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L'émergence des Cinq États Hor du nord du Kham. Religion et politique aux frontières sino-tibétaines

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# The rise of the Five Hor States of Northern Kham. Religion and politics in the Sino-Tibetan borderlands

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Irina Garri

## Introduction

- One of the distinct characteristics of Tibetan political culture has been the close relationship between the religious and the secular (Cüppers 2004; Ruegg 2004; Ishihama 2004). Understanding Tibetan society as a religious one has been and still remains the foundation of understanding Tibetan national identity. Central Tibet was ruled by "religious law" (Tib. chos srid zung 'brel), personified by the Dalai Lama and his government, and in most of the Kham polities the secular rulers and the monastic institutions shared authority over the local population. Scott Relyea describes this mode of rule in Kham as a bifurcated structure of authority, which "frustrated attempts by both the Lhasa and Beijing governments to assert their unquestioned control over a myriad polities in the borderlands between Sichuan and Tibet" (Relyea 2015, p. 1).
- The present article examines this "bifurcated system" of religion and politics in the Sino-Tibetan borderlands in its historical perspective, by taking the example of the Five Hor States: Drango, Trehor, Khangsar, Mazur, and Beri¹. These states constituted a traditional political formation in Kham, a territory that today belongs to the counties of Kandze (Chin. Ganzi), Drango (Chin. Luhuo), and Tau (Chin. Daofu) of the Kandze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, located in Sichuan Province's fertile valleys in the middle reaches of the Yalong river and its main tributary, the Zhe-chu.



Figure 1. Five Hor States and environs

- © Garri, 2020, based on Ryavec 2015, p. 150
- A good concise description of this land is provided by the British consul Eric Teichman, who visited the region in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: "This valley plain, usually called by the Tibetans Horko (valley of the Hor) [...] is the largest tract of level cultivated land in the whole of Eastern Tibet. The elevation is a little over 11 000 feet. The Yalung river winds through the middle of it, and farms, hamlets, and monasteries are thickly dotted about. The inhabitants are prosperous and wealthy, being engaged in the lucrative Chinese-Tibetan tea trade, as well as in agriculture" (Teichman 1921, p. 75).
- In the complex patchwork of Kham's historical polities, the Five Hor States occupied a particular place. The people who inhabited them have generally been considered to be Tibetans. However, they themselves claimed a separate ethnic and regional identity, as they considered themselves also to have been descendants of Mongols, a claim people in this region still uphold today. In the Hor States secular rulers enjoyed indisputable authority over the population, but the power of the mighty thirteen Hor Gelug monasteries was no less strong, as they took part in all local affairs and conflicts as independent competing centres of power. It was this bifurcated structure of authority that allowed the secular rulers and the monasteries to achieve a balance between Lhasa and Beijing and thereby to safeguard their interests and almost independent rule over their subjects for nearly 260 years up to the collapse of the Qing Empire in 1911.
- The history of the Hor States has been poorly investigated in Tibetan and Chinese Studies. Only recent research on various aspects of the Sino-Tibetan borderland (Kessler 1984; Coleman 2006, 2014; Peng Wenbin 2006; Dai 2009; Nietupsky 2011; Hayes 2013; Wang Xiuyu 2013; Oidtmann 2014; Sullivan 2013; Relyea 2015; Spengen & Lama Jabb 2009; Yudru Tsomu 2014, 2018) has revealed Kham's historical complexity. None of

these works, however, is specifically dedicated to the Hor States and there are only occasional mentions of events or aspects connected with the region. My primary aim is therefore to present the particularities of the Hor region in a historical perspective and in the context of religion and politics, the interplay of which I consider to be the main factor in the persistence of the Kham political systems.

- Sources about the history of the Hor States are sparse. Although classical Tibetan histories in English and Russian translations (Tucci 1971; Pubaev 1991; Karmay 2014a) do not contain any information about the Hor States, they are useful for reconstructing the early period of the Hor history. The principal Tibetan source that I use is a recent work on the history of the Hor monastery Nyitso written by its former abbot dPal 'byor phun tshogs (2002). The main Chinese materials which I use are a series of fieldwork reports carried out in Kham in the 1950s and published in the 1980s (Zangchuan fojiao siyuan ziliao xuanbian, Zhou Xiyin & Ran Guangrong 1989; Sichuan sheng Ganzizhou Zangzu shehui lishi diaocha, Dong Zhongqi 1985; Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou gaikuang, Unknown 1986; Jindai Kangqu dang'an ziliao xuanbian, Unknown 1990). Very reliable firsthand information about the Hor States may be found in the accounts of the first European travellers to the region. The most important for the present study are the works of William Rockhill (1891), Pyotr Kozlov (1906) and the aforementioned Eric Teichman (1921).
- Sources on the Hor States assert that the Hor originated from the Chinggisid Mongols. Wylie, however, has shown that traditional Tibetan historiography is not accurate in regard to the Mongolian conquest of Tibet (Wylie 1977). For example, the stories of the Tibetan leaders' submission to Chinggis Khan and of the alleged patron-priest relations between the latter and the Sakyapa turned out to be a later fabrication with no historical foundation. Further recent findings by scholars show that the first Mongolian-Tibetan interrelations had not been of a purely religious character, as Tibetan historiographies produced centuries after these events suggest, and that also the Tangut kingdom of Xi Xia had played an important role in it (Sperling 1987; Dunnel 1992; Haw 2014; Atwood 2014). On the basis of these recent findings, the first section of the article analyzes the origin of the Five Hor States particularly with regard to their supposed connection with Chinggisid Mongols in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.
- In the second section I discuss the rise of the Hor States in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, which began after the conquest of Tibet by Gushri Khan. The rise of the Fifth Dalai Lama's power and his connection with Gushri Khan were crucial for the history of Kham and especially for the Hor States, as they together led to their rise. I also show why and how the Hor clan has played a very important role in the dissemination of the Gelug order in Kham.
- Along with the establishment of the Dalai Lama's state in Central Tibet in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, a new power rose in China: the Manchus. The complex Manchu-Mongolian-Tibetan relations in Kham are still relatively unexplored, not to mention those of the Manchu with the Hor States. Though source materials on this subject are yet to be fully sought and analyzed, the third section of this article will present a historical trajectory of the Hor States during the Qing period against the backdrop of Tibetan history.
- Finally, in the fourth section, I describe the situation in the Hor States at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century mainly using Russian explorer Pyotr Kozlov's firsthand report. While the famous work of Rockhill is widely acknowledged in Tibetan Studies, Kozlov's report on

the small expedition led by the Buryat cossack Tsokto Badmazhapov to this remote place in Eastern Tibet is still little known in Western academia.

In conclusion, I argue that the Hor region of Northern Kham constituted a strong and unique polity with a high level of autonomy for more than two-and-a-half centuries up to the collapse of the Qing Empire in 1911.

# Mongols and the origin of the Hor clan in the 13<sup>th</sup> century

- According to local tradition, the founder of the Hor clan of Northern Kham was a Mongolian prince or minister or even a son of the Sechen Khan, that is, of Khubilai Khan. Slightly different variations of this story can be found elsewhere: in the "History of the Nyitso gonpa" by Peljor Phuntsog (dPal 'byor phun tshogs 2002), the histories of the Drango and Dargye monasteries², academic publications (Zhou Xiyin & Ran Guangrong 1989; Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou gaikuang, Unknown 1986; Ran Guanrong 1994), and publications on the internet³.
- The story goes like this: the nephew and disciple of Sakya Pandita, Phagpa Lama, passed through Kandze when he was traveling to the court of Khubilai Khan's at the latter's invitation. On his way, while bestowing initiations on the local population, he noticed a place looking like a precious mandala in the middle of a picturesque valley. Today it is the site of Hanrensi (monastery for Chinese)<sup>4</sup>. He told Khubilai Khan about it and advised him to build a Dharmapala temple at this location. Khubilai was very delighted to hear this and sent his minister or, according to other versions, a prince, Hor Seweng by name, to found a monastery there. After arriving at the site and beginning with the construction, the prince met a beautiful local girl. The young couple fell in love, and the girl soon became pregnant. The prince, however, had to leave, but before his departure he entrusted the girl to care of the local chief<sup>5</sup>. He left him a pair of Mongolian boots with the request that, if the child were a boy, to give them to him. The girl duly gave birth to a boy, whom the locals named Hor Masambu (Tib. Hor ma bsam bu, meaning "unexpected child of a Mongol"<sup>6</sup>.
- 14 Can anything in this story be historically verified? Let us first examine the word Hor. According to the Bod raya tshiq mdzod chen mo, "[t]he term Hor before the Great Yuan denoted the Uigurs, during the Yuan the Mongols, after that the Tuyuhun from Asha, and now it denotes the nomads of the north of Tibet and the Hor people of the Kokonor's north-east" (Zhang Yisun 1996, p. 3071). George Roerich, who stayed five months among the Horpas of the West (Tib. Nub Hor)7, writes in his Trails to Inmost Asia: "In reality, the name belongs only to the district of Jya-de, northeast of the Tengri-nor, and west of the Amdo tsho-nak. In Tibetan historical annals, the name "Hor" or "Jya-Hor" commonly designates tribes of Mongol or central Asian origin, which since the 8th to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. continuously overran Tibet and especially the northeastern border" (Roerich 1967, p. 39). Rolf Stein writes in his Tibetan Civilization that "in the ninth century, the remnants of the Tibetan army sent against the Bhata Hor (Uighurs) of Kanchow turned into nomadic tribes" (Stein 1972, p. 31). He further adds that "racial names add to the confusion. The name 'Hor' was given at first to the Uighurs, found in Kanchow about 800 A.D. The modern nomadic Horpas of the West (Nup Hor) may still bear their name. But 'Hor' was later used for the Mongols of Genghiz Khan, and it is

from these that the five principalities of Kham (around Kandze and Beri) claim their descent" (Stein 1972, p. 34).

The views of Roerich and Stein are useful for the explanation of the origin of the two Hor peoples, the Horpas of the West and the Hor of Northern Kham<sup>8</sup>. The former are a nomadic people with a Bon background, while the latter are agriculturalists and Buddhists. The former have their name from the ancient Turks of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, while the latter from the Mongols of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The term "Hor" in both their names denotes their "discernable foreign origin" (Stein 1972, p. 19). Rockhill, for example, described them as being of a "Red Indian" type<sup>9</sup>. Both the Horpas of the West and the Hor of Northern Kham claim to be descendants of the Mongols and share two apparently un-"Tibetan" characteristics with regard to their material culture: "the sets of menhirs and tombs arranged in stone circles; and the 'animal style' in the decoration of metal objects" (Stein 1972, p. 34). Besides these features, these two peoples have yet very little in common.

Let us now turn our attention exclusively to the Hor of Northern Kham. It may well be that their origin can be traced back to the 13th century. After the disintegration of the Tibetan Empire in the 9th century, the Sino-Tibetan borderland became fragmented and Kham was most likely a region consisting of small states, pastoralist tribes, and selfgoverning villages (Samuel 1993, p. 68). In regard to the origin of the Hor clans, Gama Jiangcheng and Zeren Dengzhu (1999, p. 42) write, without providing any evidence, that the word Hor is a Tibetan modification of the Chinese word han in the notion da han (Chin. 大汗), which can be understood as "great khan", and it is this explanation of the term that is widely used in the internet resources<sup>10</sup>. Although this explanation appears to be erroneous, there is a rational grain in it, since da han can also be understood as tar qan or dar khan - a high rank in the Mongolian army, equivalent to a commander or a general. In Tibetan sources a commander of the Mongolian troops, who led military operations in Central Tibet, named Dor ta (Pagsam Jonsang 1991, p. 35) or Dar han thas ci tor ta (Hor chos byung, cit. Wylie 1977, p. 110), or Doorda Darkhan (Howorth 1876, p. 505), is mentioned. In the "Pagsam Jonsang", chronological tables of the history of Tibet authored by the Amdo scholar Sumpa Khenpo Yeshe Peljor (1704-1788), is written that "in the year of the iron mouse (1240) the troops of the Mongol Dorta (Dor-ta) invaded Central Tibet, killed five hundred Sakya monks such as Serton and others and burned [the temples] Raden (Rwa-sgreng) and Gyal-lhakhang" (Pagsam Jonsang 1991, p. 78). This Dorta, whom Sumpa Khenpo elsewhere also calls Dorta the Black (Dor ta nag po), was a general of prince Köden. Wylie believes that this expedition of 1240 was the first military conflict between the two peoples (Wylie 1977, p. 106).

17 Certain very interesting findings made by Stephen Haw in the Yuan Shi confirm Köden's action in Tibet, since it is recorded that Li Hulanji followed Köden in attacking "the southern valleys of Tibet [Xifan]", in 1241<sup>11</sup>. There are two names in the Yuan Shi, which, according to Haw, may be applied to Doorda Darkhan. One is Daidaer, and another is Tahai Ganbu. Daidaer was a commander of Möngke Khan's "Mongol and Han Army of Sichuan and Other Places" in the 1230s. Tahai attacked Sichuan together with Köden in 1235. Haw suggests that Doorda may have been a Tibetan or Tangut general, who had formerly been in the service of the Xi Xia state, but was later enlisted by the Mongols to lead their campaign in Tibet in the 1240s (Haw 2014, p. 46). Christopher Atwood supports Haw's suggestion, and believes that the Mongols were well aware of the Amdo Tibetans through their links to the Tangut Xi Xia kingdom and later

identified them as the Central Tibetans (Atwood 2014, p. 41). In the 1250s the Mongols launched more serious attacks and subjugated Tibet. In 1252, according to the chronological tables of Sumpa Khenpo, the Mongol Möngke won over the Tibetan commander Monkhar Gonbo, and in 1253 Phagpa and prince Khubilai established "patron-priest" (Tib. *mchod yon*) relations; the Sakya obtained control over the thirteen districts of Tibet, and in 1254 the Mongolian Khan sent troops to Gara-Gyan-yul (Pagsam-Jonsang 1991, p. 80).

From all this information it may be concluded that a reconnaissance party of the Mongols under the command of the Doorda Darkhan has indeed operated in Kham in the 1240s. He may have been a Mongol, but he was most probably a Tangut recruited by the Mongolian army after the fall of the Xi Xia kingdom in 1227, who later became a general of the *keshigten* army of Khubilai Khan. During the raids in Sichuan the army came into contact with aboriginal peoples, and it may well be that the Mongolian prince Hor Seweng in our sources was Doorda Darkhan himself or another commander of the Mongolian troops.

The hypothesis of a (partial) Mongolian origin of the people of the Five Hor States is also supported by remarks of scholars concerning the language of the Hor people. For example, Stein writes, "[...] from a few Mongol words such as the title *tarqan* their speech is related to the aboriginal language of Kinchwan" (Stein 1972, p. 34). Gyurme Dorje notes in regard to the people of Tawu (former Hor Trehor state) that they "speak an extremely idiosyncratic dialect or language, [hence] may well be descended from the migrant Minyak (Xixia) population, following the destruction of their kingdom by Genghiz Qan in the 13<sup>th</sup> century" (Gyurme Dorje 2009, p. 637). Thus, we can see that words such as *Hor* and *tarqan* clearly confirm the Mongolian roots of the Hor people of Northern Kham, whereas such confirmation cannot be found for the Horpas of the West.

20 As for the story of the construction of the Buddhist temple in Kandze on the recommendation of Phagpa Lama, it is very difficult to find any historical link between the Hor clan of Northern Kham and Phagpa Lama during the Sakya period (late 13<sup>th</sup> to mid 14<sup>th</sup> centuries). There were some Sakya estates in Gonjo and Lingtsang in Western Kham (Petech 1988; Samuel 1993) and there was a Sakya monastery in Derge (Hartley 1997). Yet, the Nyarong valley, as the valley of the Yalong river is called too, was a stronghold of the Bon and Nyingma traditions (Gyurme Dorje 2009, p. 637). All available sources (dPal 'byor phun tshogs 2002, Zhou Xiying & Ran Guangrong 1989) indicate that before the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Hor region was a place of powerful Bonpo priests. It is well known that the principal opponent of Gushri Khan was the pro-Bon king of Beri, a principality that later became one of the Five Hor States, and there are still many Bon monasteries in the former Hor region nowadays<sup>12</sup>. Since there is no evidence of any Sakya influence in the region before the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the story about the founding of monasteries by Phagpa Lama in the Nyarong valley seems to be a later, probably quite recent, fabrication.

# The Mongolian-Tibetan-Manchu interplay and the rise of the Five Hor States in the 17<sup>th</sup> century

From the available sources we know the names of the successors of Hor Masambu (Tib. Ma bsam bu), enabling us to reconstruct the lineage across eight generations. The

first six of them were (1) Hor Ma bsam bu, (2) Hor Nag 'ja', (3) A rgyas, (4) 'Bum dge rgyas, (5) Bla ma skyabs, (6) Nam mkha' blo bzang. The latter had two sons: (7) Hor Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan and (7) Nam mkha' Od zer, between whom he divided his land into two parts. Hor Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan had three wives and six sons. The elder wife gave birth to (8) dBang lu and (8) Ngag dbang phun tshogs, the middle wife to (8) dBang po and (8) mKhan po Sa skyong Ngag dbang dpal bzang, and the junior wife to (8) 'Od chung and (8) Blo bzang bstan 'dzin (dPal 'byor phun tshogs 2002, p. 8). Under dBang lu the territory of the Hor clan was expanded to the borders of the contemporary counties of Ganzi, Luohuo and Daofu (Gama Jiangcheng & Zeren Dengzhu 1999, p. 43). dBang lu divided the land between his five sons, who founded separate clans. This way the Five Hor States – Hor Kangsar (Chin. Kongsa), Hor Mazur (Chin. Mashu), Hor Drango (Chin. Zhanggu), Hor Trehor (Chin. Zhuwo), Hor Beri (Chin. Baili) – ruled by their chieftains (Tib. pönpo), came into being in the north of Kham (Gama Jiangcheng & Zeren Dengzhu 1999, p. 43).

- A peculiarity of the Five Hor States, noticed by the visitors to the region, was their overlapping territories. The five chieftains had authority over individual families rather than territorial units, so that families belonging to them lived scattered throughout the whole region (Rockhill 1891, p. 253; Teichman 1922, pp. 71-72). The word Hor was added to the names of all chieftains as the indication of their Mongol origin.
- 23 As can be seen in the aforementioned genealogy, the five Hor clans arose from its eighth generation. At the beginning of the 17th century, two kinsmen of that generation, Wanglu (Tib. dBanglu) and his brother Ngawang Phuntsog (Tib. Ngag dbang phun tshogs), became particularly important (Gama Jiangcheng & Zeren Dengzhu 1999, p. 43; dPal 'byor phun tshogs 2002, p. 8). The former became the first chieftain of Mashu, while the latter became the disciple of the Fifth Dalai Lama and the founder of the thirteen Hor Gelug monasteries. About Ngawang Phuntsog information can be found in the autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (1617-1682), according to which, in the 10th month of 1653, the Dalai Lama gave him initiations to the Bla ma mchod pa, Rig byed ma'i mngon rtogs and Vajra Vidarana rnam joms ljang sngon thabs in Amdo during his triumphant return from Beijing from a meeting with the Manchu emperor and other initiations in the 9th month of 1654 in Lhasa (Karmay 2014a, pp. 454-455). After receiving the initiations from the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1654, Ngawang Phuntsog went to Kham, where he in 1655, with the support of the Derge king, founded the first Gelug monastery – Gonsar – in the north of Kham and became its first incarnate lama (Tib. trulku), and then began to build more monasteries, thirteen of them altogether<sup>13</sup>.
- In the time before Wanglu and Ngawang Phuntsog the power of the clans of Mongolian descent seems to have been very limited. The most powerful among the local Kham rulers of that time was the king of Beri, a staunch adherent of Bon, ally of the king of Tsang, and enemy of the Gelug order. His domain was located between the contemporary counties Derge and Kandze, but after he defeated the kingdom of Lingtsang, he also seized vast territories up to the contemporary counties Dengke and Shiqu in the west and to Daofu in the east (Wang Kaidui 2010, pp. 38-39), thus land of the Hor clan came under his control. Yet, in 1639 the leader of the Khoshot Mongols, Gushri Khan, a zealous supporter of the Fifth Dalai Lama, invaded Kham, defeated the

Beri king and conquered all of Kham (Shakabpa 1984, pp. 104-112; Kolmaš 1967, pp. 31-32). It was this background that facilitated the subsequent rise of the Hor clan.

25 The Hor States, as being strong supporters of the Fifth Dalai Lama and Gushri Khan, played a major role in the diffusion of the Gelugpa into Kham. Prior to the mid-17th century, the Nyarong valley was a stronghold of the Nyingma and Bon traditions, while the plains to the north were that of the Sakya and Kagyupa (Gyurme Dorje 2009, p. 637). The only center of the Gelug order in Kham to the east of Drichu was the monastery of Litang founded by the Third Dalai Lama in 1580, which however suffered heavily under the invasion of the Beri king (Shakabpa 1984, p. 103; Wang Kaidui 2010, p. 39). The arrival of Gushri Khan, the suppression of the Beri king, and the emergence of the Hor States drastically changed the situation. The construction of thirteen Gelug monasteries by Ngawang Phuntsog and the destruction and forced transformation of the Bon and Kagyu monasteries into such of the Gelug order led to the subsequent dissemination of the Gelugpa in all of Kham. As labeled by Scott Relyea, a "bifurcated structure of authority" (Relyea 2015) arose in the Hor region. It successfully thwarted the efforts of both Lhasa and Beijing to exert authority over the region. This merger of the secular authority of the Hor clan with the spiritual power of the Gelugpa facilitated the rise of the very specific type of polity of the Five Hor States in the north of Kham.

Initially, the Mongolian factor played a big role in this process. First, it may well have been the Mongol roots of Ngawang Phuntshog that let the Fifth Dalai Lama and Gushri Khan entrust him with the entrenchment of their influence in Kham. Secondly, the sources indicate that the invasion of Kham by Gushri Khan was accompanied by the resettlement of Mongolian and Amdo tribes in Kham (Wang Kaidui 2010, p. 40; Anonymous 2016). During the following centuries these Mongolian migrants were gradually assimilated by the local Tibetan population. When the Russian expedition of colonel Pyotr Kozlov traveled to the region in 1900, it found people in Northern Kham people who still remembered their Mongolian roots, but the language was lost everywhere (Kozlov 1906, p. 421). Many scholars noted such processes of Tibetanisation of autochthonous and alien ethnic groups in the Sino-Tibetan borderland, so that, as Geoffrey Samuel asserts, "[i]t may be that much of the present-day Tibetan population of K'am results from similar processes of Tibetanization since the 7th century or earlier" (Samuel 1993, p. 85)14. Regardless of whether Minyak or Mongols, early Uighur or ancient Indo-European Yuezhi, it is quite clear that the "foreign" origin of the inhabitants of the Hor region can only be understood by taking population movements into account.

In conclusion, it was in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century that the crucial events for the formation of the Hor identity took place, such as the rise of the Hor clan and some of its members becoming the secular leaders of the local population, the formation of the Five Hor States, and the adoption of the Tibetan Buddhism of the Gelug order.

# The Hor States and the Qing (1644-1911)

While Ngawang Phuntsog and his brother Wanglu were establishing the religious and secular authority of the Hor clan, a new formidable political force rose in the arena of Inner Asia - the Manchu, who, in 1644, founded the Qing dynasty. In the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Manchu were not much involved in internal Tibetan politics, but

paid great attention to Tibetan Buddhism and its hierarchs. Thus, for Kham in general, the first eighty years after Gushri Khan's invasion were a relatively peaceful time and the Hor States, in particular, were able to strengthen their position and that of the Gelugpa in Kham. This state of affairs however ended in the early 18th century, when Central Tibet was invaded by the Zunghar Mongols<sup>15</sup>. The Manchu Emperor dispatched two armies to assist the Tibetans - one advancing through Sichuan, the other through Gansu. In 1720 the armies entered Lhasa and enthroned the Seventh Dalai Lama and appointed a Qing imperial resident (Man. amban), thereby weakening the Tibetan government. The Qing further diminished Lhasa's influence by reducing its control in Kham. A garrison of Chinese soldiers were left in Lhasa, while small detachments of troops were stationed in Kham along the Lhasa-Chamdo-Batang-Dajianlu road. In 1727 the Qing erected a pillar stele at the Bum La mountain pass and, as Teichman writes, "[t]he country to the west of this point was handed over to the rule of the Dalai Lama under suzerainty of the Manchu Emperor, while the Tibetan Chiefs of the States and tribes to the east of it were given seals as semi-independent feudatories of China" (Teichman 1921, p. 2). In this way, the Hor States fell nominally to the side of the Qing.

Since that time, the region was considered to be under the control of the Qing. The emperor invested the lay rulers, including the Hor chieftains, with tusi titles 16. However, as many scholars' research shows, granting of the hereditary headmen or chieftains titles did not necessarily mean that the Qing were able to exert a real control over the indigenous leaders (Ryosuke 2014, p. 200; Yudru Tsomu 2014, p. 28; Relyea 2015, p. 17). At the best, only a loose control was exercised by small garrisons along the official road, but could not be expanded to remote areas, such as the Hor region. There, to the east of the stele, the Tibetan government continued to exert its spiritual influence, because the Hor region, along with Litang, was a stronghold of the Gelugpa in Kham<sup>17</sup>. The Central Tibetan monasteries appointed abbots to the Hor monasteries, while the Hor monks studied in the Gelugpa monasteries in Lhasa. Lhasa's control was, however, limited to the spiritual sphere. Over time, both Lhasa's and Beijing's tenuous influences waned, while the bifurcated secular and spiritual power of the rulers of the Hor States and their monasteries became stronger. It seems that the second advance of a Qing army into Central Tibet to assist the Tibetans in expelling the Nepalese forces in 1792 did not influence Kham at all. The relatively peaceful state of affairs 18 continued there up to the 1860s, when the leader of Nyarong, Gonpo Namgyal, in the southwest of the country, destroyed the balance of power in Kham by attacking and invading neighboring territories, including the Derge kingdom and the Five Hor States (Tashi Tsering 1985; Yudru Tsomu 2014).

The leaders of Derge and the five Hor States appealed to both the Qing and the Tibetan governments for assistance. As the former was preoccupied with the Taiping rebellion and was in no position to help, the latter sent an army and suppressed Gonpo Namgyal in 1863. The administration of Nyarong was then taken over by the Lhasa government, which appointed a high commissioner to govern Nyarong and also to superintend the affairs of Derge and the Five Hor States. This was done not only without any objections from the Qing, but was even Emperor Tongzhi's own will (Tsomu 2014, pp. 222-224). Thus, at this time, Derge and the Hor States were considered to be under Lhasa's control. According to Scott Relyea, the king of Derge and the rulers of the five Hor States even voluntarily submitted a bond swearing their allegiance to the Lhasa government (Relyea 2015, p. 18). However, these developments did not lead to Lhasa

having exclusive authority over the region, as these rulers did not renounce the hereditary headmen or chieftains titles that the Qing had bestowed on them.

Moreover, from about 1885 onwards, Chinese military posts were installed on the northern road from Dartsedo (Dajianlu) to Jyekundo in the towns of Kata, Tawu and Kandze (the last two belonging to the Hor States) in addition to the already existing three on the southern route in Lithang, Bathang and Nagchuka (Rockhill 1891, p. 221). This was done under the pretext of helping conflicting parties in the Hor States to resolve an internal dispute, but in reality in order "to stop the turbulence of the lamas, who continually attacked the Chinese" (Rockhill 1891, p. 254). The designated governor of Sichuan, Taotai Qing Shan, executed two leaders of this disorder in the Hor monastery of Drango, and after that the Chinese remained unmolested. However, according to Rockhill, the offices of the established posts did not have any authority over the native chiefs, as their duty was confined to just protecting and administering Chinese trade, forwarding government officials, and monitoring conditions in the country (Rockhill 1891, p. 221).

So, we can see that towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Hor States, notwithstanding their formal subservience to Lhasa and the presence of Chinese military posts, were a highly autonomous polity, ruled by their secular leaders and their monasteries in accordance with their local interests.

Towards the end of the Qing reign, the policy of indirect control of Kham was replaced by one of direct administration (Chin. *gaitu guiliu*<sup>19</sup>), and the later viceroy General Zhao Erfeng crossed the Tibetan lands with fire and sword. The Hor States for the most part avoided the fate of the other Kham polities, whose monasteries were leveled to the ground and their defenders executed. Zhao Erfeng left the Hor region for the end of his enterprise and subordinated it only in August 1911, after finishing the Lhasa campaign. In February 1912, however, the Qing Empire collapsed, taking with it its cruel viceroy, killed by revolutionaries in the same year. Yet, in Eastern Tibet there began a new era of fierce struggle by the Tibetan polities for their independence.

# Expedition of Tsokto Badmazhapov to the Hor States in 1900

- From the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards foreign explorers began to penetrate into Kham. In 1889 the American diplomat William Woodville Rockhill visited the Hor States, and in 1900 a small group of members of Petr Kozlov's expedition under the command of Tsokto Badmazhapov did so too<sup>20</sup>. Although this visit was very short, it revealed, due to a dramatic sequence of events, a very vivid picture of the life in this remote part of Eastern Tibet. So let us examine this enterprise in more detail.
- The expedition of Kozlov lasted three years from 1899 to 1901 and went through the Mongolian Altai, the Central Gobi, Tsaidam, and Eastern Tibet<sup>21</sup>.
- of Kozlov's adventures in Eastern Tibet. He had passports from the Xining administration for his movements in the territory under its jurisdiction, but nothing for the travel further south. Kozlov therefore applied for permission to the Lhasa authorities, but a categorical prohibition to cross the border under the death penalty came to him as a reply, while he was in the Nangchen kingdom (Kozlov 1906, p. 400).

Nevertheless, Kozlov decided to proceed to Chamdo. On October 28, 1900, when the Tibetans stopped his advance for the second time and demanded that he turn back, Kozlov ordered his men to open fire, because "Tibetans tossed stones" and "viciously laughed". In this battle twenty-three Tibetans were killed and seventeen wounded, with no casualties on the Russian side. Kozlov described this incident as follows:

It became very clear with whom we are dealing now: the inhabitants unexpectedly rose against us, a mere handful of Russians in the depths of Tibet, unexpectedly, instigated by the lamas of numerous monasteries, but mainly of those of Chamdo and its highest representative Pagpalha. In a great hurry we successfully managed to put our caravan together and, taking up our positions, to clear our way. Quick guns, much better than any of the Chinese passports, secured the best outcome for us. The Tibetans rushed to escape [...]. (Kozlov 1906, pp. 403-404<sup>22</sup>)

Finally, however, Kozlov was forced to retreat after a meeting with Da-lama, a representative of the local Tibetan administration.



Figure 2. Dadai, Badmazhapov, and Da-lama with his attendant

© Pyotr Kozlov, 1906

The expedition then spent three winter months in the kingdom of Lhatok. It is not difficult to imagine what a stir was caused by the armed Russian expedition in the region. Seeing the extreme hostility of the locals and the impossibility of his plans to advance, Kozlov decided to go back, but this time through the kingdom of Ling, which took him by a different route from the one by which he had come. One unexpected circumstance allowed him, however, to undertake one more adventure – a visit to the Hor town of Kandze. On March 11, 1901, the Dalai Lama's envoys Jamyin Sherab Usur and Dhondub Chunden arrived, with a large retinue, at Kozlov's camp.

Figure 3. The Dalai Lama's envoys

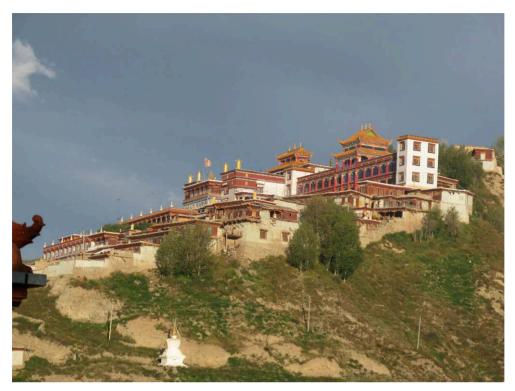


© Pyotr Kozlov, 1906

- According to Kozlov, the envoys first made sure that they were dealing with Russians and not with the British, and then apologised that the Dalai Lama was not allowing Kozlov to go to Lhasa because of "ancient Tibetan traditions". In addition to this conciliatory statement, they provided Kozlov with two Tibetan officials from their entourage for a visit of the Hor town of Kandze.
- This surprising turn of events was, most likely, connected with the activity of Agvan Dorjiev, the counselor of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. Dorjiev was a Buryat-Mongol from Russia and one of the protagonists in the so-called Great Game between Great Britain and Russia in Tibet. Only in September 1899 he had returned to Lhasa from his long journey to China, Russia, France, and other European countries. In his autobiography, Dorjiev wrote that after his tour the Dalai Lama elevated him to the third official grade and to a senior khambo rank<sup>23</sup>, and that at that time the Dalai Lama and many Tibetan ministers began to incline toward Russia (Dorjiev 2005, p. 39). It is not surprising, therefore, that the envoys were well-disposed to the expedition's translators Tsokto Badmazhapov, a Buryat cossack, and Dadai, a Tsaidam Mongol, after learning who they were and from where they came. After they came to know about Kozlov's plan to go to the Hor town Kandze, the envoys advised him to send only these Mongolian members of his expedition, in order to secure the success of this undertaking. It did not help, however, as we will see. Taking all these moments into consideration, Kozlov sent to Kandze Badmazhapov and two Tsaidam Mongols, Dadai and Chagdur, accompanied by two Tibetan officials from the envoys' entourage, according to Kozlov - and a Lhasa "khondo" and a Derge "tonkor"24. The pretexts for the expedition were the delivery of a message to Russia through Chinese officials and the replenishment of food supplies.

Kozlov supposed that the visit would last approximately two weeks. However, the party returned on the fifth or sixth day, without having stayed in Kandze for even one night.

Figure 4. Kandze monastery



© Irina Garri, 2008

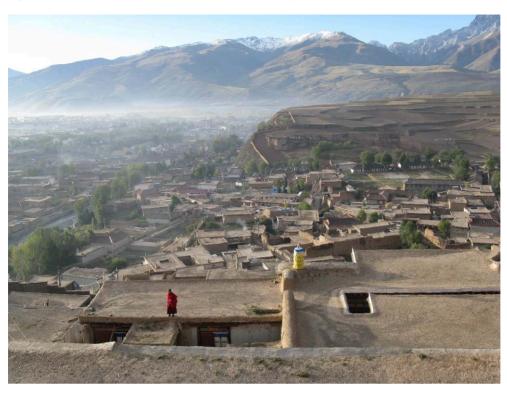


Figure 5. Kandze town, view from the top of the monastery

© Irina Garri, 2008

- Here is a concise account of this adventure as rendered by Kozlov, according to Badmazhapov's report to him:
- "On the last day of the passing month of March, a colorful and elegant party led by Badmazhapov moved to Hor Kandze", wrote Kozlov (1906, p. 513). On the third day the party reached the town and Badmazhapov sent their Lhasan companion to inform the local authorities about their arrival and to find lodgings. After a while Badmazhapov's party entered the town too. Very soon they saw their Lhasan "khondo". He was very confused and said: "It is very bad. A decision has been made not to let us into the town". Badmazhapov, trying to find a solution, decided to stay at the house of one Lhasan lama-official. Coming to the house, he left his companions outside and entered the house with Dadai and two Tibetans. After greetings he asked the lama for assistance. It appeared, however, that the entire population of the town had already been mobilised against their presence in town. The lama explained that neither the authorities nor he could deal with the mob, which demanded the expulsion of the Russians from the town. Nevertheless, the lama agreed to assist. He said that he would ask a Chinese official for help with finding lodging for the party either in the Chinese governmental office (Chin. yamen), or in the lama's own house. Then, after asking them to wait for him for a while, the Lhasan left. Outside they heard a dreadful noise, and Dadai and one of the Tibetans left to check their caravan. Immediately after that, a crowd of people with swords rushed into the house and filled all the space around it as well and demanded their departure, threatening them with violence if they did not obey. Badmazhapov, with the help of the Lhasan khondo, who spoke a little Mongolian, tried to explain to the mob that he has passports from the Chinese emperor and from

the Lhasa authorities. But, according to Kozlov (or Badmazhapov?), from the first row of the crowd he heard this startling reply:

Your passports mean nothing to us. We spit on the Dalai Lama and do not want to know him, since he himself did not let you enter Lhasa and also prohibits us from doing so, but at the same time is sending *pilins* [foreigners] to us accompanied by his people. We despise Bogdy Khan even more. He gives *pilins* passports, but himself runs away from them by foot from the capital to Xianfu. Traitors are they, both the Dalai Lama and the Bogdy Khan, and we once again spit on them and throw ashes in their eyes. You immediately get out, if you want to stay alive, otherwise you will be severed! (Kozlov 1906, p. 520)

- Badmazhapov waited in vain for the lama, who, as it turned out afterwards, could not squeeze through the crowd. Finally, unable to withstand the threats and danger any more, he decided to leave. Raising a revolver and threatening to fire, he struggled out of the house. At the gate he saw Dadai, Chagdur, the Lhasan lama, his guides and the beaten Derge khondo with "faces blackened with horror". When Badmazhapov appeared with his revolver, the mob retreated for a while, and the party, taking advantage of the moment, jumped on their horses and rushed out of town, stones and curses following them. "All, with the happy exception of Badmazhapov, were beaten; the Derge khondo suffered most of all, he was severely beaten while Badmazhapov was in the house; the unfortunate man was beaten mercilessly and dragged along the ground by grabbing his long hair; and in the end they took away his sword and the shawl which he used to tie around his head" (Kozlov 1906, p. 522).
- Thus, ended this risky enterprise. On the way back Badmazhapov gathered information on the situation in the Hor States, but as it is mostly similar to Rockhill's account, we will not dwell on it here. This episode of a short, but dramatic visit to Kandze by Badmazhapov and his fellows provides a brief, yet revealing, glimpse into life in this remote part of the Sino-Tibetan borderland at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- "Both Qing and Central Tibet's control over Kham was indirect and nominal. The various kingdoms of Kham were highly autonomous and events in the region were mainly controlled by local interests", writes the Tibet scholar Yudru Tsomu (2014, p. 30). It is difficult to disagree with this opinion; the episode of Badmazhapov's visit clearly confirms its validity.

# Conclusion

To sum up, we can see that in the conglomerate of the various political entities of Kham the Five Hor States constituted a unique polity. Population movements, in particular the settlement of new groups among older ones, were clearly responsible for its formation and "foreign origin" is discernable in them. The endonym *Hor*, the word *tarqan*, and the spoken dialect may well imply that the Hor people descended from intermarriages between the local population and members of Mongolian troops of supposedly Tangut Xi Xia origin in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century. The establishment of *Hor-ko* as a polity of five states, in its turn, was connected with the Khoshot Mongols of Gushri Khan in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In that time period the crucial events for the formation of Hor identity took place: the rise of the Hor to becoming the leading clan, from which the secular leaders of the local population came, and the adoption of the Tibetan Buddhism of the Gelug order. In the course of the following centuries the Mongolian influence gradually faded and the Hor people largely adopted Tibetan

culture. The bifurcated system of authority, in which the secular rulers of five clans and the religious leaders of thirteen monasteries together exerted power over the population, matured in the Hor States' successful efforts to prevent both Lhasa and Beijing from exerting their authority over the region. It was, however, also the favorable geographical position of the Hor States, off the main route from Beijing to Lhasa, which allowed them to remain largely unaffected by the turmoil of the Sino-Tibetan confrontation during the Qing period. All these factors facilitated the rise of the Hor States to a very strong polity, and ensured them a high level of autonomy for more than 250 years up to the collapse of the Qing Empire in 1911. When the first foreigners appeared there at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Hor States were a country characterised by a very distinct culture, the particular features of which comprised a close intertwining of secular and religious power, a warlike population, prosperous agriculture, material wealth, and remarkable architecture.

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#### NOTES

- 1. Following the tradition in Tibetan Studies, I label the Hor polity of northern Kham as a group of states (Rockhill 1891; Teichman 1921; Yudru Tsomu 2014): Drango (Chin. Zhanggu), Khangsar (Chin. Kangsa, Kongsa), Mazur (Chin. Mashu), Trehor (Chin. Zhuwo), Beri (Chin. Baili).
- 2. As cited in Gama Jiangcheng & Zeren Dengzhu 1999.
- 3. Anonymous 2016; Anonymous, no date.
- **4.** Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou gaikuang (Unknown 1986, p. 41) notes that the monastery has a Chinese name, because it was built with court treasury funds, and that Phagpa Lama personally founded it
- 5. It is reported in the Menggu houdai zai Zangqu Kangbei Zangqu Huoer yuanlai shi zheme laide (Anonymous 2016) that according to the Bon source "Benjiao yuanyuan mingjing jizai" (Clear

mirror of the origin of Bon) he was called Zhawangjin or Zhadun and built twenty Bon monasteries. Peljor Phuntsog, on his part, mentions a Bon priest named Yundrung Gyaltsen (dPal 'byor phuntshogs 2002, p. 5).

- 6. Menggu houdai (Anonymous 2016) adds that the chief told the girl: "Last year, Hor Seweng left boots and a carpet. That means: sitting on a horse, rule the laity; and sitting on the carpet: rule the monks. Your son is of the Hor blood, and in the future the Hor tribe will rule the area and gain political and religious power over the Tibetan regions in the north of Kham. I want to give all the territory under my rule to your son". Afterwards Zhawangjin allegedly told his family: "This pure and beautiful land will become a holy place of Buddhism under the rule of the Hor clan, but not a base of the Bon. That is why I will leave Ganzi as soon as possible for the Bon monastery of Zhading gingsi".
- 7. The Horpas of the West, or the Thirty nine Hor Tribes, are another Hor community, different from the Five Hor States. Samten Karmay wrote in his article about these people that they also claim to originate from the Chingissid lineage, and in particular from that of Thog Temur (1329-1332), the 9<sup>th</sup> emperor of the Yuan dynasty (Karmay 2014b, pp. 184-185).
- 8. There is also another explanation. At the Tibetan Studies conference in Beijing 2016, I asked Chinese scholars in informal conversations about the etymology of the word *Hor*, and one Tibetan scholar from Lhasa suggested that the word may be a loan word deriving from the Chinese word *hu* (胡), which designates the northern barbarians. However, the whole issue needs further careful investigation.
- **9.** William Rockhill, for example, noted that the Hor people of northern Kham often have "aquiline noses, hazel eyes, and curly or wavy hair" (Rockhill 1891, p. 243).
- 10. Anonymous 2016; Anonymous, no date.
- 11. Yuan Shi, xiii, p, 3791, as cited in Haw 2014, p. 45.
- 12. Before the 1956 "democratic reforms", there were, for example, thirty-six monasteries in Tawu (former Trehor state), of which ten were Gelugpa, sixteen Nyingmapa, and nine Bon (Zhou Xiying & Ran Guangrong 1989, p. 206).
- 13. There are several variations of the list of monasteries. According to Peljor Phuntsog, these monasteries were: 1) dKar mdzes bkra shis dar rgyas nor bu'i gling, 2) rDza dgon sar bkra shis dga' ldan chos 'phel gling, 3) rDza dga' ldan bsam 'grub gling, 4) Brag lcog dgon dga' ldan 'phel rgyas gling, 5) bKra shis dar rgyas phun tshogs gling, 6) Khang dmar bsam 'grub dgon, 7) Shing khog lcog ri dgon, 8) sNyi mkha' gnya' dgon, 9) Brag 'go dga' ldan rnam rgyal gling, 10) rTa'u gnyan mtsho dgon, 11) Be ri 'gro phan gling, 12) rTsis tshang dga' ldan chos 'byor gling (dPal 'byor phun tshogs 2002, p. 11). The thirteenth monastery is not in the list. Peljor Puntsog notes that it was situated in the place of Brag lcog. According to the chairman of the Kandze Buddhist association, Juli Trulku, as cited in Wang Kaidui 2010, p. 42, the thirteenth monastery of the list may have just been added for the sake of the number "thirteen", as this is considered an auspicious number in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.
- **14.** An interesting opinion on Tibetanisation based on the example of the Henan Mongols can be found in Roche 2015.
- 15. For a detailed analysis of the early Qing actions in Kham see Dai 2009.
- **16.** *Tusi* (Chin.) hereditary headmen or chieftains recognized as imperial officials by the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. For a study on the *tusi* system see She Yize 1944, Cong Yin 1992, Jia Xiaofeng 2010.
- 17. For a detailed analysis of the Sino-Tibetan competition over Kham, see Relyea 2015.
- **18.** With the notion of "relative peace" I mean that there were no large external invasions, such as Mongol or Qing troop advances. But there were, of course, constant feuds with the neighbours as well as internal conflicts.

- **19.** *Gaitu guiliu* implies the forcible removal of local rulers and their replacement by civil magistrates appointed by the Qing government. For further details see Wang Xiuyu 2013, Relyea 2015.
- **20.** Tsokto Badmazhapov was a Transbaikalian Buryat Cossack, and after this trip a permanent participant in Kozlov's expeditions. He, not Kozlov, was the real discoverer of the "dead city" of Khara-Khoto, as evidenced by his letter to Kozlov about the discovery of the city's ruins and also by an official message to the Russian Geographical Society. See Andreev 1997.
- **21.** See Kozlov 1906. His 730-page account, with maps, pictures and photos attached, includes a detailed description of the region's geography and ethnography, the data for which was gathered by all members of the expedition.
- **22.** Descriptions of clashes with indigenous people and contemptuous remarks about them by him can also be found elsewhere in Kozlov's accounts of Eastern Tibet.
- 23. Rus. СТАРШИЙ ХАМБО. It should be khenche (mkhan che) in Tibetan, senior monk official.
- 24. Rus. ХОНДО and ТОНКОР. Kozlov doesn't explain what do these titles mean. Tibetan scholar Hortsang Jigme supposed that khondo might be sku ngo (sir, master), or sku mgron (guest), and tonkor (Tib. drung 'khor), lay official.

## **ABSTRACTS**

The article analyses the merging of religion and politics in Tibet by taking the example of the Five Hor States of Northern Kham, a traditional polity of Eastern Tibet. The article presents the phenomenon of Hor in historical perspective in the context of the Mongol-Tibetan and Manchu-Tibetan relationships in Kham. Using the example of the Five Hor States, the author focuses on the bifurcated system of secular and religious authority, which is considered to be the main factor of the Kham political systems' persistence. The paper shows how this system facilitated the rise of the Hor States to a very strong polity and ensured them a high level of autonomy for more than two-and-a-half centuries up to the collapse of the Qing Empire in 1911.

L'article analyse la fusion de la religion et de la politique au Tibet en prenant l'exemple des Cinq États Hor du nord du Kham, une région du Tibet oriental. L'article présente le phénomène de Hor dans une perspective historique dans le contexte des relations mongoles-tibétaines et mandchoutibétaines au Kham. À partir de l'exemple des Cinq États, l'auteur se concentre sur le double système d'autorité laïque et religieuse, considéré comme l'élément principal de la persistance des systèmes politiques du Kham. Cet article montre comment ce système a facilité l'émergence des États Hor en une constellation politique très forte et leur a assuré un haut niveau d'autonomie pendant plus de deux siècles et demi, jusqu'à l'effondrement de l'empire Qing en 1911.

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Mots-clés: relations culturelles, bouddhisme, Tibet oriental, Kham, Chine Keywords: cultural relations, Buddhism, Eastern Tibet, Kham, China

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