THE UPRISING AT BATANG: KHAMS AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN CHINESE AND TIBETAN HISTORY

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Introduction

In *The Records of the Establishment of Xikang Province*, Fu Songmu writes:

> In Guangxu 30 (1904), the Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet, Feng Quan, went from Sichuan to Tibet, and he made it as far as Batang.[122] He saw the soil there was rich and fertile, and immediately he recruited Han people to open up the land. But according to the barbarian peoples' superstition, they thought the mountain god should not be disturbed, so they went out and obstructed them. Feng Quan would not listen, and at Cililong he tilled a field.... Then all the troops Feng Quan had brought with him practiced foreign drilling techniques using foreign drum calls. The barbarian people wondered if they were foreign officials, and so they obstructed the tilling of the field with more force. The indigenous official (*tusi*) and *mkhan po* (*kanbu*, abbot) exhorted Feng Quan to enter Tibet quickly, and thereby avoid something from happening in Batang.[123] Feng Quan swore at them, and increasingly aroused the hatred of the barbarian people.
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> Thereupon the people of Qicungou plundered the field, killed the field manager, and then rose up and chased after Feng Quan. As for the Han troops, the few could not withstand the many, and they were killed.... The foreigner's church was moreover burnt down, and two Catholic missionaries were violently killed. Feng Quan escaped and entered the indigenous official's fort and negotiated peace with the barbarian people. The barbarian people deceitfully promised to [let] Feng Quan return to Sichuan. He led his retinue of soldiers and scholars and went east.... He traveled several *li*, but when he arrived at

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[122] Tibetan: 'Ba' thang.

[123] Upon the first appearance of Chinese official titles, the original Chinese will follow the English translation. When authors transliterate a Tibetan official title in Chinese characters, the original Tibetan will be given first, followed by the original Chinese transliteration, and then the English translation.

The primary indigenous official of Batang at this time was Luo Jinbao, also known as Zhaxi Jicun. The assistant indigenous official was Guozong Zhabao, also known as Zhaba Jicun.

> Yinggezui the barbarian people ambushed and attacked him.[124] The officials and soldiers died difficult deaths. Only Wu, the provisions officer, was spared because he had not yet gone. Among the soldiers and officials who had escaped, the barbarians protected all the virtuous ones.[125]

Through the critical examination of a variety of Chinese primary source materials like this one, in combination with a select number of secondary sources, I intend to accomplish two things in this paper. First, I will outline the political, cultural, social, and economic landscapes of the Khams region in the late nineteenth century. I will then trace several of the important changes these landscapes underwent in response to the events surrounding the 1905 uprising at Batang, the beginning of which is narrated above. Second, I will critique Western and Chinese historiography of Khams history during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In so doing, I will highlight the significance of Khams in Qing, Chinese, and Tibetan history.

The Cultural Nexus of Power in Batang

With the above narrative in mind, I want first to discuss the polity, broadly defined, of Khams civilization. The "cultural nexus of power," is a loosely defined concept that facilitates the abstract mapping of the political, cultural, social, and economic milieu of a region. It is fundamental to this discussion.[126] As an organizational category, "the cultural nexus serves as a framework that structures access to power and resources in local society. It also serves as the arena in which politics is contested and leadership developed in a society." The cultural nexus therefore allows one to analyze a region's "culture and legitimacy within the organizational context in which power is wielded."[127] In other words, the cultural nexus provides an organizational structure around which to identify fluctuating bodies of power across time. Discussion of these bodies in Batang and Khams in general will shed light on their positions in

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[124] 1 *li*=.576 km, or approximately .33 miles.

[125] Fu 1912:5. Also quoted in Wu 1937:46. Complete citations are found in the Bibliography.

[126] The cultural nexus of power was first outlined by Prasenjit Duara in his book on rural north China (1988). See pp.1-41 for an extended discussion of this concept.

[127] Duara 1988:15.

the cultural nexus prior to the uprising, their roles in the events surrounding the uprising, and how their positions within the cultural nexus of power changed following it.

There are four primary players within Batang's cultural nexus of power: indigenous leaders, monasteries and their representatives, representatives of the Qing empire, and merchants.

Before the nominal conquest of Khams by Qing armies in 1719 (Kangxi 58), Batang was administered by two *sde pa* (*diba*, indigenous leaders), the principal *sde pa* (*'Ba' sde pa*) and the assistant *sde pa* (*gnya ngan sde pa*).[128] Both of Batang's original *sde pa* were sent from central Tibet in 1703 (Kangxi 42).[129] Their primary responsibilities were to appoint local elite (*sku tshab*) to assist them in managing local granaries, to supervise the *'u lag* system of corvée labor, and to collect taxes to support themselves.[130] After the two original *sde pa* died of illness, Batang's indigenous leaders assumed their titles, later passing on these titles and the responsibilities accompanying them to their descendents. *Sde pa*, to the extent that powerful monastic officials did not encroach upon their position within the cultural nexus, ruled Batang independently as the secular elite of society.

Following his father's military conquests, the Yongzheng Emperor began expanding nominal Qing control in Khams. In 1728 (Yongzheng 6), representatives of the Qing empire arrived in Batang and granted seals and charters of investitures to Batang's current *sde pa*.[131] Zhaxi Pingcuo was granted the title Primary Mollification Commissioner (*zheng xuanwushi*), and Awang Renqing was granted the title Vice Mollification Commissioner (*fu xuanwushi*). In Chinese official discourse, *sde pa* became *tusi*, and Batang was thereby incorporated into the Qing imperial system. With their new titles, Batang's indigenous leaders were able to maintain their positions in the cultural nexus by drawing on the legitimizing power of their

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[128] Carrasco 1959:142. According to the *Dictionnaire Thibétain-Latin-Française* (p.384), the assistant *sde pa* in Batang had the family name Gnya ngan tshang. No other sources corroborate the Tibetan orthography.

[129] *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi*, p.35. See also Niu 1993:343. Indigenous leaders in other parts of Khams were sometimes known as *sde pa*, other times as *rgyal po*.

[130] Carrasco 1959:142-43.

[131] For a thorough discussion of the Yongzheng Emperor's efforts to incorporate Khams' indigenous leaders into the Qing empire, see Herman 1993.

status as both hereditary Tibetan *sde pa* and invested representatives of the Qing empire. Evincing this dual legitimacy, Batang's s*de pa* continued to carry out the activities they had undertaken before the arrival of Qing armies. Moreover, they began to monitor trade and collect taxes for the Qing empire. Significantly, Batang's *sde pa* received a salary for the services they rendered for the Qing empire.[132]

Monastic officials, as both individual actors and representatives of larger religious institutions, constitute the second group of players in Batang's cultural nexus of power. Their positions of power were based on a variety of factors. Religion was an important part of life for most Tibetans, and they looked to monasteries to support their everyday religious practice and instruction. With their central role in Tibetan religion, monasteries therefore maintained a unique source of ideological power in the cultural nexus. Monasteries in Khams also derived their power from their material wealth. Like indigenous leaders, most monastic officials in Khams collected taxes from the local population.[133] Many monasteries, including Dinglin Monastery outside Batang, also maintained vast estates with plentiful natural resources across large areas. Important markets for Sichuan tea, monasteries increased their financial and material wealth by engaging in trade and serving as distribution centers for smaller local markets. Monasteries also frequently loaned money to local people, thereby further increasing their resources and power in the cultural nexus.[134] As one late nineteenth century observer writes:

> The Lamas, keeping in their hands the retail...by this means reduce the people to absolute dependence upon them, exacting in return for the precious article (tea), labour and produce. Grain, yaks, sheep, horses, and even children, are given to the rapacious priesthood in return for tea.[135]

Finally, monasteries maintained military power. As we shall see shortly, monasteries did not hesitate to use this power to protect their exclusive interests. With access to and control over rich sources of ideological, financial, material, and military power in Khams, mon-

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[132] *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi*, p.35.

[133] See, for example, Cassinelli and Ekvall 1969:250.

[134] Tsering Thar 1995:981-85.

[135] Cooper (1871:409), as quoted in Gardella 1992:109-10.

asteries and their representatives maintained strong and influential voices in the cultural nexus.

Representatives of the Qing empire constitute the third and most diverse group of players in the cultural nexus of power in Batang. Mentioned above in the context of indigenous leaders, indigenous officials (*tusi*, indigenous leaders incorporated into the Qing administrative system) are the first manifestation of Qing representatives in the cultural nexus. As we have seen, in return for collecting taxes and monitoring trade for the Qing empire, these indigenous officials received a salary. Moreover, they used this imperially endowed authority to bolster their own legitimacy on the local level, and thereby strengthened their position within the cultural nexus. However, the granting of official titles and responsibilities to indigenous leaders in Khams does not necessarily mean that the Qing empire was able to exert direct influence through them. In his study of Qing expansionism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, John Herman argues that *sde pa* and *rgyal po* were forced to grant the Qing empire many concessions in return for receiving the empire's support. He suggests that estates were divided, Confucian schools were established, periodic tribute was demanded, and inheritance (including the inheritance of the *tusi* office itself) came to be regulated by the Qing empire in Khams.[136] However, careful examination of later historical records suggests that the imperial policies Herman discusses were not successful. For example, the omission of references to Confucian schools in late Qing local records from Khams indicates that such schools had not existed in Khams for a significant period of time, if at all. Moreover, the Qing empire not only frequently exempted Khams' indigenous officials from tribute missions, but they also provided their territories with annual subsidies.[137] Intermarriage and polygynous marriages within relatively small elite populations also allowed indigenous officials to thwart Confucian inheritance restrictions. Given these observations, as well as the fact that Ma Weiqi and Zhao Erfeng (discussed in depth below) encountered serious resistance from local Tibetans on their way from Dajianlu to Batang (supposedly the territory under greatest Qing control) in 1905 (Guangxu 31), we may conclude that while indigenous

[136] Herman 1993:15-109.

[137] Fu 1912:4. Also quoted in Wu 1937:45.

officials in Khams did use their status as Qing representatives to increase their personal power, Qing control over these officials and the territories they administered was extremely weak.

The second manifestation of Qing representatives in Khams is posted Qing officials. Rarely noted by scholars,[138] three Qing provisions officers (*liangtai*) were stationed in Khams beginning in 1748 (Qianlong 13). Under the High Commissioner in Lhasa (*zhu Zang dachen*), these officials were charged with supplying Qing soldiers stationed in Tibet and Khams with provisions and salaries.[139] One of these provisions officers was stationed in Batang, and several lower ranking officials were stationed with him on rotating three year terms to provide assistance. Posted with these officials were also a number of soldiers, whose presence increased the power of Qing officials in the cultural nexus.[140] It is important to note that these officials did not necessarily exploit their military supremacy in Batang. Different from often arrogant higher ranking officials and soldiers merely travelling through the region, these civil and military officials were stationed there for extended periods of time, and evidence suggests that at least some (but certainly not all) of them maintained amiable relations with local Tibetans. For example, by the early twentieth century, a class of people of mixed ethnic background resulting from intimate relations between Qing officials and local Tibetans had emerged not only in Batang, but also throughout Khams. Known as *lo tsā ba* or *a bu lags* in local Tibetan, *tongshi* in Chinese, such people served as interpreters for Qing officials stationed in the region.[141] The narrative of the uprising quoted in the introduction also evinces the amiable relations between Tibetans and posted Qing officials. Despite the murder of Assistant High Commissioner Feng Quan and most of the members of his retinue, the Batang Provisions Officer, Wu Xizhen, was spared.

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[138] Scholars often overlook the significance of Qing officials stationed in Khams. Ignoring their very presence, Adshead (1983:56) states, "Except for a few gold prospectors, Chinese trade...stopped at Dachienlu (Kangding); so did regular bureaucratic administration; and only diplomats and soldiers went beyond it, and then always in transit." Moreover, in his important article on early twentieth century Khams history, Sperling (1976) merely mentions the presence of Qing officials in Khams prior to the twentieth century, and does not discuss their significance.

[139] Hucker 1985:310.

[140] Wu 1937:45.

[141] Teichman 1922:147.

Merchants make up the final player in Batang's cultural nexus of power. While the longer but less demanding northern route supported most of the trade through the region, Batang, located on the shorter southern route, with its lower elevation, fertile soil, and temperate climate, was also an important trading post in the region.[142] Both local residents and itinerant entrepreneurs carried on trade in Batang, and their financial and material resources gave them influence in the cultural nexus of power. As early as the Yongzheng period, Chinese traders had established a sedentary presence in Batang. In 1727 (Yongzheng 5), Han merchants founded the Han Commercial Society (*Han shang gonghui*) to "manage business, offer financial assistance, and take care of societal affairs...[as well as] to provide relief for orphans and widows, help the poor, and support the weak."[143] This Society was still extant in the late nineteenth century. Following a devastating earthquake in 1874 (Tongzhi 13), it rebuilt the local Guandi temple and established a tri-provincial native place association (*sansheng tongxianghui*) in Batang.[144] Early twentieth-century western observers also note the presence of permanent Chinese settlers in other areas of Khams working as merchants. Teichman, for instance, writes about a community of Chinese merchants living in northern Ganzi who traded regularly with local Tibetans.[145]

Tea and salt made up the bulk of material traded in Khams. Because the value of tea rose twenty-fold between Dajianlu and Lhasa, *yin* permits for transporting and selling tea were in high demand. The provincial government was therefore able to sell the permits at high profits, and the Sichuan-Tibetan tea trade was an important source of revenue for provincial coffers. In the late nineteenth century, the sale of tea permits for export to Tibet accounted for two-thirds of the annual tea revenues for Sichuan province.[146] Salt tax revenues from Khams (which were administered in Batang) were another profitable source of income for the Qing government. Because of the large revenue they supplied the province, particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Qing government considered the success of the tea and salt trade very important. To facilitate this

[142] Guo 1996:71-77.
[143] *Batang xianzhi*, p.10.
[144] *Batang xianzhi*, p.11.
[145] Teichman 1922:77.
[146] Gardella 1992:107-10.

trade, the government worked hard to keep trade routes open in Khams and protect the merchants. With provincial backing and access to large profits from their trade, it is clear that merchants maintained significant influence in the cultural nexus of power.

With this background in mind, I will now turn to a discussion of a critical instance of unrest in Batang, the effects of which drastically altered the cultural nexus of power throughout Khams.

The Uprising at Batang

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, a series of events in Khams and Tibet compelled the Qing court to increase the empire's influence in the cultural nexus of power in Khams. The first of these events began in 1860 (Xianfeng 9). In that year Gompo Namgyal, an ambitious indigenous leader in Nyarong,[147] invaded several neighboring territories controlled by different indigenous leaders. Wanting to maintain stability in the region, the indigenous leaders of Derge and the Hor principalities appealed to both the Qing empire and Tibet for military assistance in expelling Gompo Namgyal from their territories and controlling his future behavior. The Qing empire was unable to offer any support at that time because their armies were preoccupied with the suppression of larger rebellions throughout China proper. The central Tibetan government in Lhasa, however, was able to provide assistance. In 1863 (Tongzhi 2), they sent in troops, and after two years of fighting their army defeated Gompo Namgyal. The central Tibetan government then appointed a resident commissioner to rule Nyarong and superintend Derge and the Hor principalities. Still focusing on their internal rebellions, the Qing court did not contest Lhasa's activities in Nyarong, and they quietly accepted the incorporation of these areas into the central Tibetan administrative system.[148]

In 1895 (Guangxu 21), indigenous leaders in Nyarong and the surrounding region rebelled against direct rule by Lhasa. They appealed to the Qing empire for support, and the Sichuan Governor-General, Lu Chuanlin, responded by sending soldiers to Nyarong who quickly

[147] Nyag rong. In Chinese, this principality is known as Zhandui, Sanzhan, and Jiaya. Gompo Namgyal's name is written in Chinese as Gongbu Lanjian.

[148] Teichman 1922:5; Shakabpa 1984:187.

pacified the region, thereby bringing Nyarong back under nominal Qing control. Lu Chuanlin, however, favored more than mere nominal control in Nyarong. Taking advantage of the empire's renewed strength in western Khams, he drafted an extensive proposal to bring the region under direct Qing administration by implementing *gaitu guiliu*, a process of administrative reform in which indigenous leaders were removed from their official positions and replaced with Qing civil and military officials.[149] Fearful of direct Qing influence in western Khams, the Lhasa government presented their objections to Lu's proposal to the Qing court, and the Guangxu emperor allowed Nyarong to return to the control of the Lhasa government. Lu's proposal had been rejected, but his authority had not. In 1903, he resigned as Governor-General and took a more influential position on the Qing Grand Council (*junji chu*). He did not forget his failure in Nyarong.

In 1904 (Guangxu 30), not long after the Nyarong affair, imperial policy in Khams was further complicated by the British invasion of Tibet. Hoping to facilitate negotiations between the British and the Tibetans for the withdrawal of British soldiers from Tibet, the Qing court dispatched You Tai as the new High Commissioner. Upon his arrival in Lhasa, You Tai attempted to persuade the Dalai Lama to negotiate with the British. The Dalai Lama, however, was unwilling to do so. You Tai then quickly sent a request to the newly appointed Sichuan Governor-General, Xi Liang, to dispatch 4,000 soldiers to Lhasa. He hoped the presence of these soldiers would press the Dalai Lama into negotiations with the British. Xi Liang, however, was strongly opposed to increasing the Qing military presence in Tibet, and he refused. Without further resources to bolster his bargaining position, You Tai was left with no choice but to grant concessions to the British.

The new British threat from the west and the lack of cooperation between Xi Liang and You Tai greatly angered the Qing Grand Council. In response the Grand Council, on the recommendation of its new member, Lu Chuanlin, began to advocate a more aggressive Tibet policy in late 1904. The Council first demanded Xi Liang work more closely with You Tai to strengthen their position in Tibet. Xi Liang therefore proposed to transfer the official residence of the As-

[149] Lu 1974.

sistant High Commissioner to Tibet (*zhu Zang banshi dachen*) from Lhasa to Chamdo. He hoped this action would restore social order in Khams and allow merchants to pass through the region uninterrupted. You Tai, however, took Xi Liang's proposal further:

> Litang and Batang were originally under the jurisdiction of Sichuan. The indigenous officials of these two areas are rather deferential and pliant. Already I have enlightened them with great principles, making these things known in order to glorify your righteousness. There are none that do not show their gratitude and respect. However, among those born and raised in the barbarian areas, it is not that there are none that have tyrannical and arrogant behavior. In the event there is a trifle, strife will flare up. If local officials were able to render substantial supervision, then peace would prevail and there would be no incidents. The monks in all the monasteries are proliferating, and the power of the *mkhan po* occasionally emerges from their midst. As for these monks, they exploit the people by stripping them, and they use all means to coerce the people. If debts are not repaid, then they resort to every form of search and repossession. Even when rogue barbarian Buddhists plunder and rob on the roads, if victims make an accusation to the authorities, the victimizers will in turn demand a *guili* (a kind of bribe).
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> Because the region of Jiaya forms the border between Batang and Chamdo (Chamuduo), cases of robbery number as many as the trees in a forest, and travelling merchants dare not go forward. My humble opinion is that these barbarian monks are all our people, and...so it is certainly not that our country's laws do not cover them. Moreover, as for the intervention of the monks in these areas, they have been rampant and without inhibition. If we do not force them into submission quickly, I fear suddenly the tail will begin to wag the dog, and putting things back in order will be more difficult.
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> I have consulted by letter with the acting Governor of Sichuan, Xi Liang, on this matter many times, and also with the Assistant High Commissioner Gui Lin. I propose to establish a substantial garrison in the Chamuduo area, and also to settle the stationing of a high official there, preparing provisions for emergencies, and drilling troops.... By living in the center he (the Assistant High Commissioner) can respond appropriately to problems. These are truly urgent matters, and your servant is working day and night...on them.[150]

Several points in this memorial suggest further reasons behind the Qing court's re-evaluation of its Tibet policy. You Tai criticizes not only the inability of indigenous officials to suppress ubiquitous brigandage in the region, but also the oppressive practices of monaster-

[150] You Tai, *Zouyi*, as quoted in Wu 1937:43.

ies. Fearing that further hesitation on the part of empire will allow conditions in Khams to escalate to uncontrollable levels, You Tai proposes to increase Qing presence in the region by stationing not only the Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet in Chamdo, but also a garrison of soldiers there.

In contrast to You Tai and the Grand Council, Xi Liang advocated a moderate policy toward Tibet. While he accepted the transfer of the Assistant High Commissioner's post to Chamdo, he remained strongly opposed to increasing Qing military presence in either Tibet or Khams. He therefore refused to provide the Assistant High Commissioner with a garrison of soldiers. Evincing a cultural sensitivity rare in the late Qing, Xi Liang also established a Tibetan school in Chengdu to teach Chinese officials Tibetan language, culture, and history. Xi Liang argued that "to govern barbarians, we must first conquer their hearts," and that "the important thing in frontier matters is to understand the native's mentality, and this can be done only through his written and spoken language."[151]

Despite Xi Liang's good intentions, the Qing court remained unsatisfied with his programs. The court's growing pressure ultimately convinced Xi Liang of the necessity for action, and he therefore initiated a series of reforms in Khams. Xi Liang reduced provincial taxes, laid the groundwork for a mining project, and established a small (two hundred *mou*) experimental project to develop agriculture, commerce, and mining in Batang.[152] However, still reluctant to increase Qing military presence in the region, he refused the Assistant High Commissioner Gui Lin's request for 10,000 soldiers to escort him to his new post in Chamdo. Complaining of an eye illness, Gui Lin resigned his position before embarking for Chamdo. The Emperor then tapped Feng Quan as Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet. Xi Liang provided him with an escort of only one hundred fifty policemen.[153]

Feng Quan was known for his aggressiveness, and his appointment to this position reveals the Qing court's desire to increase its influence in the cultural nexus of power in Khams. Upon receiving his appointment, Feng Quan immediately requested permission to

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[151] Xi 1959:490, no.452, and pp.651-52, no.581, as quoted in Des Forges 1973:72-80.

[152] Sperling 1976:12. 1 *mou*=.16 acres.

[153] Des Forges 1973:74.

recruit and train local irregulars in Khams. The Emperor responded, "Conscientiously train them. I earnestly hope that it will be effective."[154] Travelling through Khams en route to his new position in Chamdo, Feng Quan memorialized:

> The indigenous official of Litang is deficient. All day he does things by exploiting the barbarian people. Of ten houses, nine are empty. The monks are many and the people are few. In large monasteries, monks can number as many as 4,000-5,000. By these means they subjugate the indigenous officials and exploit the barbarian people. They have had this long-standing habit for too many years. Our garrisons and outposts are weak and meager. Civil and military officials [just] stare at each other, and no one dares to do anything. They (the monks) plunder as frequently as before, and half of them (the civil and military officials) consider the monastery to be a refuge for criminals. As a result, traveling merchants who come and go quarrel about giving bribes to monasteries for insurance. Even if [the local officials] catch a *jag pa* (*jiaba*, bandit), invariably the monks will receive a bribe and allow him to escape....
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> When your servant passed through Litang, I strictly ordered the indigenous officials and *mkhan po* to be just and to respect the laws. I also ordered them to investigate, purge, apprehend, and punish the *jag pa* severely. Moreover, I instructed the garrison commander, Zhang Shiyan, to recruit one hundred local braves from the indigenous officials to drill and aid our defenses....
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> But to eradicate totally the problems, we cannot do without setting limits on monasteries. If we do not do this, then harmful practices will proliferate, and I fear that taking care of affairs will be more difficult in the future. I request that the number of monks in large monasteries in indigenous official areas not be allowed to exceed three hundred, and that for a period of twenty years the tonsuring of monks be stopped. Hereafter, limits should be set on the number of monks, and no permission should be granted for the private registering of even one monk. As for monks who are under the age of thirteen, their families should be ordered to take custody of them, and they should return to the laity. I will not only strictly command the indigenous officials and *mkhan po* to take the monks of large monasteries and order them all to return to their native tribes, but I will also establish small monasteries to accommodate the remaining monks. By these means I will divide their power. I request that you set aside an order to the Lifanyuan (Ministry Ruling the Outer Provinces) to decide to implement these suggestions. If we employ these methods, then after twenty years the monks will decrease daily and the people will increase daily, so why

[154] *Dezong shilu*, as quoted in Wu 1937:44.

> would every family wander about and the monks be lazy? Now we can see that there will be land (in Khams) and people to work it.[155]

Fulfilling Feng Quan's request, the Emperor forwarded his proposal to the Lifanyuan for further consideration.

While local Tibetans were most likely unaware of Feng Quan's official memorials, they did witness his activities on the ground. En route to Chamdo, Feng Quan stopped in Batang. Here he quickly punished alleged bandits and treated the principal indigenous official, Luo Jinbao, with disrespect. On his own initiative Feng Quan also expanded Xi Liang's modest land reclamation project in Batang to 50,000 *mou*, granted a tract of land to the French Catholic mission in Batang, and encouraged Han migration to the fertile valley surrounding the village. Finally, he recruited two hundred local Tibetan men to serve in his army, training them in western field techniques. Angered by Feng Quan's radical actions, the monks of Dinglin Monastery led a crowd of monks and Batang residents numbering almost 3,600 to Feng Quan's compound, where they attacked him and his retinue.[156] The passage from *The Records of the Establishment of Xikang Province* quoted in the introduction picks up the narrative here, and it is not necessary to repeat it again. It is sufficient to state that Feng Quan had so disturbed the cultural nexus that the people of Batang rose up and killed him and his retinue, thereby marking the critical point in this uprising.

The rapid suppression of this uprising was crucial for Xi Liang and the Qing empire. Located mid-way on the southern road between Dajianlu and Lhasa, Batang was an important base from which Qing officials kept this route open for official travel and communication, as well as for trade. Xi Liang knew that if he lost control of Batang and the southern road then the province would lose substantial profits from the sale of tea permits and revenues from salt taxes. Because the Qing government (itself suffering a severe financial crisis) had recently begun requiring provincial governors like Xi Liang to support their provinces without national revenue, Xi Liang was extremely concerned about the effects of instability in Khams on provincial finances. He writes:

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[155] Zhu 1958:5307, Doc.28. Also quoted in Wu 1937:44.

[156] You Tai, *Zougao*, as quoted in Wu 1937:47.

> By burning churches and killing officials, the lamas (of Batang) have committed great crimes.... We must extend the command of Heaven in order to suppress the rebellion and restore order.... The finances of Szechwan are in bad straits, but we must increase our troops in order to maintain control.[157]

Xi Liang knew he could not afford to lose revenues from trade going through Khams, and he therefore compromised his policy of moderation by dispatching Ma Weiqi and Zhao Erfeng with 4,000 troops to quell the unrest at Batang.

Writing from the Khams frontier in 1905 (Guangxu 31), Commander-in-Chief Ma Weiqi and his second in command Zhao Erfeng sent the following telegram to Xi Liang:

> On the eighteenth day of this month, I (Ma Weiqi) went to Sanba and seized a spy who reported: 'The Songlin pass has rebels, and a ramparted fort under guard.' Thereupon...the general (Zhao) led his troops forward, and when he arrived he did not see any trace of the rebels. The captured local people said, 'Several days ago, there was a head lama who had been sent from Batang, and at this place he provoked and assembled the common people. The ramparted fort was well guarded, but upon seeing the great armies coming forward, no one was willing to fight. So the night before they dispersed on their own.'
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> On the twenty-second day at daybreak, the general's troops advanced forward, and upon arriving at the top of the great Shuo Mountain, we saw there were many rebels and spies, whom we followed closely, sought, and attacked up to the fourth bell of the afternoon. Then we ran away to Chamu, and it happened that the bandits made a furious assault. We were unable to withstand the rebel's strength, so we retreated to Little Bachong.... Consequently we chose from each camp two hundred vigorous soldiers and irregulars, and divided them into two flanks. The first [flank]... searched and then advanced as far as the southeast Duoban Mountain, and they saw the bandits in the process of cacophonously transporting trees and boulders. They were preparing to cut off our approach. It came about that our troops painfully routed and dispersed them. The larger army passed through at the foot of the mountain as far as Reshuitang, and then the bandits ambushed over 1,000 of our soldiers. They came swarming like bees.... Ma Ruxian...established a line of resistance against the rebels, [and]...Li Kechang blew them up with a large cannon. They attacked the bandits with abandon. At that time our two armies in the mountains had already seized the bandits, and their strength became disorganized....

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[157] Xi 1959:477-79, no.443, as quoted in Des Forges 1973:77.

> On the twenty-sixth day of this month we entered Batang. Li Kechang entered first to take care of the walled fort, and to take prisoner the indigenous official Luo Jinbao.... The military lieutenant Zhu...captured the assistant indigenous official Guozong Zhabao. That night, there were rumbling sounds of explosions in the four mountains, and by daybreak we knew there were bandits still remaining. They had retreated and hidden in Dinglin Monastery. They resisted and would not communicate.
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> The said monastery is located several *li* west from the walled fort, and at one time it had packed earthen walls as hard as the outer wall of a city surrounding it. We attacked it, but we could not advance. We used the cannon to bomb it, and its great halls went up in flames. Subsequently, by these means it fell into ruins and was destroyed.
>
> The recently captured ringleader is Lama Bage. The remaining bandits ran off to Qicungou. Immediately we sent soldiers hastily to chase after them.... On the one hand, we have searched the mountains and cleaned them of remaining bandits. On the other hand, we have proclaimed amnesty for the rebels and those who have fled.... In general, the schemers of disorder, the rebellious plotters, and the ringleaders have been recently captured, and therefore we report this up to the Emperor.[158]

This first-hand account of the military suppression of the uprising at Batang confirms many of the ideas addressed in my discussion of the cultural nexus of power in Batang. Most important, a division of power clearly existed between monastic officials and indigenous leaders. It is not insignificant that it was a head lama, presumably representing the monks of Dinglin Monastery, and not one of the indigenous leaders who had at least nominal relations with the Qing government, who attempted to meet Qing troops outside Batang and stop them from advancing. Although not specifically mentioned in the passage above, it is also important to note the following. When the Qing army did arrive, the indigenous officials Luo Jinbao and Guozong Zhabao attempted to mediate between the army and the Dinglin monks, who had taken refuge in the monastery along with many other Batang residents. Despite their good intentions to negotiate a return to stability in the region, both indigenous officials were arrested immediately by the Qing army and eventually executed. The quick arrest of Batang's two indigenous officials, in combination with the strong resistance offered by the monks of Dinglin Monastery to the Qing armies, suggests that the monastery had access to

[158] Wu 1984:14-15.

considerably more material, and perhaps military, resources than the indigenous officials. We may therefore conclude that, at least in terms of wealth and military might, Dinglin Monastery overshadowed the indigenous officials in Batang's cultural nexus of power.

This account also challenges the assertion presented by other scholars that the Qing empire successfully broke up large estates and divided power among indigenous leaders in Khams by controlling inheritance rights.[159] In contrast, the above passage offers no indication that Batang's two indigenous officials maintained distinct rights or responsibilities. The fact that they, like Batang's original *sde pa* two centuries earlier, were brothers suggests that early Qing attempts to reduce the influence of indigenous leaders in Khams were largely unsuccessful.

Ma Weiqi and Zhao Erfeng pacified Batang in only four months, but other areas quickly rose up against Qing administration and paralyzed the southern road between Dajianlu and Batang. The Qing court therefore ordered Xi Liang to develop a larger plan to guarantee security in the region. Xi Liang's first action was to command Zhao Erfeng to begin preparations to station a large garrison of soldiers in Batang.

Zhao Erfeng responded with strong military force, using his Mauser guns and foreign cannon to kill more monks, and he effectively cleansed Batang of all resistance. However, resistance to the Qing armies still remained in Khams. Both Zhao and Xi Liang knew that neighboring monks, particularly monks from Sangpi monastery in Xiangcheng, had supported, if not outright fought along with, the monks in Batang throughout their struggle. After bringing Batang under his control, Zhao therefore requested permission to lead his armies south to Xiangcheng on a punitive mission. However, Xi Liang was still hesitant to use excessive military force, and he initially refused. Instead, he attempted to negotiate directly with the Xiangcheng monks in hopes of reaching a compromise. His efforts soon failed. Realizing what was required to bring peace to Khams, Xi Liang wrote, "The policy of managing barbarians by humbling one's self to conquer their hearts only nourishes an abscess and encourages rebellion."[160] With this change of heart, the precarious balancing act

[159] Herman (1993:15-109) presents such an argument.

[160] Xi 1959:470-71, no.438, as quoted in Des Forges 1973:78-79.

that the Qing empire had maintained in Khams since the Yongzheng era collapsed, and a policy of sustained direct involvement in the region began. The cultural nexus of power in Khams was forever changed.

After a long-fought battle in Xiangcheng, Zhao Erfeng defeated the monks of Sangpi monastery and restored order to the region. Following this military triumph, the Qing court in 1906 (Guangxu 32), appointed Zhao Erfeng Border Commissioner for Sichuan and Yunnan (*duban Chuan Tian bianwu dachen*), a newly created position charged with managing land reclamation and military training in Khams and northern Yunnan. The creation of this position, and Zhao's appointment to it, is further evidence of the empire's desire to increase its presence in the cultural nexus of power. Zhao quickly became the most important figure in Qing administration of Khams. Departing from Xi Liang's moderate policies, he radicalized Qing policy in Khams and Tibet from his new position. With the right to memorialize directly to the Emperor, he proposed that the Border Commissioner be allowed to establish offices, open mines, direct trade, and establish Chinese schools to teach Chinese language and Confucian morality to Tibetans throughout Khams. He also immediately instituted *gaitu guiliu* in Batang and Litang, promulgated a series of regulations designed to bring Tibetan customs more in line with Chinese Confucian values, and (at least publicly) promoted Han immigration into Khams.[161] The Qing court approved Zhao's programs, including his proposed annual budget of over two million taels, again clearly showing that the court wanted to strengthen its influence in Khams' cultural nexus of power.

Because of Xi Liang's reluctance to pursue an aggressive policy toward Tibet, he was removed from his position as Sichuan Governor-General in 1907 (Guangxu 33). Maintaining his position as Border Commissioner, Zhao Erfeng was appointed interim Governor-General, during which time he allowed foreign missionaries to penetrate further into Khams, engaged Chinese and foreign advisors to develop schools, mines, and agricultural projects, and established more district magistracies in the region. When his younger brother, Zhao Erxun, took office as permanent Governor-General of Sichuan in 1908 (Guangxu 34), Zhao Erfeng was appointed High Commis-

[161] Sperling 1976:19-22; Adshead 1983:82.

sioner to Tibet, a position he held concurrently with the position of Border Commissioner until 1909. Zhao soon departed with his army to assume his new position in Lhasa, but a succession struggle in Derge and a series of other events during his journey allowed him to remove from power all the remaining indigenous leaders in Khams (including Nyarong). By 1910 (Xuantong 2), Zhao had effectively brought the entire area under direct Chinese administration.[162] In his own words:

> Humbly I've found that as for the indigenous tribes beyond the pass, historically your Excellency used the indigenous official system to divide them up and rule them. Now at the beginning of the dynasty, this system was still tolerably successful. However, since Zhandui (Nyarong) was incorporated into Tibet (1865), the authority and power of the barbarian officials has advanced and pressed their neighboring dependencies. These officials forcibly oppress others, and they are troublesome and cruel. The people have difficulty making a living. Because the roads are obstructed, Sichuan is far, and there are no people to manage things, each and every one of the indigenous officials relies on Tibetan barbarians to be his sovereign. We have already lost our authority to manage things.
>
> In the last few years, they blatantly incited evil acts. The monks in Taining, a small monastery, killed one local official and drove out the Han people. In Litang there were private feuds, and they resisted Han jurisdiction. In Batang, they actually dared to kill the High Commissioner. The Tibetan barbarians totally disregard the laws of the dynasty, and they are certainly making trouble on the frontier. Fortunately, I've been supported by Heavenly strength, and I have cleaned away the chief rebels. In order to make manifest the punishments of Heaven, I put them to death. I also took advantage of the situation and reincorporated Zhandui, instituted administrative reform (*gaitu guiliu*), and established Han officials [in the region] to avoid future calamities.[163]

After bringing all of Khams under direct Qing control, Zhao continued his march to Lhasa. The Dalai Lama fled to India, and the Qing empire for the first time in history had direct control over central Tibet. However, Zhao's interests rested in Khams, not central Tibet. After restoring order in Lhasa, he returned to Khams and continued to develop the region aggressively. He began by implementing *gaitu*

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[162] See Sperling 1976:24-30, for a narrative of Zhao's military activities in Khams from 1908 to 1911.

[163] Wu 1984:21.

guiliu in the entire region. Then, to legitimize the new magistracies he had established, he proposed new names for each of them and increased the number of soldiers garrisoned there. Moreover, he reformed the salt administration in the region, established a provincial treasury in Batang, drew up contracts with foreign companies to build bridges and explore mining operations in Khams, built a "modern-type" school in Batang, and planned for others to be built in Markham, Nyarong, and Chamdo.[164] The Qing court approved all of Zhao's actions and proposals.

Zhao Erfeng drastically altered the cultural nexus of power in Khams. By successfully implementing *gaitu guiliu*, often accomplished with the use of military force as in the case of Batang, he effectively dismantled the traditional Qing ruling system in Khams. *Sde pa* and *rgyal po*, if they were still living, were no longer tusi, and the resulting loss of this source of legitimacy disempowered them and their descendents in the cultural nexus. In the resulting power vacuum, monasteries, even those damaged by Zhao's military activities, were able to increase substantially their ideological and socio-economic influence in the cultural nexus of power. Qing civil and military officials were stationed in place of the indigenous leaders, but as an obvious unwelcome foreign presence their influence within the cultural nexus was tenuous at best. Nevertheless, we must not overlook the fact that the mere presence of such a large number of newcomers drastically increased demands on the region's limited resources of food, fuel, housing, labor, and transportation, demands which inevitably altered the cultural nexus as well. Also, although Zhao's efforts to promote permanent Han migration to Khams failed, he did lay a foundation that allowed the region to be opened up to further trade. As a result, Han merchants and entrepreneurs willing to conduct business in the region were able to increase their influence and power in the cultural nexus.

The balance of power formerly shared by indigenous leaders, monasteries, representatives of the Qing empire, and merchants in the cultural nexus had disintegrated by the end of the Qing dynasty, and a new system of order had emerged in its place. Indigenous leaders were now non-existent, Qing representatives were no longer welcome, and monasteries and merchants had substantially greater influ-

[164] Adshead 1983:86-89.

ence. However, we must not overlook the fact that the Qing empire collapsed in 1911. In the years immediately following the fall of the Qing empire, Khams, like much of western and southwestern China, suffered from lawlessness and banditry. Many of the Qing soldiers stationed in the region either left their posts or joined forces with warlords. Zhao Erfeng himself was murdered in 1911, and many of his achievements were undone. His yet to be implemented proposals were largely abandoned. As a result of the collapse of the Qing empire, the people of Khams witnessed yet another wave of radical fluctuations in the cultural nexus of power. Mapping these fluctuations, however, demands a separate study.

Khams in Chinese Notions of Modernity and Nationalism

The study of the events surrounding the uprising at Batang, as well as Khams history in general, sheds new light on our understandings of Chinese modernity and nationalism. Regarding modernity, historians often portray officials of the late Qing dynasty as conservative actors either opposed to modernization, or unable to modernize successfully. Zhao Erfeng, in contrast, was no such official. Characteristic institutions of modernity appear throughout Zhao's actions in Khams.

Zhao Erfeng's actions in Khams were driven by an ideology of imperialism, and this ideology was fundamentally modern. The fact that Zhao compared his actions in Khams with the imperialist projects of the British in Australia, the French in Madagascar, the Americans in the Philippines, and the Japanese in Hokkaido[165] reveals the modernity of his imperialist ideology. These were the very same nations whose modern ideologies and technologies had allowed them to humiliate, conquer, and colonize not only other lands, but Qing China as well in Zhao's lifetime.

Several other activities reveal Zhao's modern ideology of imperialism. When local Tibetans refused to provide labor for construction of a telegraph line in Litang, Zhao did not co-opt the *'u lag* system of corvée labor as was commonly done by Qing civil and military officials. Rather, he entered into a contract with the indigenous official

[165] Sperling 1976:23.

in which the Qing government unprecedentedly *paid* for local labor. Zhao writes:

> I...have made a preliminary agreement with one of the indigenous officials. The *'u lag* (*wula*) which the common people will provide is to be treated as chartered by the government, and between each station the wage to be issued is forty cents. All are very pleased to do so. With this very method, *'u lag* will not result in trouble in the future.[166]

To promote trade, Zhao also established the Border Tea Limited Liability Company (*Biancha gufen youxian gongsi*) in 1908. In classic imperialist style, this *guandu shangban* (official supervision and merchant company) was designed to "modernize the tea trade and insure China's continued monopoly."[167] As I have mentioned above, Zhao moreover initiated several modern projects to build bridges, increase agricultural production, develop mines, and establish schools in Khams. Many of these projects were abandoned following the collapse of the Qing empire, but Zhao's modern schools remained. While the positive effects of these schools are debatable (their primary purpose was to teach Chinese language to Tibetans), we should not overlook the fact that several important Tibetan intellectuals and political figures, including Phuntsog Wangyal, emerged from Batang and other areas of Khams in the 1930s.[168]

It is also important to note that Zhao frequently used modern technology to implement his programs. Preparing to depart for Batang in 1905, Zhao begins his first telegram to Xi Liang by discussing the progress of telegraph construction in the region. He suggests that completion of a modern telegraph line from Dajianlu to Batang is a fundamental part of his mission, and he completes the line successfully. This telegraph line greatly facilitated Zhao's later plans to build bridges, open mines, construct modern schools, and promote trade in the region. We have also seen that Zhao utilized modern technology, *e.g.*, Mauser guns and cannons, to bring Batang and the rest of Khams under direct imperial administration. Finally, Zhao had had his soldiers trained in modern western field techniques, which no doubt facilitated their military success in the region.

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[166] Wu 1984:14.

[167] Gardella 1992:111.

[168] For more information on Phuntsog Wangyal, see Barnett 1999:16 and Stoddard 1985:82-84. Special thanks to Robert Barnett for making these references available to me.

While much of Qing China struggled with the forces of modernity in the late nineteenth century, Zhao Erfeng's activities in Khams show that the Qing empire not only accepted various institutions of modernity, but also actively employed them to their own advantage. Although many of his programs either were never implemented or were abandoned with the collapse of the Qing empire, through *gaitu guiliu* Zhao did succeed in developing and laying the foundation for modern imperialist institutions in Khams that were later built upon by the Republican and Communist governments.

The uprising at Batang and the events surrounding it also play a significant role in Chinese nationalism. The British invasion of Tibet in 1904 greatly influenced nascent feelings of nationalism in the early twentieth century Qing empire. Not wanting to face another national humiliation, the Qing court, acting first through Xi Liang and then through Zhao Erfeng, began to adopt a more aggressive Tibet policy. I have shown how this shift in policy directly contributed to the uprising in Batang. This uprising, in turn, ultimately allowed Zhao Erfeng to solidify Qing control in Khams and central Tibet by removing all of Khams' indigenous leaders from power and successfully implementing *gaitu guiliu* throughout the region. Flexing the empire's nationalist muscle, Zhao was able "to convert the British invasion of Tibet into a Chinese nationalist triumph" in less than six years.[169]

The failed Simla Conference in 1914 also reveals the importance of Batang in the development of Chinese nationalism. In tripartite discussions to define more clearly the relationship of Tibet vis-à-vis China, the status of Batang was a major sticking point. Given Batang's relatively strong Chinese (Han) presence since the Yongzheng era and the fact that Batang had undergone *gaitu guiliu*, Chinese representatives steadfastly held that Batang was part of Sichuan province, and not merely part of "Inner Tibet" as the British contended.[170] Effectively used to resist what was perceived to be potential foreign encroachment on Chinese territory, Batang as early as 1914 had become a symbol of an emerging Chinese nation.

Most important in terms of nationalism, the events surrounding the uprising at Batang brought Tibet into contemporary Chinese con-

[169] Des Forges 1973:81.
[170] Teichman 1922:45-46.

sciousness. While Tibet was previously absent from Chinese popular discourse, discussions of Zhao's success in Khams became part of a growing movement of public culture in early twentieth century China. Book-length publications such as Fu Songmu's *Xikang jiansheng ji*, Xie Bin's *Xizang wenti*, and Mei Xinru's *Xikang* offered heretofore unavailable information on Tibetan history and culture. The popular bimonthly magazine *Yugong* even dedicated an entire issue to the problems of Tibet and Xikang in 1937. Evincing a growing interest in border areas, study societies were also established during the Republican period to better understand Khams and its culture, now more accessible thanks to Zhao's implementation of *gaitu guiliu*. Moreover, the formal incorporation of Khams into the Qing administrative system by 1910 facilitated the later establishment of Xikang Province in 1939, an event which further bolstered Chinese nationalism in the Republican period.

Interestingly, some Chinese scholars realized the significance of the uprising at Batang in terms of China's emerging national identity in the early twentieth century. Wu Fengpei, who went on to become the most prolific and learned twentieth century Chinese scholar of Tibetan history, wrote prophetically in 1937, "Although the time did not exceed several months before the unrest and trouble at Batang was pacified, Tibetan affairs from this point have been difficult to mend."[171] Zhao Erfeng's efforts in the waning years of the Qing dynasty clearly have had long-lasting effects on both Tibetans and Chinese.

Conclusion

Cassinelli and Ekvall state, "Eastern Tibet had a reputation for political instability and governmental impotence."[172] In this paper I have argued, in contrast, that an identifiable cultural nexus of power existed in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Khams. It is precisely in the interaction between the four primary players in the cultural nexus—indigenous leaders, monasteries and their representatives, representatives of the Qing empire, and merchants, that Khams' unique sense of socio-economic order can be discerned. Al-

[171] Wu 1937:43.

[172] Cassinelli and Ekvall 1969:362.

though Khams was rarely at peace from the early seventeenth to the late nineteenth century, it had successfully maintained a delicate balance in its cultural nexus. However, following the uprising at Batang, this balance was lost forever. Indigenous leaders were removed from the nexus as viable participants, and monasteries subsequently increased their power. The stationing of large numbers of Qing soldiers in the region also altered the nexus in terms of both heightened ethnic tension and increased demands on the region's resources. Finally, merchant influence in the cultural nexus of power increased in the wake of Zhao's activities in Khams. The cultural nexus of power is clearly an important component in the process of understanding Khams history.

In this paper I have also discussed the importance of Khams in western and Chinese understandings of modernity and nationalism in early twentieth century China. I have shown: one, that the late Qing empire effectively employed institutions of modernity to its own advantage; and two, that the events surrounding the uprising at Batang greatly strengthened China's feelings of nationalism in the early twentieth century. Critical analysis of the uprising at Batang therefore demands that we rethink our understandings of the Qing empire, China, and Tibet, both then and now.

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