

## The Historical Status of China's Tibet

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### Introduction

China is a unified country with 56 nationalities. As a major member of this big family, the Tibetans are found in large numbers throughout the Tibet Autonomous Region, most parts of Qinghai Province, southern Gansu Province, northwest Sichuan Province and northwest Yunnan Province.

At the time of the unification of the Tibetan race, its various tribes maintained close ties with the Han and several other nationalities in western and northwestern China. During the first part of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Tubo King Songtsan Gambo unified the various Tibetan tribes on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and formed the Tubo Kingdom, which later maintained frequent contact with the Central Government of the Tang Dynasty (618-907). The marriages of Songtsan Gambo to Princess Wen Cheng and Tride Zhotsan to Princess Jin Cheng indicate that the Tibetan and the Han nationalities had gradually formed close political, economic and cultural ties. In the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century, the unified Tubo Kingdom collapsed. This was followed by the rise of many local warring factions in the Tibetan areas of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. When the Song Dynasty (960-1279) was founded in the Han-dominated areas of China, some of these local Tibetan forces (Tibetan tribes formerly subject to rule by the Tubo Kingdom) pledged allegiance to the Song court. The relations between the Tibetans and the Han became even closer during this period.

When the Mongolians founded the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), a dynasty that featured unprecedented national unity, Tibet was officially incorporated into the Chinese nation. Kublai Khan, the founding emperor of the Yuan Dynasty, granted the Sagya regime the power to administer Tibet under the rule of the Yuan government, and introduced many rules and regulations to be applied to Tibet. The Mongolian, Han, Tibetan and various other nationalities joined hands to form a political entity featuring economic and cultural prosperity. The Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) basically followed various systems introduced during the Yuan Dynasty for rule over Tibet. In carrying out a policy of pacification, the Ming Dynasty granted the title "Prince of Dharma" or "Prince" to eight government and religious leaders in the Tibetan areas. During this period of time, the Tibetan areas and the Central Plains maintained frequent economic and cultural exchanges; the relations between the Tibetan race and the other nationalities in the Chinese family developed further. After the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Manchurians unified China and founded the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). The Qing government granted the honorary title "Dalai Lama" to the Dalai and the honorary title "Panchen Erdeni" to the Panchen; it also appointed local government officials, dispatched High Commissioners to Tibet, and

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enacted laws concerning the Tibetan government system and regulations for the more effective governing of Tibet. This helped strengthen Qing government administration over Tibet and led to closer ties between Tibet and the motherland. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the Qing entered its late period, the British coupled its invasion of China's coastal areas with an invasion of Tibet. The British sowed bad blood between the Tibetan and the Han and other nationalities. The Qing court, corrupt and impotent as it was, adopted many domestic and foreign policies that proved the undoing of the Qing Dynasty. The relations between the Tibetan local government and the Central Government worsened. Nonetheless, no change took place to the Chinese nation, the unified political entity composed of the Han, Manchurian, Mongolian, Hui, Tibetan and various other nationalities. Soldiers and civilians of the Han and the Tibetan, Manchurian and Mongolian ethnic groups jointly fought against imperialist invasions, writing a brilliant page in the history of defending the motherland. In the late years of the Qing and the early days of the Republic of China (1912-49), the British left no stone unturned in their attempts to cultivate pro-British elements in the upper echelon of the ruling class in Tibet, and masterminded the Simla Conference aimed at tearing Tibet away from the motherland. All these failed to become true in the face of a boycott staged by the patriotic forces in Tibet and the resolute opposition of people throughout China. During this period, Tibet maintained ties with the Central Government of China. China continued to exercise sovereignty over Tibet, as it had since the Yuan Dynasty.

In 1949, the liberation struggle waged by the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was crowned with a sweeping victory. At the time of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, foreign imperialist and expansionist forces incited Tibetan separatists to speed up efforts towards bringing about "Tibetan independence" in an attempt to make impossible the liberation of Tibet. The CPC Central Committee and Chairman Mao Zedong decided to send the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) into Tibet "early rather than late," and worked out principles and policies for the peaceful liberation of Tibet. The PLA troops and working team members, sent into Tibet, followed the principles and policies of the CPC Central Committee and Chairman Mao Zedong to the letter and with great success. Tibet was peacefully liberated in 1951. Foreign imperialist and expansionist forces, who had been riding roughshod over the Tibetan people for more than half a century, were driven out of Tibet. The Central People's Government followed a new policy for minority affairs. Various ethnic groups in Tibet began, for the first time in history to enjoy political, economic, and social equality. The big Chinese family, composed of Tibetans and members of other nationalities, was formed on the principle of equality, unity, fraternity and cooperation. Following the revolution in Tibet, characterized by the overthrow of feudal serfdom and the emancipation of the serfs and slaves and their becoming masters of their own fate, Tibet enjoyed rapid development in the political, economic and cultural field. Tibet became an autonomous region established in the People's Republic of China in 1965. Although Tibet also experienced the chaotic "cultural revolution" (1966-76) and mistakes were made, progress made in construction has outstripped these setbacks. Tibet experienced unprecedented development of the productive forces and improvements in living standards. All the 56 nationalities in the big Chinese family, Tibetans included, have cemented a politically, economically and culturally united entity that no outside force can tear apart.

This 1,000-year-long written history between the Tibetans and various other nationalities in the big Chinese family is an inalterable fact.

Marco Polo, an Italian who came to China and visited Emperor Kublai Khan of the Yuan Dynasty in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, described Tibet as “the Province of Tibet” in his travelogue. References to Tibet as a province can be found in the editions of *The Travelogue of Marco Polo* by the Macmillan Company in 1927 and also by the John Company of New York in 1948. Obviously, Marco Polo stated in explicit term some 700 years ago that Tibet was a province of China. In the 18<sup>th</sup> volume of *The Encyclopedia Britannica* for 1973 and 1974, *Webster's Atlas* published in the United States in 1978, and *The International Atlas* Published in the 1960, maps are marked with China in larger letters and Tibet in smaller letters. This is also the case with maps published by various other countries. All these show that these publications recognize Tibet as a part of China.

As an over whelming majority of the Chinese are the Hans, the word “Chinese” was used in English to mean both the Chinese people and the Han people in specific. Although it is not a rigorously followed approach to adopt the name of the majority ethnic group of a nation as the reference for that nation, other examples do exist in the world today. In India, for example, the Indianstans make up more than 46 percent of the Indian population, constituting the country's ethnic majority. But the population also includes sizable numbers of Bengalis, Tamils, and Sikhs. The term “Indian” has been used in English to refer to all the various ethnic groups in India, not only the Indianstan ethnic majority. (Strictly speaking, however, the term should not encompass those from other ethnic groups), In the United Kingdom, the English account for some 80 percent of the national population. Other ethnic groups include the Scots, Welsh, and Irish. In various countries around the world, including the United Kingdom itself, the term “Englishmen” or “Englander” is used to refer to members of all of the various ethnic groups in the United Kingdom, not only the English, but also the Scots, Welsh, and Irish. (Again, strictly speaking, it does not include these peoples). Very few people in the United Kingdom use the proper term “British” to refer to the citizens of the United Kingdom, although it correctly means the English, Scots, Welsh, and Irish and any other ethnic minorities of the nation. This situation, which has been going on for more than 1,000 years, is one of the major reasons that many terms in English (and other languages as well) contain meanings in both broad and narrow senses. For example, “Chinese” means the “Chinese people” in a broad sense and the “Han people” in a narrow sense, while “Englander” means the people of the United Kingdom in a broad sense and the “Englander” in a narrow sense.

Because of past confusion, the use of the term “Chinese” in English translations can not correctly reflect the relations between the various nationalities within the larger Chinese family. Therefore, the Chinese government, after the founding of New China, stipulated the use of the “Han nationality,” “Hans” or “Han people.” Such rigorous use of the English terms has been accepted by foreign scholars holding just and rigorous approaches. For example, the *New Webster International English Dictionary* (third edition) published in 1961 cites the term “Han” or “Hans,” expounding it as:1) the ethnic group that moved from Central Asia to the Weishui River Valley in ancient times, members of this ethnic group expanded eastward and southward and resided in the bulk areas in eastern China, becoming the primitive Chinese nation and forming the cultural mass that holds predominance in China:2) the people of the Han nationality.

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In accordance with international practice of names being derived from the masters, terms used to mean a nationality, a place and a people of the nationality—written in the country's own language and foreign language—should be confirmed by the government and peoples of the nation. Foreigners should respect the stipulations of the country. Therefore, from the angle of ethnicity, the Tibetans are not part of the Han but from the angle of Chinese population as a whole, the Tibetans are undoubtedly part of the Chinese. This fairly and accurately tells the historical reality that has existed for more than 700 years, since the Yuan Dynasty.

The historical status of China's Tibet is clear as clean water and the blue sky—a fact known to the world.

In the last few decades, however, certain forces in Europe and the United States have supported a small number of people led by the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama to concoct a theory of “Tibetan independence,” blurring the vision of many people who are not clear about facts. This theory of “Tibetan independence” finds concise expression in *Tibet: A Political History* written in the 1960-70s by Xagabba Wangqug Dedain, a Tibetan noble, and in *The Status of Tibet* written by Michael C. van Walt van Praag, an American Hollander, in the 1980s. The theory, as laid out in the two books, is that:

(1) Tibet does not belong to China; (2) the relations between the Tang Dynasty and the Tubo Kingdom featured struggles mainly, (3) the weight of the Tibetan foreign relations during the Song Dynasty shifted away from China; (4) the relations between the two regions was one of Cho-yon only; (5) the Ming Dynasty had not interest in Tibet; (6) Tibet is a political entity; (7) there was no need to liberate Tibet; (8) the CPC invaded Tibet; (9) the CPC violates human rights in Tibet; (10) Tibet should experience national self-determination; and (11) the “government-in-exile” is the legitimate and legal government of Tibet. These are the major elements of the theory of Tibetan independence, which are meant to make trouble and tamper with history.

One loves clean water and a clear, blue sky. This book has been compiled to allow readers to clearly witness the historical status of China's sovereignty over Tibet through settling the muddied waters and sweeping the mist from the sky.

## Chapter I

### **Relations Between the Han and the Tibetans During the Tang and Song Dynasties**

The first chapter of *The Status of Tibet* by Michael C. van Walt van Praag states that the Tang-Tubo Alliance Tablet erected in 821 indicates that Tubo was then a state independent of the Tang Dynasty (618-907); the Tubo Empire was powerful enough to last for two centuries. The second chapter of *Tibet: A Political History* by Xagabba Wangqug Dedain describes how one Tibetan king succeeded another for several generations; and how the Tubo Kingdom had conquered its neighboring areas and seized control of Chang'an, the capital of the Tang Dynasty. Xagabba relates this to play up the struggle between the Tibetan and the Han, with a view to

impressing readers that struggle between the Tang and the Tubo were the major thrust of Tang-Tubo relations.

Both Van Praag and Xagabba seldom mention the most important part of history: Friendly contact between the Tibetan and the Han during the Tang Dynasty and also between the Tubo and Tang governments boosted social development and growth in production and eventually promoted economic, political and cultural prosperity.

Historical facts, however, show that the outstanding ability and far-sightedness of Tubo King Songtsan Gambo find expression in the fact that he saw the culture and production technology of the Tang Dynasty in the Central Plains in the east as worth studying by the Han's neighbors to the north, south, east, and west. After telling how the Tubo Kingdom had struggled to expand by conquering the neighboring areas, the Tibetan text of the Tang-Tubo Alliance Tablet erected in front of the Jokhang Monastery in Lhasa says: "Tianzhu (India) in the south, Dashi in the west, and Niemai and Tujue in the north were brought under [the Tubo], vied to pay tributes and acted at the deck and call [of the Tang]...In the east there is the Han state, whose huge territory reaches the sea and the place where the sun rises. Its emperor, unlike those in Nepal and some others in the south, calls for good actions." (Qabai Cedain Puncog and Norcham Wugyain: *Concise History of Tibet*, Tibetan edition, Vol. 1, p.212) The text of the alliance tablet clearly shows that the Tubo Kingdom regarded the Tang Dynasty in a way different from its neighbors in the south, west and north. It admired and placed great importance on relations with the Tang Dynasty. This is why Tubo kings, beginning with Tubo King Songtsan Gambo, took the initiative to build close ties mainly with the Tang Dynasty.

In the 630s, when Songtsan Gambo founded the Tubo Kingdom which followed the slavery system, the Tang Dynasty, under the reign of Taizong, was in its prime. The highly developed politics, economics and culture of the feudal Tang Dynasty exerted enormous influence on countries in the east and in Europe as well. Songtsan Gambo had a strong interest in the Tang, and so took the initiative to strengthen contacts with the Tang. He did his best to absorb advanced production technology and culture from the Han people in the Central Plains. He sent his ministers to the Tang court on several occasions to seek a marriage with a Tang princess. His effort succeeded in 641 when Princess Wen Cheng, a daughter of Tang Emperor Taizong's family system, was greeted into Tibet. Her dowry included statues of Sakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, and 360 volumes of Buddhist scriptures and classic works. Legend has it that Emperor Taizong also gave her various religious objects, food, 300 classic texts used for practicing divination and performing a sorcerer's dance, a bronze bowl used as a mirror that could tell good from evil, 60 varieties of books on construction and industrial arts, 100 medical prescriptions for 404 diseases, six types of medical tools, four medical books, and large amounts of silk and clothing. Princess Wen Cheng carried the statues of Sakyamuni in a horse-drawn carriage, and used mules and horses to transport the other articles. She brought into Tubo large numbers of artisans, varieties of crop seeds, and domesticated animals. Songtsan Gambo made a special trip to the headwaters of the Yellow River to greet the Tang princess. According to *The Lineage of the Tubo Kingdom*, Princess Wen Cheng, while on her way to Tubo, taught the Tibetans how to reclaim land and grow crops, erect water mills, make ropes from grass, and make sweet foods. When she reached Lhasa, she was given a rousing welcome with all the people taking to the streets to greet her. This knowledgeable Han woman believed in Buddhism. She designed and built the Jokhang and Ramoqe monasteries in places she chose. Her actions

won the respect and love of the Tibetans. After the marriage, Songtsan Gambo introduced rice mill, paper and ink making technologies from the Han area. During the period, farm tools and pottery making technology also made their way into Tubo from the Central Plains along with textile, metallurgical and building technologies. Today, the broad masses of the Tibetans still spin yarns about how Princess Wen Cheng taught the Tubo women to weave and embroider. While creating a Tibetan written language, Songtsan Gambo sent children of noble families to study poetry in Chang-an. He also invited Han men of letters to help write his legal codes and official documents. These efforts greatly enhanced Tubo's social productive forces and promoted economic and cultural development.

In 704 when Tride Zhotsan came to the throne of the Tubo Kingdom, his grandmother Molu held court and on many occasions, dispatched officials to Chang'an to seek a marriage between a Tang princess and the Tubo king. Tang Emperor Zhongzong agreed to marry Princess Jin Cheng to Tride Zhotsan in 710. Princess Jin Cheng entered Tubo bringing embroidered silks, books on handicraft making technology, articles of daily use and Qiuzi (present-day Kuche in Xinjiang) music. She also brought into Tubo many artisans and acrobats. In 712, the Tang Emperor Xuanzong was enthroned, ushering in a new period of peace in the Central Plains. This situation exerted enormous influence on Tubo. During the period, Princess Jin Cheng, extraordinarily talented as she was, financed monks in Yutian to enter Tubo and built monasteries for them to use in the study and translation of Buddhist scriptures. She introduced famous Han classics from the Tang court, such as *The Books of Poetry* (Mao Heng's version), *Book of Rites*, *Zuo Zhuang* (the famous commentary by Zuo Qiuming on *The Spring and Autumn Annuals*) and *Selected Works* (a well-known selection noted for essays of elegant style dating from early centuries AD). *The Book of Rites* and *Tactics of the Warring States* were translated into Tibetan. These helped boost social development and economic and cultural prosperity in Tubo.

Reciprocally, many aspects of the Tibetan culture were absorbed by the Han. For example, people in the Central Plains learned to play the traditional ball games of the Tubo people, and Han women learned to do their hair and makeup in the manner of the Tubo women. This naturally enriched the Han culture.

The feudal social and political systems of the Tang Dynasty, which were greatly more advanced than the social and political systems practiced in the Tubo slavery society, aroused great interest from the Tubo kings. Songtsan Gambo followed the system of the Tang Dynasty to appoint officials. The Tubo official in charge of legal affairs, for example, was installed in accordance with "the minister of punishments" listed in the Tang-Tubo Alliance Tablet. In the ensuing years, the Tubo Kingdom followed the example of the Tang Dynasty to decide titles for the reigns of its kings. Tubo King Tritso Detsan, for example, used "the seventh year of Yitai" in the Tang-Tubo Alliance Tablet as his title of reign. These played an important role to the effective rule by the Tubo government and in improving the Tubo system.

There was also frequent exchange of envoys between the Tubo Kingdom and the Tang Dynasty. According to historical books dating to the Tang period, including *System Changes During the Tang Dynasty*, *Tang Books: Tubo Volume*, *New Tang Books* and *History of China*, in the 213 years from 634 when the Tubo Kingdom had just been founded to 846 when the Tubo Kingdom collapsed, there were 191 exchanges of officials between the Tubo and the Tang,

averaging one each year. Altogether, Tang officials went to Tubo 66 times, and Tubo officials went to Tang 125 times. In some cases, there were four exchanges in a single year. In 648, when Right-Wing General Wang Xuance was sent to the Western Regions, he was attacked in Tianzuo (India). Wang managed a narrow escape, and reached Nepal and Tibet, where he sought help from the Tubo troops. Songtsan Gambo dispatched crack troops to assist Wang against Tianzuo and later sent an envoy to pay tribute to the Tang court in Chang'an. In 649 Tang Emperor Taizong passed away and Tang Emperor Gaozong came to the throne. When a Tang emissary was sent to Tubo to inform Songtsan Gambo of Emperor Taizong's death, Songtsan Gambo dispatched a special envoy to Chang'an to mourn the late emperor with sacrifices of 15 types of gold and silver jewelry. The special envoy brought a letter from Songtsan Gambo to Tang Minister of Education Sun Wuji, which read in part: "the emperor has just come to the throne. I will lead my men to fight anyone who is not loyal to him." Tang Emperor Gaozong conferred on the Tubo king the title "Imperial Son-in-Law Governor" and the honorary title "West Sea Prince." Later, Songtsan Gambo was promoted to "Treasured Prince." A stone statue was carved for the Tubo king, and placed in front of the Tomb of Tang Emperor Taizong along with statues of other Tang ministers and generals. These historical facts show very close ties between the Tang Dynasty and the Tubo Kingdom. The Tang-Tubo Alliance Tablet reads in part: "The Tang emperor and the Tubo king, as maternal uncle and nephew, have met and agreed to become allied as one." "The populace be offered peace and stability and think with one mind. Old ties be renewed and good neighbor relations be maintained." These lines also show that close and friendly political ties did exist between the Tang Dynasty and the Tubo Kingdom, and both parties expected such ties to be lasting.

Military confrontations also broke out between the Tang and the Tubo. However, warfare has been anything but rare during the 5,000 years of human civilization. Such warfare will only be eradicated when humans create a perfect society of great harmony in the distant future. Still, friendly contact made up the main thrust of the relations between the Tang and Tubo. And this is known to all.

Of course, we do not deny the fact that both the Tang and Tubo were independent states at that time, and Tang did not have official rule over the Tubo. However, when Xagabba and Van Praag talk about struggles between the Tang and the Tubo and the fact that the Tubo Kingdom was an independent state, a fact that we do not deny, they refuse to mention the very close and friendly ties between the Tang and the Tubo, who worked for joint prosperity and development. What are they aimed at, promoting national unity or inciting national hatred?

With regard to Han-Tibetan relations during the Song Dynasty, Van Praag comes to a very strange conclusion, claiming the weight of Tibetan foreign relations shifted from China to India and Nepal. In his book, Xagabba describes fragments about religious activities, such as the eminent Indian monk Atisa being invited to Tubo during the later development of Tibetan Buddhism, and the facts that the Tibetan areas, which were subject to separatist rule, lacked a centralized leadership.

Soon after downfall of the unified Tubo Kingdom, the Tang Dynasty went into decline and was toppled in 907. China was torn apart, giving rise to the Five Dynasties (907-960) and Ten Kingdoms (891-979). By this time, the Tibetan areas had entered the feudal serfdom society and were also in a fragmented political state. They lacked a centralized leadership and did not

follow a unified foreign policy. In 960, the Northern Song Dynasty was founded. Unlike the Tang Dynasty during its hey day, the Song was not powerful enough to maintain frequent contacts with U-Tsang and other Tibetan areas, which were located far from the Han area. However, it maintained still closer economic and political ties with the Tibetan-inhabited areas in Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan, areas that are close neighbors of the Han area.

The Xixia (Tangut) State, founded mainly by the Dangxiang Tribe, was rising in present-day Ningxia and northern Shaanxi, posing a threat to the minority areas in Gansu, Qinghai and Sichuan, as well as to the Song Dynasty. To cope with the invasion by the Xixia, the Song decided to beef up its military might. Efforts were made, beginning in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, to strengthen rule over the Tibetan areas in southern Gansu, the Hexi Corridor, eastern Qinghai and northwestern Sichuan by stationing troops and reclaiming wasteland. General Wang Shao recruited 300,000 Tibetans to work in Linxia and Lintao in present-day Gansu. Special markets were set up in present-day Ya'an of Sichuan, Linxia of Gansu and parts of Shaanxi to cope with the rising tea and horse trade. From that point on, trade boomed for hundred of years, allowing the Tibetans to trade horses for tea from the Han areas and emerging as a regular economic activity indispensable to both the Han and the Tibetan. The situation in which the Tibetan and Han peoples became mutually dependent and supportive in production and articles of daily life took shape.

The Song Dynasty went further to issue bows and arrows, as well as other weapons, to the Tibetan tribes in the Hexi Corridor and some other areas. In the meantime, Tibetan archers were recruited, and efforts were made to help the Tibetans build a military system similar to the militias in the Han area, to jointly ward off the Xixia invasions and harassment.

Soon after the founding of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), Gusiluo, a tribal chief of the former Tubo Kingdom, established his regime in an area centered around Maochuan (present-day Ledu) and Qingtang (present-day Xining) in the Huangshui River Valley in Qinghai. This was the largest local feudal regime composed mainly of Tibetans and also the first Amdo regime of the Tibetans. In order to consolidate its rule and grow into the chief ruler of the Tibetan tribes in the Gansu-Qinghai area, the Gusiluo regime sought support from the emperor of the Song Dynasty. The Tibetan ruler sent emissaries to the Song court. They paid tribute and sought official posts. The Song court, attaching great importance to Gusiluo's role in resisting the Xixia, managed to strengthen its time with this Tibetan regime by granting official posts and rewards to its leaders. In 1032, Song Dynasty Emperor Renzong granted Gusiluo the official posts of "Ningyuan General" and "Head of the Aichou Home Guards," as well as handsome rewards. Nine years later, in 1041, the Song emperor made Gusiluo the governor of the Baoshuang and Hexi armies. The offspring of Gusiluo, including Chiuzhan, Aliqu, Xiazhan and Longnao, all received official posts from the Song Dynasty, and the Gusiluo regime pledged allegiance to the Song court and was put under the Qinfeng Route of the 26 Routes (equivalent to provinces) established across the country during the Song Dynasty. By 1116, the areas belonging to the Gusiluo regime were made a prefecture of the Song Dynasty. The regime cooperated with the Song Dynasty in wars against the Xixia invaders.

In addition, in 1001, Song Dynasty Emperor Zhenzong made Panluzhi, chieftain of the Liugu Tibetan Tribe in Liangzhou (Wuwei) a general in charge of the defense of Yanzhou and concurrently an official in charge of the Linzhou area.



Gusiluo, Panluzhi and other Tibetan tribal leaders claimed submission to the Song court and strengthened the rule of their regimes in the capacity of Song officials. Such a relationship is clear to all.

This shows that beginning in the Song Dynasty, Gusiluo, Panluzhi and other Tibetan tribes in eastern Qinghai and western and southern Gansu came under the sovereignty of the Song Dynasty.

The relation between Tibet and India at that time was one of a religious nature. Even in terms of religious ties, India was not the chief area that maintained close religious ties with Tibet. The Tibetan areas coupled their religious ties with India as well as with Qinghai, Gansu and other Amdo areas.

Buddhism spread into the Tubo Kingdom during the Tang Dynasty and flourished there. Historically, this was called the first-period of the spread and development. Buddhism declined in Tubo when Dar-ma, the last Tubo king, banned the religion. Buddhism didn't revive and spread again in Tubo until one century later. The second-period of the spread and development of Buddhism in Tubo took place in 978, during the early days of the Northern Song Dynasty. There were two main reasons. First, the eminent monk Laqen Goinba Rabsai from Amdo, Qinghai, promoted Buddhism by lecturing its doctrines and teaching disciples, turning Amdo into a Buddhist center. Yexei Gyaincain, the abbot of the Samye Monastery in Shannan, sent disciples to study Buddhism in Amdo and introduced Buddhism into U-Tsang. In the history of Tibetan Buddhism, this is known as the "Lower Route Spread of Buddhism." Second, Ye-shes-'od of the Guge Kingdom invited the eminent Indian monk Atisa to lecture in Ngari. Atisa later went to U-Tsang, making it possible for Buddhism to be spread from Ngari to U-Tsang and to flourish there. In the history of Tibetan Buddhism, this is called the "Upper Route Spread of Buddhism." Both Lama Goinba Rabsai and Atisa were public figures who distinguished themselves for spreading Buddhism in Tibet in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. Both the lower and upper routes played their respective role in reviving Buddhism in U-Tsang. The "Upper Route Spread of Buddhism" played an important role in systemizing the Buddhist doctrines, standardizing the methods of practice, and the translation of Buddhist scriptures; while the "Lower Route Spread of Buddhism" played a role in the construction of monasteries in U-Tsang, the recruiting of monks, and the conducting of Buddhist activities. The latter began dozens of years before the former. During the second period of the spread and development of Buddhism in Tubo, the Painbo Gyalhakang Monastery in U-Tsang, the Tangboche Monastery in Shannan and the Xalhu Monastery in Rear Tibet were built by monks sent to study from Laqen Goinba Rabasi. Therefore, it is unfair to emphasize the role played by the "Upper Route Spread of Buddhism" and the influence of Indian Buddhism on Tibet.

Han culture also exerted influence on religion in U-Tsang during the Song Dynasty. A case in point is the Xalhu Monastery, built during this period. This monastery is a combination of the Tibetan and Han architectural styles, exerting great influence on U-Tsang.

There is another historical aspect that Xagabba and Van Praag refrain from mentioning: the close ties in religion and culture between the Xixia State and the Tibetan areas. This constitutes an important relationship between a region and the Tibetan areas within China during the Song Dynasty. The Xixia regime, founded mainly by the Dangxiang Tribe, was not taken as

part of the Tubo Kingdom in its process of unifying the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. The state itself was actually a local political power within the territory of China. Although Xixia's culture and religion were exposed to strong influence by the Central Plains, they had many aspects identical with those in the Tibetan areas. Xixia used not only its own language but also the Han and Tibetan scripts in carving stone tablets and in translations of Buddhist scriptures. There was also much in common with the Tubo kingdom in terms of official posts and military systems. The royal family and the populace of the Xixia State believed in Buddhism, and Tibetan Buddhism held sway in the state. During the rise of various Tibetan Buddhist sects during the second-period spread and development of Buddhism in Tubo, the royal family of the Xixia State managed to establish ties with some of these sects. Many Tibetan monks were invited to lecture on Buddhist doctrines in Xixia. The Xixia royal family established its own system of management over Buddhist monasteries by absorbing the cream from the Tubo and Han systems. The Xixia State was found to be the earliest to appoint eminent monks as "Imperial Tutors." King Tehu of the Xixia State once sent his emissary to the Curpu Monastery in Tibet, trying to invite Doisum Qenba, founder of the Garma Gagyü Sect of Tibetan Buddhism, to lecture in Xixia. Doisum Qenba didn't go, but sent a disciple, Geshe Tsangbowa, in his place. The disciple was honored as a "Master" in Xixia. When the Curpu Monastery was prepared to build an auspicious Myjü dagoba, the Xixia king sent gold and bronze to the monastery as gifts.

These historical facts show that, following the collapse of the Tubo Kingdom, the Tibetan race lacked a centralized political regime. But both Tibet and the Gusiluo regime in Qinghai maintained identity religiously and culturally with the Xixia State in Gansu, Ningxia and northern Shaanxi. Both the Gusiluo regime and the Xixia State, which operated under the rule of the Song Dynasty, given their geographical location, became the forefront of economic and cultural exchanges between the Tibetans and the other Chinese ethnic groups.

In his book, however, Xagabba refrains from mentioning this and does his best to cloud over most of the historical facts that the Gusiluo and other Tibetan tribes pledged allegiance to the Song Dynasty and maintained close religious and cultural ties with the Xixia State.

Simply put, the Tibetans began to establish close ties with the Han people during the Tang Dynasty. Such relations became closer, especially in eastern Tibetan areas, during the Song Dynasty. This historical fact, which nobody can deny and alter, negates, hide and hair, the fallacies of Xagabba and Van Praag that struggles between the Tang and the Tubo were the main theme of their relations and that the weight of the Tubo Kingdom's foreign relations shifted from China to India and Nepal.

## Chapter II

### **Relations Between the Emperor of the Yuan Dynasty and the Prince of Dharma of the Sagya Sect of Tibetan Buddhism**

The Southern Song Dynasty, founded in 1127, was toppled in 1279. Prior to this change, the Mongol Khan Kublai altered the title of his reign to "Dayuan" and claimed himself the

founding emperor of the Yuan. The Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) emerged as the first national political power characterized by minority rule of China.

Tibet was officially incorporated into China during the Yuan Dynasty, a historical fact that neither Xagabba nor Van Praag can deny. Undaunted, however, the two concoct the “Cho-yon relationship” between the Chinese emperor and the Tibetan lamas, stating that this was the only type of relationship in existence at the time.

“Cho-yon” is a Buddhist word meaning patron. The “Cho-yon relationship” is also called “the relationship between the patrons and the lamas.” The rich, who believed in Buddhism, often offered alms to monasteries and eminent monks. In return, they enjoyed priority in having the monks to recite Buddhist scriptures on their behalf. The relationship was fixed as the “Cho-yon relationship.” Such a situation is widely found in the Buddhist world.

During the Yuan Dynasty, the emperor did offer alms in terms of gold and materials to major lamas of the Sagya Sect of Tibetan Buddhism. For example, twice in two years Kublai Khan, the founding emperor of the Yuan Dynasty, offered large amounts of gold and materials as alms to Pagba, the Prince of Dharma of the Sagya Sect in Tibet. The first offering was composed of *kasaya* adorned with gold and pearls, long sleeveless jackets, jewel-encrusted utensils, Buddhist robes, hats, boots and cushions, plus one large gold ingot, four large silver ingots, riding beasts, mules and golden saddles. The second offer was composed of 56 large silver ingots, 200 bags of tea and 110 bolts of brocade. Also, in 1277, when Pagba held a Grand Summons Ceremony in Tibet that was reportedly attended by some 70,000 monks, the crown prince of Kublai Khan granted each participating monk one *qian* (equal to five grams) of gold. Reciprocally, Pagba promised to satisfy the demands of the emperor and members of the imperial family for religious activities. Pagba three times conducted *Abhiseka* consecration and other rituals for Kublai Khan. These historical facts point to the fact that the “Cho-yon relationship” did exist between the Yuan emperor and the Prince of Dharma of the Sagya Sect in Tibet. The question, however, is whether the “Cho-yon relationship” was the principal or even the only relationship that existed at the time between the two.

Historical facts suggest that, in addition to the “Cho-yon relationship” between the Yuan emperor and the Prince of Dharma of the Sagya Sect of Tibetan Buddhism, a political relationship of superior and subordinate also existed, i.e., a relationship between sovereign and subject. This political tie would have been much more important than the “Cho-yon relationship.”

#### (1) Godan and Sapan

Some of the Tibetan tribal leaders in U-Tsang began to pay tribute to the Mongol Khanate in 1206, during the reign of Genghis Khan. In 1277, the Mongol Khanate toppled the Xixia State and Genghis Khan passed away. Two years later in 1229, Wogotai came to the throne and granted Gansu, Qinghai and areas formerly held by the Xixia State as fiefs to his second son Godan, a very powerful military leader of the Mongol Khanate. Following the death of Genghis Khan, U-Tsang stopped paying tributes to the Mongol Khanate, resulting in tense relations between the two. To find a person who could represent U-Tsang in negotiations with the Mongol Khanate concerning the former's allegiance to the latter, Godan ordered his general

Dorta Nagpo to fight from Liangzhou (Wuwei) into Tibet in 1240. General Dorta Nagpo and his men were garrisoned in Razheng and Painbo. Dorta Nagpo didn't bother to go into details about various Tibetan Buddhist sects in U-Tsang and suggested that Sapan Gunga Gyaincain, a gifted eminent monk of the Sagya Sect, go to Liangzhou for the negotiation.

Godan accepted the suggestion, and issued an imperial edict in 1244, which said: "To Sagya Pandit Gunga Gyaincain: To repay my parents and the Heaven and the Earth, I need to have a Master who can tell me which path I should take. I have decided to have you. Please come in total disregard of road hardships. If you find excuse in your old age (and refuse to come), how could you explain so many alms given by Sakyamuni for the benefit of all living things in the past? Are you going against the vow you made when you studied Buddhism (when compared with Sakyamuni)? Don't you fear that I will answer the matter by sending troops stationed in the border area? ...Please come as early as possible. I will make you the leader of all monks in the West...Written on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of the eighth month in the Year of the Dragon." (*Godan's Order to Summoning Sagya Pandit*, p.67 of the Dege edition *The Sagya's Lineal Descriptions*)

Upon receipt of the imperial edicts Sapan Gunga Gyaincain and some local forces discussed matters concerning allegiance to the Mongol Khanate before setting out for Liangzhou. At the time, he was over 60 years old. After an arduous and long journey, Sapan reached his destination in 1246. In the following year Sapan Gunga Gyaincain and his two nephews—Pagba and Qana Doje—met with Godan. Their meeting led to the establishment of political ties between Tibetan local forces and the Mongol royal house. Godan and Sapan came to terms regarding Tibet's submission to Mongolia, including: Mongolia was to appoint a Sagya member as the chief manager and grant him golden and silver credential tallies; all headmen in Tubo were to submit to the golden tally holder of the Sagya Sect and refrain from acting independently; official documents, residence cards and list of tributes were to be written in three copies in Tubo, with one copy for the local official, and one copy each for Godan and the Sagya leaders; and Mongolia was to send officials to U-Tsang, where they would join the Sagya rulers in deciding tax items.

On this basis, Sapan Gunga Gyaincain wrote an open letter to the Tibetan temporal and secular leaders in U-Tsang and Ngar, informing them of the terms he had reached with Godan and explaining the necessity for Tibet to be submitted to Mongolia. This lengthy letter of historical significance says: Godan works hard under the well-intended desire of benefiting the peoples of various tribes under the Heaven. The Mongol troops are numerous in number and follow so sophisticated tactics in battle that the Xixia troops were defeated and the Tibetan troops that operated against Godan were put to route. There is only one way out, which is to submit to the Mongols. So long as we pledge allegiance to them and pay them tributes in the capacity of a loyal vassal, we will be able to receive the preferential treatment due the Uygur Tribe, with local officials continuing in their posts and live-stock continuing to be owned by their masters. Given the above consideration, and out of the Buddhist doctrines and the interests of the Tubo people and all living things, I come in person to negotiate with Godan on matters concerning submission. Because the Mongols have accepted my submission, their troops have not attacked Tubo in the last few years. So long as you can abide by the Mongol decrees, you will benefit. (*Letter of Sagya Pandit Gunga Gyaincain to Scholars and Patrons in Dbus and Gtsang*, pp.78-81 of the Dege edition *The Sagya's Lineal Descriptions*)

The long letter of Sapan Gunga Gyaincain tells that the Mongol Khanate, which later unified the whole of China and founded the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), confirmed the leading status of the Sagya Sect in Tibet, with the Sagya members given full power to administrate U-Tsang and Ngari. This ushered in the temporal and religious administration of Tibet. Even the Italian Tibetologist Duchi admitted: "In the hands of Godan, Mongolia for the first time exercised effective control of Tibet." (G. Tucci [Italy]: *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p.19, translated by Li Youyi and Deng Ruilin)

If "Cho-Yon relationship" between Godan and Sapan existed, without the relationship of sovereign and subject, how would Godan, the patron, be able to summon Sapan, an eminent monk, across thousands of miles? And further, how would Godan be able to grant Sapan the power to rule U-Tsang? How can Xagabba and Van Praag explain this away?

## (2) Kublai and Pagba

In 1251, Monge ascended the throne as the Khan. He gave a large portion of the Han and Tibetan areas to his brother Kublai, including areas of Tibet formerly under the control of Godan. Kublai continued the policy adopted by Godan by persisting in cultivating a religious leader who could help rule Tibet. In 1252, when Kublai passed through the Tibetan area east of the Jinshajiang River while on an expeditionary march to Yunnan, local forces in U-Tsang once again expressed allegiance to the Mongol Khanate. By this time, Sapan had passed away. Kublai sent for Pagba, the new leader of the Sagya Sect in Liangzhou. Pagba showed his allegiance to Kublai, and the latter expressed his great appreciation for the former. Pagba was commissioned in the capacity of Kublai's agent to rule over Tibet.

When Kublai came to the throne as the Khan in 1260, he appointed Pagba the "State Tutor." Four years later, in 1264, Kublai Khan moved his capital from Shangdu in Mongolia to Jinzhongdu (present-day Beijing). He set up the Zhongzhi (General) Council in the imperial court to handle religious affairs throughout China and also the administrative affairs in the Tibetan areas. Pagba was put in charge of the council in the capacity of "State Tutor." In 1271, Kublai changed the title of his reign to Dayuan and claimed the title of emperor of all China. Shortly after, Kublai nominated Pagba the "Imperial Tutor" and the "Great Treasure Prince of Dharma." The Zhongzhi (General) Council was turned into the Xuanzheng (Political) Council in 1288, being on an equal footing in terms of power with the Privy Council, the Cabinet Secretaries and the Censorate. The four were the most important imperial court organs under the direct control of the emperor, and Pagba thus became a highly powerful government official in the imperial court who was appointed by the emperor. From that point on, emperors of various generations appointed well-learned high lamas of the Sagya Sect as the "Imperial Tutors," and this emerged as a set system. G. Tucci called Pagba and other high lamas, who held official posts in the imperial court, "the abbots" and pointed out in explicit terms: "The abbots were not kings or dukes. They were officials, appointed by the emperor through the issue of imperial edict and seals of authority. As they were Imperial Tutors, they enjoyed extremely high respect and honor." "The Imperial Tutors issued writs in the name of the supreme imperial power they were bestowed." (G. Ducci [Italy]: *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, pp.24-25, translated by Li Youyi and Deng Ruilin). In 1265, Kublai accepted Pagba's recommendation to appoint a Sagya Ponchen (which means high-ranking Sagya official) of full power over Tibetan affairs. Pagba appointed Sangge, his favorite disciple, who had a good command of the Tibetan, Han, Mongolian and Hui

languages as the "Official Translator." Kublai Khan, attracted by Sangge's talents, transferred him to the imperial court and offered him an official post. Sangge was appointed the "Right-Hand Prime Minister," becoming a very powerful Tibetan official in the Yuan court.

If Kublai Khan, the founding emperor of the Yuan Dynasty, and Sagya Pagba maintained only the "Cho-yon relationship" and no subordinate relationship ever existed between the two, how could Kublai, the patron, order Pagba, an alms recipient high lama, to his court? How could Kublai have Sangge, a favorite disciple of Pagba and the Official Translator, work in his court and appointed him into official positions?

Indisputable historical facts show that Genghis Khan began to maintain a form of subordinate relationship with some leaders of U-Tsang; Prince Godan coupled his "Cho-yon relationship" with Sapan Gunga Gyaincain with clearly defined king-official ties; and Kublai coupled his "Cho-Yon relationship" with Sagya Pagba with emperor-minister ties.

Kublai also appointed Qana Doje, a brother of Pagba, as "Prince Palen" and issued him a gold seal of authority. This set the precedence of Tibetans receiving the Yuan emperor's appointment to official posts. Prince Palen, acting in accordance with the Yuan emperor's edict, took charge of Tibetan affairs. Upon his death, Pagba recommended and the Yuan emperor appointed the Sagya Ponchen as administrator over Tibet. These are cases in point showing the superior-subordinate relationship that existed between the Yuan emperor and high monks of the Sagya Sect.

Historical materials both in Tibetan and Han records show the Yuan Central Government ruled Tibet, and lengthy and complete policies were formed to guide this rule. For example, in view of the fact that leaders in the Tibetan areas mostly took charge of religious and governmental affairs, the Yuan court stipulated that both lay and religious officials should be appointed below the commander level to take charge of military and administrative affairs. This later became a fixed system for generations of Tibetan governments to follow. Also for example, in view of the actual situation in which areas under the rule of the former Tubo Kingdom had been divided into independent areas during the late Tang Dynasty, the Yuan Dynasty set up three pacification commissioner's offices (namely the HeZhou, the Dokhams, and the U-Tsang and Ngari Korsum pacification commissioner's offices) in Tibetan areas throughout China, and put them under the Xuanzheng (Political) Council. Major officials on the Xuanzheng (Political) Council and in the pacification commissioner's offices and the wanhu (10,000-Households) offices were nominated by the Xuanzheng (Political) Council or the Imperial Tutor and appointed by the Yuan emperor by imperial edict. Out of military and national defense needs, the Yuan Dynasty frequently stationed troops in Tibet. Given the fact that U-Tsang and Ngari were sparsely populated and unevenly distributed in resources, the Yuan Dynasty stipulated the amounts of tributes to be paid by various localities, and set up 15 postal stations to improve communications in Tibet. Residents around each postal station were charged with providing horses for the delivery of official documents and with providing rooms and meals for passing officials. This is known as the ula system. The Yuan Dynasty also set up military stations in various localities in Tibet, to strengthen Central Government rule over military and government affairs in Tibet. This also helped boost economic and cultural ties between the hinterland of the motherland and Tibet.

When the Imperial Tutor of the Yuan Dynasty issued writs to Tubo regarding management of administrative and religious affairs, they started with such words as “In the imperial edict of the emperor” or “According to the imperial edict of the emperor.” Kublai’s edict to Tibetan monks reads in part:

“You monks should not fight for official posts. It is no good to have too many officials. No one should bully the other by dint of the imperial edict. Your monks do not join the army and do not fight battles. Those who know the teachings of Sakyamuni lecture, and those who do not know listen. You concentrate on doctrines, reciting scriptures, practicing Buddhism, praying for blessings from the Heaven, and praying for happiness for me, the sovereign...If you do not follow the teachings of Sakyamuni, the Mongols will say whether the teachings of Sakyamuni are feasible. Does this mean you are denounced?...You monks should not perpetrate evil and should not make me lose face in public. You should act in accordance with Buddhist doctrine and pray to the Heaven for luck and happiness. I will act as your patron,” (*Kublai’s Edict to Tibetan Monks*, pp.97-98 of the Dege edition *The Sagya’s Lineal Descriptions*) “I, the sovereign, have followed the teachings of Sakyamuni to ask Master Pagba, who is good at explaining the Buddhist doctrine before the public, to perform abhiseca rituals for me, and have appointed him the State Tutor, placing him in charge of all monks... You must not violate the teachings of Sakyamuni. Instead, you must pray to the Heaven for my luck and happiness.” (*Kublai’s Pearl Edict to Monks*, pp.94-95 of the Dege edition *The Sagya’s Lineal Descriptions*)

The tone of the imperial edict – especially such lines as “I will act as your patron” and “...placing him in charge of all monks” –show that the Yuan emperor was more than a patron to the Tibetan monks and Pagba; he was their paramount monarch.

The Yuan Dynasty sent officials to Tibet to conduct household censuses in 1260, 1268, 1287 and 1334, and then established 13 wanhu (10,000-households) *The Sagyas Lineal Descriptions* records standards concerning the census and the resultant establishment of various administrative organizations in Tibet:

“A small household has a house, propped up with six pillars and occupied by a couple, plus their two children and one male and one female servants, totaling six people; and owns two kinds of animals—horses and mules, bulls, milk cows, goats and sheep, and 12 Mongolian-ke (15 ke equal one hectare) farmland. Every 25 small households equal a large household. Every two large households equal a horse head. Every two horse heads equal 100-households. Every ten 100-households equal one 1,000-household. Every ten 1,000-households equal one 10,000-households. Every ten 10,000-households equal one Route. Every ten Routes equal a province. Mongol Emperor Kublai exercises jurisdiction over 11 provinces. The three Tibetan areas are not large enough to be a province, but, as they are the residence of the Grand Prince of Dharma (Pagba) and also the place where Buddhist doctrines are propagated, they have to be taken as a province.” (Qabai Cedain Puncog and Norcham Wugyain: *Concise History of Tibet*, Tibetan edition, Vol..II, pp.38-39)

## The Historical Status of China's Tibet

When quoting this section in his book *Tibet: A Political History*, Xagabba deletes the most important lines: “The three Tibetan areas are not a province, but, as they are the residence of the Grand Prince of Dharma (Pagba) and also the place where Buddhist doctrines are propagated, they have to be taken as a province.” These important lines clearly stipulate that Tubo was one of the 12 provinces of China during the Yuan Dynasty. In his book *Concise History of Tibet*, Qabai Cedain Puncog, a famous Tibetologist, points out that this intentional deletion by Xagabba is a serious problem in scholarship.

Marco Polo, an Italian traveler in China, met with Kublai Khan and became a member of his imperial court. He mentions “the Province of Tibet” in his *Marco Polo Travelogue*, a fact that supports the correctness of the situation recorded in *The Sagya's Lineal Descriptions*: Tubo was a province of China.

In the Buddhist world, alms recipient eminent monks enjoy a position higher than their patrons. If the Yuan Dynasty emperor and the Sagya Prince of Dharma maintained only a “Choyon relationship,” how could this patron send people to appoint officials, establish administrative organizations, station troops, set up postal stations, levy taxes and conduct censuses in areas where the alms recipient eminent monks were located? All in all, this points to only one possible conclusion: the Chinese emperor enjoyed paramount authority in the areas under his sovereignty, and these areas included Tibet. This objective history can hardly be tampered with or altered by Xagabba and others.