

**RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT
IN TIBET, 1911-1950**

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the award of the degree of*

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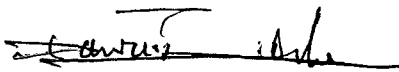
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled "**RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT IN TIBET, 1911-1950**" which is being submitted by **Mr. Rajesh Kumar Sinha** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of degree of **Master of Philosophy (M.Phil)**, carried out by him under my guidance and supervision, is his original work and to the best of my knowledge this dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


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**DEDICATED
TO
TIBETAN REFUGEES**

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CONTENTS

		PAGE NO.
	PREFACE -----	I-II
CHAPTER - I	INTRODUCTION -----	1-11
CHAPTER - II	INTRODUCTION OF BUDDHISM -----	12-32
	IN TIBET	
CHAPTER - III	RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT -----	33-56
	IN TIBET	
CHAPTER - IV	CONCLUSION -----	57-62
	APPENDIX -----	63-79
	BIBLIOGRAPHY -----	80-84

PREFACE

Talcott Parsons has very rightly said that religious values and beliefs form the basis of social values and so provide the general guidelines for action. Since centuries religion has always been a dominant factor in the process of policy making and policy implementation. With the religion playing a great role in the various countries of the modern world like Iran, Algeria, Bangladesh, Pakistan etc. and in their respective governments and societies, the study of religion and government has become quite relevant today. Not only various international religious forums have been formed but it has also influenced the international relations and politics of various countries.

The mystique of Tibet-land of snowy peaks, of lamas, and of outgoing and cheerful mountain people - has always attracted students of human history, but it is the uniqueness of the Tibetan story that gives it its special place in the course of great human cultural tradition. Tibetan Buddhism created a state that was sui-generis in its system as well as its goals, and that state must be analytically explored not only for its own sake but also for the sake of

a comparative grasp of the broader intellectual problems in our fast-moving world. The 1959 Chinese military takeover of Tibet brought an end to this unique way of life in which Buddhism provided legitimacy to political and social authority.

In the above mentioned context present study tries to explore and analyse the role of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibetan government between specific period of 1911-1950. Due to constraint of time and money and dearth of primary sources this study is primarily based on secondary sources like books, journals etc.

Introductory chapter deals briefly with geography, demography and socio-political structure of Tibet. In second chapter introduction of Buddhism and its subsequent adoption in and adaptation to the Tibetan socio-political milieu has been studied. Origin and different features of various sects of Tibetan Buddhism has also been discussed in this chapter. Third chapter deals with the role of religion in Tibetan Government. Religious and secular administration working under single authority of the Dalai Lama and supported by monk officials and the aristocracy, is the main focus of the study in this chapter. Study is rounded up in fourth and concluding chapter extending the discussion beyond the time framework upto the present situation.

CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

For centuries, Tibet, popularly called " roof of the world" has fascinated mankind. Its inaccessibility has appealed to the explorer, while scholars have been involved in the nature of Tibetan Religion and it's culture. In the present century considerable interest has been evoked in the political aspects of Tibet.

Religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices related to things sacred. From functionalist perspective religion is seen as reinforcing social norms and values and promoting social solidarity all of which are required for a stable and smooth running of social system.

Religion has always played a vital role in the Government and politics of Tibet. Although present study deals with a specific period between 1911 and 1950, a brief description of the geographical conditions and mention of some relevant factors basic to an understanding of Tibetan reality is essential for an analysis of religious historical and political events of Tibet, during above mentioned period.

Geographical features :

The area of Tibet was some 470,000 Square miles.¹ The country under Tibetan rule extended approximately from the 78th to the 103rd degree of east longitude and from the 27th to the 37th degree of north latitude.² Tibet is a vast plateau, the average elevation above sea-level being about 13,000, feet. It is surrounded by large mountain ranges; on the north lies an impassable desert. Although these physical

1. Macdonald, D., The Land of the Lama, (London, Oxford University Press, 1929), p.117.

2. Bell, Charles, Tibet: Past and Present, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1968), p.5.

factors kept it isolated from its neighbours, the Tibetans developed contact and established cultural ties with the northern pastoral population of Mongolia, and the agricultural communities of China and India. In the sphere of politics and culture, China has influenced Tibet to a great extent, while religious thought travelled from India to Tibet despite the high mountain barriers.

The presence of Himalayas along the entire southern frontier has made Tibet a dry land as rain clouds are arrested by mountain ranges. The land is not fertile, and in areas like Tuna and Pharijong,³ the crops never ripen due to the high elevation and the short summer.

Many of the great rivers of Asia- the Indus of India and Pakistan, Irrawadi and Salween of Myanmar and the Yangtze and Huangho of China originate in the Tibetan plateau.

Prior to 1951, the principal political and cultural units were U with Lhasa as its capital, and Tsang, chief town of which was Shigatse. These two areas formed central Tibet, other provinces included To-ngari-korsum or western Tibet, and Kham, Hor and Derge in the east. The country of the Tsangpo and its tributaries was the cultural and political centre of Tibet. In eastern Tibet or Kham the geographical conditions are not the same. Kham is more humid and lower in altitude, hence there are different varieties of agricultural products. North-eastern part called Amdo is pastoral.

Though a proper anthropological study of Tibet has never been undertaken, the ethnologists have observed two principal strains in the Tibetan populations - one tall, long-headed and long-limbed, the other shorter in stature

3. Macdonald, David, Op. Cit., p.19.

with high cheekbones, flat noses and round heads.⁴ Tibetan language is Tibeto-Burman in character. People of Tibetan origin spilled over to the Himalayas into Laddakh, Sikkim and Bhutan and thus ethnographic Tibet was larger than the political Tibet.

The population of Tibet was estimated to be four or five million by Charles Bell⁵ and the official Chinese estimate in 1995, as quoted by 'Tibetan Review' was 2.38 million⁶ of which Peking says more than 90 percent are ethnic Tibet. A large number of Tibetan refugees are residing outside the Tibet in different countries such as India, Nepal, Bhutan etc.

Social and Political Structure of Tibet before 1951:

Religion has always exerted great influence on Tibetan society. Different segments of the Tibetan social set up can be discussed under two broad groupings; The Lay society and the monastic society. These however, were not entirely closed segments. There was a continuous interaction between them due to frequent shifts of personnel from one to the other. On detailed analysis one finds that the two segments of Tibetan society intermingled in almost all spheres of life.

Structure of Lay Society:

This was a stratified society where the nobles played vital role. Apart from nobles this section of society consisted of small landed proprietors, rich farmers, merchants, small traders, and herdsmen; next came the people

4. Richardson, H.E., Tibet and its History, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p.5.

5. Bell, Charles, op. cit., p.8.

6. Tibetan Review, vol.XXXI, no.5, May 1996.

engaged in minor occupations - tailors, carpenters, and masons, and lastly smiths, tinkers and butchers. Apparently there was no middle class.⁷

The Nobility

The noblemen of Tibet attributed their descent to three chief sources: First, the family in which a Dalai Lama had reincarnated received a large estate from the government. Secondly, some families were given recognition by the government in return of their past services to the state for example the family of Pa-Lha.

The third group of nobles consisted of the families who traced their ancestry to the early monarchs that had reigned in Tibet prior to the rule of the Dalai Lamas.⁸ The nobles earned their livelihood through three main channels: (i) as officials of the government, (ii) as estate holders, (iii) as traders. Each noble family provided one or two officials to the government. The family was granted estates by the government and the service of the officials was a kind of tax or Kral.⁹ In his own estates the nobleman had the right of taxation or justice. From among his peasants a noble could select servants for his household.¹⁰ Many of the noble had rug and blanket factories and others were traders; but most important source of income was the landed estate.

The Peasantry:

About five sixth of the people were engaged in

7. Burman, Bina Roy, Religion and Politics in Tibet, (New Delhi, Vikas, 1979), p.25.

8. Bell, Charles, The People of Tibet, (London, Oxford University Press, 1928), p.66.

9. Carrasco, Pedro, Land and Polity in Tibet, (Seattle: American Ethnological Society, 1959), p.131.

10. Ibid., p.101.

agriculture.¹¹ Within peasantry there were two different classes: first the regular tax-paying peasant holding land from the state or its representative, "the ordinary tied serfs" ; and secondly the dependent peasant who either worked for the first type or rented land from them, "the masterless peasants".

Division of family land was undesirable in peasant households. Polyandry was generally considered a device to keep the family land intact. The most able son inherited the land, other brothers shared his wife and land. In the absence of a male heir, daughters could inherit the property and a young man was adopted as her husband. The head of the family became the tax-payer.

Peasant households generally reflected poverty, having few utility goods or means of comfort. Food and clothes were scanty; the houses were small, ill-ventilated and badly lit.

Herdsman:

The most important domestic animals kept by the Tibetans were cattle (Yaks) and sheeps. Animal husbandry was integrated with agricultural practices - cattle were used for ploughing, and the animals fed partially on agricultural products. The herdsmen generally occupied the mountain pastures. In summer they moved to different grazing grounds. Main products were milk, meat, tent, butter etc.

The Traders:

The Tibetan households, both rich and poor, generally produced their food and clothes. However, items like salt, torchlight, utensils, broad-cloth, gold brocades and cotton goods, were imported from India. Tea, brocade and silk were

11. Ibid., p.5.

imported from China.¹²

No manufactured goods were exported from Tibet. The Chief export items were wool, yak-tail, hide, furs, borax and herbs.¹³ All sections of people participated in trade, whether small or big, if they got an opportunity. The status of craftsmen was not high in the society. Carpenters, painters, builders and other craftsmen had higher position. Metal work was mostly done by Tibetans of lower class.

Smiths manufacturing life taking weapons did not have higher position in the Buddhist Society of Tibet. Butchers were regarded as sinners and outcasts and were not allowed to enter priesthood.

Though there was no caste system, stratification was very much real in the Tibetan society. The officials had to wear clothes and jewellery in accordance with their respective ranks.

Religion had a very important influence on all segments of the society. The well-to-do Tibetans had their private chapels and engaged priests to perform religious rites for the family, to cure illness and to perform rites after death. Use of charms and amulets given by the priests was a common phenomenon. Both rich and poor made donations to the temples in order to earn merit.

Tibet was prone to epidemic diseases, and small-pox was the chief among them. Scientific vaccination being practically unknown, medical treatment was more or less primitive though many herbs were available in the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan region. Monks were trained as doctors in the medical college of Lhasa where training in traditional medicine was imparted.

12. Winnington, A., Tibet, A Record of Journey, (London, 1957), pp.148-9, 199.

13. Bell, Charles, op. cit., p.109.

While barter system still prevailed, coinage was generally used along the trade routes. Paper currency was not very popular until the end of the 1920s. Mining was not taken up on a proper scale due to superstitions and religious objections. It was believed that fertility of the soil would be diminished or rain would cease and crops would be ruined. Gold, copper, coal, iron, silver were some of the minerals found in Tibet although no scientific exploration had been undertaken. But religious objection gradually weakened

Land-Holding and Taxation:

In Tibet, land was recognised as belonging to the ruler. In the areas under the control of Lhasa, everything belonged to the Dalai Lama.

There were two basic types of rights over land. First the household allotment granted to the peasant for which he was obliged to pay taxes and services to the state. Secondly the estate, which included demense land (a holding which is held directly from the authority and no estate-holder is present) under the direct management of the estate holder, together with the right of taxation over number of peasants and their holding; the whole being coordinated into one single unit of production. The noble families received estates from the government which was non-transferable and only male heirs could inherit them.

Peasant household had to pay the following types of taxes (i) household or head tax usually paid in money (ii) land tax or animal tax, which was levied on the property, also usually paid in money. (iii) requisitions in kind or labour; and (iv) transit taxes levied upon movement of people or goods.

Land tax was clearly the most important tax. The state tried to keep an unchanging tax-roll, keeping the number of

taxpaying holders the same, as far as possible. The rules of inheritance helped this system.

The tax on animals was levied according to the number of animals owned. It was normally paid in cash but sometimes animals were accepted as tax.

Labour Services and Requisitions :

The most wide spread and heavy requisition was the transportation service. The revenue collectors got attendants, water, fuel and lodging from the villagers free of cost. Peasants could be conscripted for building, cutting grass, weaving apart from cultivating or looking after the animals.

Those who had received land in return of some special service were not taxed, for example, acrobats, actors, weavers, etc.

Tibetan society was feudal, but feudalism had a closer similarity with the general social set up of India and the Islamic countries. This type of system has been described as parafeudalism by Max Weber.¹⁴ From an analysis of the land system it is evident that in Tibet land was connected with political power. The state was at the top, receiving revenue from others, and the nobility and monasteries who exercised great political power, realised revenue from peasants who had no political power. The Dalai Lama was the absolute ruler and owner of all the land. The stratification of society according to ownership of land and political power was clear.

Structure of Monastic Society:

In the monastic organisation the Dalai Lama held the

14. Weber, Max, The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, (New York, Free Press, 1947), pp.378-381.

highest position. The administration of Monastic organisation was conducted by him with the help of priests. Lord chamberlain in the Dalai Lama's household held the highest post among the priest officials.

The monasteries had well organised administrative bodies to manage internal administration. In each monastery there was a three-tire organisation known as La-chi or university board, Dra-Tshong (the college) and Khamtsten (similar to a dormitory).¹⁵ An official called Khen-Po was the chief administrator of the Dra-Tshangs. Under the Dra-Tshangs, there were Kham-tshens. Monks from a certain regional area or speaking a certain language were housed together. La-chi committee was composed of khen-Pos.

All those who joined the monasteries did not necessarily become scholars or theologians. Some received vocational training, some were trained to be lama police and only a small number of them became learned monks. The monk community could be divided into studying and the non-studying monks. Accommodation was allotted according to the wealth and rank of the monks.¹⁶

The number of incarnations were very high.¹⁷ Among them the Dalai Lama was the highest. The Panchen Lama also held a very high position, and the royal incarnations and the abbots of the three great monasteries Sera, Drepung and Ganden, ranked the second. The third rank was formed of 50 or 60 incarnations.

15. Shen, T.L. and Liu, S.C., Tibet and Tibetans, (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1952), pp.72-73.

16. Macdonald, op. cit., p.97.

17. Bell, Charles, The Religion of Tibet, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1968), p.169.

Monasteries and their income:

Tax free estates were given to the monasteries. Monasteries had several sources of income, the most important being the landed estates, which were held by the different levels of the monasteries, either by the monastery as a whole or a Lama of the monastery. The drong-pons remitted butter, grain, tea, cash, for daily expenditure, and for special service extra donations were made. Many monastries traded¹⁸ and lent money on interest.¹⁹

In Tibet everything centred around religion. Though the individual layman did not participate in the every day services of the monasteries, and the monks did not preach religion to the laymen, all thoughts and actions were controlled by religion.

The monks were greatly respected; supporting a monk or a monastery economically was an act of merit. The priests were consulted about and performed numerous religious ceremonies that took place in the lifespan of a layman.

Administrative Structure:

Dalai Lama was supposed to be a supreme deity, the master of the lesser deities, and as head of the government he had to perform secular duties as well. Whenever the Dalai Lama was a minor or the Dalai Lama was yet to be discovered, a Regent (known as Desi) ruled the country. Unlike the Dalai Lama, he was responsible to the Tsongdu or the Assembly. In 1926, the thirteenth Dalai Lama created the office of the Prime Minister or Sikon. He was a senior minister of the Kashag or Council of ministers. The highest office in the administrative set up was the council of ministers or the Kashag which was composed of one priest and three lay-

18. Macdonald, op. cit., p.75.

19. Bell, Charles, The People of Tibet, op. cit., p.86.

men. Each member was known as a Sha-pe. The Kashag had power over the internal administrations of the country, and matters relating to politics, revenue and justice. The grand secretariat known as Yik-tsang with four monks occupying the major posts, was in charge of religious affairs. Finance office was headed by four lay finance secretaries. The National Assembly or the Tsong-du was an example of a kind of Semi-democracy, which was composed of ecclesiastical and secular officials below the Sha-pes or the ministers.

King Tsong-tsen Gampo introduced the first legal code in Tibet, which had ten commandments for the holy order and sixteen articles for the laity.²⁰

Semi Independent States in Tibet:

Of all the semi-independent states, within the territories controlled by the Lhasa Government, the holdings of the panchen Lama with headquarters at Tashillunpo in Tsang province was the most important. From the religious standpoint, the Panchen Lama was equal to the Dalai Lama as he was the teacher of the Dalai Lama. But in the temporal sphere, the Panchen Lama held a subordinate position as he controlled only three districts and he held them under the Dalai Lama. In eastern Tibet hereditary rulers ruled in some states.²¹ Although on a small scale, the situation was very similar to central Tibet.

In the following chapter characteristics and various sects of Tibetan Buddhism will be discussed. Process of its adoption in and adaptation to the Tibetan socio-political milieu will also be analysed. How Tibetan Buddhism influenced the political structure and the politics of Tibet will be discussed in third chapter.

20. Shen and Liu, op. cit., pp.112-13.

21. Carrasco, op. cit., p.139.

CHAPTER - 2

INTRODUCTION OF BUDDHISM IN TIBET : -

(A) PRE BUDDHIST RELIGION :

Before the introduction of Buddhism, there apparently was no organised religion in Tibet. The early Tibetan religious specialists were magicians and sorcerers who served the needs of individuals and families and protected them against assumed evil spirits that caused disease and misfortune by using incantations, charms and sacrifices to conjure up and exorcise local spirits. These Tibetan practitioners of the magic were similar to the shamans of several other Asian pre-literate societies. The practitioners were believed to have control over forces of nature, communicating with them and gaining from the spirits the power to deal with human problems. They were individual practitioners with essentially no religious organisation and no organised system of religious belief. These practices were referred to as Bon.¹

The earliest Tibetan kings appear to have established a royal cult, 'Tsug', to sanction their rule. The cult was linked to a claim of divine origin and to their presumed

1. Michael, Franz, Rule by Incarnation : Tibetan Buddhism and its Role in Society and state, (Colorado, Westview Press, 1982), pp.11-12.

descent from a heaven that was supported by high mountains, from which some of the kings were believed to have come. The religion of the mountain gods (kulha) was mingled with the concept of the magic power of the kings, who were placed between heaven and earth and possessed human force. To maintain their position, the early kings employed a group of diviners and attached them to their courts.²

Following were the main characteristics of Pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet :

1. The belief in the existence of a supreme or high god who transcended all other spirits and was closely associated or identified with the blue sky.
2. The acceptance of a vast pantheon of swarming spirit beings who in consonance with a basic concept of the dualism of good and devil, negative and positive and the continuing conflict between the two were characterised as lHa (god), good, and aDre (goblins), bad. Many of these spirits were of a jealous or spiteful disposition and had to be propitiated by worship and sacrifice or coerced by the exercise of thaumaturgic power.
3. The practice of offering bloody sacrifices of animals and also human beings. The gSHen ("shaman"), who car-

2. Ibid, pp.12-13.

ried knife, was the killer. Some of the sacrifices were impulsive, but others were made in connection with burial rites or divination.

4. The practice of magic to control gods and demons, provide ghosts with guidance in the hereafter, heal the sick, control the elements, foretell the future, and by malediction injure or destroy the enemies.
5. The occurrence of States of frenzy or trance, which were ascribed to possession or guidance either by the gods or the goblins. The individual subject to such secondary power essential to the function of the shaman.
6. The existence of a class of wizards both male and female - possessing the powers mentioned above, who resembled the shamans of the Mongols and other northern Asiatic people who functioned variously : as a priests officiating at funerals, as sacrificers, as healers and diviners and as those able to use black magic of malediction.
7. The practice of a ritual in which incantations and special regalia - including drums, weapons, staves of power, masks, headdresses and special costumes were used.

8. The ascription of supernatural powers to certain beasts, birds and reptiles - such as eagles, argali, yak, bears, wolves, tigers, waterfowls and snakes - thus making them object of veneration and accessories in the practice of magic.
9. The belief in an afterlife wherein ghosts were recognised and feared. This belief was probably linked with rudimentary forms of ancestor worship. It was believed that the dead might attain directly to an existence of bliss in the heavens. Certain individuals - the early kings, for example - were believed to have reached heaven directly as visitors from this life. A similar achievement was not considered beyond the range of possibility for great magicians. This belief was linked to the concept of rope or passage device, that connected earth and heaven and to the achievement of "opening the heavenly gate" ascribed to gShen Rabs.³

When Tibetan kings introduced larger political and social order in seventh century AD, they were in need of a broader value system and ideology than what was provided by the earlier religious practices, and they welcomed Buddhism

3. Ekvall, Robert B., Religious observations in Tibet, Patterns and Functions, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp.38-39.

which gave them such an ideology and with it eventually literacy.⁴

(B) CHANGES IN BUDDHISM BEFORE COMING TO TIBET

The essence of the teaching of Buddha is stated in the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold path. The Four Noble Truths are (1) life is sorrow - birth, age, disease and death are all unavoidable, and the quest is to find liberation from the suffering of this existence; (2) Sorrow arises from the sensual craving that binds man to this existence and to the chain of rebirth (3) liberation lies in ending this craving; and (4) the way to gain liberation is to follow the Eightfold Path.⁵

To follow eightfold path is to gain:

(1) the right view and understanding of the concepts of the four noble Truths, (2) the right aspiration and thought, renouncing the craving for existence and seeking an equanimity toward life, (3) the right speech, avoiding lying and slander, (4) the right conduct and action, no stealing or appropriating anything to which one is not entitled, (5) the right mode of life avoiding violence and drunkenness, (6) the right endeavor, not to think evil but to correct and

4. Waddell, L. Austin, Tibetan Buddhism, (New York, Dover Publications, 1972), p.18.

5. Michael, Franz, op.cit., p.13.

control ones mental state, (7) the right concentration to meditate and awaken one's mind and (8) the right mindfulness to control one's body and feelings.⁶

What Buddha taught was the "middle path". A course between ascetic self-castigation and indulgence in sensual delights. The human craving for clinging to the chain of existence is due to cosmic ignorance that includes a delusion of selfhood. The phenomenal universe is impermanent and transient; full of fear, suffering and pain; and soulless. In contrast to the delusion of empirical world, true freedom from the entanglement of the world can be gained through enlightenment- a state of mind reached through meditation, a freedom that places a being outside the world of phenomena, a state that leads to undefinable bliss, 'Nirvana'. The teachings of the Buddha are the Dharma (the wheel of Law) and the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha are the three jewels of the Buddhist faith.

During the centuries after the life of the Buddha and before Buddhism entered into Tibet, Buddha's teachings were explored and interpreted by a number of schools and monastic systems that developed three major schools of Buddhism- Theravada (Hinayana), Mahayana and Vajrayana.

6. Ibid, p.13

Theravada (Hinayana), the school of the elders and the oldest tradition, stresses the community of Buddha's disciples, the Sangha of the arhats ("perfected men"). The arhats seek liberation by following the Buddhist law through a monasticism that stresses the rules of monastic discipline.

Mahayana meaning "large vehicle", is the chief component of Tibetan Buddhism. Mahayana incorporates the fundamental views, techniques of practices, and discipline of the Hinayana school, including three concepts but going beyond them. Mahayana Buddhism follows ontologically the teachings of the great Indian philosopher Nagarjuna of the "Madhyamika" school in exploring and interpreting Buddha's message. Elaboration of doctrine of emptiness is one of the major, philosophical contributions of the Mahayana school. Its other major text, the heart of Mahayana philosophy, is its stress on the concept of Bodhisatva.⁷ A Bodhisatva is an awakened being who, having reached the state of enlightenment, chooses to be reborn, instead of entering Nirvana, out of compassion for all sentient beings and in order to assume the burden of saving them all.⁸ Two chief qualities a

7. Zaehner, R.C., The concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths, (London, Hutchinson, 1971), Chapter 7b.

8. Basham, A.L., The wonder that was India, (London, Sidgwick and Jackson, 1954), p.275.

bodhsatva is believed to possess wisdom and compassion. Believers and followers of Bodhisatva can lead to their enlightenment and liberation only by striving for the liberation of all others.

Another school called Vajrayana is at the centre of Tibetan spiritual life.⁹ Vajrayana School adds another dimension to the practice and belief of Buddhism. The new factor is the use of tantric practice - magical, supernatural powers obtained by religious practitioners through their initiations and meditative attainments.

The traditional sources hold that Vajrayana recognizes the hidden higher potential in man's physical aggregates and neuropsychic system and energies, thus widening the scope of human possibilities. Vajrayana propounds many different methods of using those physical and neuropsychic attributes for an immediate awakening through initiations followed by teachings including secret oral instructions. Role of teachers with knowledge, experience, and compassion is considered as essential as the spiritual devotion of the disciples.

9. Samuel, Geoffrey, Civilized Shamans, (Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), p.12.

Vajrayana tradition is immensely rich in symbolism, much of which can be understood and is meaningful only to trained initiates. The diverse forms, of mystical Buddhas, peaceful and wrathful male and female deities, are in the ultimate sense, symbolic visual representations of aspects of enlightenment already achieved or to be achieved. The entire pantheon falls into five genres of supreme manifestations, the five Buddha families. Each family of deities symbolizes one of the psychophysical aggregates, and five basic aspects of enlightened awareness represent the five purified states of the human emotive defilements- delusion, jealousy, conceit, lust and hate. The use of ritual mask dances and community recitations of verbal formulas, mantras, are communal rites designed to aid in the practice of the realisation of the nonduality of the self and the phenomenal world. They are to be performed at regular intervals to guarantee the physical and spiritual wellbeing of the community that performs them.

Why Buddhism was adopted by Tibetans. A sociological answer might point to a number of factors, including the existence of states, of limited extent and control in Tibet and the long distance trade routes and consequent mobility which meant that Tibetans were exposed to a much wider range of social contexts than any of the other hill people.

A Tibetan reason for the adoption of Buddhism would probably be phrased quite differently. A Lama, would likely to answer "because of the compassionate activity of Avlokitesvara and other great bodhisattvas". Activity of an Avlokitesvara, in Tibetan thought, took a variety of forms. Among these were the initial fathering of the Tibetan population, and introduction of agriculture. Avlokitesvara was active through the early Tibetan kings who sponsored the introduction of Buddhism, and through powerful reincarnate lamas such as the Dalai lama, the Gyalwa Karmapa, and Gyalwang Drugch'en. Buddhism was encouraged from above, by the rulers of Tibet who acted as its patrons and it was adopted from below, by the common people of Tibet whose spiritual and religious needs it met. Since ancient period adoption of Buddhism was at least in part a matter of state policy, and was closely linked to the adoption of other cultural, political and administrative forms. Buddhist temples and monasteries were part of the panoply of state power, and were expected to aid in maintaining that State power. This would seem to have been true of the Tibetan kings of the seventh and eighth centuries. Buddhism survived and flourished in Tibetan societies because it established itself

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outside the context of state sponsorship, as a part of Tibetan village communities.¹⁰

When we turn to the adoption of Buddhism by the common people of Tibet, we see a different pattern, and in the long run, more significant, aspect of it. The folk religion was concerned with, power, with defence against the dangerous powers of the physical and social environment, and with the utilization of the beneficial powers of the Buddhist clergy (primarily the lamas) for the good of the community. So, in effect was the cult of enlightenment, at any rate as pursued through the Tantras. Power here was the power of the personal religious teacher, 'the tsawe Lama', and of the Buddhist Tantric deities who were accessed through him. Ultimately this power was internalised within the practitioner and became available to help others. Ordinary Tibetans were interested in the morality and holiness of Lamas to whom they turned for aid. Monastic life also had its attractions from the point of view of individual practitioners. It was a withdrawal from the karmic consequences of ordinary life in Samsara and recognised step onwards in the spiritual path. There could also be material factors. Joining a celibate 'gompa' could, for

10. Ibid, p.555

some people, have provided the main opportunity of acquiring an education beyond the elementary level. For others it might simply have been more congenial than the sometimes harsh life of a Tibetan villager or nomad. From the point of view of parents (or siblings), a monk in the family could provide connections and access to resources otherwise unavailable, and perhaps relieve pressure on a family's limited land and other resources. Becoming a monk, or having one's child become a monk, was a choice that earned respect and prestige among one's community.¹¹

(c) TIBETAN BUDDHISM AND IT'S VARIOUS SECTS

Buddhism was quite unknown to Tibet before the marriage of king Songtsen Gampo in 638-641 A.D.¹² Both of his wives , one princess Wencheng of T'ang Dynasy and other Bhrikuti, daughter of Nepal king Amsuvarman, were devoted Buddhists and they speedily effected the conversion of their young husband of sixteen years of age. Songtsen Gampo, first patron of learning and civilization in that country and having with the aid of his wives first planted the germs of Buddhism, was later canonized as an incarnation of most popular of the celestial Boddhisatva, Avlokita. His two wives were canonized as incarnations of Avalokita's consort,

11. Ibid, p.558.

12. Waddell,L.Austin, op.cit., pp.20-21

Tara. Princess Wencheng was deified as "The white Tara" while the Bhrikuti as "Green Bhrikuti Tara".¹³ After Songtsen Gampo's death about 650 A.D. Buddhism made little headway against the prevailing shamanist superstitions and seems to have been resisted by followers of traditional practices.

A century later king Tri-sron Detsan sent a messenger to India for a celebrated Buddhist priest to establish an order in Tibet. Buddhist wizard, Guru Padmasambhava, promptly responded to the king's invitation and accompanied the messenger back to Tibet in 747 A.D.

Padmasambhava is the founder of lamaism. Lama is a Tibetan word meaning the "superior one". The first lama may be said to be Pal-bans, who succeeded the Indian abbot Santaraksita. Primitive lamaism may be defined as a priestly mixture of shivaite mysticism, magic, and Indo-Tibetan demonolatry, overlaid by a thin varnish of Mahayana Buddhism.¹⁴

Buddhism, the newly adopted ideology, had to become assimilated to the Tibetan setting and to come to terms with it. The services that folk religion had provided were

13. Waddell, L. Austine, op. cit., pp. 13-14

14. Ibid, pp. 24-26.

therefore included in Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism for the benefit of the lay population to replace and give a deeper meaning to Bon Shamanist practices. This inclusion strengthened the influence of the Vajrayana school in Tibetan Buddhism.¹⁵ Vajrayana's emphasis on tantric practices and forms of magic enabled it to replace the native Shamanism and its practices with rituals that related "Buddhist magic" to the philosophy and metaphysics of a doctrine that was much more profound than anything Bon had to offer.

Before the eleventh century, there were no broad sectarian divisions in Tibet. Rather the pattern was that one in which families and their lineages preserved tantric teachings through texts that were acquired through perilous journeys and the expenditure of a great deal of gold and many presents. Rival families based their religious authority and the political power derived from it on the texts and teachings they possessed and functioned much as religious corporations.

Once introduced and entrenched in Tibet, the complex Buddhist faith generated, in due course, a number of sects that shared all the basic elements of doctrine and practice

15. Michael, Franz, op.cit., p.18.

specific aspects of rituals and in choice of some of the texts on which they concentrated their studies.¹⁶

Nyingmapa - Buddhism spread in Tibet by Padmasambhava later became known as Nyingmapa. It included the traditions and teachings of all the schools that had been brought to Tibet by Indian scholars, and it had been conceptually broadened to incorporate local beliefs and deities into its pantheon and doctrinal framework. Nyingmapa was a manifold system that ranged from philosophical, metaphysical and psychological studies and practices of meditation to the elaborate magic, rites, spells and mantras. The later were practiced by religious specialists to serve the laity and also to provide a mystical experience for the practitioners, who through magic, dealt with the forces in nature and in themselves. Some of these practitioners disregarded the disciplinary vows; their practices included the use of sex between religious teachers and consecrated women, the use of alcoholic beverages and disregard of other prohibitions all justified in the framework of religious practices.¹⁷

The destructive magic and excesses of some tantric practitioners brought about a reaction among the laity and the Buddhist teachers themselves and became the chief causes

16. Ibid, p.19.

17. Ibid, p.20.

for the founding of new sects and for the reform of religious life and discipline.

Reformation started by Atisha (980-1050 AD) resulted not only in the new sect Kadampa but also initiated the semi reformed sects of Kagyupa and Sakya Pa.¹⁸

Kadampa - kadampa or "those bound by the orders " is the first of the reformed sects and with which Atisha most intimately identified himself. Atisha promoted reforms of religious life, a formalised structuring of Buddhism, including the three vows, and a reform of relationship which emphasised celibacy and high morality. However, he maintained tantric practices and meditation in his curriculum. The best known among Atisha's Tibetan disciples was Dromton, who founded the first monastery of the new school at Rading, near Lhasa, in 1058 AD and became the formal head of the Kadampa sect, the forerunner of the yellow Hats, which eventually became the ruling order of Tibet.¹⁹ In its monastic discipline and return to the teachings of the original mahayana concepts, the Kadampa sects already in-

18. Waddell, op.cit., p.54.

19. Ibid, pp.56-57.

cluded the basic ideas of the later founder of the yellow hat order, the Tibetan monk and scholar Tsongkapa.²⁰

Kagyupa - Two other schools originated in the same century. The Kagyupa meaning "oral transmission of secret teachings" is to be traced to the Tibetan yogi Marpa (1012-1096 AD) who had travelled to India and been a student of great Indian masters. Marpa was a mystic, famous for his magic power and translations of tantric texts, and Milarepa was a romantic poet. It was his student, Gampopa, who founded Kagyupa order, which later divided into four major and eight lesser sects, each organised by a religious family. The Karmapa sect became the most important, and it was to play a major part in Tibetan politics. The head of Karmapa sect was the first to establish the concept of reincarnation for the head of the sect, and the Gyalwa karmapa is believed to have been continuously reincarnated upto the present incarnation. It was this concept, followed soon by all other sects, that transferred the power from the religious families or outside aristocrats to the leading monks, who played their part in the discovery of the incarnations and helped to guide them. Like the Dalai Lama of Gelukpa sect, the Gyalwa Karma is believed to be an

20. Michael, Franz, op.cit., p.20.

reincarnation of Avalokitesvara, and two rival cults eventually engaged in a political rivalry, in which the Gelukpa sect prevailed. Other subsects emnated form kagyupa were Di-Kungpa, Ta-lung-Pa and Duk-Pa.

Distinctive features of Kagyupa are its hermit practices, meditation in caves and other retired places.²¹

Sakya - The last great reformed sect is Sakya, taking its name form the yellow colour of the scanty soil at the site of its first monastery in western Tibet, founded in 1071 A.D. The original founder of this sect was Konchog Gyalpo. It's best known scholarly head, Sakya Pandit (1182-1251 A.D.) together with his nephew Phagpa (1235-1280 A.D.) was invited by the mongol Godan khan to his camp in the Kako Nor in 1244 A.D., and the Khan appointed Sakya Pandit the temporal ruler of Tibet. This client-patron relationship, by means of which foreign ruler indirectly extended influence over Tibet, gave the Tibetan religious organisation the power to shake off the authority of the Tibetan rulers and the power of Tibetan aristocracy and enabled it to assume control of the temporal government of the country. Sakya has two reformed sects namely the Norpa and Jonan-pa subsects.

21. Waddell, L.Austine, op.cit., pp. 63-67.

Ninma-Pa - The wholly unreformed section of Lamas was named Ninmapa or the "old school". It is more freer than any other, tinged with the native bon or pre Buddhist religious practices and celibacy and abstinence are rarely practiced. It regards the metaphysical Buddha Samantabhadra as its primordial deity or Adi Buddha. It worships the Guru Padma Sambhava, the founder of lamaism, in a variety of forms, both divine and demoniacal expenses of his different moods at different times. It's peculiar cap is named after the Guru "urgyen-pan'zu" and with these characteristics it exhibits greater laxity in living than any other sect of lamas.

Even Ninmapa has its subsects based on adoption of different revelations. Its chief subsects are the Dorje-tak-pa, Mindol-lin, kar-tok-pa, named after their respective founders or parent monastery.²²

Gelukpa - The most important religious organisation of Tibet was that of the Gelukpa sect known as the yellow Hat sect, in contrast to the Red hat sect. The Gelukpa was founded by the great scholar and reformer Tsongkapa (1357-1419 A.D.). Tsongkapa did not introduce any basic innovation of doctrine or ritual, studying and accepting

22. Ibid, pp.72-73.

many varying texts, including tantras, and using them for meditation and rituals. But he did change the freewheeling interpretation of texts and the looseness of practices, indeed of monastic life, that had affected the Buddhist monastic life of his time. In this respect he followed the Kadampa tradition of Indian monk Atisha.

Tsongkapa stressed on return to strict monastic discipline, requiring celibacy and moral life, and instead of the practices of instant revelation, he advocated a gradual path to enlightenment for all. Gelukpa meaning "those who follow virtue" grew rapidly and a number of monasteries were founded: Ganden in 1409 A.D., Drepung in 1416 A.D. and Sera in 1491 A.D. These three were the leading monasteries of the country and they were also large academic institutions divided into colleges, including tantric colleges for advance work.

The success of Gelukpa order created some hostility. Tsongkapa did not take part in the political power game but his successors could not maintain that policy and actual hostilities began with the Gelukpa sect's rivals, especially the Karmapa, who had become dominant after the decline of Sakya and had the military support of the king of Tsang. The Gelukpa turned to the Mongols for help and they defeated and killed the king of Tsang and established the head of

Gelukpa order as the ruler of Tibet. Following the example of Karmapa he was given status of a reincarnation of Avlokiteswara and came to be known by the title given to him by the Mongol ruler, the "Dalai Lama" (ocean of Wisdom)²³

Evolving from an ideology for the ruling class, Buddhism thus became the ruling force of Tibet. A unique form of heirocratic government emerged, which combined a rich religious practice with highly complex institutional form of political and social life that characterised the Tibetan cultural tradition.

23. Michael, Franz, op. cit., pp 22-23.

CHAPTER - 3

Religion and Government in Tibet

(A) Sects and Politics:

Religio-political order of Tibet, which remained in force from the seventeenth century until the Chinese takeover in 1959, have been unthinkable without monastic establishments. Their main purpose was religious, but they also provided the basic education and religious concepts on which the whole Tibetan political and social order was founded. As indicated earlier, the Tibetan monastic system evolved historically through four major sects.¹

The oldest of the sects, the Nyingmapa, was divided at the very outset into two separate wings. One was made up of monk communities that among other vows, required celibacy, and the other consisted of secular, "white clad" yogi communities that permitted their members to marry.² From the beginning the Nyingmapa teachings placed heavy emphasis on tantric writings and practices. It seems that at first, these tantric practices were related to the task that the

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1. Michael, Franz, Rule by Incarnation, Tibetans Buddhism and Its Role in Society and State, (Colorado, Westview, 1982), pp.19-23.
 2. Waddell, L. Austine, The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism, (Cambridge, W. Heffer, 1967), p.54.

new Buddhist religion faced in its confrontation with Bon magic, and some of the ritualistic practices of this sect appear to have been initially introduced to facilitate acceptance by Bon believers. But the tantric practices became and has remained a major part of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. The important role of this sect in tandem with the Gelugkpa sect, is attested to by the fact that fifth Dalai Lama studied Nyigmapa teachings intensely. Among his teachers were Nyingmapa monks, and he was proclaimed as having been the finder (terton) of hidden Nyingmapa scriptures. It was believed that he revealed from his transmigrating consciousness teachings from his previous embodiment as king Trisong Detsen.

The importance of the second of the major sects, the Sakyapa, was that it not only established the first religious government over all Tibet but it also laid the foundation for the formation of a monastic bureaucracy. It's headquarters, some fifty miles west of Shigatse, and it's estates, especially those in eastern Tibet, formed one of the major religious units of the Tibetan system.

The Kagyupa sect founded in eleventh century and almost contemporaneously of Sakyapa order, emphasised from the

outset the meditational training of the monks.³ Many monasteries and meditation centres sprang up in the valleys and on the mountainsides of the Tibetan landscape. Four major and eight minor sects, differing only in minor ritualistic practices, branched out of the main Kagyupa order as a result of the division of lineages among its ecclesiastical leadership. The Karmapa sect was the most important of these branches, because the concept and realisation of the institution of incarnation emerged through its leadership.

The last and the most important sect, the Gelukpa, provided not only the leadership of Tibet, in the person of the Dalai Lama, but Tibet's three leading monasteries near Lhasa. Those monasteries, the "Serdegasum", dominated the scene within the government institutions, and the "five ling" monasteries traditionally provided to the Regents during the minority period of the Dalai Lama. Not only in Lhasa but also in Kham the largest monasteries such as Kumbum and Tashikhil, were Gelukpa monasteries, and the large majority of the monk population was of the Gelukpa order. Even more important, most of the monk officials came from the Gelukpa order - indeed, many families who were

3. Ibid., p.60.

members of other sects sent their sons to Gelukpa monasteries because of the greater prestige of those monasteries, which gave their children a greater chance in a government career.⁴

No monastery of any sect paid any attention to the original affiliation of any of the monks or laymen, which demonstrates the eventual close cooperation among the sects in Tibet. Each followed its own specialisation and training without interfering with other's interests, but all contributed to the common religious effort. Added to the spirit of cooperation the function and economic status of each sect was guaranteed and supported by the Lhasa government. So the strong cohesion of the system on the basis of common Buddhist belief becomes apparent.

From the 12th century onwards, all four of the major sects followed the example of the Karmapa sect and recognised the institution of incarnations, which led to the emergence of numerous incarnations in almost all monasteries.⁵ At the peak of this development, i.e., at the turn of the twentieth century, it was believed to have been well over ten thousand such incarnations in Tibet. These

4. Michael Franz, op. cit., p.45.

5. Carrasco, Pedro, Land and Polity in Tibet, (Seattle, American Ethnological Society, 1959), p.126.

incarnations could roughly be grouped into three categories, not counting the Dalai Lama, who because of his highest authority, belonged to a category by himself. The first and the highest group consisted of the ranking incarnations who headed the major sects and some of the leading monasteries. To this group belonged the Panchen Lama (the second highest incarnation of the Gelukpa sect), the Gyalwa karmapa, and some of the other Gelukpa incarnates, such as the Trulku of Kundeling, Tshemonling, Tengyeling, Zhide and Dedruk. The candidates for these incarnations were found by the monks of their respective orders and were usually confirmed by the Dalai Lama, who also made the decision of selection if there was more than one candidate. That the unity of the religious establishment transcended the distinction of the sects can be recognised also by the fact that an incarnation could be found in a family that belonged to a sect other than the one in which the incarnation was established.

The second level consisted of lesser though still important incarnations, including the heads of other important monasteries of all sects, who were founded by the monks of their monasteries and also usually confirmed by the Dalai Lama. The third group consisted of a very large number of incarnations who were proposed by their

monasteries and confirmed by the head or another one of the leading Lamas of their respective sects.

The institution of incarnations became a part of all sects. Even those sects that still determined succession by biological lineage, such as Sakya, introduced incarnations and placed them over the existing inheritance system. Even though each sect had it's own incarnations, and the common hierarchical order under the Dalai Lama bound the sects together in a common belief in and practice of a unique Buddhism that gave Tibet it's extraordinary cultural, social and political unity.

(B) Ideological Assumptions:

Tibet, called 'land of religion' has always had its own polity, and had always been governed by its own institutions and officials. Polity, the form and process of civil government in Tibet, is often termed as "Ch'o-si nyi-dan", and thus in expression "B'o-zhung Ch'o-si nyi-dan", "Bo-zhung" means "Government of Tibet" and "Ch'o-si nyi-dan" means "religion and politics".

"Ch'o" generally has several different meanings.⁶ In this context it means the "Ch'o" of "Ch'o kon-ch'og", the Dharma. This definition of it has been known to the

6. Wangyal, Phuntsog, "The influence of Religion on Tibetan-an Politics, Tibet Journal, 1(1), July-Sept. 1975, p.78..

Tibetans since the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet in the seventh century. "Si" means 'politics', the art of government, the art of directing or guiding the policy of government towards a particular goal. Sometimes it is expressed with another syllable, "Ch'ab" to form "Ch'ab-si" without changing its original meaning. When it is combined with the syllable "Pa", forming "Si-pa", it means the "universe" or the "world" depending upon the context. In the case of "Ch'o-si" however, it is to be understood as undertakings for the materialistic world, while the first syllable is to be understood as undertakings for the spiritual world. Thus "Ch'o" refers to the religious sanctity and "Si" to political authority.

"Nyi" is the number two and "dan" is the possessive suffix. Thus "B'o-zhung Ch'o-si nyi-dan" means the "Tibetan Government of Religion and Politics". This intermingling of religion and politics is not peculiar to Tibet alone. Elsewhere also, as in early Greece, politics was mixed with a great deal of mythology and superstition. The two were so closely interwoven that no attempt was made to establish an independent science of politics until the Greeks developed political science in its pure and systematic form.

The divine origin or theocratic conception of rule is also another form of political authority sanctioned or

sanctified by religion. Early rulers were often a combination of priest and king or shaman and king. The Tibetans also, who found and enthroned Nya-tr'i tzan-po as their first king in 127 B.C., believed in his "holiness", in his "divinity".

The early Tibetan kings from Song-tzan gampo onwards were called "Ch'o-gyal" (dharmaraja). Whatever may be the case, the fact remains that Buddhism permeated the life and thought of the Tibetans and with this innovation the expression "Ch'o-gyal" came to penetrate the Tibetan ethos. "Ch'o" sanctified the "gyal-po", the king, as a political authority. Thus the title "Ch'o-gyal" referred to two facts (1) "Ch'o" as the established religion and (2) "Gyal-po" as the established authority. This authority was by its nature political. Hence the duty and functioning of the king was religio-political. This fact was especially true of the Tibetan government between 1242 and 1950 when it was run by ecclesiastics from the reign of Sakya Pandita Kun-ga-gyal-tsan to that of the present fourteenth Dalai Lama. All along, the Government of Tibet maintained its dual character of religion and politics.

The term "Ch'o-si nyi-dan" appears for the first time in the seventeenth century when the fifth Dalai Lama reorganised the Government of Tibet as "B'o-zhung ga-dan

P'o-dr'ang Ch' og-la nam-gyal", "the ever victorious Tibetan Government of Ga-dan P'o-dr'ang".⁷ Although the term "Ch'o-gyal", embodying the same dual concept of religion and politics as before, suggests its origin in the Sanskrit term "dharma-raja", there is little evidence to show that the Tibetan rulers sought to model their system on the practices of ancient India.⁸ Rather the Tibetan rulers, admirers of Dharma-raja Ashoka, were merely indulging in their propensity towards giving native institutions an Indian sanctity to enhance the dignity and prestige of their rule. There were constant attempts to identify their basic principles of government in accordance with the Buddhist concept of law. Hence, Tibet's rule was based on two different sets of laws - the ten principles of Buddhism and the sixteen civil laws of Tibet. This came into existence during king Song-tzan gampo's reign in seventh century.

The "Ch'o-si nyi-dan" system is based not upon any consistent theory of government nor is it built up according to any unambiguous scheme. It is constituted of expedients which have been found to be useful for the consolidation and preservation of this regime.

7. Ibid., p.79.

8. Sinha, N.C., "Chos-srid gnyi-idan", Bulletin of Tibetology, (Gangtok, 1968), vol.5, no.3, p.20.

It is believed that might was the decisive factor among fighting clans in Tibet.⁹ These clans had come into existence as a separate group within Tibetan society. This group perhaps constituted the original land owning nobility, the aristocracy which later shared - but never lost - its power and responsibility of government with the ecclesiastical rulers.

The initial founders of the government, as we have seen, were past masters of the game of power politics. They knew that if their rule was to survive, mastery gained by might had to be transformed into right and obedience imposed by force into duty. They also found it necessary to establish a religious and legal basis for their exercise of power. This they gradually found in a principle of political authority sanctioned by religious duty.

Religion is different from politics, but there was never any attempt in Tibetan history to separate the two. Rather the ruling class, first the aristocracy and later both the aristocracy and the monasteries, encouraged their union.

9. Richardson, H.E., Tibet and it's History, (London, Oxford University Press, 1962), p.28.

Thus the legal authority of Ch'o-si nyi-dan is based on the idea that the office of the king or the Dalai Lama is the surrogate of Chan-ra-zig (Avalokitesvara), the Lord of Mercy. The doctrine that Chan -ra-zig, the ultimate source of the Tibetan race,¹⁰ and the patron god of Tibet, should be assisted by responsible ministers in the governing of the country had existed since the seventh century. The religious and temporal powers were never seperated. The role of Ch'o-si nyi-dan is dual in nature not in the sense that there are two parallel and seperate governments functioning simultaneously, but in the sense that the governments has a double personality.

Ch'o-si nyi-dan was founded in the belief that it exists for a dual cause: for temporal happiness in this world and spiritual happiness in the hereafter. In doing so it has to make use of religion in politics and extend special privileges to the monasteries. Hence the lay community exists for the support of religious community, and the religious community exists for the ultimate happiness of the lay community.

Ch'o-si nyi-dan as a system of polity was formally established during the reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama. The

10. Wangyal, Phuntsog, op. cit., p.82.

Fifth Dalai Lama, who came to power as the supreme ruler of all Tibet, consolidated and systematized the ideas that had previously been observed as normal. He elaborated the existing arrangements and standardised them as hard and fast rules.

(C) Dalai Lama and Monk Officials:

On the basis of the priority of the Buddhist religion, the government formed under the Dalai Lama divided its performance between religious and secular affairs. The religious and secular sectors both believed that primary purpose of all endeavour was religious liberation, not only for all Tibetans but for all sentient beings. As a result the religious and secular aspects of the Tibetan politico-religious structure were so closely linked that it is difficult to draw a distinct line between them. In the monasteries of all sects monks were trained for the management of human affairs as well as for religious service.

For the education of future monk officials a special school was established at Potala, the Peak School (Tselabdra). Its students, about thirty of them, were monks who were especially selected by the grand secretaries

from a list submitted by the Gelukpa monasteries.¹¹ Students, who had to pass an examination, given twice a year, and to satisfy the grand secretaries in personal interviews, were also interviewed by the Dalai Lama or the regent for the final selection. This was the formal road to becoming a monk officials. Much larger number of future monk officials, however, did not attend the peak school but accomplished the same preparation through private tutoring. These private students had to pass the same type of examination and personal interviews as the peak school students. The "novice" monk official's, whether trained at the peak school or by private tutors, who were the candidates for administrative careers had to come from the monasteries - chiefly but not exclusively, from the three great monasteries near Lhasa.

That a majority of monk officials or their families regarded career as the primary reason for entering monastic life, may be inferred from the composition of monk bureaucracy. It has been estimated that about two third of the monk officials were novices and only one third were fully ordained monks. The difficulty of obeying the 253 strict disciplinary rules as a full-time administrator in

11. Michael Franz, op. cit., p.53.

government service is a major explanation of preponderance of novices among the monk officials.¹² One third of total monks called ordained monks held high positions, which reveals the importance that was attached to the dedication and learning of such monks by the Dalai Lama and the leadership of the monasteries.

It was the fully ordained monks who provided the greatest service to the Tibetan society. They were the teachers, not only of the monk novices in the monasteries but also of the laity in private homes or in communities.

Trained monk officials formed the link between religious and secular affairs as the secular administration organised by the Dalai Lama was to a large degree, staffed by monk officials.¹³ These monks though still belonging to their respective monasteries worked full time at their administrative duties and no longer played any part in the affairs of their respective monasteries. Their religious character was, however, maintained by the fact that they had to uphold their religious vows. By working on all levels of government, they provided the cohesion for the political structure. Monks worked in the offices of the central

12. Ibid., p.59.

13. Bell, Charles, The Religion of Tibet, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1968), p.19.

government at Lhasa, together with their secular colleagues, and they had regional and local positions for the central government as governors of the seven provinces. They also served as "dzongpon" (district magistrates) in the more than two hundred districts into which Tibetan local government was divided. They shared all these positions with secular colleagues, in some cases by joint appointment. Monks also served the central government in special assignments at home and abroad. The body of about three hundred monk officials was the core of the administrative system and supplied the religious quality and purpose to the government. They were expected to apply ethics and religious principles to the mundane affairs they had to handle.

At the head of structure was the Dalai Lama himself, and all power converged in his hands. He was an absolute ruler with unchallengeable authority.¹⁴ During a Dalai Lama's minority, this power was exercised by a Regent, always a high Lama, who had almost the same power as that of the Dalai Lama himself. However, because a Regent lacked the Dalai Lama's ultimate authority and the highest prestige connected with it, he had to be more cautious and circumspect in his actions, aware of the fact that his peer

14. Bell, Charles, The Portrait of the Dalai Lama, (London, Collins, 1946), p.147.

could vote him out of the office and replace him, as indeed happened in more than one case. As a result, no Regent could be as active or innovative as Dalai Lama, and consequently the rule of the Regents was sometimes characterised by political stagnancy and also by corruption. Indeed the fact that the rule by Dalai Lamas was interspersed by so many, often long periods of regencies has been regarded a distinct weakness of the Tibetan religio-political system.

The personal staff of the Dalai Lama was headed by the 'Chikhyab Kenpo' (literally "chief abbot"), a lord Chamberlain who served as the Dalai Lama's link with both the religious and the secular administration.¹⁵ The Chikhyab Kenpo took part in their sessions and lent his voice to the decision-making process in the highest religious and secular councils. He was selected by the Dalai Lama himself from the monk civil service as a personal secretary and counsellor.¹⁶ Under the Dalai Lama level, the two administrative structures were remained divided, and the religious administration was handled by the 'Tseyigtsang', the

15. Macdonald, David, The Land of the Lamas, (London, 1929), p.60.

16. Shen, Tsung Lien and Shen-chi-Liu, Tibet and the Tibetans, (Stanford, Standford University Press, 1953), p.194.

peak ecclesiastical secretariat. It consisted of four grand secretaries, high monk officials who held the fourth rank in the bureaucracy.

Four grand secretaries (drunyk chemo) made their decisions jointly. The daily agenda was prepared by a monk official who was the superintendent of the Tseyigtsang, which moved from the Potala palace in winter to the Norbu Linka Palace in summer, with the Dalai Lama. The office dealt with religious and particularly monastic affairs on its own authority under the Dalai Lama, with occasional consultations with the political branch of government, the cabinet, when joint action was required. The importance of the Grand Secretariat was indicated by the popular name for the grand secretaries; the "four inner pillars" (Nangi Kawazhi).

The four grand secretaries handled the affairs of all monk-officials - their appointment, transfer or dismissals - as decided by the Dalai Lama. They dealt with the monastic quarrels and subsidies to the monasteries. They also dispatched all orders of the Dalai Lama throughout the country. They were thus chief executives of Dalai Lama in the religious sector but also as far as ecclesiastical authority affected and dominated the secular sector, of the Dalai Lama's government. The monk cabinet minister and the

lord Chamberlain were usually chosen from the ranks of the grand secretaries.

Together with the four chiefs of the revenue department, grand secretaries served as the joint chairmen of the General Assembly, the highest joint deliberative body of Tibetan state, which was called only during times of special emergency or when major decisions were needed.

(C) Secular Bureaucracy:

The Dalai Lama's secular bureaucracy was headed by a prime minister and a cabinet. The prime ministers were appointed chiefly during the rule of a Dalai Lama, during the rule of Regents, prime ministers were not appointed. The position of prime minister (silon; literally, "political minister") did not include chairing cabinet sessions, or even participating in cabinet action, but rather a special responsibility to act as a liaison between the cabinet and the Dalai Lama, as well as to assume some functions that the Dalai Lama wanted to avoid such as final action in criminal cases. All final authority remained in the hands of the Dalai Lama, and the position of prime minister was therefore not as important as the title implies, although the prime minister enjoyed considerable personal influence and held second rank.

Most of the executive work in the field of secular administration was handled by the cabinet (Kashag), which was composed of four ministers (Kalon).¹⁷ Three of these ministers were secular officials and one was a monk. They held the third rank and were known as "four outer pillars". They were appointed by the Dalai Lama or the Regent and worked together six days a week, making joint decisions in case of disagreement, discussion carried on until any dissenting member would eventually accept a majority decision. The cabinet minister acting jointly had the same functions of selecting, appointing, promoting, and recalling secular officials as the grand secretaries had over the ecclesiastical bureaucrats. The prime minister, who was a monk, participated fully in these decisions, which indicates the religious role and its importance in the secular aspects of government.

The secular officials were derived from the aristocratic families, who held their estates in exchange for the obligation to provide at least one son per estate to serve as an official in the government. The candidates received¹⁸ practical training in the Tsikhang, the office of

17. Bell, Charles, Portrait of the Dalai Lama, op. cit., p.142.

18. Carrasco, Pedro, op. cit., p.131.

revenue; were tested by the heads of that department jointly, and if found adequately prepared, recommended to the Kashag for appointment to official rank. From this group of officials-in-waiting, the cabinet selected its appointees to administrative positions in the central government as well as in the provinces and districts.

Major function of the cabinet was to appoint, promote, transfer, recall and supervise those officials, acted on their requests, and issued directives and orders. Each year Kashag issued a general directive to the governors and local officials, admonishing them to maintain standards of fairness and justice in their treatment of the people and to keep the welfare of the public always in mind. Cabinet decided on all aspects of taxation - the rates, new taxes, local or specific tax exemptions. It dealt with the allocating funds for secular purposes, considering revenue and expenditure in a budget like manner, although not as systematically as under modern budget planning. Cabinet also dealt with the allotment of income for secular position. Cabinet supervised regional and local administration. Minor matters were left to the discretion of local officials but all important matters had to be reported regularly for the cabinet's decision, and if necessary, the cabinet would initiate it's own

investigation, sending investigators and requiring further reports before taking action.

The cabinet as a whole had the assistance of three or four secretaries, three or four protocol officers, and three or four officers who prepared and distributed documents and orders.

In its political role, the cabinet would call upon and be supported by the General Assembly (Tshokdhu Gyezom) and the working or standing committee of the General Assembly (Tshokdhu Rakdu).¹⁹ The General Assembly was composed of all officers; the abbots and representative of the three great monasteries; representative of professional secular groups such as artists, craftsmen, tailors, blacksmiths; and representatives of some special middle-class associations such as traders, non-official secretaries, and semi-religious lay groups - a total of about seven hundred people. One of the General Assembly's function was to nominate the Regent during the Dalai Lama's minority by discussing the candidates and selecting three finalist.

The assembly was jointly chaired by the four grand secretaries and the three or four lay chiefs of the revenue

19. Michael, Franz, op. cit., p.63.

department. Working committee consisted of about fifty representatives of officials of various ranks, both ecclesiastical and secular, military officers, and the three leading Gelukpa monasteries - predominantly ecclesiastical group. Their decision carried great weight with the cabinet and the Dalai Lama or Regent. In both the Great Assembly (General Assembly) and the small Assembly (Working Committee), the ecclesiastical leadership provided with the decisive influence on the management of worldly affairs.

The most important government agency under the cabinet was the office of Revenue (Tsikhang). Its most important function was to maintain up to date records of the governments as well as the estate's lands and herds and of the revenue derived from them. It supervised payments and informed the cabinet about them. The department was headed by four lay officials (tsipon) of the fourth rank, who acted jointly.

Directly under the cabinet was the Finance and Mint Department (Drazhi Nyukhang), which was established in 1920 and located at Drazhi near Lhasa. It handled the printing of paper money, printing of postage stamps and the coining of money in silver and copper in various denominations.

Application of the law, both civil and criminal, was a function of the Lhasa government, and the cabinet functioned

as the highest court of the country in both civil and criminal cases.²⁰ In preparation for its decision or recommendation to the Dalai Lama or Regent, the cabinet assigned an appropriate department or its own staff to investigate a case. The judicial authority over major criminal matters rested in the person of the Dalai Lama and was managed on the central government level by the cabinet.

The cabinet was also in charge of the military forces, which were garrisoned in and around Lhasa and on the borders. The military system was incorporated into the bureaucracy under the cabinet. Two commanders in chief were appointed, a monk and a lay official, and they held the position of third rank.²¹ Together they formed the military headquarters and were in charge of maintaining the army, training, deployment, and the acquisition of weapons.

Foreign affairs was handled by the Department of Foreign Affairs under the control of the cabinet. Besides that there existed a commission for Nepalese citizens in Lhasa, headed by a joint team of Tibetan and Nepalese officials, which handled occasional crimes, disputes

20. Michael, Franz, op. cit., p.70.

21. Bell, Charles, The people of Tibet, op. cit., p.91.

involving Nepalese, and problems arising between Nepalese and Tibetans.

State oracles were selected for political advice and appointed as monk officials. There was one chief state oracle and two lower state oracles. For most important matters, the Dalai Lama would invite the chief state oracle to his residence, and the oracle would go into trance and then answer questions addressed to him by the Dalai Lama in person. Other predictions were given at different places, mostly at Nechung monastery where the chief state oracle resided. The oracle was regarded as a medium through which the spirit spoke. The faithful believed that the chief state oracle was seized in his trances by the very powerful force of the protective deity, Pehar. In a way state oracle personified the very concept of religious dominance in the Governmental and personal affairs of Tibetans.

CHAPTER - 4

CONCLUSION

Tibet, due to its geographical location and lack of attractive economic opportunities, remained isolated from other parts of the world. Buddhism was one of the main factors that led Tibet to come into close contacts with India, China and Mangolia. Of late, Britain and Russia too had shown interests in this forbidden land, but Tibet remained free from their colonial adventures. Threat of Chinese military invasion in 1950 for the first time forced Tibet to shed it's isolation completely and send missions to various countries of the world.

Buddhism entered into Tibet in 7th century during the rule of Srongtsen-Gampo and was readily accepted by the ruling elite, first, because it enhanced the legitimacy and acceptance of their rule. Lamaism also served material and spiritual purposes of the general masses.

Once introduced Buddhism adapted itself to Tibetan socio-political milieu and in course of time adopted certain features of Tibetan folk religion, Bon and tantric practices. Reforms and new discoveries led to the emergence of various sects that agreed on the basic tenets of Buddhism but differed in their interpretation of and emphasis on

specific aspects of rituals and choices of some of the texts on which they concentrated their studies. In course of time there developed a hierarchical pattern of their importance in which Gelukpa sect got the highest position. The Dalai Lama, highest spiritual leader of the country, belonged to this sect of Tibetan Buddhism. Drepung, Sera and Ganden were most important monasteries. Panchen Lama was the second highest spiritual head and teacher of the Dalai Lama. He belonged to Tashillunpo monastery.

Complex social system of Tibet was held together by the Buddhism. By establishing general principles and oral beliefs, religion helped to provide the consensus which was necessary for the stability in society. Monks in general and Lamas in particular were spiritual guide, psychological counsellor and teacher in every way, from instruction in simple literacy and understanding of the religion to the highest intellectual and emotional insight into their own lives and the lives of the others. Religious education was the major factor in the extension of literacy throughout Tibet. Herdsmen, peasants, traders all performed their religious duties as prescribed by the monasteries.

Religio-political system under the Dalai Lama was separated into religious and secular affairs. Main

objective of both was the religious liberation of all fellow beings. Link between these two aspects of administration was the Dalai Lama, performing the dual role. In the monasteries of all the sects, the monks were trained for the management of human affairs as well as of religious affairs. Their partners, the secular officials were from the aristocracy. Noblemen, provided one or two son for the administrative service in return for the estates they received from the state. In every sphere of administration monk officials had extensive power.

Kashag (Cabinet) was the highest office in the administrative set-up with Silon (prime minister) at the head of it. Yik-tsang (grand secretariat) was in charge of religious affairs. Tsongdu (National Assembly) was an example of semi-democracy and it was the duty of Tsongdu to appoint and advise Regents whenever the Dalai Lama is minor or new Dalai Lama has not been found. Unlike the Dalai Lama, Regent was responsible to the Tsongdu.

It was widely felt that the system of government which had prevailed upto 1950 in Tibet was not sufficiently responsive to the contemporary needs and future development of the people of Tibet. It was therefore felt that religio-political system be modified and amended as to allow the

elected representatives of the people to play a more effective role in guiding and shaping the social and economic policies of the state. Promulgation of the draft constitution by the Tibetan Government in Exile on March 10, 1963 was a move to accommodate these noble ideas. A process of election through ballot was witnessed recently in which all Tibetan refugees from different parts took part in electing their representatives to the National Assembly of Government in-Exile.

Politics between 1911 and 1950 and subsequent domination of Tibet by China had greatly reduced the role of religion in Tibetan government and society. Having defeated Chinese in 1913 Tibet declared its full independence, which was always resented by the China. Chinese monks of Tibetan origin and Panchen Lama were constantly used to redominate Tibetan political and religious institutions. Any threat of military invasion however was counterbalanced by the British interests in the region. After the departure of British in 1947 and limited interest shown by India, China wanted to "liberate Tibet". Fearing a military invasion Tibetan government sent its missions to various countries and to the U.N. but in vain. Between 1951 to 1959 Tibetan religious and political institutions were greatly influenced taking

advantage of the treaty of 1951. Revolt of 1959 led to severe Chinese repression of nationalist Tibetans which resulted into thousands of Tibetan alongwith the Dalai Lama leaving Tibet for safer places. The Dalai Lama's government in exile is patterned in the similar fashion which existed in Tibet upto 1950.

The cultural revolution could not be successful in suppressing religious beliefs and people of Tibet who remained in their homeland have clung to their faith and belief in Buddhism and the Dalai Lama. Policy of liberalization started in 1979, though not intended actually, led to more open expressions of the nationalists protests in Lhasa in 1987-89. That led to a change in the Chinese policy of controlled freedom in 1980's to a policy of control in 1990's which again failed to stamp out the nationalist protests by monks and nuns. The recent policy entitled "Golden Bridge to reach the New Era" announced on 25th of Nov. 1995 calls for vigourous counteraction to religious activities from the state authorities. It introduces a new element to the conduct of religious policy, a fierce attack on the Dalai Lama and a crackdown on Tibetan cadres suspected of nationalist sympathies.

History has proved that religions do not wither away in the embrace of secular societies but assume symbolic form. Main question is not whether these religious traditions will survive but rather in what form and with how much integrity despite the lack of freedom, resources and the qualified teachers.

APPENDIX

Appendix

The Last Testament of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (1876–1933)

Translated by Lobsang Lhalungpa

I was first recognized as the reincarnation of the supreme spiritual guide of the world [the twelfth Dalai Lama] in accordance with the prophetic directions of the great lamas and the state guardians, making it unnecessary to follow the practice of selection through drawing lots from a golden vase. Since that time, following the examples of my predecessors, I studied under holy tutors such as the regent Tatsak Hothoktu, Phurchok Rinpoche, and others. Having memorized daily the religious texts, including the liturgical chants, I received the primary and secondary monastic ordinations and practiced the regular debate on the five major treatises of Buddhist doctrine. Besides, I was given daily—without interruption—profound sutric expositions, the great and the lesser esoteric initiations, the key instructions [including the secret oral teachings], and explanations in accordance with my intellectual capacity.

Despite of the lack of experience, I was called upon at the age of eighteen [1894] to assume the responsibility of the temporal and spiritual power by unanimous appeal of the ecclesiastic and secular communities of Tibet and by the counsel of the great [Manchu] emperor. I have been striving to advance the cause of Buddha's teachings, to strengthen our political system, and to promote the welfare and happiness of my subjects to the best of my ability with honesty and justice, despite the fact that my personal leisure and freedom were thwarted by my constant concern about the heavy responsibility for the well-being of our religiopolitical system.

In the wood-dragon year [1904], the British army invaded our country. I considered that any diplomatic appeasement [of the invader] merely for one's personal safety and welfare would certainly undermine the future of

Text is from the collected works of the thirteenth Dalai Lama. Translated by Lobsang Lhalungpa.

our sovereignty. Ever since a mutually respectful relationship, based on the traditional bond between preceptor and benefactor, was established [in 1653] by the Dalai Lama, the "great vth," [with the Manchu emperor], I found it worthwhile to invoke [the stipulations of] mutual support. So I left for Peking via Tibet's northern plateau and Mongolia. The emperor and the queen mother received me graciously, showing me great honor and hospitality while I apprised them of our situation. Not long after that, the emperor and the queen mother passed away one after the other. Hsüan Tung was installed as new emperor. After having talks with him and his father, I returned to Tibet. [By that time the British troops had withdrawn from Lhasa.]

Sometime after that [in 1909], invading Chinese military forces led by General Chao Erh-feng penetrated Lhasa with the intent to seize power. This invasion was due to the crafty and slanderous report to the emperor by the resident amban.¹ I, the sovereign, and my ministers, who held the power, departed for India. Enduring all the hardships of the journey, we arrived there safely.

Persistently we protested [against the Chinese invasion of Tibet] to the Chinese imperial court through the British government. Meanwhile the civil war in China altered the situation, depriving its forces and their commanders [in Tibet] of further supplies, like a reservoir cut off from its source. They were gradually expelled from the country. This came about owing to the unfailing power of the profound truth of causality connected with our performance of religious services for the preservation of Tibet's temporal and spiritual system.

I returned to the religious land of Tibet that remained under my guidance. A new glorious peace and happiness prevailed from the water-ox to the water-monkey year [1914–1932]. People, high and low, enjoyed tranquility and liberty in a relaxed manner. This was indicated widely since much was known to the people of the various classes in the religious and secular communities. The details are recorded in the documents. If ever there was any beneficial result from my personal and political service it would be a matter of personal satisfaction. I will neither boast about it nor do I have the slightest wish—not even the size of a sesame seed—for any reward and recognition.

Considering my age at the present moment, I feel a strong urge to abdicate from my position as spiritual and temporal ruler in order to devote myself, during the last phase of my life, to virtuous [religious] practice and to secure spiritual support for the long course of my next life. Yet I dare not forsake the complete trust placed in me by the religious guardians—who have associated themselves with me like the shadow of my body—and by my revered lamas as well as my subjects, high and low, who have had both a

spiritual and practical relationship with me. I therefore continue striving to discharge my responsibility to the best of my knowledge and ability.

I am now in the fifty-eighth year of my life. Everyone must know that I may not be around for more than a few years to discharge the temporal and spiritual responsibility.

You must develop a good diplomatic relationship with our two powerful neighbors: India and China. Efficient and well-equipped troops must be stationed even on the minor frontiers bordering hostile forces. Such an army must be well trained in warfare as a sure deterrent against any adversaries.

Furthermore, this present era is rampant with the five forms of degeneration, in particular the red ideology. In Outer Mongolia, the search for a reincarnation of Jetsun Dampa [the Grand Lama of Urga] was banned; the monastic properties and endowments were confiscated; the lamas and the monks were forced into the army; and the Buddhist religion destroyed, leaving no trace of identity. Such a system, according to the reports still being received, has been established in Ulan Bator.

In future, this system will certainly be forced either from within or without on this land that cherishes the joint spiritual and temporal system. If, in such an event, we fail to defend our land, the holy lamas, including "the triumphant father and son" [the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama] will be eliminated without a trace of their names remaining; the properties of the incarnate lamas and of the monasteries along with the endowments for religious services will all be seized. Moreover, our political system, originated by the three ancient kings, will be reduced to an empty name; my officials, deprived of their patrimony and property, will be subjugated like slaves by the enemy; and my people, subjected to fear and miseries, will be unable to endure day or night. Such an era will certainly come!

At the present time, when we enjoy peace and happiness as well as the admiration of others, the inerrable common cause of religion and polity still remains in our hands. The political stability depends on the devotion of the ecclesiastical and secular officials and upon their ability to employ skillfully every diplomatic and military means without any possibility of regret or failure in the future. It is the bounden duty and responsibility of all my subjects, the religious and lay members of the various orders, to think and work unerringly in unity and cooperation for the promotion of the common welfare and of peace. To do so without deviating will be in accord with the chief state guardian [oracle] when he stated, "There is no need for fear and anxiety [on the part of all concerned] for everything will be all right as long as everyone strives toward fulfilling the express wishes of the master Thongwa Donden, the Fulfiller of Aspirations upon Sight [the Dalai Lama]."

I, on my part, will protect and hold dear to my heart those who devote

themselves to serve honestly in keeping with my wish for the common cause of religion and polity. They will be blessed with successful achievement while the unscrupulous will meet with failure and retributions. It is evident that if you [officials] do not devote yourselves to the service of the state but continuously indulge in self-seeking, prejudice, or nepotism, the long-term common objective will not be realized. And then nothing will help, and regrets will be useless.

I perceive that Tibet's happiness will continue as long as I live. In the long run, each of you will suffer the consequences of your actions in the manner I stated. There is no clearer advice which emanates from my innermost perception, experience, and reasoning. If all of you deeply concern yourselves with your duty—as the inner remedy—with sincere repentance for your past omissions and a resolve to do your utmost, we shall not only carry on the religious services as external support, but I shall also try, as long as I live, to bring about an extensive long-term progress in the religious and political system. I shall also support and guide the officials consistent with their positions and performances while striving to maintain peace and happiness as before for all my subjects lasting through this century.

I have recorded this counsel at the request of the entire nation. Of paramount importance for you is to examine seriously and apply unerringly through your four daily activities² this my counsel in regard to the importance of the inner remedy for our common cause!

1. Amban, a Manchu or Mongol word, was the title of the resident imperial minister in Lhasa.

2. Movement (*drowa*); sitting (*dukpa*); recreation (*chakpa*); resting (*nyalwa*).

The Sixteen Human Principles (Michö Tsangma Chudruk)

Composed and proclaimed by King Songtsen Gampo in the seventh century. [From the Record of the Seals of Tibetan Rules (Thamdeb)]

1. To worship the Three Jewels and look upon them as the Supreme Guide
2. To believe in the law of causality [karma] and to abstain from harmful deeds
3. To respect one's parents and repay their kindness
4. To reciprocate the kindness of others and not to hurt them
5. To emulate the behavior of refined people while disassociating from impudence
6. To be restrained through one's conscience and honesty
7. To master every branch of knowledge
8. Not to fall under the domination of one's wife
9. Not to cheat through false weights and measures
10. To pay taxes and repay loans on time
11. Not to harm but help others
12. To respect and obey teachers and parents
13. Not to interfere in the affairs of others
14. To fulfill one's pledges and promises
15. To be loyal to one's masters
16. To be scrupulously fair and just in all one's dealings with others

Copy of a Tibetan manuscript in the possession of Lobsang Lhalungpa and translated by him.

Selected Passages from the Charter of Sera Monastery

[The text begins with the usual homage to Buddha, the doctrine, and the holy community. It gives the historical background of Buddhism and a preamble to the formulation of rules and regulations governing the life of the monk community.]

To emphasize the role and responsibility of each individual monk, the charter quotes the Buddha as having said:]

I have shown to you the path for eliminating all existential miseries. O! monks, you should be your own guide, the supreme master Tathagatha ["one who has attained to the ultimate reality"].

Buddha has shown us the methods for destroying the root of all evils. It is of utmost importance for our own well-being to follow the precepts expounded in the *Tripitaka* in general and the *Vinaya Pitaka* [the canon of discipline] in particular.

This charter is based on the moral and ethical principles contained in the four parts of the *Vinaya* and the monastic regulations that are relevant to time and circumstances.

All branches of this monastery—the Jay, May, and Tantric colleges and their affiliated schools, Kavitsan and Mitsan—shall receive the three-part monastic ordination by stages. They shall use the three robes—lower and upper robes. The fully ordained monks shall use the *namjar* [the yellow robe made up from patches], and the begging bowl. Shirts with sleeves, fur dress, Chinese or Mongolian boots, ornaments, etc., are prohibited. The length of hair shall not exceed the traditional standard measurement.

The monks shall gather together in the assembly hall once the voice call is made. They shall move gently while maintaining a good behavior. Running and entering through exits are not permitted. They must sit according to seniority. Leaning against the pillars or walls, spitting or blowing noses without covering their head with the gown, sleeping, chatting, playing, etc., are not allowed.

The monks shall perform the liturgy with pleasant voice and harmonized tone. They must not make noises while eating food or drinking tea and must not lick the bowls. The food must be consumed with the idea of sustaining the body.

[The text then specifies the liturgy to be performed.]

Issued by the seventh Dalai Lama (1708–1757), the Tibetan text is found in his *Collected Works*, vol. 3 (1977), pp. 336–361. Translation is by Lobsang Lhalungpa.

Community Feasts

As for the regulation for serving the congregation with tea and rice pudding as provided by patrons, this must be organized in such a way that it does not cause irritation on the part of the patrons. As regards the quantity of tea leaves each patron is expected to give to the monastery, the management may receive 60 nyag [approximately 60 kegs] of tea leaves and 180 nyag of butter for the total population of three thousand monks. The management must give patrons proper estimates for the supply. They shall not demand more than what patrons are willing to donate.

Concerning gifts [in cash or kind], the management must allow patrons to choose. Under no circumstance shall they demand anything from the patrons. In distributing gifts, the residence [of the abbot] shall receive four shares of whatever gift; the prefect, three; the kitchen staff, tea maker (*jama*), water carrier, and fireman one each. Instructors or other members who have to attend to lay patrons [and cannot attend the assembly] can receive gifts from patrons. The management shall receive the required quantity of butter from patrons for the butter lamps in the hall, the kitchen, and the torches of the corridors.

Kitchen Staff

The kitchen staff shall consist of one director (*jatsul dhodampa*), three tea makers (*jama*), two attendants for firewood, two for fetching water, and one inspector (*zhaltawa*). Patrons may send two observers to the kitchen.

Cash Gifts

The distribution of money shall be carried out according to the regulation for gift distribution: The members must be present in the hall to receive their gifts or come to listen to the prefect who will make announcements and convey the patron's request for congregational prayers. Except for the sick and for students in special retreat, monks who are absent at the gift-sharing occasion shall not receive their share. This restriction is applicable to those monks who left the monastery on their own for collecting donations in any areas of the country.

The used tea leaves must be collected for disposal. Skimming of the melting butter from the teapot by any kitchen aides is prohibited.

Any of the affiliated colleges who handle the gift of tea or money for the common assembly [*tshogehen*; "intercollege assembly"] as provided by patrons shall not divert such gifts, intended for the common assembly, to other colleges and vice versa. Such diversion of gifts is a serious act of deprivation, and the moral consequences will be unbearable.

The tea served by the management must be handled by the steward and the director jointly as usual.

Whenever the chief administrator of the endowment estates (*chiso*) distributes provisions [barley grain, flour, woolen cloth, salt, butter, etc.] to the common assembly, it must be done under the joint supervision of the chief steward (*canyer*), the prefect (*gekö*), and the representative of the management (*zhung*).

Examination and Titles

No monks except those who have mastered central philosophy and metaphysics known as "wisdom gone beyond" (*uphar*) shall receive the degree of divinity [i.e., the title of *geshe*]. The title of *kachu*, i.e., the master of ten branches of metaphysics, should be conferred upon those who not only passed the congregational debate in central philosophy and "wisdom gone beyond" but achieved the mastery of the canon of discipline, the sublime doctrine, and logic. Those students—who passed the congregational debate on central philosophy, the "wisdom gone beyond," and the canon of discipline and who also passed textual explanation of the sublime doctrine and logic—should be allowed to contest their knowledge of the doctrine and their skill in debate at the intermonastic congregational debates during the great festival of Lhasa in order that successful candidates may receive appropriate titles.

Those successful candidates for the title of *geshe* who appear before the intercollege debaters should be treated with the same fairness in determining their mastery. Similarly, the minor and major dialectical debates at the respective colleges, the intercollege debate at the great assembly hall, as well as the debates during the retreat in the rainy season should be conducted according to well-established tradition.

Candidates for *lingse geshehood*¹ during the winter and summer must participate in the major intercollege debate (*rigchen*). No one shall repeat the same subject debated during the winter and summer examinations. The abbots and other functionaries should select in all fairness the best candidates for conferring the title of *geshe* (and other similar titles). Rumors that these titles can be obtained by way of bribery are very damaging to the monastic colleges and to Buddhist scholarship.

Concerning the appointment of the abbot, all monks should select by common agreement candidates who distinguished themselves in their learning. Affiliated colleges and branches must not show special favor in selecting candidates.

The selection of the grand prefect (for the common assembly hall) shall be carried out according to existing procedures.

The chief steward (*chinyer*) and the master of liturgy (*udzey*) at the great assembly hall shall be appointed from deserving candidates of the two main colleges (Jay and May) according to established procedures.

Monk students who have not achieved good scholarship should not be allowed to take part in the intercollege debate at Namning Chode monastery (in western Tibet) lest they harm the reputation of this monastery.

Studies

Monks who wish to study must be encouraged. No monk student should study astrology, medicine, and other branches of arts and sciences until the completion of his doctrinal studies and of the dialectical system of metaphysics.

No healthy and intelligent monks should remain idle by merely absenting themselves from the sessions of congregational debates.

Entertaining Lay Patrons

During the Zhoton festival [two days in August or September], women who are relatives, friends, or visitors should be allowed to stay with monk hosts only during the day. [During this celebration some colleges invite lay patrons to witness dance dramas performed by professional minstrels, and monks entertain their patrons, families, and friends with food and tea.] Under no circumstances may anyone indulge in intoxicating drinks; singing and similar behavior shall not be permitted.

Monks are allowed to receive religious discourses from teachers of other colleges or monasteries [of the same order]. Similarly they are free to receive privately any initiation into esoteric tantric meditation.

Criminal Justice

A thorough investigation should be conducted in cases of any monk who is seen or suspected of having violated the four fundamental precepts and the principle of nonindulgence in any intoxicating drinks. Upon guilt being established, the offender should be expelled from the monastery.

Any monk who verbally and physically attacks the grand prefect should be expelled. Brandishing knives or swords against others, wounding or attacking, and any other offenses should be dealt with firmly and fairly by the two grand prefects. They have the responsibility of maintaining law and order within the boundry of the monastic complex. Monk criminals who commit crimes outside the boundaries should be tried and punished suitably under the supervision of the steward and the *zimkhang* [the general manager].

Any gambling with dice [*migurang*], archery, stone throwing, or jumping is not permitted inside and outside the monastery.

Undertaking pilgrimage by monk students is likely to distract them from their study. They should refrain from it. Gifts received by monks which are not sufficient for distribution should be stored in the common treasury.

Begging for sustenance is permitted by the sacred canon. Monks may do so in Tibet. No monks should beg in other countries such as Mongolia and China except to collect contributions for the monastery.

The four gates of the walls and the giant prayer flag and the residences of the three abbots are the charge of the *zimkhang*. They should arrange for whitewashing the walls.

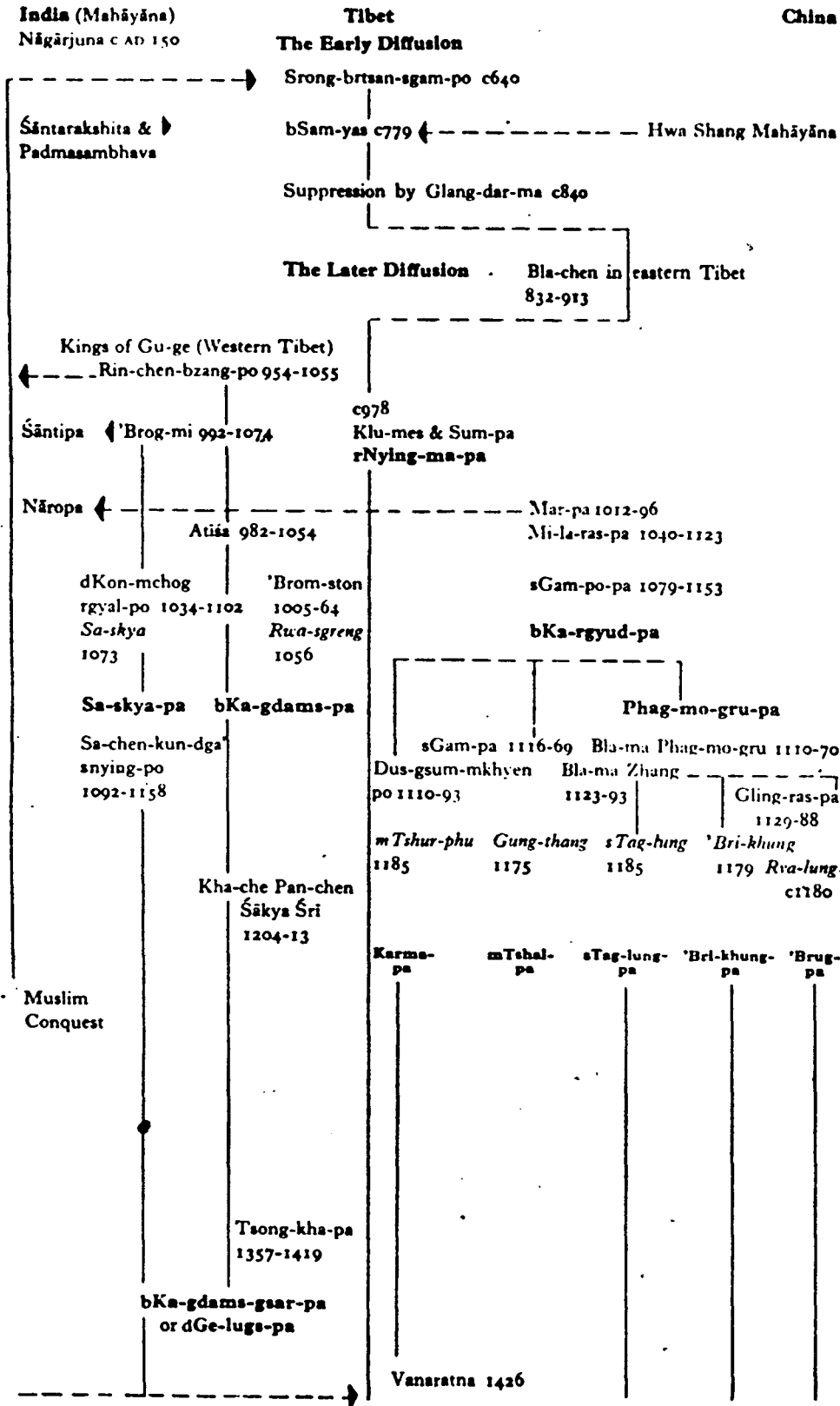
Only the abbots and the *zimkhang* shall keep horses and mules at their residences. The two stewards shall be allowed to keep three; and the two tea supervisors, two.

Congregational Ceremonies

Novices and fully ordained monks shall attend the Sojong ceremony [the process of spiritual regeneration] upon hearing the sound of the gong. Similarly they shall attend the congregational ceremony of Gakyay [the end of restriction on movement enforced during the summer retreat]; the day of visiting the town (*jonggyu*) shall be used for beneficial activities.

All the monks should be conscious of the major and minor precepts and shall observe them.

Succession of Religious Schools



Map 1 TIBET c. 1920

LEGEND

— National boundary



Baltistan

● SRINAGAR

LADAKH

Zaskar

Lahul

Spiti

WESTERN TIBET (NGARI)

NORTH EASTERN TIBET (AMDO)

DRI RIVER

DERGE

EASTERN TIBET (K'AM)

CHENGDU

CENTRAL TIBET Ü
TSANG (Ü-TSANG)

Lhasa RIVER

Dolpo

Lo

Dingri

Mt Everest

Sherpa

SIKKIM

BHUTAN

Mön

BRAMMAPUTRA RIVER

BURMA

CHINA

● DELHI

GANGES RIVER

INDIA

GOGRA RIVER

YANGTZE RI

RIVER

BURMA

100°E

90°E

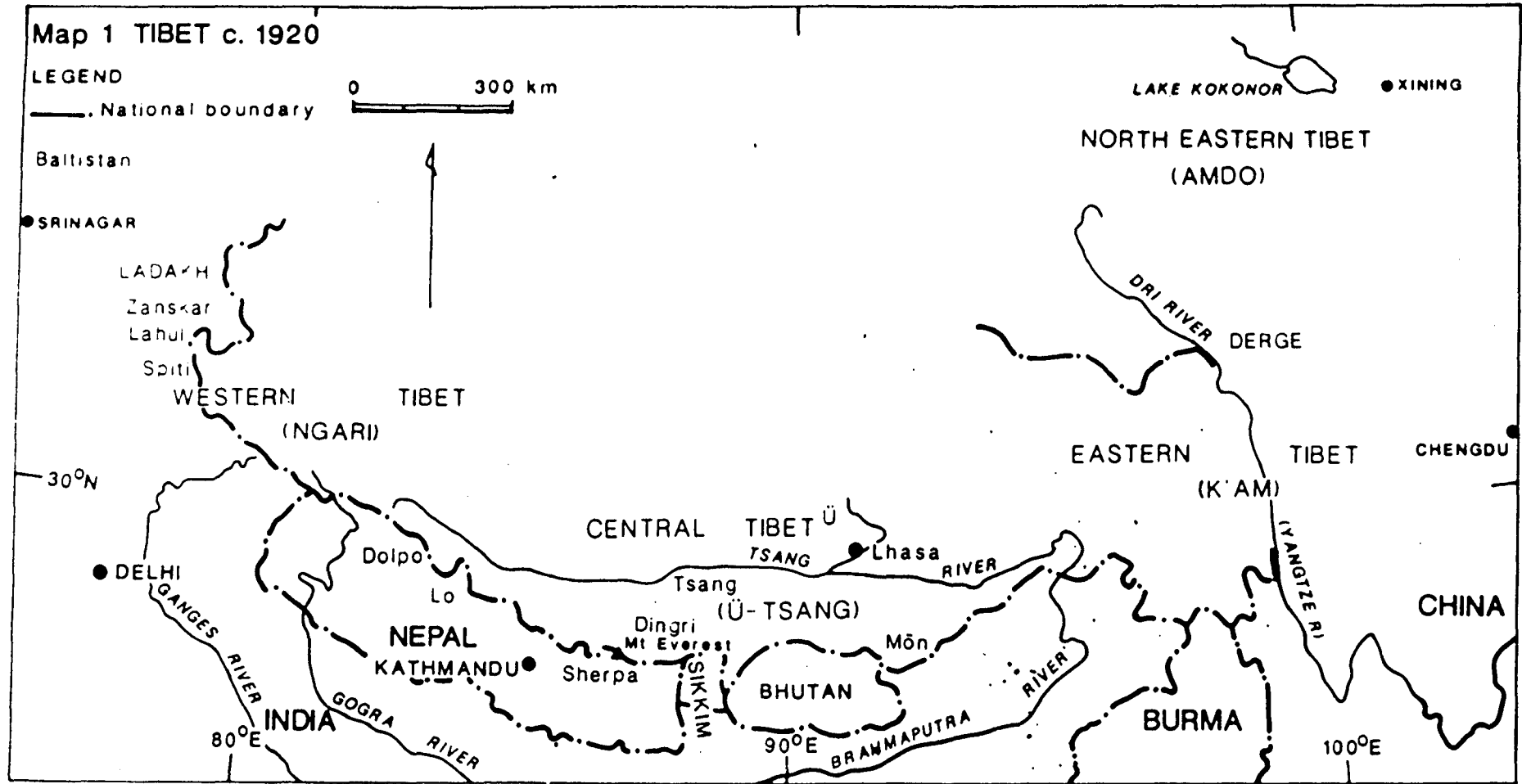
80°E

30°N

73

LAKE KOKONOR

● XINING



GLOSSARY

(All words listed here are Tibetan except those described otherwise.)

Amban(s)	Chinese political officer(s), generally of the Manchu race, stationed in Lhasa by the Manchu rulers of China. (A Manchu-Chinese word.)
Chagzo (<i>Phyag mdzod</i>)	Manager or treasurer in the Government of Tibet or in a monastery.
Chagzopa (<i>Phyag mdzod pa</i>)	Treasury officer.
Chila (<i>Spyi bla</i>)	Short for Chikyab Lama (<i>Spyi khyab bla ma</i>), which is the title of a district governor in Bhutan.
Chikyab Khempo (<i>Spyi khyab mkhan po</i>)	Head of the Monastic Establishment of the Government of Tibet.
Chinda (<i>Spyi mdah</i>)	Highest military position in the old days, short for Chikyab Dapon (<i>Spyi khyab mdah dpon</i>). The word "Dapon" literally means "arrow chief," and refers to an officer of the rank and status of a colonel in the army. "Dapon" and other similar basic military terms were formerly in use in Ladakh. Recently some of them, particularly "Dapon," have gained currency in the Bhutanese armed forces. The term "Chinda" and "Chinda Chungwa" (<i>Spyi mdah chung ba</i>) disappeared from Tibet's military parlance with the creation of the post of <i>Magchi</i> (<i>Maga spyi khyab</i>), Commander-in-Chief of the army, in 1913.
Chogyal (<i>Chhos rgyal</i>)	Religious King. This was the title of the early kings of Tibet (and Ladakh) who patronized Buddhism. It is now the title of the ruler of Sikkim.
Cholkha Sum (<i>Chhol kha gsum</i>)	Collective name, according to tradition, for the three units of the entire ethnic Tibet.
Dabdop	Lama policeman in a monastery.
Dalai Lama	Lama whose learning is as deep as the ocean and as vast and all embracing. The expression "Dalai" (Mongolian for "ocean") corresponds to "Gyatso" (<i>Rgya mtsho</i>) in Tibetan. The expression "Lama," spiritual teacher and guide, corresponds to the expression "Guru" in Sanskrit.

Depa (<i>Sde pa</i>)	Title of chief or officer of varying importance. From <i>Sde</i> , community, Province.
Depa Shung (<i>Sde pa gshung</i>)	Government of Tibet.
Depa Tsangpa (<i>Sde pa gtsang pa</i>)	Chief of Tsang.
Depon (<i>Sde dpon</i>)	Descendants of the early kings of Tibet.
Desi (<i>Sde srid</i>)	Regent.
Depung (Tib.)	The 'Mound of Rice' monastery or College of Lamas outside Lhasa, at one time containing eight to ten thousand students. Founded in 1414. Wealthy and powerful, it has long exercised much influence on Tibetan Buddhism.
Dogen (Jap.)	The Japanese Founder of Soto Zen Buddhism in Japan (1200-1253). Dogen studied the teaching of the T'sao-tung School in China for four years before bringing it, in 1227, to Japan. He stands along as the Founder of the Japanese School, and is by far its greatest name.
Drungyig Chemo (<i>Drung yig chhenmo</i>)	Chief monk secretary of the YIKTSANG.
Dzasa (<i>Dzasag</i>)	Title, below that of GUNG. (Originally a Mongolian word borrowed into Tibetan.)
Dzasa Lama	Title of the monk-cadre head of the Chigye Lekhung (<i>Spyi rgyal las khungs</i> , Foreign Department).
Dzong (<i>Rdzong</i>)	Fort. Also the headquarters of a district where the DZONGPON and his staff live.
Dzongpon (<i>Rdzong dpon</i>)	Governor of a fort, i.e. the official in charge of the fort and district.
Garpon (<i>Gar dpon</i>)	Chief of a camp, governor.
Gegen Chemo (<i>Dge gan chhenpo</i>)	Principal.
Gelukpa (<i>Dge lugs pa</i>)	The reformed yellow-hat sect founded by Tsongkapa (Tsong kha pa). The DALAI LAMA is its head.
Gampo-pa (Tib.)	Tibetan saint and author (1077-1152). Regarded as a reincarnation of Srongtsan

Gung	Highest hereditary Tibetan title conferred on the father or any one of the brothers of a DALAI LAMA. (Originally a Mongolian word borrowed into Tibetan.)
Guru	Spiritual teacher and guide. (A Sanskrit word.)
Gyalpo (<i>Rgyal po</i>)	King
Gye Tsab (<i>Rgyal tshab</i>)	Deputy of Sovereign, i.e. the DALAI LAMA.
Kalon (<i>Bkah blon</i>)	Minister of the KASHAG LHENGE. Also called Shappe (<i>Shabs pad</i>).
Kalon Lama (<i>Bkah blon bla ma</i>)	Lama minister of the KASHAG LHENGE.
Kargyupa (<i>Bkah rgyud pa</i>)	Semi-reformed red-hat sect founded by Marpa (1012-97) and his disciples.
Karmapa (<i>Kar ma pa</i>)	Subsect of the KARGYUPA. It was politically dominant in Tibet from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries and gave its support successively to the Phagmo Drup, the Rimpung, and the Tsang lay rulers of Tibet. Its chief monastery was Tsurphu (<i>To lung Mtshur phu</i>), west of Lhasa.
Kashag Lhenge (<i>Bkah shag lhan rgyas</i>)	Council of Ministers. Kashag, for short.
Khan (<i>Qan</i>)	Chief, king. (A Mongolian word.)
Khenchen (<i>Mkhanpo chhenpo</i>)	Senior Khempo.
Khenchung (<i>Mkhanpo chhungpo</i>)	Junior Khempo.
Khutukhtu (<i>Qutuqtu</i>)	Mongolian title for an incarnate lama. The Tibetan form of this Mongolian word is "Hothogthu."
Mipon (<i>Mi dpon</i>)	Magistrate.
Misser (<i>Mi ser</i>)	Yellow men. Applied to the peasants in Central Tibet.
Monlam Chemo (<i>Smon lam Chhenmo</i>)	The Great Vow festival. The expression "Monlam" (Vow) corresponds to "Pranidhana" in Sanskrit.

Nyingmapa (<i>Rnying ma pa</i>)	Oldest sect of the Buddhism of Tibet widely believed to have been founded by GURU Padmasambhava.
Panchen	Short for <i>Pandita Chhenpo</i> , Great Sage.
Panch Sheel	Five Principles. (From Sanskrit <i>Panchasheela</i> .)
Phokhang (<i>Phogs khang</i>)	Army treasury.
Phokpon (<i>Phogs dpon</i>)	Paymaster (in the army).
Ponchen (<i>Dpon chhen</i>)	Great Chief.
Po Gyalpo (<i>Bod rgyal po</i>)	King of Tibet.
Rimpoche (<i>Rin po chhe</i>)	Precious one. An honorific applied to learned lamas.
Rimshi	Title, below that of THEJI.
Sakyapa (<i>Sa skya pa</i>)	Semi-reformed red-hat sect which had political dominance over Tibet during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Its seat and main monastery was at Sakya (<i>Sa skya</i> , Grey Earth) in Central Tibet.
Senampa (<i>Sras rnam pa</i>)	Sons of nobles.
Serpon (<i>Gser dpon</i>)	Gold superintendent.
Shango (<i>Shal ngo</i>)	Lama proctor. Applied to the head of a district in Eastern Tibet.
Shodrung (<i>Shol drung</i>)	Lay-cadre employees of the Government.
Shoton (<i>Shol ston</i>)	Monsoon festival.
Shung Tsong (<i>Gshung tshong</i>)	Government trader.
Sikyong (<i>Srid skyong</i>)	Protector of State.
Silon (<i>Srid blon</i>)	Prime Minister. It is now the designation of the highest, most senior administrative officer of Sikkim.

Ta Lama	Senior member of the YIKTSANG.
Theji	Title, below that of DZASA and above that of RIMSHI. (Originally a Mongolian word borrowed into Tibetan.)
Thichen (<i>Khri chhen</i>)	One descended from an illustrious religious house.
Thikor Chuksum (<i>Khri skor bchu gsum</i>)	Thirteen administrative units in mediaeval Tibet, each theoretically comprising ten thousand homesteads.
Thi Pa (<i>Khri pa</i>)	Enthroned one of the Ganden Monastery. Also called Thi RIMPOCHE.
Thipon (<i>Khri dpon</i>)	Chief ruling over ten thousand homesteads.
Trulku (<i>Sprul sku</i>)	Incarnate Lama.
Tsa Tsi (<i>Rta tshigs</i>)	Literally, root word. Administrative regulations.
Tse (<i>Rtse</i>)	Peak
Tsedrung (<i>Rtse drung</i>)	Peak secretaries, i.e. monk-cadre employees of the Government.
Tsikhang (<i>Rtsis khang</i>)	Finance Department.
Tsipon (<i>Rtsis dpon</i>)	Comptroller of Finance.
Tsongdu (<i>Tshogs hdu</i>)	National Assembly. It is also the name of the Bhutanese Assembly.
Yiktsang (<i>Yig tshang</i>)	Ecclesiastical Department.
Yongzin (<i>Yongs hzin</i>)	Tutor of the DALAI LAMA. The DALAI LAMA has two tutors—a senior

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