Yat-sen	孫中山
Sun Zhonglian	孫仲連
Suzhou	肅州
Tacheng	塔城
Taipingzhai	太平寨
Taizishan	太子山

Taizisi	太子寺
Tan Qixiang	譚其驤
Tan Zhonglin	譚鐘麟
Tanchang Qiang	宕昌羌
Tao Mo	陶模
Taobei	洮北
Taohe linyeju	洮河林業局
taomin lu baoan siling	洮岷路保安司令
taomin xieying	洮岷協營
taomin xieying	洮岷協營
Taonan	洮南
Taoxi	洮西
Taozhou	洮州
taozhou ying zhongjun	洮岷營中軍
tewuying	特務營
Tian Kunshan	田崑山
Tianshui	天水
tidu	提督
Tiebahe	鐵坝河
Tiecheng	鐵城
tituan	提團
tonghua	同化
tongyi de duo minzu guojia	統一的多民族國家
tongyi zhanxian	統一戰線
tongzhanbu	統戰部
tongzhi huiluan	同治回亂
tuan	團
tuanzhang	團長
tubing	土兵
tudi gaige	土地改革
Tufan deng chu xuanweisi duyuanshuaifu	吐蕃等處宣慰司都元帥府
tufeiwo	土匪窩
tuguan	土官
Tumen guan	土門關
tuntian	屯田
tuojuan	駝捐
tusi	土司
tusi yamen	土司衙門
tusi zhidu	土司制度
tuzu	土族
waibian	外邊
Wang Fuchen	王輔臣
Wang Guochang	王國昌
Wang Quan	王權

Wang Zhen	王震
Wang Zhiqi	王治岐
Wang Zhongjia	王仲甲
Wanghuaizhai	旺懷寨
Wanxi	皖系
Wei Guangtao	魏光燾
Wei Xizhou	魏錫周
Weihe	渭河
weisuo	衛所
weiwen	維穩
wenhua da gemin	文化大革命
wenshi ziliao	文史資料
wenshu	文書
Wenzhou	文州
Wu Jing'ao	吳景敖
Wu Peifu	吳佩孚
Wu Sangui	吳三桂
wuba nian zangmin panluan	五八年藏民叛亂
Wuduguan	武都關
wujuren	武舉人
Wulianghai	烏梁海
wuzu gonghe	五族共和
Xi'nanxiang	西南鄉
Xia Yutian	夏玉田
xian	縣
xiang	鄉
xianghuo di	香火地
xiangjun	湘軍
xiangzhang	鄉長
xiaotou	小頭
xiaotoumu	小頭目
Xiaoxing	小姓
Xiasi	下寺
xibei bianfang duban	西北邊防督辦
xibei junzheng zhangguan gongshu	西北軍政長官公署
Xibeijun	西北軍
xiefujiang	協副將
xiexiang	協餉
Xifan	西番
Xigu	西固
xijun	西軍
xinan junzheng zhangguan gongshu	西南軍政長官公署
Xinbao	新堡
Xincheng	新城

xingzheng duchaqu	行政督察區
Xingzhengyuan	行政院
Xining	西寧
xinjiao	新教
xinxianzhi	新縣制
xinxinjiao	新新教
xinzheng	新政
Xixia	西夏
Xu Shiying	許世英
Xu Wenxiu	徐文秀
Xu Xiangqian	徐向前
xuanchuanbu	宣傳部
Xuanzhengyuan	宣政院
Xue Jinwen	薛敬文
Xunhua ting	循化廳
yamen di	衙門地
Yan Changhuan	嚴長宦
Yan Xishan	閻錫山
Yan'an	延安
yanchang	煙場
Yang Buyun	楊步雲
Yang Changjun	楊昌濬
Yang Hucheng	楊虎城
Yang Jinghua	楊景華
Yang Jisheng	楊繼盛
Yang Kun	楊琨
yang laoye	洋老爺
Yang Mazhou	楊麻周
Yang Shenghua	楊生華
Yang Shijie	楊世傑
Yang Shijun	楊世俊
Yang Shijun	楊世俊
Yang tusi jiazu	楊土司家族
yang tusi jinianguan	楊土司紀念館
Yang Xiling	楊錫齡
Yang Yijuan	楊一雋
Yang Ying	楊英
Yang Yuebin	楊岳斌
Yang Zheng	楊政
yanglian yin	養廉銀
Yangsha	羊沙
Yangshaguan	羊沙關
Yanguan	鹽官
yanguan	煙館

yanjuan  
yanmu fajin  
yanyi  
Yao Bingyi  
yefan  
Yehuqiao  
Yeliguan  
yihui zhihui  
ying  
yinyuan  
yiwen  
yiyi zhiyi  
yizi  
yong  
Yongdeng  
youji siling  
Yu Shiyu  
Yu Youren  
Yuan Cai  
Yuan Shikai  
yuanfan  
Yue Zhongqi  
Zaitao  
zangzu  
zeiwo  
Zengqi  
Zhang Guangjian  
Zhang Guotao  
Zhang Mingqing  
Zhang Xueliang  
Zhang Yangwen  
Zhang Zhaojia  
Zhang Zuolin  
zhang'an  
Zhangxian  
Zhanqi-bao  
Zhao Erfeng  
Zhao Guifang  
Zhao Guozhang  
Zhao Longwen  
Zhao Weixi  
Zhao Xipin  
zhaofu  
zhaohui zhuyong

煙捐  
煙畝罰金  
演義  
姚秉義  
野番  
野狐橋  
冶力關  
以回制回  
營  
銀元  
藝文  
以夷制夷  
義子  
勇  
永登  
游擊司令  
于式玉  
于右任  
袁采  
袁世凱  
遠番  
岳鍾琪  
載濤  
藏族  
賊窩  
曾啟  
張廣建  
張國燾  
張明清  
張學良  
張仰文  
張兆鉅  
張作霖  
掌案  
漳縣  
張旗堡  
趙爾豐  
趙桂芳  
趙國璋  
趙龍文  
趙惟熙  
趙席聘  
招撫  
招回逐勇



zhen	鎮
zhenlong tianzi	真龍天子
zhenren	真人
zhenwujun	振武軍
zhifu	知府
zhihui qianshi	指揮僉事
zhizhou	知州
zhongguo	中國
zhonghua minzu	中華民族
zhongyang zhengzhi weiyuanhui	中央政治委員會
zhongyuan	中原
Zhou Kaixi	周開錫
Zhou Tiren	周體仁
Zhu De	朱德
Zhu Shaoliang	朱紹良
zhuang	莊
Zhuanglang	莊浪
Zhungaer	準噶爾
Zhuoni yamen	卓尼衙門
Zhuoni zangzu zizhiqu	卓尼藏族自治區
zhurenjia	主人家
ziwei tejuan	自衛特捐
zongdu	總督
zongqi	總旗
zu	族
zuo you chengxiang	左右丞相
Zuo Zongtang	左宗棠
zuoshao	左哨
zuzhibu	組織部

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