

Making the State on the Sino-Tibetan Frontier: Chinese Expansion and Local Power in Batang,
1842-1939

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Columbia University
2014

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Abstract

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This dissertation analyzes the process of state building by Qing imperial representatives and Republican state officials in Batang, a predominantly ethnic Tibetan region located in southwestern Sichuan Province. Utilizing Chinese provincial and national level archival materials and Tibetan language works, as well as French and American missionary records and publications, it explores how Chinese state expansion evolved in response to local power and has three primary arguments. First, by the mid-nineteenth century, Batang had developed an identifiable structure of local governance in which native chieftains, monastic leaders, and imperial officials shared power and successfully fostered peace in the region for over a century. Second, the arrival of French missionaries in Batang precipitated a gradual expansion of imperial authority in the region, culminating in radical Qing military intervention that permanently altered local understandings of power. While short-lived, centrally-mandated reforms initiated soon thereafter further integrated Batang into the Qing Empire, thereby demonstrating the viability of New Policy reforms and challenging the idea that the late Qing was a failed state. Finally, I posit that despite almost two decades of political, economic, and social upheaval in the post-Qing period, Nationalist officials' ability to repel central Tibetan attempts to assert their authority over Batang while effectively denying multiple movements for autonomous self-rule by local Batang political activists who were also Nationalist Party representatives directly contributed to Batang's incorporation into the Nationalist state. This analysis of Batang's transition from an imperial domain of the Qing Empire to a county in the newly created province of Xikang in 1939 highlights China's desultory and still incomplete transition from empire to nation.

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Acknowledgements

A dissertation is rarely the product of one mind, and this one is no different. I cannot but begin by breaking with convention to thank my wife, Asuka, for her unwavering support that has seen this project begin in a sun-drenched seminar room at the University of Hawai'i many years ago, move to the learned halls of Columbia University, absorb the demands of professional diplomacy across the globe, and reach its present form in northeast China. Her constant encouragement and good humor has been my source of inspiration.

I would also like to extend my sincerest gratitude to Madeleine Zelin, my advisor. Through an unexpectedly long writing process, she has always offered insightful guidance, pushing me to connect local events in a far-flung corner of the Sino-Tibetan frontier to larger historical trends and ideas. Robert Barnett has also been a steadfast supporter of my research since I arrived at Columbia, and I cannot overstate how important his mentorship has been. I have been very fortunate to benefit from rich interactions with many other Columbia University professors and scholars, including Karen Barkey, who introduced me to the value of comparative studies; Gray Tuttle, whose scholarship demonstrates the importance of Tibet to our understandings of modern China; Sherry Ortner (now at UCLA), who showed me Tibet from its other borders; Carol Gluck, who was instrumental in bringing me to New York; Robert Hymes, whose historiographical acumen continues to amaze me; Michael Tsin (now at UNC Chapel Hill), who opened my eyes to the richness of modern Chinese history; and the late Pei-yi Wu, who pretended to love my strange classical texts from the Sino-Tibetan frontier as much as I did. I also wish to thank the entire staff of the C.V. Starr East Asian Library for their research assistance during my time at Columbia.

This project began in Hawai'i, and my intellectual debt to Dru Gladney is immense. Dru was the ideal M.A. advisor whose introduction to the intricacies of anthropological theory continues to shape my thinking. Thanks to his ever-present encouragement, I am not only a better thinker; I am also a better surfer. Harry Lamley, also at Hawai'i, provided important feedback in this project's early stages, for which I am grateful.

I also had the great fortune to benefit from the wisdom of the late E. Gene Smith, whose infectious passion for the study of Tibet knew no bounds.

I would be remiss not to thank the many language teachers that have given me access to the beautiful worlds of Chinese and Tibetan history. I am particularly indebted to Xu Long, Tenzin Norbu, Xia Jing, Rose Shen, Wang Sulan, Zhang Xuyin, and Yao Weili.

Over the years this project has developed I have benefitted from many other people around the world, including (in rough geographic order): Fabio Lanza, Georgia Mickey, Ian Miller, Kwang-kyoon Yeo, David Atwill, Marielle Prins, AS, LT, Yanglin Dorje, Qin Heping, Lang Weiwei, Chen Bo, Douglas Wissing, Alex Gardner, Robert Bare, Michael Graham, and Stephen Sears. My thanks for their contributions, direct and indirect, are deeply heartfelt.

I would also like to acknowledge the numerous organizations that provided financial support for research related to this project, including the U.S. Department of Education, the Social Science Research Council, the Weatherhead East Asian Institute at Columbia University, and the American Historical Association.

And finally, I would like to thank my parents, Bill and Linda Coleman, for raising me with the curiosity to explore the world while not forgetting where I come from.

For Asuka, who has always had faith

List of Abbreviations

| | |
|--------------|--|
| <i>BTXZ</i> | <i>Batang xianzhi</i> (巴塘县志) |
| <i>JJD</i> | <i>Jiaowu jiaoan dang</i> (教務教案檔) |
| <i>KPDM</i> | <i>Khams phyogs dkar mdzes khul gyi dgon sde so so'i lo rgyus gsal bar bshad pa thub bstan gsal ba'i me long zhes bya ba bshugs</i> , vol. 2 |
| <i>QCBDS</i> | <i>Qingmo Chuan Dian bianwu dang'an shiliao</i> (清末川滇边务档案史料) |
| <i>QSL</i> | <i>Da Qing lichao shilu</i> (大清歷朝實錄) |
| <i>QZZ</i> | <i>Qingdai Zangshi zoudu</i> (清代藏事奏牘) |

Dates

I present all dates first in the Julian solar calendar. I record Chinese date references following the Chinese lunar calendar with reign name first, followed by the year, month, and day. For example, GX 1.2.23 is the Chinese lunar calendar rendering for March 30, 1875. An asterisk (*) after a lunar calendar date indicates it occurred during an intercalary month. I use the following abbreviations for Qing imperial reign names:

| | |
|----|-----------------------|
| SZ | Shunzhi (1644-1661) |
| KX | Kangxi (1662-1722) |
| YZ | Yongzheng (1723-1735) |
| QL | Qianlong (1736-1795) |
| JQ | Jiaqing (1796-1820) |
| DG | Daoguang (1821-1850) |
| XF | Xianfeng (1851-1861) |
| TZ | Tongzhi (1862-1874) |
| GX | Guangxu (1875-1907) |
| XT | Xuantong (1908-1911) |

Notes on Transliteration

For the purposes of this work, I have transliterated Tibetan terms and proper nouns that appear in the body of this dissertation in such a way as to render them easily pronounceable to English speakers. Upon the first appearance of a Tibetan term or proper noun, I have included a transliteration of the word according to the Wylie Transliteration System following it in parenthesis.¹ I have also transliterated Tibetan terms and proper nouns in Tibetan language works that appear in footnotes and/or the bibliography according to the Wylie system unless the author(s) have provided alternative English transliterations.

I have transliterated Chinese terms, place names, and personal names according to the standard Hanyu Pinyin system (漢語拼音), except in such cases where other transliterations are more familiar, such as Sun Yat-sen (孫中山). Chinese characters appear in parenthesis after the first occurrence of proper nouns and key words or phrases that may be best understood in the original language.

Chinese does not have a standard method to transliterate Tibetan terms, place names, or personal names. As a result, it is not always clear to what object, location, or person a Chinese author may be referring when he transliterates Tibetan into Chinese. When the original Tibetan term or place name to which a Chinese transliteration refers is indisputable, I use the Tibetan term or place name, except in some cases when the Chinese term or place name occurs more commonly in discourse of the time. When the original Tibetan term or place name is uncertain, I retain the Chinese transliteration of the term or place name. Although Tibetan personal names have relatively standard spellings, Chinese authors do not transliterate them with consistency.

¹ Turrell V. Wylie, "A Standard System of Tibetan Transcription," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 22 (1959): 261-267.

When I have been able to confirm the Tibetan spelling of a personal name transliterated in Chinese, I use the original Tibetan spelling. Otherwise, I use the Hanyu Pinyin transliteration of the name.

Tibetan personal names present an added challenge. In frontier areas like Batang (‘Ba’ thang, 巴塘), the subject of this study, people were often of mixed ethnicity, and they commonly held two (or more) names: one in Tibetan and one in Chinese. Choosing which name to use when referring to a historical person is not always obvious. In principle, I have adopted the name used most commonly by the individual in question, his/her contemporaries, and secondary source authors who have written about that person. For example, throughout this dissertation I refer to Tibetan Kelzang Tsering (Skal bzang Tshe ring, 格桑澤仁) by his Tibetan name, although he was also known as Wang Tianhua (王天化) and Wang Tianjie (王天傑). On the other hand, I refer to Tibetan Jiang Anxi (江安西) by his Chinese name, although he was given the Tibetan name Lobsang Thundrup (Lob sang Thun drup, 洛松鄧珠) at birth.

I have made every attempt to verify the proper transliteration of French names written in Chinese. For those names for which I could not identify the original French, I follow the Hanyu Pinyin system as they are written in Chinese language materials.

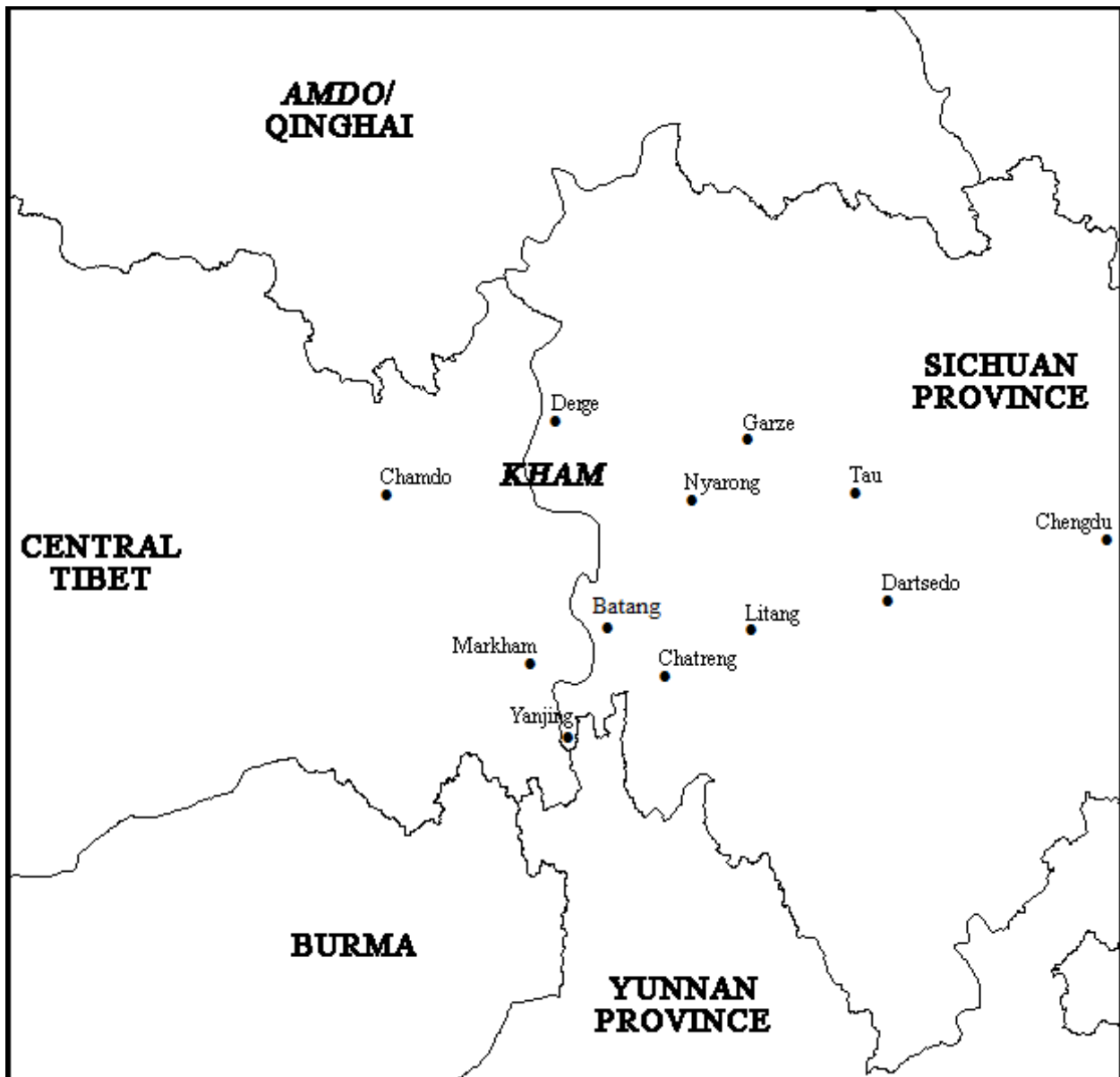
Maps

Map 1:



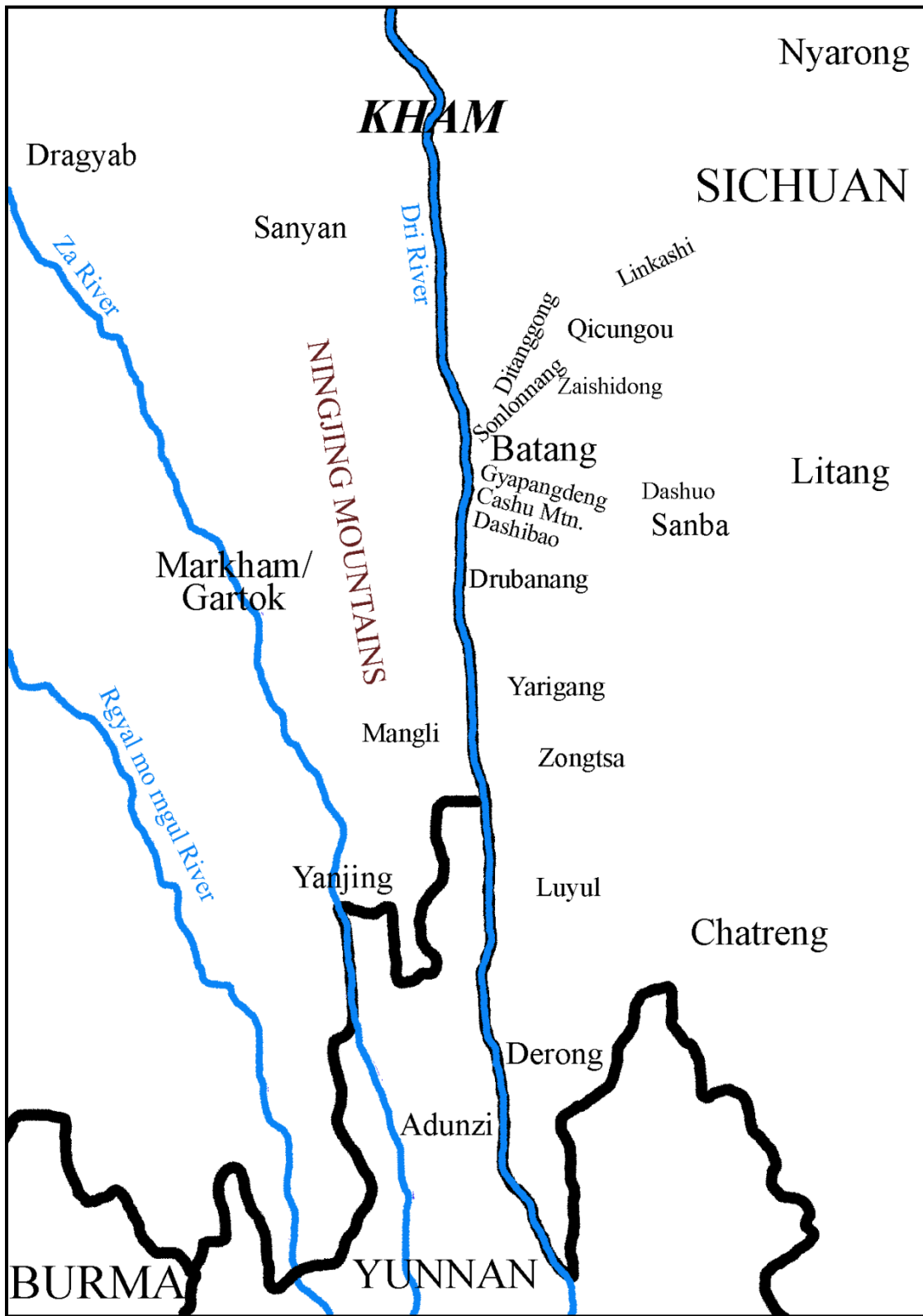
Ethnographic Tibet in the Qing Empire

Map 2:



Major towns in Kham in the Nineteenth Century

Map 3:



Batang and Surrounding Territories in the Early Twentieth Century

Chapter One: Introduction

This dissertation analyzes the ascendancy of Batang as a locus of consequential political events and activities in China's late Qing and Republican eras, the impact of these developments on local society, and their significance in the broader history of China and Tibet during this time period. In short, local circumstances—people, events, society—matter in Chinese and Tibetan history. This dissertation will outline a narrative history that demonstrates the key roles and far-reaching influence of Batang in nineteenth and twentieth century China and Tibet despite its isolated geographic location on the frontier between these two powers.

Polemics plague historical scholarship on Tibet written since the region's liberation by the People's Liberation Army in 1951. While some scholars claim that Tibet has been “an inalienable part of Chinese territory since the 13th century,”¹ others assert that “Tibet possessed both actual and formal independence...throughout its history” until 1951.² The persistence of similar rhetoric in the twenty-first century not only complicates China's contemporary relations with Tibetans inside and outside its borders, but it also obfuscates our understanding of the complex nature of Tibet's historical relationship with China. By critically analyzing the history of Batang, an ethnically Tibetan principality on the Sino-Tibetan frontier, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this dissertation will provide much needed historical perspective to the history of Tibet's complicated and shifting relationship with China.

Batang is situated in Kham (Khams, 康區 or 西康), an ethnically Tibetan region separated from central Tibet by high mountains and precipitous river valleys that today makes up

¹ Yang Gongsu, “The Origin and Analysis of the Schemes of the So-called ‘Independence For Tibet’,” *Theses on Tibetology in China*, ed. Hu Tan (Beijing: China Tibetology Press, 1991), 290.

² Michael van Walt van Praag. *The Status of Tibet* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 140.

much of western Sichuan Province and the eastern part of the Tibet Autonomous Region.³ Two commonly-held assumptions complicate the historical experience of Batang and Kham in general. The first assumption holds that the central Tibetan government in Lhasa maintained power throughout all areas inhabited by ethnic Tibetans, including Batang and Kham; the second, that Tibetans remained beyond direct Chinese influence until the arrival of the People's Liberation Army in the region in 1950. Batang's historical experience belies both assumptions. To the contrary, while the Dalai Lama maintained significant spiritual authority in Batang and Kham, direct rule by central Tibetan officials was non-existent in Batang and rare throughout Kham in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On the other hand, due to the sustained presence of Chinese officials, soldiers, and migrants in Kham, Chinese influence in the region was widespread, particularly in Batang.

This dissertation traces the growth of state power in Batang in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a desultory process that eventually resulted in the region's formal incorporation as Batang County in the new Chinese province of Xikang in 1939. The process of Batang's integration into the Chinese state should not be told merely as a teleological story of coercive incorporation. Rather, I will demonstrate that local power holders—headmen; monastic leaders; central Tibetan, imperial, and Republican officials; and merchants—actively manipulated both Chinese and central Tibetan policies, institutions, and ideas to promote their own unique interests. While the coerciveness of state action in Batang should not be ignored, we must also consider the contingent nature of expansion on the Sino-Tibetan frontier. Local power holders in Batang successfully redirected the imperial and nation building projects of China and

³ In Tibetan areas, traditional toponyms only rarely are fully contiguous with the boundaries of contemporary administrative districts. Kham, for example, also includes the Deqing (迪慶) area of northwestern Yunnan (雲南) Province and portions of Chamdo (Chab mdo, 昌都, known in the Qing as 察木多) and Markham (Smar khams, 芒康) in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (西藏自治區). I have made every attempt to clarify when traditional and contemporary toponyms diverge significantly.

Tibet in important ways and with lasting consequences. Closely analyzing changes in the way power holders understood and wielded their influence in Batang from 1842 to 1939, this dissertation presents as yet untold perspectives on the processes of the region's gradual incorporation into the Qing Empire and the Republican nation-state.

Understanding the State: Tibet, Kham, and Batang

In his 1997 policy study, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon: China, Tibet, and the Dalai Lama*, historian and anthropologist of Tibet Melvyn Goldstein addresses the historical roots of the Tibet Question, *i.e.*, the long-standing conflict over the political status of Tibet in relation to China.⁴ A fundamental aspect of this question involves the nature of Tibet itself. As twentieth century scholarship on Tibet has shown, any attempt to describe "Tibet" as a region is fraught with contentious political implications, but it is precisely because of its contentiousness that we must briefly consider this question. Sir Charles Bell, former British officer and close friend of the 13th Dalai Lama (1876-1933), was the first author to attempt to explain in English what has become the paradigmatic description of Tibet. In the early twentieth century there existed, Bell argued, two Tibets: a political Tibet and an ethnographic Tibet.⁵ Writing almost forty years later, Hugh Richardson, a British diplomat who served in Lhasa as an official of the colonial Indian government in the 1930s and 1940s, explained Bell's distinction:

In "political" Tibet the Tibetan government have [*sic*] ruled continuously from the earliest times down to 1951. The region beyond that to the north and east [Amdo and Kham]...is its "ethnographic" extension which people of Tibetan race once inhabited exclusively and where they are still in the majority. In that wider area, "political" Tibet

⁴ Melvyn C. Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon: China, Tibet, and the Dalai Lama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

⁵ Charles Bell, *Tibet: Past and Present* (1924; reprint, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1992), 5-8. For a critique of British influence on the question of Tibet's sovereignty and identity, see Dibyesh Anand, "Strategic Hypocrisy: The British Imperial Scripting of Tibet's Geopolitical Identity," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 68, no. 1 (2009): 227-252.

exercised jurisdiction only in certain places and at irregular intervals; for the most part, local lay or monastic chiefs were in control of districts of varying size. From the 18th century onwards the region was subject to sporadic Chinese infiltration.⁶

Today, “political” Tibet is roughly contiguous with the Tibet Autonomous Region as demarcated by the People’s Republic of China. Known in Tibetan as Ü-Tsang (Dbus Gtsang, 衛藏), scholars generally agree that “political” Tibet encapsulates the territory over which the Dalai Lamas maintained effective and generally uninterrupted sovereignty via the Ganden Phodrang (Dga’ ldan Pho brang) government until the arrival of the People’s Liberation Army in 1950-1951. When scholars refer to central Tibet, they are generally speaking of Bell’s “political” Tibet. I, too, have adopted this convention.

“Ethnographic” Tibet, on the other hand, is much larger.⁷ It includes the Ü-Tsang regions, as well as Tibetan-inhabited areas of Qinghai and southern Gansu Provinces to the northeast, known in Tibetan as Amdo (A Mdo, 安多); and western Sichuan and northwestern Yunnan Provinces to the east, commonly referred to as Kham. During the period of this study, ethnographic Tibet was predominantly Tibetan, but Han, Hui, and other ethnic groups lived in many areas on the Tibetan plateau. Most of these non-Tibetans were soldiers attached to Qing garrisons along the main trade routes through the region, but there were also small communities of Han and Hui merchants in many towns in ethnographic Tibet. By the mid-eighteenth century, for example, Batang was home to over eighty Han families. Small in number and almost always male, non-Tibetan migrants frequently intermarried with Tibetans while attempting to preserve their Confucian traditions in a foreign cultural environment. Among these traditions, an emphasis

⁶ Hugh Richardson, *Tibet and Its History* (1962; reprint, Boston: Shambhala, 1986), 1-2.

⁷ See Map 1: Ethnographic Tibet in the Qing Empire.

on education for young people would eventually stimulate dramatic change in Batang and, by extension, in Tibetan history.

As Richardson notes above, the Tibetan government did not maintain sovereignty over all of ethnographic Tibet, but that was not always the case. The peak of Tibet's political power occurred under the leadership of Songtsen Gampo (Srong btsan Sgam po, c.609-649), who unified Tibetans across the plateau and initiated a kingdom that saw unrivaled political power and cultural growth for two centuries.⁸ However, it was only during this period of kings that political Tibet encompassed all of ethnographic Tibet. With the gradual decline of central authority in Lhasa, political Tibet gradually decreased in size, the empire fragmented, and a collection of independent principalities, especially in the frontier regions of Amdo and Kham between China proper and central Tibet, arose in place of a centralized imperial government with its capital in Lhasa. From the ninth to the sixteenth centuries, secular elites and religious leaders in these two areas ruled relatively small and isolated principalities with little outside influence. Even when the powerful Sakya (Sa skya) religious leader Sakya Pandita (1182-1251) initiated the "priest-patron" (*mchod-yon*) relationship with the Mongols in the thirteenth century, thereby effectively incorporating Tibet in the Mongol empire, minor kingdoms on the Kham and Amdo frontiers remained largely independent of central Tibetan control. It was only with the expansion of the Gelug (Dge lugs) tradition in the sixteenth century under the leadership of Sonam Gyatso (Bsod nams Rgya mtsho, 1543-1588), who was later given the title Dalai Lama by his powerful Mongol patron, that central Tibet again re-exerted its power into Amdo and Kham. Nevertheless, a dearth of local level historical documents prevents us from determining the extent of central Tibetan political influence in most areas along the Sino-Tibetan frontier throughout much of Tibet's history. In fact, it is not until the early eighteenth century with the arrival of Qing soldiers

⁸ David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet* (Boston: Shambhala, 1995), 27-32.

in Sino-Tibetan borderlands on their way to Lhasa that we begin to get a glimpse of local power and the extent of central Tibetan authority in much of Kham.

Scholars, journalists, government officials, and activists have spilled much ink trying to define and resolve the relationship between Tibet and China. What is lacking in these discussions is thorough examination of the historical nature of governance in areas of disputed sovereignty. This dissertation directly addresses governance in Batang, one region of disputed sovereignty along the Sino-Tibetan frontier.

Scholars generally agree that Tibet in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a decentralized state, but the nature of the Tibetan polity remains a subject of debate. For example, in his survey of Tibetan polities across the plateau, Pedro Carrasco describes a loose form of state organization in which local rulers of varying levels of importance were “subject to the Lhasa government but not sharing in the central government nor forming part of the bureaucratic set-up of the Lhasa officialdom.”⁹ If we are to believe C.W. Cassinelli and Robert Ekvall, who argue more strongly in favor of a decentralized state, Tibet consisted of independent kingdoms that had only a “formal” relationship with the government in Lhasa.¹⁰ Other scholars challenge Cassinelli and Ekvall’s characterization of Tibetan governance as overly decentralized. For example, Goldstein argues that a “delicate balance between centralized and decentralized (feudallike) political authority” best explains the Tibetan political system. Under this system, the Dalai Lama administered Tibet via a religious and aristocratic government that was not only accepted as legitimate in name but also exercised overt power over hundreds of estates, each ruled by a lord that represented either a religious institution or a lay aristocratic family. While the

⁹ Pedro Carrasco, *Land and Polity in Tibet* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1959), 120.

¹⁰ C.W. Cassinelli and Robert Ekvall, *A Tibetan Principality: The Political System of Sa Skya* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969).

Dalai Lama's government maintained political supremacy over most of these estates in central Tibet, this arrangement did not preclude the government from ceding broad powers to these subordinate estates, powers that included the extraction of taxes and corvée labor and the maintenance of local peace. Nevertheless, several powers held exclusively by the Dalai Lama's government support its superordinate status vis-à-vis other estates. For instance, the central Tibetan government maintained exclusive control over the military, for which they recruited men from across central Tibet. The Dalai Lama's government also controlled Tibet's system of communication and transportation by maintaining postal transit stations throughout the region, coined money, issued postage stamps, and controlled relations with foreign powers. Significantly, the central government furthermore served as a court of last appeals. Although local lords (lay or religious) held primary judicial authority over the people on their estate, individuals unsatisfied with a lord's decision had the right to bring their case to the central government for adjudication, and it was not uncommon for the central government to overturn a lord's decision. In such cases, the lord had no further recourse. Finally, the Dalai Lama's government maintained the right to levy taxes and impose rules on other estates. Even though the 9th Panchen Lama (1883-1937), Tibet's highest ranking religious leader after the Dalai Lama, fled Tibet and lived out his remaining years in China to protest new taxes imposed on his estate by the Dalai Lama, in the end his estate representatives had no choice but to submit to Lhasa's sovereignty and pay the taxes demanded of them.¹¹

¹¹ Goldstein makes this argument most explicitly in Melvyn Goldstein, "The Balance between Centralization and Decentralization in the Traditional Tibetan Political System: An Essay on the Nature of the Tibetan Political Macro-Structure." *Central Asiatic Journal* 15, no. 3 (1971): 170-182. He adopts a similar "balanced" approach in several other works, including "An Anthropological Study of the Tibetan Political System." (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1968), and "The Circulation of Estates in Tibet: Reincarnation, Land and Politics." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 32 (1973): 445-455. Grunfeld makes a parallel argument for a "balanced" state. See A. Tom Grunfeld, *The Making of Modern Tibet* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 9.

Geoffrey Samuel has also written on the nature of the Tibetan state, and he agrees with Goldstein that the Dalai Lama's government maintained specific centralized rights that extended over other estates. Adding to Goldstein's findings, Samuel even points out that during the reign of the 13th Dalai Lama, the Lhasa government extended its power in the religious sphere by controlling access to senior monastic positions in the government. Nevertheless, Samuel argues that Goldstein's description of the Tibetan polity as balanced between centralization and decentralization should not be used to describe other areas of ethnographic Tibet that were beyond the reach of the central government. Rather, Samuel suggests that it is best to understand Tibet as a "stateless society" in which overlapping societies shared sovereignty within a continuous social field. In other words, the wide variety of political and social formations in Tibet, ranging from religious estates to secular kingdoms, agricultural communities to nomadic pastoralists, in which some groups exercised control over others while still others self-governed, necessitates that we refrain from trying to interpret the Tibetan political structure in terms of our preconceived Western models of governance.¹² Samuel also suggests that Stanley Tambiah's well-known concept of a "galactic polity" may be used to describe Tibet. Arguing that the Western notion of a state is inappropriate for Buddhist societies, Tambiah suggests that traditional South and Southeast Asian Buddhist polities were organized in mandala-like structures of concentric circles with exemplary centers and regional administrations that mimicked the center. At times, the center may exert close control over the periphery. At other

¹² Geoffrey Samuel, "Tibet as a Stateless Society and Some Islamic Parallels." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 41, no. 2 (1982): 215-229; and Geoffrey Samuel, *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993, especially Chapters 1 and 3.

times, that control may wane and regional centers may function independent of central influence.¹³

Tambiah's galactic polity model has much to offer, but is it the best way to describe traditional Tibet's political structure? Georges Dreyfus contends that this concept is also inadequate and proposes that while Tibet may have at one time been a galactic polity, by the eighteenth century it was clearly moving toward centralization with the increasing power of the Dalai Lama and the Gelug religious tradition, which were taking concrete steps to codify Tibet's laws, control the military, collect revenue, exercise judicial authority, and regularize its political administration. Acknowledging that "inequalities of the spread of the power of the Lhasa government over the rest of Tibet were real," Dreyfus suggests we consider Tibet in the early twentieth century to be a semi-bureaucratic state or polity with an identifiable state apparatus.¹⁴ Interestingly, Dreyfus's evidence of Tibet's bureaucracy is almost identical to Goldstein's evidence of a state balanced between centralization and decentralization. We can conclude, therefore, that at least in central Tibet, the Dalai Lama's government maintained identifiable, but not complete, sovereignty over much of the region. At the same time, this sovereignty did not preclude other estates from exercising limited local sovereignty. But what of governance on the Tibetan frontier?

I find two things remarkable in the literature on the history of the Tibetan state and governance. First, there is a relative dearth of published scholarship that focuses on individual Tibetan polities or estates, the fundamental building blocks of the Tibetan state, be it

¹³ Stanley Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) and Stanley Tambiah, *Culture, Thought, and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹⁴ Georges Dreyfus, "Law, State, and Political Ideology in Tibet," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 18, no. 1 (1995): 136.

characterized by centralization or decentralization, a galactic polity or a semi-bureaucracy. Cassinelli and Ekvall's study of the Sakya estate, Sherry Ortner's works on the Sherpas of Nepal, Barbara Aziz's exile ethnography of Dingri, and Paul Nietupski's monograph on Labrang Monastery are notable exceptions.¹⁵ Apart from these and a few other works, the field of Tibetan history remains heavily focused on the political machinations of the Dalai Lama's government. Second, scholars seem reluctant to address the power and influence of Qing officials in the Tibetan state. For example, the institution of the High Commissioner to Tibet (駐藏大臣), a Qing office established by the Yongzheng Emperor in 1727 to oversee the empire's relations with Tibet, has yet to receive in-depth academic scrutiny.¹⁶ More relevant to this dissertation, extant scholarship practically ignores the presence, let alone influence, of lower ranking Qing officials in Tibetan polities that were largely beyond the reach of the Dalai Lama's government in Lhasa. In a brief but detailed survey of administration in Batang during the Qing dynasty, Carrasco merely notes that three Qing officials were stationed there, mentioning nothing of their roles or influence.¹⁷ In his often-cited article on early twentieth century Kham history, Elliot Sperling similarly only notes Qing official presence, effectively dismissing their influence.¹⁸ Overlooking the very presence of Qing officials, Samuel Adshead states, "Except for a few gold

¹⁵ See, for example, Sherry Ortner, *Sherpas through their Rituals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); and *High Religion: A Cultural and Political History of Sherpa Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Barbara Aziz, *Tibetan Frontier Families: Reflections on Three Generations of from Ding-ri* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 1978); and Paul Nietupski, *Labrang Monastery: A Tibetan Buddhist Community on the Inner Asian Borderlands, 1709-1958* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012).

¹⁶ This position is often glossed with the Manchu word *amban*, meaning "high official." I have chosen to translate it as High Commissioner. See Josef Kolmaš, *The Ambans and Assistant Ambans of Tibet (A Chronological Study)* (Prague: The Oriental Institute, 1994) for a general overview of this institution, and Dahpon David Ho, "The Men Who Would Not Be Amban and the One Who Would: Four Frontline Officials and Qing Tibet Policy, 1905–1911," *Modern China* 34, no. 2 (2008): 210-46, for a careful examination of the High Commissioner position in the last decade of the Qing dynasty.

¹⁷ Carrasco, *Land and Polity in Tibet*, 142.

¹⁸ Elliot Sperling, "The Chinese Venture in K'am, 1904-1911, and the Role of Chao Erh-feng," *The Tibet Journal* 1, no. 1 (1976): 10-36.

prospectors, Chinese trade...stopped at Dachienlu;¹⁹ so did regular bureaucratic administration; and only diplomats and soldiers went beyond it, and then always in transit.”²⁰ Finally, Carole McGranahan remarks that, “At times, portions of Kham fell under Chinese influence. For the most part, daily life in Kham was regulated not by direct or even absentee Lhasan (or Chinese) authorities, but by local rulers.”²¹ Such statements fail to consider that in certain regions Qing officials had integrated themselves into the local network of governance and wielded actual power. Looking closely at the history of Batang, a unique and understudied Tibetan principality in Kham, this dissertation intends to contribute to the discussion of Tibetan governance and state structures, arguing that Batang maintained a unique system of local governance based on shared authority among native chieftains, religious leaders, and Qing officials. My analysis of Batang’s system of power and authority and the changes it underwent in response to increasing state power begins in Chapter Two and continues throughout this study.

China and Empire

Another major theme of this dissertation is the nature of empire. The literature on empires in history is seemingly as vast as the imperial domains it describes. While no two empires are the same, it is the nature of historical inquiry to search for broader patterns among similar organizations acting under divergent circumstances. In the past thirty years, two trends have shaped our broader understanding of empire as a political system. Beginning with the publication of Michael Doyle’s *Empires* in 1986, research on empire has focused on issues of

¹⁹ Present-day Kangding (康定).

²⁰ Samuel A.M. Adshear, *Province and Politics in Late Imperial China: Viceregal Government in Szechwan, 1898-1911* (London: Curzon Press, 1984), 56.

²¹ Carole McGranahan, *Arrested Histories: Tibet, the CIA, and Memories of a Forgotten War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 42.

metropolitan control and power. Doyle provides a succinct definition of empire that encapsulates this emphasis. For Doyle, empire is “a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society.”²² Doyle argues that the ability to control the lives of individuals without necessarily sharing their cultural values is a fundamental characteristic of empire. Or, to put it another way, imperial power is the ability of a powerful actor to achieve effects the influenced actor would not have chosen. The simplicity of Doyle’s imperial archetype likely accounts for its widespread use, and no one doubts the primacy of central control in imperial relationships. However, as others have indicated, Doyle’s definition is so broad that it often loses its utility as a theoretical construct. If we follow Doyle, for example, can we not posit that domination of any political society over another represents an imperial relationship?

In recent years, a new trend has emerged in the comparative study of empires. While not rejecting Doyle’s imperial paradigm, scholars have shifted their line of inquiry away from power and control to the study of “the modalities of empire,” *i.e.*, the socio-political mechanisms by which empires operated and sustained their political systems over time.²³ Influenced by the works of Charles Tilly,²⁴ these scholars do not deny the coercive nature of empire, but they have chosen to explore other enduring facets of imperial states. For example, in her innovative study of the Ottoman Empire, Karen Barkey focuses on the organization and longevity of empire, examining how the Ottomans constructed their domestic institutions over time and adapted their

²² Michael W. Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 45.

²³ Karen Barkey, “Changing Modalities of Empire: A Comparative Study of Ottoman and Hapsburg Decline,” in *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World*, eds. Joseph W. Esherick, Hasan Kayali, and Eric Van Young (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 167-97.

²⁴ See, for example, Charles Tilly, “How Empires End,” in *After Empire*, eds. Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 1-11.

mechanisms of imperial rule to changing domestic and international circumstances. For Barkey, an empire is:

a large composite and differentiated polity linked to a central power by a variety of direct and indirect relations, where the center exercises political control through hierarchical and quasi-monopolistic relations over groups ethnically different from itself. These relations are, however, regularly subject to negotiations over the degree of autonomy of intermediaries in return for military and fiscal compliance. The central state negotiates and maintains more or less distinct compacts between itself and the various segments of this polity. Last, but not least, one can say that most of the different segments of the polity remain largely unconnected among themselves. That is why an imperial system is best represented in terms of the hub-and-spoke network structure, where the rim is absent.²⁵

Barkey's definition of empire is rich and deserves thoughtful consideration when using it as a framework to examine other imperial state formations. Key elements of her definition include the balance between direct and indirect rule, empire's negotiated character, and the importance of difference, be that difference be segmented by ethnicity, religion, geography, or other boundaries.

Empire's foremost characteristic is its reliance on indirect rule. As Barkey explains, a central power maintains its domination through military and fiscal control, but it grants intermediaries, usually local elites and/or religious leaders, broad authority to rule and maintain peace in specific territories. Fundamental to this ceding of sovereignty by a central power is flexibility and variation. What makes an empire unique as a form of governance, particularly in contrast to the modern nation-state, is its ability to negotiate distinctive arrangements of vertical integration with peoples on different peripheries that offer varying degrees of local sovereignty and autonomy. Patched together piecemeal over time, an empire therefore consists of overlapping spheres of autonomy shared between a central power and intermediary elites. The center does not seek uniformity in its relationships with individual peripheral constituencies. Rather, the flexibility of a central power to negotiate distinct arrangements of shared sovereignty

²⁵ Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 9.

with diverse populations is the hallmark of imperial rule, and it is precisely this flexibility that contributed to the longevity of empires across the globe.²⁶ In the chapters that follow, I adopt this definition of empire and explore how events along the Sino-Tibetan frontier in Batang reflect on the nature of the Qing Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In recent decades, our understanding of the Manchu Qing Empire has deepened thanks to the growth of the “new Qing studies” field in Chinese history. Articulated in a slightly different vocabulary, this field, which stresses the unique nature of Manchu Qing rule vis-à-vis their imperial predecessors, shares much in common with the trend in the comparative study of empires described briefly above. The new Qing studies field in Chinese history has two distinct lines of inquiry that are relevant to this dissertation. Beginning with David Farquhar’s 1978 study of Qing emperors’ efforts to represent themselves as bodhisattvas in order to foster ideological and political legitimacy in the empire’s Mongolian domains while maintaining their position at the top of China proper’s Confucian hierarchy,²⁷ several other historians have produced groundbreaking scholarship on the distinctive Manchu character of Qing imperial ideology and convincingly argued that the success of the Qing as an empire rested “in its ability to use its cultural links with non-Han peoples of Inner Asia and to differentiate the administration of the non-Han regions from the administration of the former Ming provinces.”²⁸

²⁶ Barkey is not the only scholar to characterize empire in this way. In their recent study of world empires, Burbank and Cooper similarly emphasize the flexible nature of imperial rule and the idea in empires that “different people within the polity will be governed differently.” Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 8.

²⁷ David M. Farquhar, “Emperor as Bodhisattva in the Governance of the Ch’ing Empire,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 38, no. 1 (1978): 5-34. Joseph Fletcher’s chapters in the *Cambridge History of China Volume 10: Late Ch’ing 1800-1911, Part I* are also commonly cited as foundational works for this new field of Chinese history. See Joseph Fletcher, “Ch’ing Inner Asia, c. 1800,” “Sino-Russian Relations, 1800-62,” and “The Heyday of the Ch’ing Order in Mongolia, Sinkiang, and Tibet,” in *Cambridge History of China Volume 10: Late Ch’ing 1800-1911, Part I*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978): 35-106, 318-350, and 351-408.

²⁸ Evelyn S. Rawski, “Presidential Address: Reenvisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 55, no. 4 (1996): 831.

While coopting the Confucian elite in China proper was a necessary part of the Qing imperial strategy, Manchu rulers also used their cultural and religious affiliation with non-Han peoples, particularly Mongols and Tibetans, to incorporate these and other peoples along their borders into the empire. Evelyn Rawski develops this Qing-centered approach to history in *The Last Emperors*, in which she argues that the Manchu's multi-ethnic perspective allowed them to craft distinct approaches to their diverse communities of Mongols, northeastern peoples, Tibetans, and Han Chinese. By looking at the Qing as a pluralistic and multicultural empire, Rawski asserts that we must abandon the long-held assumption that the success of the Manchus depended on their ability to assimilate to Han Chinese culture. Implicit in Rawski's analysis is a rejection of the long-held idea of the "Chinese world order," a concept first articulated by John Fairbank. According to Fairbank, Chinese rulers saw themselves as the center of a Confucian moral universe that naturally attracted non-Chinese peoples toward their culture and inspired their assimilation to Han culture, a process commonly referred to as "sinicization." Moreover, it was this worldview that contributed to China's long-term political stability, economic growth, and cultural flourishing.²⁹ Rejecting the idea that the "Chinese world order" model applied to the Qing dynasty, Rawski's thesis is that it was precisely because the Manchus were *not* Chinese that they had the flexibility to negotiate with other non-Han peoples on the borders of the empire, gradually incorporate them into their imperial state, and construct a successful empire.³⁰

Adopting a similar approach to Qing history, Pamela Crossley further fleshes out the ways in which the Manchus developed and maintained their ethnic identity while engaging with

²⁹ John King Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968); and John King Fairbank and Ssu-yü Teng, "On the Ch'ing Tribute System," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 6 (1941): 135-246.

³⁰ Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

Han and non-Han peoples along their borders. Highlighting the “simultaneity” of Qing imperial ideology, *i.e.*, the ability of Qing emperors to represent themselves as the upholder of Confucian traditions to Chinese elites, a successor to Genghis Khan to Mongols and Manchus, and a universal Buddhist king (*chakravartin*) to Tibetans all at the same time, Crossley, like Rawski, debunks the long-held idea in Chinese history that sinicization was the absolute standard of an emperor’s relationship with other cultures.³¹ Rather, when engaging with other cultures Qing emperors employed multivalent personalities that allowed them to speak in the idioms of those they intended to conquer and incorporate into their empire.³² The parallels between Crossley’s “simultaneity” and Barkey’s “hub and spoke” imperial model are striking. Just as Ottoman rulers negotiated discrete agreements with peripheral constituencies, Manchu emperors presented different visions of imperial ideology depending on their audience. The result for the Qing rulers and their empire was a strong dynasty that lasted nearly three centuries and whose boundaries, with only a few exceptions, the People’s Republic of China inherited.

While both Crossley and Rawski enhance our understanding of the uniqueness of Qing imperial relations with Tibet, their studies are not without areas for improvement, especially in terms of their tendency to essentialize Tibetan identity. As I have suggested above and will

³¹ For another critique of the sinicization argument, see Stevan Harrell, “Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them,” in *Cultural Encounters on China’s Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Stevan Harrell (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 3-36.

³² Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). See also Crossley’s “Thinking About Ethnicity in Early Modern China,” *Late Imperial China* 1 (1990):1-34. Other recent works informed by the Qing-centered approach to Chinese history as articulated by Rawski and Crossley include: Edward Rhoads, *Manchus and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861-1928* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000); Philippe Forêt, *Mapping Chengde: The Qing Landscape Enterprise* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2000); Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Patricia Ann Berger, *Empire of Emptiness: Buddhist Art and Political Authority in Qing China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003); Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); and Michael Chang, *A Court on Horseback: Imperial Touring & the Construction of Qing Rule, 1680-1785* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007).

elucidate in subsequent chapters, Batang and the frontier between China and Tibet was a site of political contestation, shifting loyalties, and multiple identities. Indeed, Qing emperors employed Tibetan Buddhist idiom to legitimize their authority in Batang. However, this was but one of many modalities they utilized on the Sino-Tibetan frontier. Given the complexity of Tibetan politics, Qing emperors relied on more than just Tibetan Buddhism to incorporate Tibetan areas into the empire. By highlighting the numerous facets of Qing imperial authority in Batang, this dissertation will both enrich our understanding of Qing imperial governance while challenging the notions of a unitary Tibetan state and identity.

The second line of inquiry in the field of new Qing studies that is relevant to my research is the increasing number of works that examine imperial administration of frontier regions during the Qing dynasty. John Shepherd's meticulous study of the political economy and settlement of Taiwan (台灣) during the first half of the Qing marked the beginning of Chinese historians' serious consideration of the Qing periphery. Shepherd outlines how the Qing state calculated their interests in Taiwan, working to balance revenue collection, military security, and administrative presence necessary to handle the long-standing problems of aboriginal land rights and increasing Han migration. Analyzing eighteenth century court debates over such topics as isolating Taiwan and restricting Han immigration to the island, local land taxation, and land reclamation policies, Shepherd reveals that the socio-economic and cultural integration of Taiwan into the Qing Empire was not a foregone conclusion. Rather, Taiwan's incorporation into the empire occurred gradually and in non-linear fashion. I will examine similar debates and comparable administrative processes over a century later when imperial officials turned their attention to Batang and the Sino-Tibetan frontier.

Shepherd makes several other important contributions to our understanding of Qing frontier administration. For example, he brings to the fore the importance of military security in Qing policy discussions on Taiwan by highlighting the bureaucratic roles of military commanders in the region. This pattern would be repeated in Batang, where the Qing Commissariat Officer (糧務委員) gradually assumed responsibilities to manage the civil administration of the region. Shepherd also emphasizes the variegated nature of ethnicity along the border, astutely reminding us that neither “Han” nor “aborigine” were ever unitary categories. Moreover, like Rawski and Crossley would go on to do on the ideological level, Shepherd’s path-breaking study moves us beyond the Fairbank conception of Chinese culture, *i.e.*, the “Chinese world order” model in which concentric circles of civilization radiate from a Confucian moral center. Stressing the fundamental role indigenous people played in Qing expansion, Shepherd skillfully argues that Chinese history is defined not by a moral ideal in which non-Chinese are attracted to the Chinese center. In contrast, processes of conflict, accommodation, and negotiation under the unique socio-economic circumstances of the frontier more accurately characterize the Qing Empire’s relations with its peripheries. These processes clearly resonate with Barkey’s theoretical model that emphasizes the negotiated character of empire.³³

Building on the works of Rawski, Crossley, and Shepherd, James Millward emphasizes the importance of the frontier in his study of the Qing conquest and administration of Xinjiang (新疆). Clearly articulating a “Qing-centered history of the Qing,” Millward challenges many of

³³ John Robert Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600-1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993). Other early works that address the administration of Qing frontier regions include: Thomas J. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1989); Pamela Kyle Crossley, *Orphan Warriors: Three Manchu Generations and the End of the Qing World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Joanna Waley-Cohen, *Exile in Mid-Qing: Banishment to Xinjiang, 1758-1820* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); and John E. Herman, “National Integration and Regional Hegemony: The Political and Cultural Dynamics of Qing State Expansion, 1650-1750,” (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1993).

our assumptions about Chinese history. Describing the intricacies of trade between the Qing and Central Asia, he adroitly undermines Fairbank's "Chinese world order," which was based largely on a static model of tributary trade, by showing the complex nature of trade between Kazakhs and the imperial court. Millward also justifiably takes Chinese historians to task for their long-term acceptance of William Skinner's macro regions, a concept in which traditional China is divided into nine geographically bounded regions consisting of a core and peripheries where the bulk of trade occurred internally rather than externally. Millward argues that this influential construct does not sufficiently take into account geographic variation and social, political, and economic variables. Skinner not only fails to consider areas on China's imperial periphery, Millward points out, but he also does not address the influence of other methods of administration, *e.g.*, the native chieftain system, non-agrarian means of production, or ethnicity, on trading patterns.³⁴ Moreover, blending Crossley's notion of the "simultaneity" of Qing emperors with Shepherd's emphasis on local agency in empire building, Millward demonstrates how strategic military concerns in Xinjiang compelled Qing administrators to abandon over time their practices of cultural accommodation in favor of new policies that privileged Han merchants and encouraged local people to assimilate to Chinese culture.³⁵ As I will demonstrate, Batang underwent a similar process in which the Qing state became increasingly less tolerant of cultural variations and, rather than accepting ethnic differences, adopted new policies that encouraged both Han migration to the region and cultural assimilation of Tibetans in the waning years of the dynasty.

³⁴ G. William Skinner, ed., *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977).

³⁵ James A. Millward, *Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759-1864* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

In the wake of the seminal studies by Shepherd and Millward, numerous other works that address the unique modalities of Qing rule throughout its imperial domains have emerged in recent years.³⁶ Only two, however, address the relationship between the Qing Empire and Tibetan frontier areas in present-day Sichuan. In *The Sichuan Frontier and Tibet: Imperial Strategy in the Early Qing*, Yingcong Dai illustrates the important connection between eighteenth century Qing imperial strategy in Tibet and the socioeconomic transformation of Sichuan. Dai argues that the Qing state, threatened by Zunghar Mongol patronage of central Tibetans, made the strategic decision to develop Sichuan as a launching pad for military action in Tibet. By purposefully maintaining high military spending and low taxation, Qing central policies stimulated Han migration to Sichuan and commercialization of the grain market, which, in turn, facilitated its recovery from devastation in the Ming-Qing transition and transformed the province into a key strategic region of the empire. Dai's argument is cogent, but her focus is on Qing administration of Sichuan. While she does touch on the Qing campaigns to suppress the Zunghars, central Tibet and the Sichuan-Tibetan borderlands are mere catalysts that stimulate imperial leaders to redevelop the province into a strategic base. Describing her focus on Sichuan, she writes, "To a degree, the Sichuan frontier was comparable to the Shaanxi-Gansu area relative to Central Asia and Fujian relative to Taiwan. It was their function as base areas in supporting

³⁶ Far from a complete list, some of the more influential contributions to the field of new Qing studies include: Stevan Harrell, ed. *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995); Jonathan N. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); David G. Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate: Islam, Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856-1873* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton, eds., *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); and C. Patterson Giersch, *Asian Borderlands: the Transformation of Qing China's Yunnan Frontier* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

the Qing's outward operations that justified their position as frontiers in the empire system."³⁷

Dai only tangentially addresses how the Qing used its frontier base in Sichuan to launch outward operations into Tibetan areas or the effects of those operations on the local level in Tibet. As a result, we can learn little about Qing administration of the Sichuan-Tibetan frontier in the eighteenth century from her study.

Xiuyu Wang, in contrast, examines how imperial state expansion developed in response to local power along the Sino-Tibetan frontier in Sichuan. Focusing on the last two decades of the Qing dynasty, a period of intensive imperial expansionism in Tibetan areas, Wang analyzes late Qing military conquests in Kham, as well as imperial attempts to consolidate their political power, undertake legal and tax reforms, promote land reclamation and Han migration, and introduce Confucian-based education.³⁸ Wang's study has much to offer and is a welcome addition to the paucity of English-language studies on Kham history during the Qing.³⁹ However, by dealing with the entirety of Sichuan's Tibetan borderlands, he often overlooks the influence of local agency and privileges the expansionist imperial narrative. As I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, the expansion of Qing imperial power unintentionally began in the mid-nineteenth century, several decades before British activity in India compelled Qing authorities to attempt to strengthen their strategic power in Tibetan areas, the factor commonly cited for renewed imperial interest in Tibet in the early twentieth. Gradually assuming more power from

³⁷ Yingcong Dai, *The Sichuan Frontier and Tibet: Imperial Strategy in the Early Qing* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 11.

³⁸ Xiuyu Wang, *China's Last Imperial Frontier: Late Qing Expansion in Sichuan's Tibetan Borderlands* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011).

³⁹ Other works on Qing-era Kham history include: Sperling, "The Chinese Venture in K'am, 1904-1911, and the Role of Chao Erh-feng,"; Adshead, *Province and Politics in Late Imperial China*; John E. Herman, "National Integration and Regional Hegemony: The Political and Cultural Dynamics of Qing State Expansion, 1650-1750"; Lawrence Epstein, ed., *Khams pa Histories: Visions of People, Place and Authority* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); and Scott Relyea, "Gazing at the Tibetan Plateau: Sovereignty and Chinese State Expansion in the Early Twentieth Century" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2010).

local elites in the interest of protecting foreign missionaries in the region, Qing officials unwittingly hastened the transition from indirect to direct rule in Batang. In so doing, they hardened boundaries between themselves and local Tibetans and narrowed the range of options they had to engage constructively with local leaders.⁴⁰

Wang also limits his study to the last two decades of the Qing Empire. Granted, this was a frenetic period of Qing activity in western Sichuan with long-lasting consequences, but his narrow temporal focus prevents him from considering broader historical trends. The fall of the Qing dynasty led to the collapse of many of the imperial policies implemented in the previous decade that Wang describes. In fact, much of the Sino-Tibetan frontier fell into a period of socio-political disarray and economic collapse that required decades to overcome. Beginning my examination of Batang's history in the mid-nineteenth century and bridging the transition from the Qing Empire to the Republican nation-state, this dissertation presents new historical perspectives on the processes of Batang's gradual integration into the Qing Empire and eventual incorporation into the Republican nation-state.

From Empire to Nation

The third theme this dissertation explores is China's transition from empire to nation and the impact of this political evolution on Batang society, Tibet, and the Chinese nation. Of all the major empires that fell in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, China was alone in maintaining its territory basically intact as the Qing Empire gave way to the Republic of China in 1911 and, in 1949, to the People's Republic. From a nationalist perspective, this is no surprise.

⁴⁰ See John E. Herman, "The Cant of Conquest: Tusi Offices and China's Political Incorporation of the Southwest Frontier," in *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, ed., Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 135-70, for a discussion of a similar process in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Guizhou.

China has a long history of unified imperial rule dating from the founding of the Qin dynasty in 221 BCE, due largely to shared cultural traditions, a common written language, and a centralized bureaucracy. However, the boundaries of present-day China encompass territory twice as large as the area generally known for its common Han culture. Even more perplexing, historically speaking China's incorporation of all or part of Manchuria, Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang, occurred relatively recently. How did this come to be?

The people living in these frontier areas were not only of different ethnicity from Han Chinese, they were also ruled differently. While a centralized bureaucracy represented the state in most of China, on the frontier indirect rule through native chieftains, religious leaders, and other local elites prevailed. The rhetoric of the 1911 Xinhai Revolution was simultaneously nationalist and inclusive. While the peoples of the Ottoman, Hapsburg, and other empires chose to form individual nation-states along discrete, if imagined, ethnic lines, Chinese leaders chose a different path as they tried, “[to stretch] the short, tight skin of the nation over the gigantic body of the empire.”⁴¹ Overthrowing the Manchu rulers and promoting Han nationalism were key components of China's nationalist revolutionaries, particularly in China proper. Yet on the frontier of the empire, gradual encroachment by foreign powers into the empire's peripheral territories of Mongolia, the Ryūkyū Islands, Korea, Xinjiang, and Tibet in the final decades of the empire had compelled Qing rulers to seek to strengthen central control along the border, often with mixed results, and nationalist revolutionaries did not hesitate to lay claim to these peripheral territories. I discuss the consequences of these efforts in Batang and Kham in subsequent chapters.

⁴¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 88.

In terms of the empire-to-nation transition, late imperial efforts to solidify the borders of the empire also reminded Chinese nationalists of the expansive view of the Chinese empire as aptly described by Crossley's "simultaneity" or Barkey's "hub-and-spoke" imperial models. Choosing not to concentrate their nation-building efforts on the culturally homogenous Han areas of China proper, intellectuals and influential revolutionary leaders instead quickly turned to a more inclusivist strategy in which the new nation embodied all the lands and people of the now defunct Qing Empire.⁴² Although it was rarely explained, the Republic's new rhetoric insisted that the Chinese nation consisted of five "races": Han, Manchurian, Mongolian, Muslim, and Tibetan. Underlying this concept of the nation was the continued fear of foreign incursions. These fears were not unfounded. The British had occupied Lhasa in 1904, and Russia was increasingly aggressive in Mongolia. Japan had already taken Taiwan and Korea, and they were making inroads into Manchuria. In the hopes of protecting China proper, nationalists urged that imperial lands be maintained to serve as a "fence" or "screen" (藩篱), a notion common in Qing discourse on border regions. In fact, in a process that Uradyn Bulag describes as "going imperial," the new Chinese nation frequently adopted imperial practices and ideologies in their efforts to assert central control in peripheral areas, from the granting of official titles, to patronizing

⁴² Joseph Esherick refers to this decision as the "Ataturk counterfactual." Joseph W. Esherick, "How the Qing Became China," in *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World*, eds. Joseph W. Esherick, Hasan Kayali, and Eric Van Young (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 243. Pamela Crossley explores the same paradox in Pamela Kyle Crossley, "Nationality and Difference in China: The Post-Imperial Dilemma," in *The Teleology of the Modern Nation-State: Japan and China*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 138-58. The literature on ethnicity and nationalism in late Qing-early Republican China is expansive. Other important works include: Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); and John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture, and Class in the Nationalist Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

religious figures, to offering political, military, and financial support to local elites.⁴³ In so doing, leaders of the new Republic perpetuated some of the defining characteristics of imperial governance, *i.e.*, indirect, negotiated rule through local elites, well into the era of the nation-state, thereby fostering a tension between the central government and ethnic minorities that persists to this day.⁴⁴

The legacies of empire in Batang and Tibet writ-large are undeniable. When the Chinese, British, and Tibetans sat down at Simla to negotiate a new status for Tibet under which the Dalai Lama would have full autonomy in central Tibet, negotiations ultimately broke down when the parties involved failed to reach agreement on the borders of Tibetan territory.⁴⁵ While relations between the Dalai Lama's government and China during the Republican era have received some scholarly attention, the Sino-Tibetan frontier in Kham has, until recently, largely been ignored.⁴⁶ Gray Tuttle's study of the critical role of Tibetan Buddhism in the making of the Republican nation-state does take up the activities of the Norlha Trulku and the Panchen Lama in Kham, but his arguments focus more on the national level. While such religious figures did undertake

⁴³ Uradyn E. Bulag, "Going Imperial: Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhism and Nationalisms in China and Inner Asia," in *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World*, eds. Joseph W. Esherick, Hasan Kayali, and Eric Van Young (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 260-295.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Fernanda Pirie, "The Limits of the State: Coercion and Consent in Chinese Tibet," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 72, no. 1 (2013): 69-89; and Emily T. Yeh, "Blazing Pelts and Burning Passions: Nationalism, Cultural Politics and Spectacular Decommodification in Tibet," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 72, no. 2 (2013): 319-334.

⁴⁵ Alastair Lamb, *Tibet, China & India, 1914-1950: A History of Imperial Diplomacy* (Hertingfordbury: Roxford Books, 1989), 1-51; and Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 65-83.

⁴⁶ In addition to the two works mentioned below, there are a few additional exceptions. Scott Relyea addresses briefly Yin Changheng's (君昌衡) efforts to extend Zhao Erfeng's (趙爾豐) reforms in Kham during his short tenure as General Commander of the Western Expeditionary Force without discussing in detail the effects of Yin's action in Kham or the legacies of Qing imperial rule in the Republican period. Relyea, "Gazing at the Tibetan Plateau." Peng Wenbin offers a cogent analysis of local agency in Kham during the Republican period in: Peng Wenbin, "Frontier Process, Provincial Politics and Movements for Khampa Autonomy during the Republican Period," in *Khams pa Histories: Visions of People, Place and Authority*, ed. Lawrence Epstein (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 57-84.

religious and political activities in Kham, Tuttle argues that their historical importance rests more in their ability to provide a spiritual link that tied Tibet more closely to the Chinese nation.⁴⁷

Hsiao-ting Lin also addresses Republican attempts to build influence in Tibetan areas, but his focus is largely on discourse among state leaders in Nanjing and Chongqing on how to engage with the Dalai Lama's government so as to strengthen their young nation-state.⁴⁸ Xiaoyuan Liu, moreover, provides a fascinating account of early Communist Party activities in Kham, but his aim is to show how contact between early Party leaders and non-Han ethnic groups on the fringes of China proper informed later Communist nationality policy.⁴⁹

Each of the above-mentioned studies is valuable, but not one of them addresses meticulously the rupture of the 1911 Xinhai Revolution in Kham. By examining the socio-political history of Batang from the mid-nineteenth century up to its formal incorporation into the new Republican state province of Xikang in 1939, this dissertation will provide much needed contextualization to China's rocky transition from empire to nation-state along one of its strategic frontiers. As I will demonstrate, the success of this transition was far from certain and highly contingent on coopting local elites to achieve national objectives. With both the Dalai Lama's government and the new Republican state competing for dominance in Kham in the early twentieth century, tracing the changes that led to the (albeit contested) success of one will shed light on how Chinese nation-builders constructed their state. Only by adopting long-standing

⁴⁷ Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). Interestingly, the activities of the Norlha Trulku and the Panchen Lama in Kham were closely related to Batang. I discuss these individuals and their connections to Batang in Chapter Six.

⁴⁸ Hsiao-ting Lin, *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier: Intrigues and Ethnopolitics, 1928-49* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006).

⁴⁹ Xiaoyuan Liu, *Frontier Passages: Ethnopolitics and the Rise of Chinese Communism, 1921-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

imperial practices, it seems, were Republican leaders able to create order out of the chaos of the post-revolutionary period and establish their sovereignty in Batang and Kham.

A Note on Sources

In her study of Khampa resistance and history, Carole McGranahan quotes a Tibetan official saying, “The history of Kham is found only in religious books. There are no separate books for it. What they ate, the religious festivals....all these are found only in the religious books.”⁵⁰ When considering Batang specifically, such a statement is false and patently misleading. Indeed, much of Tibet’s history exists in so-called “religious books,” but to limit one’s field of inquiry to such books is to accept the misconceptions that Tibet and its religion are inseparable and that a history that does not revolve around religion does not exist. While not ignoring the important role that religion plays in Tibet, this dissertation demonstrates that history in at least one part of Tibet—Batang—can and must be told from multiple perspectives, religious, but also political, economic, and social.

Batang was and is inhabited primarily by Tibetans. However, due to decades of violence in the region and low levels of literacy in Tibetan areas until the mid-twentieth century, locally-produced Tibetan language sources on Batang’s late Qing and early Republican history are practically non-existent. I have uncovered only three Tibetan-language sources directly relevant to Batang’s local history, each of which is of marginal utility at best. In 1971, Lobsang Gyaltzen, a former Batang resident who escaped to India to live after 1959, published *‘Ba’ kyi lo rgyus (A History of ‘Ba’)*. While many histories written by Tibetan exiles are colored by proclamations of Tibetan independence and glorify Tibet’s past before the arrival of the Chinese, Lobsang Gyaltzen offers a balanced narrative of Batang’s history based on his experiences growing up

⁵⁰ McGranahan, *Arrested Histories*, 60-61.

and living there. He writes in a free-flowing and colloquial style, sometimes offering great detail, but he is often frustratingly vague. Nevertheless, his anecdotes when pieced together offer valuable glimpses of indigenous Batang perspectives on local history.⁵¹ In addition to Lobsang Gyaltzen's local history, the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center houses a collection of undated, hand-written monastic histories that includes Batang's largest religious institution, Ba Chöde Monastery ('Ba chos sde dgon). Much shorter than Lobsang Gyaltzen's text, this anonymous source focuses exclusively on the history of Ba Chöde Monastery itself and does not mention external events that may or may not have influenced the monastery's development in history or the impact of the monastery on Batang's local history.⁵² Given the similarity in content between Lobsang Gyaltzen's discussion of Ba Chöde Monastery and this short history, it is very likely that he consulted this work when composing his text. A third Tibetan-language source is a gazetteer of monasteries in the Kham region compiled and published in mainland China in 1995. Although it was labeled for internal reference and circulation only (内部参考), its contents, at least for Batang, are not noticeably different from other Chinese-language surveys of religious institutions in the area published earlier.⁵³

Despite the paucity of available Tibetan-language sources directly relevant to Batang's nineteenth and twentieth century history, this does not mean that other important historical materials do not exist. The trove of documents housed in the archives of the Tibet Autonomous Region in Lhasa would no doubt shed important light on central Tibetan motivations and actions

⁵¹ Lobsang Gyaltzen, *'Ba' kyi lo rgyus* (Dehra Dun: Nyingmapa Lamah Press, 1971).

⁵² *'Ba' pa Mang khong pa dgon pa khag gi lo rgyus* (N.p.: n.p., n.d.).

⁵³ Jimei Sangzhu, ed., *Khams phyogs Dkar mdzes khul gyi dgon sde so so'i lo rgyus gsal bar bshad pa thub bstan gsal ba' me long zhes bya ba bzugs*, vol. 2 (N.p.: n.p., 1995) (hereafter *KPDM*).

in Batang and the surrounding regions. Unfortunately, access to these documents is tightly controlled and almost never granted to non-Chinese citizens.

Given the dearth of relevant and available Tibetan-language resources, this dissertation relies heavily on Chinese-language primary and supporting secondary source materials from the Qing and Republican periods, as well as some contemporary Chinese-language academic research. These primary and secondary source documents often provide first-hand narratives of events, as well as detailed accounts of policy debates and formation that directly impacted Batang's gradual incorporation into the Chinese state as it occurred. In addition to primary source materials from the Sichuan Provincial Archives, I have utilized published collections of official documents, especially memorials, official communications, diplomatic correspondence, local gazetteers, and personal journals written by Qing and Republican officials in Batang and surrounding territories. When possible, I have compared published sources to their original archival materials and found no noticeable discrepancies.

I have also combed the vast collection of late Qing and Republican era periodicals dealing with border affairs for materials on Batang and Kham history. Frequently overlooked by western scholars, these resources reported on events soon after they happened; printed commentaries and opinion pieces by political leaders, scholars, and Tibetan religious figures, including some in the original Tibetan; offered policy proposals; published original ethnographic research and survey results; and reprinted various government documents, including memorials, telegrams, and official pronouncements. Often penned by Tibetans, journal articles such as these not only provide an additional perspective to the heavily state-centered communications from Chinese officials in the region, but they also reveal the authentic voice of Batang Tibetans. Where appropriate, I have also taken advantage of “Cultural and Historical Materials” (文史資

料) related to Batang's history to give further texture to local Tibetan voices on their past, with the knowledge that such materials bear the imprimatur of the modern Chinese nation.⁵⁴

Complementing these Tibetan and Chinese sources is a wealthy trove of French- and English-language primary and secondary supporting source material written by missionaries, adventurers, and foreign consuls in the region, many of whom either passed through Batang or resided there for a number of years. The majority of the French sources that I consulted are housed in the archives of the Paris Foreign Missionary Society (*Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris*) and consist of annual field reports and internal correspondence from French missionaries, as well as posthumous biographies composed by Society staff based on other archival material. Occasionally hyperbolic, these sources offer a unique perspective of a seemingly outside party that was frequently the source of tension between local Tibetans and Qing officials.

American and British travelers frequented Batang, and for many years in the early twentieth century there was a thriving community of American missionaries who resided in Batang proper. Many members of this community recorded and published their activities in and around the region. Like their French counterparts, American missionaries were occasionally given to exaggeration. They were also frequently drawn into local events as unwilling participants, while, at other times, they proactively inserted themselves into local politics. Their memoirs and related materials enrich our understanding of Batang's history in multiple ways and provide an important check to official historical narratives.

The chapters below utilize a combination of Tibetan-language histories, archival materials, local gazetteers, official communications, diplomatic correspondence, and cultural and

⁵⁴ For a thorough analysis of the challenges of using this unique form of historical document, see Martin Fromm, "Producing History through 'Wenshi Ziliao': Personal Memory, Post-Mao Ideology, and Migration to Manchuria" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2010).

historical materials in Chinese together with the writings of French, British, and American missionaries, adventurers, and foreign consuls to demonstrate the complexity of Batang's rich history as I analyze how state expansion unfolded in relation to local power on the Sino-Tibetan frontier.

Chapter Two: Batang's Early History

“At the far western edge of Sichuan is Batang,
Where numerous rivers originate and the roads are long.
Its environment is mild, its spring waters ample.
Could it have been that its landscape once appeared savage and desolate?”

—Qian Zhaotang (錢召棠)
A Brief Gazetteer of Batang (巴塘志略), 1845¹

Introduction

This chapter discusses the history of Batang from the early days of the Qing dynasty through the middle of the nineteenth century. It highlights the sources of authority among Batang's power holders, which included monastic leaders, Tibetan officials, Qing imperial officials, and Han merchants beginning in the seventeenth century. Through a discussion of Batang's earliest known locally written history, *A Brief Gazetteer of Batang*, which was composed by resident Qing official Qian Zhaotang in 1845, and various secondary source materials, I reveal the complex relationships among power holders in the region, thereby setting the stage for my subsequent analysis of more tumultuous changes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This chapter explores the roots of power and authority in Batang. I understand power to be the capacity of one individual, group of individuals, or institution to dominate and/or impose internal constraints on another. Authority, on the other hand, points to the legitimacy of one's power over another. Both concepts have been the subject of long-standing intellectual debate led

¹ Qian Zhaotang, *Batang zhilüe*, ed. Wu Fengpei (1845; reprint, N.p.: n.p., 1978), 19b.

by such influential thinkers as Foucault and Lukes on power, Hobbes and Weber on authority.² With their debates in mind, this chapter examines relatively straight-forward questions: Who had power in Batang? What were the sources of their power and authority? In what ways was their power and authority manifested? And how did they actively wield their power and authority? As is the case with many frontier regions, power and authority in Batang had different meanings at different times, and they meant different things to different people. While historical records do not permit us to understand every meaning at every time to every person, available materials are sufficient to expose and explore the dynamics of power and authority in this volatile region at significant historical moments across nearly a century from 1842 to 1939.

Before discussing these historical moments, it is necessary to understand the context from which they emerge, to compose a snapshot of governance in Batang. That is the purpose of this chapter. By the middle of the nineteenth century, four distinct groups dominated the local populace in Batang: monastic leaders, Tibetan officials, Qing imperial officials, and Han merchants. I will discuss each group, including the sources of their power and authority, how each group manifested and wielded their power and authority, and how their power and authority changed from the early Qing through the middle of the nineteenth century. To understand more clearly how each group relates to the others, I first offer a brief introduction to Batang's network of power holders in the mid-nineteenth century, after which I turn to more in-depth analysis of each group.

The monastic leaders of Batang's largest monastery, Ba Chöde Monastery, wielded broad-reaching power in Batang. Their monastery predated all other power holders in Batang,

² See, for example, Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1995); Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (New York: Penguin Classic, 1982); and Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

including the secular elite. They were the spiritual leaders in society and oversaw thousands of monks resident at Ba Chöde Monastery and its many smaller branch monasteries throughout the region. In addition, Ba Chöde and other monasteries owned anywhere from thirty to fifty percent of Batang's land. Tenants on monastic lands were obliged to pay taxes and offer a variety of services to their monastic landlords.

Co-existing with the monastic leadership were Batang's secular leaders. Two *deba* (*sde pa*, 第巴) were at the top of a hierarchy of secular elites in Batang.³ The power of Batang's *deba* derived from multiple sources. In the early eighteenth century, the Dalai Lama dispatched two lay officials (*deba*) to oversee affairs and collect taxes in Batang. These officials settled in Batang and, over time, passed on their duties, and the power that accompanied them, to their descendants. Not long after their arrival in Batang, Qing armies passing through the region also granted Batang's *deba* imperial seals and charters of investiture, bestowing on them the power and authority to rule Batang in the name of the emperor as native chieftains (土司). Drawing on the authority given to them by both the Dalai Lama and the Kangxi Emperor, Batang's two native chieftains, known individually as *da yingguan* (大營官, Brigade Commander) and *er yingguan* (二營官, Deputy Brigade Commander), also possessed massive estates in Batang, owning anywhere from fifty to seventy percent of Batang's territory. Like tenants on monastic lands, residents on native chieftain domains paid taxes and provided a variety of in-kind services to the native chieftains.⁴

³ Sometimes glossed as "governor," a *deba* refers to a person in charge of an estate, territory, or province. See Melvyn C. Goldstein, ed., *The New Tibetan-English Dictionary of Modern Tibetan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 595. A *tusi* (土司) similarly refers to an indigenous official recognized by the Qing Emperor with imperial seals and charters of investiture.

⁴ Carrasco, *Land and Polity in Tibet*, 142-43.

As Qing armies passed through the region in the early eighteenth century on their way to suppress the Zunghars in central Tibet, a campaign I describe in more depth below, their leaders made Batang a regional base of operations by establishing a military garrison of five hundred soldiers and a Commissariat Office (糧台) in Batang proper. This office provided salaries to soldiers stationed in the region, in addition to logistical support for those civil and military officials based in Lhasa and/or travelling through the region. Batang's Commissariat Officer maintained significant power in Batang as an official representative of the Qing Empire with a sizeable garrison of imperial troops at his command.

Han merchants represent the final group of power holders in Batang. Like Batang's native chieftains and its Commissariat Officer, Han migrants began arriving in Batang in the wake of the Qing army's early eighteenth century expedition to Lhasa.⁵ They brought with them new farming techniques, commercial connections, and traditions common to Han sojourning communities around the world, including a variety of charitable community service activities. While Batang's Han merchant community maintained significantly less power than Batang's monastic leaders, native chieftains, and imperial officials, their charitable activities, particularly involving education, did directly influence Batang's people. As I will show, education would come to play a fundamental role in Batang's development in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Power and authority, of course, are not exclusive, and this is nowhere more true than in Batang, where multiple and sometimes contradictory sets of rules, allegiances, and assumptions directly impacted how people saw their world and lived their lives. Primary source material on Batang's history before the publication of Qian Zhaotang's *A Brief Gazetteer of Batang* in 1845

⁵ Early migrants to Batang were not exclusively Han. A small number of Hui merchants also settled in Batang.

is either scant or inaccessible, and secondary sources offer only limited accounts of significant local events. Nevertheless, sufficient information is available to discern Batang's major power holders and the various sources of their power that allowed them to influence local society.

Ba Chöde Monastery

Like all principalities in Kham, there were numerous Tibetan Buddhist monasteries throughout the Batang region. Some were large and powerful, possessing several hundred monks and extensive landholdings, while others were smaller and served only their immediate community. Almost all villages, for example, had local temples (lha kang, 喇巴廟) to support the daily religious activities of the surrounding community. Like the larger monasteries, they owned some land and collected rent from tenants. Most local temples also required community members to make annual in-kind donations.⁶ These smaller institutions were often branches of larger central monasteries, which provided oversight and support. Regardless of their material resources, as practitioners of Buddhism and, in the case of Gelug monks, representatives of the Dalai Lama, Tibetan monks and their monastic institutions commanded deep respect among local people throughout the Tibetan plateau. Acting as protectors and mediators in spiritual matters, their material resources allowed them to provide protection and mediation in the physical world as well.⁷ The monks of Batang were no exception.

The actual number of monasteries in Batang is impossible to determine accurately. Qian Zhaotang's *A Brief Gazetteer of Batang* records twenty-seven monasteries in the region,

⁶ Zhou Xiyin and Ran Guangrong, eds., *Zang chuan fojiao siyuan ziliao xuanbian* (Chengdu: n.p., 1989), 328.

⁷ See Samuel, "Tibet as a Stateless Society and Some Islamic Parallels," 217-22, and Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, for the interplay between Buddhism and Tibetan political and social development.

seventeen Gelug and ten Nyingma (Rnying ma) monasteries, in 1845.⁸ Several mid-Republican period surveys indicate similar numbers,⁹ while more rigorous research in the last thirty years suggests Batang has almost twice that number of monasteries in the nineteenth century.¹⁰ Despite discrepancies in number, all sources agree that Batang's largest and most influential monastic institution was Ba Chöde Monastery.¹¹ While I will occasionally mention other monasteries in the Batang region,¹² particularly in Chapter Five, when discussing the power of monasteries in Batang, I am specifically referring to Ba Chöde Monastery.

Batang's largest and most powerful monastery, traditionally recognized as one of the thirteen great monasteries of Kham,¹³ is Ba Chöde Monastery. Its senior leader is known as Lakha Lama, a reincarnation of the monastery's original founder, who also went by the Chinese name Bao Angwu (包昂武) through the Republican period.¹⁴ The first Lakha Lama established

⁸ Qian, *Batang zhilüe*, 5b-6a.

⁹ Yang Zhonghua, *Xikang jiyao* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1937).

¹⁰ Zhou and Ran, *Zang chuan fojiao siyuan ziliao xuanbian*, 35-37.

¹¹ The complete name of Ba Chöde Monastery is 'Ba Chos sde dga' ldan phan bde gling, but it is commonly known as 'Ba Chos sde dgon (Batang Chöde Monastery). In Chinese, Ba Chöde Monastery was originally known as Zhata Monastery (扎塔寺) until the Wanli reign of the Ming dynasty, when sources begin to identify it by a different name, Dinglin Monastery (丁林寺). Although a few Chinese sources refer to it as Dingning Monastery (丁寧寺), even after its destruction in 1905 by fleeing monks and Qing soldiers under Zhao Erfeng and its gradual reconstruction in the 1920s and 1930s, Ba Chöde Monastery was most commonly known as Dinglin Monastery in Chinese. In 1941, Dai Jitao (戴季陶), head of the Examination Yuan in Nanjing, bestowed the name Kangning Monastery (康寧寺) on the rebuilt institution, the Chinese name it still maintains today. See Yang Jianwu, "Kangningsi jingji huodong diaocha," *Zhongguo Zangxue* 4 (2001): 72-79; and Zhou and Ran, *Zang chuan fojiao siyuan ziliao xuanbian*, 317-20.

¹² Conflicts between monasteries were not unknown in Batang. Druppa Monastery (Grub pa Dgon, 竹瓦寺), Batang's largest Nyingma monastery, competed with neighboring Gelug monasteries, which were gaining influence, throughout the nineteenth century. Zhou and Ran, *Zang chuan fojiao siyuan ziliao xuanbian*, 323.

¹³ Sichuan sheng Batang xianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, ed., *Batang xianzhi* (Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe, 1993), 61 (hereafter *BTXZ*).

¹⁴ Like the Dalai Lama or the Panchen Lama, Lakha Lama refers to a lineage of reincarnations. The Lakha Lama lineage, considered to be the spiritual leader of the Batang region, was the most powerful lineage in Batang, and one of the eight most important lineages in Kham. He Juefei, *Xikang jishi shiben shizhu* (Lhasa: Xizang renmin

Ba Chöde Monastery during the Yongle reign (永樂, 1403-1425) in the Ming dynasty as a Bon monastery.¹⁵ Like many monasteries throughout the Tibetan plateau, however, Ba Chöde Monastery was not immune to shifting political landscapes and changed allegiances throughout its history. During the Ming Wanli reign (萬曆, 1572-1620), the sixth Lakha Lama relocated Ba Chöde Monastery closer to its present location and affiliated it with the Kagyu (Bka' brgyud) religious tradition, likely in response to the supremacy of the Kagyu tradition in central Tibet under the Tsang Desi (Gtsang Sde srid), Karma Phuntsok Namgyal (Karma Phun tshogs Rnam rgyal, 1597-1621).¹⁶ When Mongol leader and Gelug patron Gushri Khan (1582–1655) marched through Batang in 1639 on his way to Lhasa, he razed Ba Chöde Monastery. As the power of the fifth Dalai Lama, Lobsang Gyatso (Blo bzang Rgya mtsho, 1617–1682) and the Gelug tradition grew throughout Tibet under the patronage of Gushri Khan, the thirteenth Lakha Lama converted Ba Chöde and several other monasteries in Batang to the Gelug tradition, perhaps as late as 1652, when the fifth Dalai Lama appointed a reincarnate lama to oversee Ba Chöde Monastery. At the time he decided to affiliate his monastery with the Gelug tradition, the thirteenth Lakha Lama determined it best to relocate Ba Chöde Monastery, this time to its present position along the

chubanshe, 1988), 149. The current Lakha Lama was born in eastern Tibet in 1942 as Thupten Dorjee (Thub bstan Rdo rje) and recognized as the twentieth reincarnation of Ba Chöde Monastery's Lakha Lama in 1947. His teachers took him to Lhasa in 1949 to escape the influx of Communist soldiers in Batang. He studied in Drepung Monastery, which maintained close ties with many major monasteries in Kham, for ten years under Pema Gyaltzen Rinpoche, the teacher of the current Dalai Lama. He fled with the Dalai Lama and many other Tibetans to India in 1959. He currently lives in Denmark.

¹⁵ Bon refers to a religious order that pre-dates Buddhism's arrival in Tibet in the seventh century. Today it is similar in form and nature to other Tibetan Buddhist traditions, but adherents claim their beliefs and practices derive from the teachings of Shenrab Miwo (Gshen rab Mi bo) rather than from the historical Buddha Shakyamuni.

¹⁶ Tibetan Buddhism consists of four major traditions: Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug. The Dalai Lama is the leader of the Gelug tradition but is admired and respected by Tibetans of all traditions.

banks of the river flowing through the center of Batang. Before doing so, he needed to affirm the monastery's legitimate authority in the region, and to do this he turned to history.¹⁷

Lakha Lama's efforts to maintain the spiritual authority of Batang's primary monastery as it changed religious affiliations are captured in local folklore. One well known story indicates that before the Mongols came to Batang and destroyed the Kagyu monastery, its primary Buddha statue, a gift from the Chinese emperor and the symbolic source of its religious authority, left for the underworld, the land of the nagas. After not returning for several years, a farmer one day unearthed it in his fields. In a classic tale of "finders keepers," the local farmer refused to turn over the statue to Lakha Lama and claimed it for himself. Local leaders suggested the statue be placed between the competing claimants, with the statue itself determining its proper guardian. Not long thereafter, the statue turned towards Lakha Lama's chosen location for Ba Chöde Monastery, and the statue was placed there.¹⁸ Marion Duncan, an American missionary who resided in Batang for twelve years between 1921 and 1936, records a slightly different version of this folktale:

The Chinese during the reign of Kanghsi [Kangxi], who conquered Tibet by force of arms, leveled the walls of the [Ba Chöde] monastery and the remains of these walls can be seen today. Years after the destruction of the monastery, when some people were digging into the ruins they heard a cry of pain. They naturally fled and brought others who helped them dig where the cry had occurred. They soon uncovered a statue of Jowo or Lord Buddha. Now a controversy arose as to who should have this statue with the chief prince, the second prince and the chief priest of the monastery asserting claims to it, as it was considered to be a lucky and valuable talisman for the place where it should rest. After quarrelling a long time these three agreed to a solution of the dispute.

The image was placed upon a large rock west of the city near the palace of the chief prince and some distance east of the monastery. They all agreed beforehand that, if the statue moved down, it was to go to the chief priest who represented the monastery. If it moved up, the idol was to be given to the chief prince and if it moved to one side it was to become the property of the second prince. During the night the image moved down so

¹⁷ *KPDM*, 426.

¹⁸ Lobsang Gyaltsen, *'Ba' kyi lo rgyus*, 11-12; and *'Ba' pa Mang khong pa dgon pa khag gi lo rgyus*, 15.

the idol was secured by the monastery. The huge cracks seen today in this rock are attributed to the presence of the image upon it at that time.¹⁹

The veracity of either version of this folk tale is of course difficult to determine. Nevertheless, by securing the return of a historically significant statue of the Buddha to Ba Chöde Monastery as these stories suggest, Lakha Lama was able to assert the legitimacy of the monastery's new Gelug tradition for the people of Batang. In so doing, he ensured that the religious authority of Ba Chöde Monastery remained unrivaled in Batang.

Support from Lhasa

In addition to the symbolic authority of maintaining the monastery's historical tradition as represented in this folk tale, Ba Chöde Monastery drew on a variety of other resources to maintain and strengthen its power in Batang. For example, like other major Gelug monasteries in Kham, Ba Chöde Monastery received both spiritual and material support from the Dalai Lama. In 1652 (SZ 8), following his ascendancy to power in central Tibet, the fifth Dalai Lama dispatched Trulku (*sprul sku*)²⁰ Ngawang Gelek (Ngag dbang Dge legs, 昂旺格勒) to expand Ba Chöde Monastery along the lines of the Loseling temple (Blo gsal gling) in Drepung Monastery ('Bras spungs dgon) outside of Lhasa. From this time, Ba Chöde Monastery, which had approximately 370 monks, began to receive regular stipends of tea, grain, and silver from Lhasa. Local monks were also given the opportunity to go to Lhasa to deepen their studies.²¹ In 1703

¹⁹ Marion H. Duncan, *Customs and Superstitions of Tibetans* (1964; reprint, Delhi: Book Faith India, 1998), 251-52.

²⁰ A *trulku* is a reincarnate lama, someone who is recognized as a reincarnation of a previous person, usually an accomplished lama. In Chinese, *trulku* are known as 'living Buddhas' (活佛).

²¹ Zhou and Ran, *Zang chuan fojiao siyuan ziliao xuanbian*, 320; and *KPDM*, 426. Evincing the contradictory information of secondary source material on Batang history before 1845, Lobsang Gyaltzen states that there were over 1,800 monks at Ba Chöde Monastery when it converted to the Gelug tradition. Lobsang Gyaltzen, *'Ba' kyi lo rgyus*, 5.

(KX 42), Lhasa dispatched Ngawang Chönjor (Ngag dbang Chos 'byor, 昂翁曲珠), later known as Bao Angwu, to the monastery to manage its affairs as its first *khenpo* (*mkhan po*) or abbot. At that time, there were over 200 lamas living in the monastery.²² Ngawang Chönjor became the first in a line of *geshe* (*dge bshes*)²³ monks regularly dispatched from Lhasa by the Dalai Lama to provide spiritual guidance to Ba Chöde Monastery by serving as *khenpo*, although local monks occasionally filled this important position. These learned monks oversaw all affairs of the monastery, representing it to outside parties and making decisions on internal matters in consultation with Lakha Lama and Ba Chöde Monastery's other eight spiritual leaders. *Khenpo* from Lhasa were supposed to reside in Batang for a period of three years, but in fact their abbacies often lasted fifteen years or longer. Such direct connections with Lhasa, Tibet's spiritual capital, greatly strengthened Ba Chöde Monastery's influence among local Tibetans.

Economic Influence

Ba Chöde Monastery's power extended far beyond its reach as a mere religious institution. In many ways, the monastery, with vast resources of land, human capital, livestock, grain, tea, and cash, controlled Batang's economy. Its financial income and influence derived from three primary sources: the monastery's hereditarily bound peasant tenants, loan interest, and religious donations. A significant portion of Ba Chöde Monastery's income came from its 1,600-2,600 *mu* (畝) of land.²⁴ Although detailed records are not available, Lakha Lama, and

²² Zhou and Ran, *Zang chuan fojiao siyuan ziliao xuanbian*, 317-18.

²³ A *geshe* refers to a monk who has attained the highest academic degree in the Gelug tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, usually after studying for as many as twenty years.

²⁴ Zhou and Ran state that Ba Chöde Monastery possessed 1,600 *mu* of land. Zhou and Ran, *Zang chuan fojiao siyuan ziliao xuanbian*, 320. However, Jimei Sangzhu asserts the monastery had 2,600 *mu*. *KPDM*, 426. One *mu* = 0.1647 acre or 0.0666 hectare.

other senior leaders of Ba Chöde Monastery also held large hereditary estates. These estates, which were divided into estate lands and peasant lands, were supported by a legally bound peasant population. Bound to the land, the monastery's approximately 350 peasants were obligated to provide a variety of corvée obligations to their estate.²⁵ Specific obligations of the monastery's bound peasants varied, but on typical Tibetan estates families provided one laborer every day, and two or more during peak agricultural times, to cultivate estate fields, which made up fifty to seventy-five percent of all its arable land. The monastery allocated its remaining lands to its hereditarily bound peasants, which they used for subsistence. Ba Chöde Monastery's landholdings extended throughout the Batang area, including areas west of the Dri River, which today forms Batang's western boundary with the Tibet Autonomous Region.²⁶

Not insignificantly, the monastery received in kind loan interest in approximately the same amount as land rents, indicative of the often usurious lending practices of Tibetan monasteries. Interest rates ranged from five to sixteen percent per month and could be repaid both in cash and in kind.²⁷ Traveling through the region in 1877, British engineer William Gill described how some people become so indebted to the monastery that they were forced to give up their lay life and become monks:

The Lamas and Lamasseries are enormously rich. They certainly possess the greater part of the cultivated land in the plain of Bat'ang, and now must own nearly half of the country. Their wealth is daily increased, partly by legacies—for a dying man generally leaves something to the neighbouring Lamassery—but still more by usury. Being the only people in the country who have any property, a man in want of money always applies to the Lamas, and then his fate is sealed... The rate of interest they exact for loans, even when real property is mortgaged, is fatal to the borrower. Interest mounts up, and,

²⁵ Corvée is known in Tibetan as *ula* ('*u lag*) and is transliterated into Chinese as 烏拉.

²⁶ The Dri River ('Bri chu) is known in Chinese as the Jinsha River (金沙江), an upper tributary of the Yangzi River (揚子江 or 長江).

²⁷ Zhou and Ran, *Zang chuan fojiao siyuan ziliao xuanbian*, 317-18; Duncan, *Customs and Superstitions of Tibetans*, 171; BTXZ, 207.

left unpaid, interest on interest, till at last, utterly crushed by the extortion of his creditors—his land gone, and with nothing left—the unfortunate debtor mortgages himself and his services for some temporary loan, and ultimately become a Lama.²⁸

In addition to the income it received from its land and loans, Ba Chöde Monastery also collected income from begging for alms, annual gifts from prosperous local families, providing religious services for believers, and conducting various commercial affairs. Duncan notes, for example, that the monastery's treasurer was the most powerful leader in the monastery after the *khenpo*. The treasurer was, “in charge not only of the fields which he rents to tenants on shares but also of the traders who drive the monastic strings of horses and mules long distances in the buying and selling of merchandise.... [C]onsequently the treasurer comes to have immense power which he invariably uses to enrich himself. He may become so powerful that none dare protest against his exactions until his oppressions lead to his violent death by obscure means.”²⁹

Political Influence

Beyond religious and economic influence, Ba Chöde Monastery also wielded political power, specifically the right to maintain law and order within and, under certain circumstances, outside the walls of the monastery. An anonymous chronicler of Kham monastic histories writing after 1959 best describes the monastery's judicial authority. He states that Ba Chöde Monastery's leadership maintained the right to investigate crimes involving the monastic community and mete out punishments, particularly during religious festivals, both to monastic and lay offenders. If the monastery found a monk to be innocent after being accused of a crime and the accused monk swore to his innocence, then he was allowed to remain in the monastery. If, however, the

²⁸ William John Gill, *The River of Golden Sand: Being the Narrative of a Journey through China and Eastern Tibet to Burmah* (London: John Murray, 1883), 220.

²⁹ Duncan, *Customs and Superstitions of Tibetans*, 171.

monastery found a monk guilty, they confiscated his property, smeared his face with ash, and expelled him from the monastery via the southern gate, which they opened only when banishing someone from the monastery. This author also notes that Ba Chöde Monastery's authority was very strict and extended beyond internal regulation and monastic justice to include lay people who involved themselves in monastic affairs. For example, if the monastery found a lay person guilty of entrapping a monk, the monastery possessed the authority to arrest and punish him/her. Such lay people would be bound to two tall poles decorated with prayer flags outside the monastery's main entrance, where they might be whipped depending on the severity of their crime.³⁰ Lobsang Gyaltzen describes similar punishments, noting how the monastery's head discipline officer (*dge bskos*) would, after announcing their sentence, expel criminals from the southern gate. Depending on the severity of their offense, he also points out that monastic and lay criminals might be tied to, or hung from, the poles outside the southern gate as warnings to other would be criminals. Finally, he emphasizes that the monastery's leaders were not exempt from public punishment. In the early eighteenth century, for example, an incarnation of Lakha Lama was tied up outside the Ba Chöde's southern gate after monastery officials discovered he was keeping a mistress.³¹

In *A Brief Gazetteer of Batang*, Qian Zhaotang supports these abbreviated descriptions of monastic judicial authority with a similar short portrayal of his own: "Tibetans squabble most over feuds that have built up over generations and have not yet been resolved. One person has a complaint and brings it forward to his village for assistance. It is often the case that numerous people have gathered. It is like a blood feud of barbarian monkeys. Although the native chieftain is also without means, he must obtain authority from the lamas to provide compensation for a life

³⁰ 'Ba' pa Mang khong pa dgon pa khag gi lo rgyus, 30.

³¹ Lobsang Gyaltzen. 'Ba' kyi lo rgyus, 14 and 31; and 'Ba' pa Mang khong pa dgon pa khag gi lo rgyus, 20.

lost several decades ago and cattle and horses that were stolen. They have to swear before the Buddha, and only then is the case resolved.”³² As a Han official of the Qing Empire, Qian without doubt maintained certain biases against non-Chinese people. He inevitably saw the world from the standpoint of a Confucian worldview in which civilization was defined by culture (文化). For Qing officials like Qian and Han Chinese in general, culture referred to cultivating the person through training in the moral and ritual principles that constituted virtue. Those people with the deepest understanding of relevant Confucian literary works, *e.g.*, imperial officials and scholars, were the most civilized. Other Chinese who had no direct knowledge of the Confucian classics but lived according to their principles were somewhat civilized. Non-Chinese, including Tibetans and other ethnic groups on the borders of the Qing Empire, were even less civilized, having no knowledge of the moral principles outlined in the Confucian classics.³³ Such perspectives inform Fairbank’s “Chinese world order” and sinicization theories discussed in Chapter One. Qian Zhaotang certainly saw the Tibetans of Batang as less civilized and morally inferior than himself as he suggests by alluding to Tibetans as “barbarian monkeys” above. Nevertheless, the condescension we might expect from Qian towards Tibetans is largely absent from his text, which for the most part offers objective observations of life in Batang and outlines the basic facts and history of the region. As I shall demonstrate, the “Chinese world order” model is but one modality through which the Qing Empire maintained its power in Batang.

Marion Duncan similarly corroborates Ba Chöde Monastery’s unique civil authority, describing how the monastery often served as a temporary shelter for guilty parties: “The

³² Qian, *Batang zhiliüe*, 18b. Apart from the facts that Qian Zhaotang was originally from Jiashan in Zhejiang Province (浙江嘉善) and had been promoted to his position as Commissariat Official in Batang in 1842 (DG 22) after serving as District Magistrate of Sichuan’s Xinning County (新寧縣知縣), we know little about his background. His text falls under the common genre of “local gazetteers” composed by imperial officials about the geography, history, administration, economy, and culture of their regions of assignment.

³³ Harrell, “Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them,” 18-19.

monastery is a haven of refuge for the criminal. A hundred feet from the Batang Monastery is a place called Jaoo-Gyatse-Pung ‘the life hell of a hundred steps’ which once reached by the breaker of a law secures for him the protection of the lamas until his case is settled by mediators of the parties involved. As wealth can settle for any deed, even murder, this right of refuge is more valuable for the rich than the poor.”³⁴

Maintaining law and order in Batang was not an exclusive authority of Ba Chöde Monastery. Judicial decisions were often reached by consultations between the monastic leadership, imperial officials, and local Tibetan elites. Duncan describes the close relationship between these power holders: “...criminal monks are tried by monastic authorities. The monastery frequently pleads the cause of a layman in trouble. Reversely, pressure upon the monastery by the local civil officials may bring some sort of compensation from a culprit who has fled to the lamasery from justice. When, however, the tribal princes are of the same belief as the dominant monastery there is close collaboration between them in which adherents are favoured but those of the other sects severely punished.”³⁵ After a brief discussion of the imperial support Ba Chöde Monastery received, I will turn to a discussion of the power wielded by local Tibetan officials and Qing imperial officials in Batang. In Chapter Three, four late nineteenth century case studies will reveal important changes in the relationships between these power holders.

Imperial Support

Although Ba Chöde Monastery derived most of its authority from its connections with Lhasa and its economic superiority, we should not overlook the fact that its authority also

³⁴ Duncan, *Customs and Superstitions of Tibetans*, 171-72.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 233-34.

derived in part from imperial patronage. The statue of the Buddha that legitimized Ba Chöde Monastery's new authority as a Gelug monastery in the seventeenth century, after all, was a gift from the Emperor. Historical records also indicate several Chinese emperors patronized the monastery and its reincarnate lamas. For example, the Ming Chongzhen Emperor (崇禎, 1628-1644) promised the monastery annual payments of silver, grains, and honey.³⁶ In addition, records show that the Kangxi Emperor provided Ba Chöde Monastery an annual stipend of five hundred silver *liang* to support scriptural recitation, as well as titles, charters of investiture, gold signs, and various gifts to reincarnate lamas in Batang, both Gelug and otherwise. Some of these reincarnate lamas even traveled to Beijing for imperial audiences as early as the Kangxi period.³⁷ Beginning in 1729 (YZ 7), the Qing court increased its annual allowances to Batang's religious elite. At the same time, the court began to revert to Batang all secondary taxes collected by the native chieftains to support local monks, officials, and soldiers.³⁸ As Rawski, Crossley, and others have noted, Qing patronage of religious institutions was an effective tool to expand and later maintain their imperial power on the frontier.³⁹

Steeped in religious prowess, possessing rich economic resources, wielding unique political authority, and imbued with imperial support, Ba Chöde Monastery had extensive power over Batang's local populace by the mid-nineteenth century.

³⁶ Zhou and Ran, *Zang chuan fojiao siyuan ziliao xuanbian*, 318.

³⁷ *KPDM*, 393 and 420; and Yang, "Kangningsi jingji huodong diaocha," 74. Silver *liang* are often referred to as taels. 1 *liang* = 1.33 ounces of silver.

³⁸ *BTXZ*, 10.

³⁹ See Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, and Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*.

Tibetan Officials

Complementing the extensive, but not exclusive, authority of Ba Chöde Monastery were civil Tibetan officials. Like the monastery, the authority of Batang's Tibetan officials was legitimized by both the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Emperor. This section outlines the origins of these and other overlapping sources of authority and analyzes how Batang's Tibetan officials wielded their power.

Representing Lhasa

Early records provide limited information on Batang's history, yet they do identify some significant events, people, and dates. The fifth Dalai Lama's autobiography offers an important early reference to Batang, specifically the district of 'Ba'. This text mentions Batang in the context of the fifth Dalai Lama dispatching two officials from Lhasa to Kham to conduct a census and collect taxes for the Tibetan government in 1648. While we know this was part of the Dalai Lama's efforts to assert central Tibetan authority in Kham, he does not go into detail on this matter and merely mentions their administrative mission to Kham.⁴⁰ Extant Chinese sources shed greater light on Batang's history in the mid-seventeenth century. We know, for example, after Gushri Khan conquered Batang around 1639, the fifth Dalai Lama slowly began to bring Batang under his control. As we saw earlier in the discussion of Ba Chöde Monastery, the Dalai Lama dispatched a religious official to oversee the monastery in 1652, and by 1664 (KX 3), he had firmly established his authority there.⁴¹ The fifth Dalai Lama further notes in his autobiography another mission from Lhasa that was dispatched in 1677 to regulate taxation and

⁴⁰ Amy Heller, "Midbang's 1740 Decree to Batang," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 43, no. 2-3 (1989): 376-78.

⁴¹ *BTXZ*, 9.

provide financial support from Lhasa for the monasteries in the ‘Ba’ district.⁴² While the Dalai Lama’s autobiography again offers few details on this mission, we can assume that sometime between the Dalai Lama’s two missions to Kham, Lhasa officials reached an agreement with the people of Batang for them to submit taxes periodically to Lhasa.

In 1703 (KX 42), the same year Desi Sangye Gyatso (Sangs rgyas Rgya mtsho), regent following the death of the 5th Dalai Lama, dispatched an accomplished lama to serve as abbot of Ba Chöde Monastery, he appointed two brothers from central Tibet to rule the region as *deba*. Although their specific responsibilities are not known, it is very likely they were appointed to manage the collection of taxes from the Batang people. The elder brother was Norbu Ngawang (Nor bu Ngag dbang, 羅布阿旺),⁴³ commonly known as the Ba *deba* (巴磑娃), and his younger brother was Tashi Tsering (Bkra shis Tshe ring, 扎西次仁), commonly known as *Gnya ngan deba* (年額磑娃).⁴⁴ The *deba* positions were originally to rotate every three years, but like the abbots dispatched from Lhasa, Batang’s secular leaders soon became hereditary. Early twentieth century French missionary in Kham Francis Goré suggests, for example, that in the early eighteenth century only one of the five prominent families owning land in Batang proper had been appointed by Lhasa to administer the region.⁴⁵

⁴² Heller, “Midbang’s 1740 Decree to Batang,” 376-78.

⁴³ Norbu Ngawang was also known as Do Wangpo (Rdo Dbang po, 陀翁布). See *BTXZ*, 242; and Kangding minzu shizhuan bianxiezu, ed., *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi* (Beijing: Dangdai Zhongguo chubanshe, 1994), 35.

⁴⁴ *BTXZ*, 9.

⁴⁵ Francis Goré, “Notes sur les marches tibétaines du Sseu-tch’ouan et du Yun-nan,” *Bulletin de l’Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient* 23 (1923): 353.

Representing the Qing

As outlined in Qing imperial records, the early eighteenth century Qing campaign against the Zunghars in central Tibet and its immediate aftermath had widespread implications for Batang's socio-political structure. This campaign particularly impacted Batang's relatively new *deba*. While still maintaining their inherited authority to rule Batang granted to their ancestors by the Dalai Lama, Batang's *deba* supported the Qing Empire's expulsion of the Zunghars out of Tibet and soon became official representatives of the Qing Empire. To understand how Batang's *deba* came to represent simultaneously Lhasa and Beijing, it is necessary to outline the fundamental circumstances surrounding the Kangxi Emperor's anti-Zunghar campaign.⁴⁶

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Galdan (1644-1697), a Zunghar Mongol khan, organized a broad alliance of western Mongols whose strength began to threaten the Qing Empire along its northwestern border. Galdan, like Gushri Khan before him, was a patron of the fifth Dalai Lama. When the fifth Dalai Lama died in 1682, his regent, Sangye Gyatso, concealed his death from the Qing emperor until 1697. Already suspicious of relations between the Dalai Lama and Galdan, the emperor became furious upon discovering Sangye Gyatso's deception. In 1705, with Qing support, Lazang (Lha bzang) Khan, grandson of Gushri, invaded Lhasa, killed the regent, and installed himself as temporal ruler of central Tibet. While Lazang had Qing support, the Gelug religious leaders in Lhasa did not trust him, especially when the sixth Dalai Lama, who was installed by the former regent, died under mysterious circumstances on his way to Beijing. Gelug distrust of Lazang intensified when he forbade the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, Kelsang Gyatso (Bskal bzang Rgya mtsho, 1706-1757), who

⁴⁶ For clear accounts of the Zunghar campaign, see Zahiruddin Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Rome: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1970); Perdue, *China Marches West*; and Dai, *The Sichuan Frontier and Tibet*, 76-90.

was born in Litang (Li thang) in 1706, to be brought to Lhasa for his formal enthronement and instead installed his own Dalai Lama, widely believed to be his own son.

In 1717, Tsewang Rabten (Tshe dbang Rab brtan), nephew of Zunghar leader Galdan and competitor with Lazang Khan for influence in Tibet, ordered his top general and brother, Tsering Dondrub (Tshe ring Don grub), to march on Lhasa. Tsering Dondrub successfully invaded Lhasa, killed Lazang, and seized the Dalai Lama in December of that year. The Zunghar Mongols, however, failed to gain favor among the Tibetan elite. They were unable to enthrone a new Dalai Lama, and regular looting by Zunghar troops in Lhasa created greater ill will among the Tibetans for their occupiers.

After two poorly organized Qing expeditions designed to push Tsering Dondrub and the Zunghars out of Lhasa in 1717 and 1718 were definitively crushed, the Kangxi Emperor endorsed a plan for a joint expedition proposed by then Sichuan Governor-General Nian Gengyao (四川總督年羹堯, 1679-1726) in which the emperor's nephew would depart from Xining (西寧) and Sichuan Regional Vice Commander Yue Zhongqi (岳钟琪, 1686-1754) would depart from Chengdu (成都). This expedition began in 1719, and in the following year Yue Zhongqi drove out the Zunghars, re-took Lhasa, executed the remaining Zunghar supporters, and installed Kelsang Gyatso, who had been residing in Xining under Qing protection, as the seventh Dalai Lama, an act that won the Qing dynasty much popularity among Tibetans throughout the plateau.

It was en route to Lhasa during this campaign that Qing troops under the command of Yue Zhongqi first arrived in Batang via Dartsedo (打箭爐)⁴⁷ and the southern route through Kham. Troops were stationed along the way to protect supply routes, and Manchu General Ga

⁴⁷ During the Qing dynasty, Dartsedo was known in Chinese as Dajianlu (打箭爐). As part of Zhao Erfeng's late Qing reforms in Kham, Dartsedo's Chinese name was changed to Kangding, which it maintains today.

Leibi (噶勒弼) occupied Batang in 1719 with as many as two thousand soldiers.⁴⁸ *Debas Norbu* Ngawang and Tashi Tsering accompanied Yue Zhongqi and General Ga Leibi in battles against the Zunghars in Dragyab (Brag g.yab, 乍丫),⁴⁹ Chamdo (昌都),⁵⁰ Luolong Zong (洛隆宗),⁵¹ and other areas northwest of Batang, often fighting alongside them. In recognition of their contribution to the Qing campaign, Yue Zhongqi memorialized requesting Norbu Ngawang and Tashi Tsering be granted the positions of Head Native Chieftain (正土司), commonly known as Brigade Commander, and Deputy Native Chieftain (副土司), commonly known as Deputy Brigade Commander, respectively. The Qing court approved his memorial, and Norbu Ngawang and Tashi Tsering were granted authority to administer an area roughly covering the present-day counties of Batang, Derong (Sde rong, 得榮), Yanjing (鹽井), Dechen (Bde chen, 德欽), and Zhongdian (中甸).⁵² At the same time, the Qing court granted official titles to sixty other members of Batang's nobility (*sku drag*), including seven Local Company Commanders (土百戶).⁵³

Following the enthronement of the seventh Dalai Lama in 1720, the Qing court began organizing its administrative presence in central Tibet and Kham such that the Sichuan governor-general was made responsible for direct administration of much of Kham. Wanting greater

⁴⁸ *Da Qing lichao shilu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), KX 58.9 (hereafter *QSL*).

⁴⁹ Present-day Dragyab County (察雅縣), located northwest of Batang in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

⁵⁰ Present-day Chamdo District (昌都地區) in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

⁵¹ Present-day Luolong Zong (洛隆宗), located west of Chamdo.

⁵² *BTXZ*, 9-10 and 241. Yanjing's Tibetan name is Tsakhalo (Tsa kha lo or Tsa kha lung), but it is widely known as Yanjing. Similarly, Zhongdian's Tibetan name is Gyalthang (Gyal thang), but it is widely known as Zhongdian.

⁵³ Lai Zuozhong, "Qing wangchao zai Chuanbian Zangqu de tusi shezhi," in *Ganzi zhou wenshi ziliao*, vol. 11, ed. Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshanghuiyi Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou weiyuanhui (N.p.: Ganzi baoshe yinshuachang, 1990), 119-20. See also Yuan Xiaowen and Li Jin, "Jiaoliu yu ronghe—guanyu Batang Hanzu de ge an fenxi," *Heilongjiang minzu congkan* no. 1 (2001): 95.

control over his northwest border, Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou Jiang Chenxi (雲貴總督蔣陈锡) memorialized in 1720 (KX59.4) requesting that Batang be brought under the jurisdiction of Yunnan's Lijiang Local Prefecture (丽江土知府). The emperor granted Jiang's request, but Sichuan Governor-General Nian Gengyao, citing the critical importance of continued military relief efforts following the recent campaign to expel the Zunghars from Lhasa, memorialized requesting Batang be returned to Sichuan administration. Reversing his previous decision, the emperor approved Nian's request and Batang remained under Sichuan's nominal authority.

The management of territories extending well beyond the Dri River soon proved too burdensome for Sichuan authorities, however, and in 1727 (YZ 5), the emperor decreed that administration of the region would be divided at Ningjing Mountain (寧靜山),⁵⁴ a peak near the southern end of the mountain range of the same name. Markham and territories to the west were returned to the Dalai Lama for his government to administer, territories to the east remained nominally under Sichuan authorities, who yielded effective control to recently-appointed native chieftains, and territories to the south were to be administered by Yunnan authorities, who similarly utilized the indirect rule of native chieftains.⁵⁵ Batang is located just east of the Ningjing Mountains, but much of its traditional domain lay south of these mountains. With the emperor's decision, the regions of Adunzi (阿墩子, present-day Dechen) and Zhongdian, including the 2,818 families residing there that had been under the jurisdiction of Batang native chieftains, were separated and incorporated in the administrative structure of Yunnan Province.

⁵⁴ Present-day Mangkang Mountain (芒康山).

⁵⁵ Markham was also known at the time as Ningjing (寧靜) in Chinese. Markham's largest town is Gartok (Sgar thog), which is also commonly known by its Chinese name, Jiangka (江卡). Markham's Gartok should not be confused with the town of the same name in western Tibet, which is known for hosting a British trade mart following the British invasion of Tibet in 1904.

Not insignificantly, the native chieftain of Batang at the time, Lobsang Khedrub (Blo bzang Mkhas grub, 羅藏格竹), was from Benzinan (奔子南),⁵⁶ an area south of Ningjing Mountain. Rather than retain his position as native chieftain, which required him to reside in Batang proper, he resigned when Batang was divided in 1727.⁵⁷ Deputy Native Chieftain Tashi Phuntsok (Bkra shis Phun tshogs, 扎什朋楚)⁵⁸ took over the position of Head Native Chieftain and headman Ngawang Rinchen (Ngag dbang Rin chen, 阿旺林青) filled the vacant position of Deputy Native Chieftain.⁵⁹ Available information on the background of this bureaucratic struggle between the governors-general of Sichuan and Yunnan for control over Batang is limited. Logistically, it makes much more sense to administer Batang from Chengdu than from Kunming. My supposition is that Sichuan and Yunnan authorities hoped to reap natural resources, such as gold and silver, and simple tax revenues from the region, although the reality of Batang's harsh environment and living conditions, as well as its far distance from either provincial capital, would soon prove such hopes untenable.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Present-day Benzilan Township (奔子欄鎮) southeast of Dechen.

⁵⁷ Qian, *Batang zhiliue*, 11b; and *BTXZ*, 242.

⁵⁸ Tashi Phuntsok's name is sometimes transliterated as 扎西平措 and 札什彭楚. See *BTXZ*, 242; and Song Yun, *Weizang tongzhi* (1795), as quoted in Liu Chuanying, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shiliue* (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1993), 77.

⁵⁹ Qian, *Batang zhiliue*, 11b-12a; and *BTXZ*, 10.

⁶⁰ The bureaucratic tug-of-war over the administration of Batang and Litang continued into the Yongzheng and Qianlong reigns. In 1735, Rolpai Dorje (Rol pa'i Rdo rje) submitted a memorial to the Emperor on the financial difficulties of the new Dalai Lama. As a Tibetan *trulku* educated in Beijing and trusted by the imperial court (He would later become the Qianlong Emperor's primary Buddhist teacher and advisor.), he had been sent to advise the newly enthroned seventh Dalai Lama. Rolpai Dorje stated that lost tax revenue from Batang, Litang, and neighboring regions was hurting Lhasa, and he urged the Emperor to return these territories to the Dalai Lama. In 1738, the Qianlong Emperor ordered the Dartsedo customs office to provide the region an annual subsidy of 5,000 silver *liang*, leaving the implementation of this order to the Sichuan-Shaanxi governor-general, who eventually recommended Batang and Litang remain under Sichuan's jurisdiction. See Heller, "Midbang's 1740 Decree to Batang," 377-78 for additional details.

Furthering his efforts to centralize administration throughout the empire, and especially in Tibetan areas, the Yongzheng Emperor issued an edict in 1729 mandating the implementation on the frontier of *gaitu guiliu* (改土歸流), a process through which civil and/or military officials appointed by the emperor for limited periods replaced local native chieftains (土司) and leaders, who had often inherited their positions of authority. In April of that year, Sichuan-Shaanxi Governor-General Yue Zhongqi memorialized recommending Batang's primary native chieftain (正土司) Tashi Phuntsok and deputy native chieftain (副土司) Ngawang Rinchen be given the titles of Mollification Commissioner (宣撫司) and Deputy Mollification Commissioner (副宣撫司), respectively, together with the appropriate seals and charters of investiture.⁶¹ In other words, rather than identify and dispatch Qing officials to Batang, Yue Zhongqi decided to maintain Batang's existing secular power holders, nominating them for imperial office. While this may have simply been a decision of convenience by Yue, it strongly suggests that Batang's secular leaders had the confidence and power to influence imperial policy on the local level. Henceforth, Batang's native chieftains possessed both the hereditary authority granted to their ancestors by the Dalai Lama in 1703 and their newly-granted authority of the Qing Emperor. Such dual lines of authority simultaneously enhanced and complicated their power and authority in local society.

Writing in Qianlong 60 (1795), High Commissioner to Tibet Song Yun (松筠) (1752-1835) chronicled the Zunghar campaign and early Qing activities in Batang in his work entitled, *A General Gazetteer of Ü-Tsang* (衛藏通志):

Batang is to the south of Litang. In the past it was under the control of Lazang Khan. There is one large monastery in this area, and the Dalai Lama appointed an important abbot to manage Gelugpa religious practices. He serves as the leader of the lamas of this monastery. Lazang Khan appointed a primary and a deputy civil official *deba* to govern the local people. They rotated office every several years, and over time they became

⁶¹ *BTXZ*, 242.

hereditary. In 1718 (KX 57) Protector General (護軍統領) Wen Pu (溫普) and others led officers and soldiers into Batang, where they proclaimed the majesty and virtue of the sacred dynasty. When the soldiers reached the area of Dashuo (大朔) [between Litang and Batang], Batang's civil officials went to the camp to surrender, and they willingly were incorporated into the empire.

In the winter of 1719 (KX 58) the Commander General (總統) of the Sichuan Green Brigade Cavalry reached Batang, and the civil officials, headmen, monks, and local people welcomed his divisions. With full hearts they offered their allegiance and were willing to become children of the heavenly dynasty. As presented in the documents, the administration of this region includes thirty-three villages, thirty-nine headmen, 6,920 local households, and 2,110 monks and lamas. Annually, they submit grain taxes, provide corvée labor services, and transport military rations and salaries.

In the winter of 1720 (KX 59), Western Pacification General (定西將軍) Ga Leibi led Han and Manchu cavalry soldiers to Batang, and together with his Deputy General entered central Tibet on an expedition. Local Tibetans exhausted their strength in fighting [together with the Qing soldiers] and hastened to follow the expedition to great distances....

In 1729 (YZ 7) Batang local official Tashi Phuntsok (札什彭楚) was appointed Mollification Commissioner (宣撫使司), and the important headman Ngawang Rinchen was appointed deputy local officer (副官土). They were issued seals and charters of investiture. The position of head local official is to be filled by appointed officers periodically, while the position of deputy local official is to be inherited. At this time there are twenty-five local chieftains (土目), 426 headmen, a total of 28,153 individuals, and 9,480 monks. They submit annually as tribute barley, livestock, and furs in the amount of *zheyin* 3,235 *liang*, 4 *qian*, 5 *fen* (摺銀 3,235 兩 4 錢 5 分).⁶²

The *Gazetteer of Tibet* (西藏志), composed in 1788, also mentions the first arrival of Qing soldiers to Batang in 1719, recording that, “On July 5, 1719, Deputy General (副將) Yue Zhongqi was ordered to lead 1,000 soldiers to enter and take Batang. He subsequently ordered... Yang Shilu (楊世祿) to proceed ahead and pacify the area. On July 13th, Batang Brigade Commanders (營官) Tashi Tsering and Norbu Ngawang⁶³ and accompanied Yang Shilu

⁶² Song, *Weizang tongzhi*, as quoted in Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shilüe*, 77.

⁶³ The author refers to Batang's chief *deba*, Norbu Ngawang, as Weng Bu (翁布), and to his younger brother, Tashi Tsering, as Jie Guo (結果).

and presented their land and household registers. At Benkamu (奔卡木) they submitted to Yue Zhongqi, and thus Batang and Litang were pacified.”⁶⁴

While the above two narratives of Batang people offering their allegiance with full hearts to Yue Zhongqi are certainly exaggerated, they chronicle several important events. First, Qing soldiers arrived on a military expedition not against Tibetans, but rather to expel the Zunghar Mongols who, according to both the Qing Empire and Tibetans throughout the plateau, had failed to rule Tibetan areas successfully.⁶⁵ As a result, the initial contact of Batang people with the Qing Empire is as an external army of liberation. Of course, not all Tibetans in Kham saw Qing forces this way. Tibetans in neighboring Litang initially put up strong resistance to Yue Zhongqi. No doubt Yue Zhongqi’s alleged killing of several thousand Tibetan troops, his execution of seven of its indigenous leaders, and his quick suppression of local resistance in Litang compelled Batang’s *deba* to greet Yue Zhongqi at the Batang-Litang border without resistance. Moreover, Yue Zhongqi’s arrival in Batang marked the beginning of what would become a permanent Qing military presence there. While the number of Qing soldiers garrisoned in Batang would steadily decline, they would remain in Batang until well-after the fall of the dynasty in 1911.

Second, Batang’s local leaders actively participated in Yue Zhongqi’s campaign, and following traditional Qing practices they received honorary titles, buttons and other imperial rewards for their service. The Kangxi Emperor first recognized Batang’s two *deba* as native chieftains, and less than ten years later the Yongzheng Emperor granted them imperial titles. While the imperial titles they received were part of Yongzheng’s effort to implement bureaucratic restructuring (*gaitu guiliu*) in which imperial officials would accept rotating

⁶⁴ *Xizang zhi* (N.p.: n.p., 1788), as quoted in Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shilüe*, 77.

⁶⁵ Perdue, *China Marches West*, 235.

appointments to positions along the Sichuan frontier, this effort was only partially successful. While Batang's *deba* willingly accepted their native chieftain titles, their positions were not filled by Qing officials. Rather, Batang's *deba* passed down the positions they had received from Yongzheng in 1729 to their sons, and these positions became hereditary until Zhao Erfeng abolished them in 1905 as part of a second round of bureaucratic restructuring following massive military action in the region.

Finally, authors of both texts suggest that Qing officials set up a system of taxation in Batang at this time. Although detailed accounts of this system are not available, we do know that the local tax revenue that was collected did not leave the region. In addition to funding imperial patronage of local religious institutions begun by the Kangxi Emperor, it is likely that in kind taxes were also collected to support the new Qing presence in Batang.

The arrival of Qing soldiers in Batang was one of the unintended consequences of the Qing response to the Zunghar's occupation of Tibet, but it significantly changed the lives of everyone in Batang. Having learned his lesson in Central Asian expeditions, the Kangxi Emperor understood the importance of protecting his supply routes, and he made sure that his official lines of communication with Lhasa remained open by stationing Qing soldiers all along the southern route through Kham to Lhasa. Batang's Commissariat Office played an important role in ensuring this route remained open for official communication. Almost two hundred years later, the Qing response to another foreign invasion, this time the British, would again dramatically alter Batang's socio-political landscape. I will discuss those events in Chapter Four.

A Succession Struggle

As was common in empires around the world, Batang was subject to overlapping spheres of sovereignty. Evinced the unique position of Batang's *deba*, formal incorporation into the Qing Empire did not exclude them from maintaining the titles given to their ancestors by the Dalai Lama. This is seen most clearly in a 1740 decree issued to the people of Batang by Miwang (Mi dbang, 1689-1747), an influential cabinet member in the Lhasa government who effectively ruled central Tibet during the exile of the seventh Dalai Lama between 1729 and 1735.⁶⁶ Miwang issued this decree to settle a succession struggle between two brothers for the title of *rdzong sdod*, district governor of Batang. Amy Heller, who first brought this document to light, is hesitant to draw too many conclusions from this decree since it exists as an isolated historical document, but she does assert that Miwang strongly believes he maintains political jurisdiction over Batang, despite the Yongzheng Emperor's 1727 decree dividing political authority between Sichuan and Tibet at Ningjing Mountain. In fact, reading Miwang's 1740 decree together with Chinese documents offers deeper insight into the early years of central Tibetan and Qing administration of Batang.

Miwang addressed his decree "in particular to the 'Ba' *rdzong sdod*, the rotating officials of this domain, the monastic intendants, the tax-collectors and assembly of the elders," and stated:

The ancestors of this 'Ba' *rdzong sdod* called Rin-chen have served with pure intentions the successive rulers of the (Tibetan) government since the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama, resulting in the remarkable kind gift of the decree(s) bearing red and black seals permanently establishing (them) as *brgya-dpon* [*gya pon*] of 'Ba' district. In the 7th year of Yung Ch'eng [*sic*, Yongzheng] (1730) the order came to serve as *rdzong-sdod* as well. As the two positions were held (simultaneously by one person) the younger brother disputed this within the family, without resolution. In the 11th year of Yung Ch'eng (1734) the (Chinese or Manchu) official Cang arranged a settlement at Ya'-cug. He decided to divide the servants, house, land and fields as it had been in the 55th year of K'ang hsi (1717). Also (as part of the decision) the younger brother must fulfill the civil and

⁶⁶ Literally, "ruler of men," Miwang's actual name is Pho lha nas Bsod nams Stob srgyas. Heller, "Midbang's 1740 Decree to Batang," 377.

military duties as the *brgya-dpon*. (The elder brother's) portion of the land, house, fields and all that he has newly received is settled, but neither he nor his descendants may make any claim (literally: not so much as a hair) to the position of *brgya-dpon*. In accordance with the settlement thus given, the Seventh Dalai Lama made the decree of great importance in the wood-hare year (1735) for permanent establishment (of Rin-chen's possessions and title)... From now on, Rin chen's two sons, Dpal 'byor stbos 'phel [*sic*, stobs 'phel] and Padma lha dbang and their descendants must preserve these joyful (legal) documents.⁶⁷

This document, which was held by the son of the last native chieftain of Batang before it was transferred to American missionary Albert Shelton in the early twentieth century, effectively formalizes the hereditary status of one of Batang's two most powerful elite families following a succession struggle. Qian Zhaotang notes in *A Brief Gazetteer of Batang* that Ngawang Rinchen (阿旺林青), known by Miwang as Rin-chen, was originally a Tibetan headman (土目) who was promoted to a local Batang position of Company Commander (土百户, literally a commander of one hundred and therefore equivalent to the Tibetan position of *brgya dpon* mentioned above).⁶⁸ In 1728 (YZ 5), Ngawang Rinchen temporarily filled the position of Batang's deputy native chieftain (副土司, 副宣撫司 and 二營官 all refer to this secular position of authority). We can conclude, therefore, that the district governor position (*rdzong stod*) to which Miwang refers is in fact the deputy native chieftain position in Batang.

Rin-chen, a.k.a. Ngawang Rinchen, rose to this position because the deputy native chieftain at the time, Tashi Phuntsok (Bkra shis Phun tshogs, 扎西朋楚), had been temporarily appointed to fill the position of native chieftain (土司, 宣撫司, 大營官) when Batang's southern-most territories were returned to Yunnan the previous year, at which time the then

⁶⁷ Heller, "Midbang's 1740 Decree to Batang," 383-84.

⁶⁸ *Gya pon* (*brgya dpon*) refers to an official Tibetan title for either a civil position that oversaw a unit of one hundred men or families or a military position that commanded 125 soldiers. In this case, *gya pon* were under the authority of Batang's native chieftains. Xie Qihuang, Li Shuangjian, and Danzhu Angben, eds., *Zangzu chuantong wenhua cidian* (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin chubanshe, 1992), 224-25.

native chieftain, Lobsang Khedrub, relinquished his native chieftain responsibilities. In 1730 (YZ 7), Ngawang Rinchen officially became Batang's deputy native chieftain, and he received his seals and charters of investiture three years later.

Miwang subsequently proclaimed that Rin-chen's older son, Peljor Tobpel (Dpal 'byor Stobs 'phel), was to inherit his father's position as district governor, while his younger son, Pema Lhawang (Pad ma Lha dbang), had to relinquish his claims on the deputy native chieftain position and instead serve as a Company Commander (*brgya dpon*). As we've seen above, Qian Zhaotang notes that Pema Lhawang's father had served in this position previously, so it is not surprising that one of his sons would inherit this position. Qian Zhaotang further confirms the implementation of Miwang's decree, recording in *A Brief Gazetteer of Batang* that Banjiu (班鳩, a.k.a., Peljor Tobpel), the son of Ngawang Rinchen, became deputy native chieftain in 1738 (YZ 15). Interestingly, Peljor Tobpel's son, Norbu (Nor bu, 羅布), succeeded his father in 1757 (QL 21). However, seven year later he was dismissed from his office for reasons unstated. It was none other than Rin-chen's younger son, Pema Lhawang (transliterated in Chinese as Batema, 巴特馬), who inherited the deputy native chieftain position, and whose progeny continued to serve in this capacity.⁶⁹

This isolated case illustrates several important ideas underlying power and authority in Batang. For example, Miwang clearly issued his decree in response to a local request, most likely from Peljor Tobpel, Rinchen's elder son, who felt threatened by his brother's claims to his position. That Batang's secular elite were able to appeal to the top of the government in Lhasa suggests that their secular ties to Lhasa remained strong and that, as Goldstein suggests, the Dalai Lama's government served as a court of last appeals for Batang elite as late as the mid-

⁶⁹ Qian, *Batang zhiliüe*, 12a-12b.

eighteenth century. While I have uncovered no evidence from Batang suggesting similar secular appeals to Lhasa, this case is a clear example that the Dalai Lama's government maintained at least limited sovereignty in Batang at this time. At the same time, we must not ignore the fact that someone had first brought this case to the attention of Qing officials, who also issued a ruling, therefore similarly demonstrating Qing sovereignty in the region and showing how the legitimacy of Batang's native chieftains was closely linked to Qing imperial authority. The ultimate result, however, is perhaps the most indicative of the nature of secular power in Batang. While Chinese officials may rule one way, and a senior Tibetan official in Lhasa may rule another way, local power holders more often than not proved to be the ultimate decision makers. In the end, Lhasa's influence was limited, the Qing decree that native chieftain positions would be of fixed terms and appointed by the state was ignored, and secular elites continued to appoint their own successors. This is one of many examples of how local power holders successfully manipulated Tibetan and imperial decisions to maintain their own authority.

Responsibilities and Authority

Batang's two *deba* or native chieftains were charged with broad responsibilities in their jurisdictions that gave them wide-ranging power and authority. In this section I will briefly outline their duties regarding tax collection, corvée labor, military campaigns, and dispute resolution.

As members of the local aristocracy, Batang's native chieftains maintained near absolute authority over the land, resources, and people of Batang. This authority was shared with Ba Chöde and other monasteries, and it was not uncommon for some people to be bound both to a

monastery and to a representative of the native chieftain.⁷⁰ However, when it came to most secular matters, decisions of native chieftains went unchallenged. The native chieftains possessed massive estates headquartered in Batang proper, and they had the power to grant farm and pasture land to monasteries and headmen under their jurisdiction. They oversaw sixty to eighty other secular elite families who served on a rotating basis as the native chieftains' advisors, local administrators, and militia commanders, and through them the native chieftains collected taxes and a broad range of goods and services from the local populace. Just as Batang residents living on land owned by Ba Chöde Monastery, residents on native chieftain lands were bound to their estates. In addition to the secular elite families under their authority, native chieftains commanded tenant farmers, skilled laborers, and servants, all of whom were responsible for various taxes and services.⁷¹ Directly supporting the estates of native chieftains, they were obligated to farm the fields, collect firewood and hay, take care of livestock, provide foodstuffs, and maintain the estate. Depending on their status, they may have had to perform their duties every day of the year or a limited number of days. Most people worked directly for the native chieftains from thirty to one hundred eighty days per year.

Like Ba Chöde Monastery, Batang's native chieftains collected goods and services from the people bound to their estate largely for their personal benefit. Yet unlike Ba Chöde Monastery, Batang's native chieftains were empowered by the state to collect taxes from the people. This vivid symbol of state power differentiated Batang's native chieftains from other power holders in the region. Further evincing their unique position, Batang's native chieftains

⁷⁰ Carrasco points out, for example, that inhabitants of 'Kourong', a region of Batang, were required to provide taxes in kind to both the monastery and local representatives of the *deba*. Carrasco, *Land and Polity in Tibet*, 142-43.

⁷¹ Jiang Anxi and Lai Zuozhong, "Batang xian jiefang qianhou wenjiao gaishu," in *Sichuan wenshi ziliao xuanji*, vol. 27, ed. Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Sichuan sheng weiyuanhui wenshi ziliao yanjiu weiyuanhui (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1982), 138.

collected taxes on behalf of both Lhasa and Beijing authorities. As mentioned above, while we know Batang initially came under control of the Dalai Lama in 1664, historical records indicating the precise nature of Lhasa's rule over the people of Batang are not currently available. Nevertheless, we do know that the Dalai Lama conducted two tax surveys in Kham, including the region of 'Ba', in 1648 and 1677, so it is safe to assume that the people of Batang submitted some form of tax to the Tibetan government in Lhasa beginning in the second half of the seventeenth century. We also know that Lhasa dispatched two *deba* to Batang in 1703 to administer the region, and it is likely that these individuals collected these taxes on behalf of the Lhasa government, although extant historical records are silent on this point.

In addition, Qing records show that Batang's *deba* offered their allegiance to the Qing Empire in 1719 and began paying taxes to Qing imperial authorities. Whether or not Batang's *deba* ceased submitting taxes to Lhasa at this time is unclear. Not insignificantly, upon accepting Batang's allegiance, the Qing court ordered all cash and grain taxes collected in Batang to be used to support military efforts in the region. They were not to be submitted to Sichuan coffers. What the court left unstated, of course, was that taxes were also collected to support local administration, including salaries and supplies for Batang's newly recognized two native chieftains, their headmen, local lamas, and local soldiers. As we shall see, this practice of collecting taxes exclusively for local needs continued throughout the Qing dynasty and became a useful rhetorical tool for local imperial officials when negotiating with native chieftains and lamas in the late nineteenth century.

It is not likely that Batang's native chieftains continued to submit taxes to Lhasa after 1719, but Rolpai Dorje's 1735 memorial above definitively shows that sometime before this date

Lhasa ceased receiving taxes from Batang and areas east of the Ningjing Mountain range.⁷² The transfer of Batang's tax revenues from Lhasa to Qing authorities to support their local outpost most likely occurred following the 1727 decision to divide administration of Kham and central Tibet at Ningjing Mountain between authorities in central Tibet, Sichuan, and Yunnan.

In addition to demanding from local people direct support for their estates and taxes for the state (or states), Batang's native chieftains were responsible for maintaining corvée labor services throughout their jurisdiction. Found throughout the Tibetan plateau, this system, which was managed by a region's secular (and sometimes religious) elite, allowed both Tibetan and Qing imperial officials to requisition on demand transportation services between established transit stations on the main roads throughout Tibetan areas, usually located one day's travel distance apart. Corvée services ranged from providing fresh horses for couriers transporting official documents, to accompanying long-distance trade caravans, to supporting massive military campaigns. Corvée laborers did receive token compensation for their services, but this pay was insufficient for them to survive. Most families responsible for corvée labor supplemented their income through farming or other activities.⁷³

The Qing court also obligated Batang's native chieftains to provide military support when needed, and it rewarded success in battle. Batang's two *deba* received native chieftain titles for their efforts in the Zunghar campaign. In 1748, Batang's deputy native chieftain Gonpo Jamchen (Mgon po Byams chen, 衮卜嘉木清) led over 1,500 local troops in the first Jinchuan (金川)⁷⁴ campaign and, in return, received accolades from the imperial court. In 1776, he participated in

⁷² Heller, "Midbang's 1740 Decree to Batang," 377-78.

⁷³ *BTXZ*, 244-50.

⁷⁴ A reference to Nyarong (Nyag rong), also known in the Qing as Zhandui (瞻對) or Sanzhan (三瞻). Today, Nyarong is known as Xinlong County (新龍縣), located northeast of Batang.

the second Jinchuan campaign, and because he was so successful, the Qianlong Emperor summoned him to the capital, where he and his descendants were conferred with the right to wear a Class Two red button (二品紅頂), an important symbol of rank for Batang's deputy native chieftain that was passed down until the early twentieth century.

Qian Zhaotang also records a wide range of rewards bestowed on native chieftains and their subordinates for various military efforts. For example, deputy native chieftain Trinle Chöpel (Phrin las Chos 'phel, 成勒春丕勒) accompanied Qing forces on their expedition against the Gurkhas in 1791 (QL 56). During a Qing attack on the northwest tower of Nianlang Fort (年浪宗), also known as Nielamu (聂拉木), Trinle Chöpel dug under the foot of the walls, which led to the fort's collapse, and captured the nephew of headman Mamu Shaye (瑪木莎野), Zamada Aerlu Shaye (咱瑪达阿爾魯莎野). In recognition of his efforts in battle, the Qing court granted him the title of *zalei batulu* (匝勒巴圖魯).⁷⁵ A local Company Commander Tsewang Norbu (Tshe dbang Nor bu, 土千總澤旺諾布) was also awarded with a bolt of colored satin and the right to wear a blue plume, and other local headmen and soldiers received varying degrees of financial rewards for their military contributions in this campaign.⁷⁶

The following year (1792 (QL 57)), in response to continuing problems with the Gurkhas in central Tibet, Batang head native chieftain Chönjor Drakpo (Chos 'byor Drag po, 吹忠扎布) and deputy native chieftain Tsewang Norbu (澤旺諾爾布) assisted Qing armies both by contributing money and grains and by actively participating in the fighting against the Gurkhas. The Qing court awarded Chönjor Drakpo the title of *bengzeng 'e batulu* (绷增額巴圖魯) and two

⁷⁵ Qian, *Batang zhiliue*, 12b.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 4a-4b.

large bolts of satin, and Tsewang Norbu received similar recognitions.⁷⁷ In 1805 (JQ 10), most likely to recognize the contributions of Kham native chieftains in the Gurkha war, the Batang native chieftains traveled to Beijing with other native chieftains from the area. The Emperor received them in the Hall of Protecting Harmony, where he entertained them with a feast. Such imperial favors no doubt enhanced the already far-reaching power of the Batang's native chieftains.

Finally, Batang's native chieftains exhibited their power through local dispute resolution. They had the power to determine freely the fate of people in Batang by establishing laws, arresting criminals, and meting out punishment. Punishments could be quite severe, ranging from fines, to various types of physical discipline, to imprisonment and even death. However, offenders frequently evaded corporal punishment by offering monetary payments to the native chieftains.

As seen in the discussion of monastic power above, Ba Chöde Monastery's leadership also possessed the power to settle disputes. Authors writing about Batang, both Chinese and western, frequently note Ba Chöde Monastery's ability to limit the power of Batang's native chieftains and Qing imperial officials to punish criminals. Highlighting the importance of local dispute resolution, Qian Zhaotang, for example, writes, "When the native chieftain encounters a case involving loss of life, he imprisons the murderer in a dark room. One can escape to the monastery and embrace the flagpole to avoid imprisonment. The two involved parties discuss the cost of the life."⁷⁸ In his *Draft History of the Qing*, Zhao Erxun also notes that "When a Tibetan commits a crime [in Batang], the native chieftain rules over him. When a Tibetan lama commits

⁷⁷ Lobsang Gyaltzen, *'Ba' kyi lo rgyus*, 34; and Qian, *Batang zhilüe*, 12a-12b.

⁷⁸ Qian, *Batang zhilüe*, 18b.

a crime, the monastery's *ge khö* (*dge skos*)⁷⁹ governs him. Han officials are unable to intervene. Only when a Tibetan woman married to a Han commits a crime does the Han official handle it.⁸⁰

In fact, the boundaries separating the power of Ba Chöde Monastery and Batang's native chieftains were not as clear as Zhao would have us believe. The power of Batang's native chieftains and monastic leaders, the two most influential groups in local society, often overlapped. As Qian Zhaotang hints, negotiations among all parties involved in a crime or dispute were commonplace. Some Batang residents were also obliged to submit goods and/or services both to the monastery and to a native chieftain as taxation. Not surprisingly, it also was not uncommon for Batang's powerful reincarnate lamas to be reborn in the families of secular elite. Numerous reincarnate lamas in Batang monasteries, for example, were born in the family of Batang's head native chieftain. Many others were born to native chieftains in neighboring territories. The family of the Chakla Gyalpo (Lcags la Rgyal po, 明正土司) in Dartsedo supplied a particularly large number of reincarnate lamas for Batang monasteries, especially Druppa Monastery, Batang's largest Nyingma monastery.⁸¹ As we shall see, Batang's native chieftains would continue to work very closely with Ba Chöde Monastery on dispute resolution and many other matters of local, national, and even international concern.

Fulfilling their responsibilities as representatives of both Lhasa and Beijing while maintaining their authority locally was a complex task for Batang's native chieftains, and they relied on a number of headmen and local leaders for assistance. For example, the head native

⁷⁹ Known in Chinese as *tiebang lama* (鐵棒喇嘛), *ge khö* are high ranking lamas who oversee religious discipline within a monastery. See Melvyn C. Goldstein, "A Study of *Ldab Ldob*," *Central Asiatic Journal* 9, no. 2 (1964): 137.

⁸⁰ Zhao Erxun, *Qingshi gao* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), juan 513, liezhuan 300.

⁸¹ Zhou and Ran, *Zang chuan fojiao siyuan ziliao xuanbian*, 323.

chieftain utilized *mag pon* (*dmag dpon*)⁸² in Batang proper and Sanba (Zam ba, 三壩)⁸³ and *xieao* (協敖)⁸⁴ in Luyul Derong (Klu yul sgang Sde rong, 六玉得榮), Zongyan Yanjing (宗岩鹽井), Pokhok (Spo khog, 波密),⁸⁵ and Mangling (莽岭),⁸⁶ all of which fell under his traditional jurisdiction. The *mag pon* oversaw soldiers stationed at official transit posts under their jurisdiction, while the *xieao* had broader responsibilities, including tax collection, corvée labor management, and general civil affairs. The deputy native chieftain utilized a similar array of local headmen to ensure a steady supply of tax revenue, smooth corvée services, and a stable society.⁸⁷

Finally, it is important to note that the granting of official titles and responsibilities to indigenous leaders in Batang does not necessarily mean that the Qing Empire was always able to exert direct influence through them. In his study of Qing expansionism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, John Herman argues that *deba* were forced to grant the Qing Empire many concessions in return for receiving the empire's support. He suggests that Qing officials divided up the estates of local elite, demanded periodic tribute, began to regulate inheritance (including the inheritance of the native chieftain office itself), and set up schools in Kham.⁸⁸ While Qing officials may have carried out such policies in some native chieftain territories in the western

⁸² Transliterated in Chinese as 馬本 or 馬琫, a *mag pon* is Tibetan military officer in charge of one hundred soldiers.

⁸³ Present-day Bomi Township (波密鄉).

⁸⁴ A Chinese transliteration for a Tibetan military position that oversees fifty soldiers. See Xie, Li, and Danzhu Angben, *Zangzu chuantong wenhua cidian*, 274.

⁸⁵ Batang xian diming lingdao xiaozu, ed., *Sichuan sheng Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou Batang xian diminglu* (N.p.: Xinan minzu xueyuan yinshuachang, 1986), 38-55.

⁸⁶ Mangling is more commonly transliterated in Chinese as Mangli (莽里).

⁸⁷ *BTXZ*, 245-46.

⁸⁸ Herman, "National Integration and Regional Hegemony," 15-109.

half of Sichuan, Qing records do not indicate such policies were effective in native chieftain territories in Kham. Estates in Kham were not divided up. The court, moreover, not only frequently exempted native chieftains in Kham, including Batang, from tribute missions, but they also provided their territories with annual subsidies.⁸⁹ Intermarriage and polygynous marriages within relatively small elite populations also allowed native chieftains to thwart Confucian inheritance restrictions, and as I have demonstrated above, local native chieftains determined their successors without influence from Qing or central Tibetan officials. Finally, while Batang did have a Confucian school as early as 1719 (KX 58), this was a charity school established by Han merchants who had recently migrated to Batang. It was neither built nor supported by the imperial state.⁹⁰ As we shall see, however, despite the tenuous relationship between the empire and Batang's native chieftains, Qing officials were in fact able to exert imperial power in this remote but historically significant corner of the empire.

Imperial Officials

Many individuals travelling through Batang in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries took the opportunity to comment on the weakness of imperial officials there. For example, Gill, who traveled to Batang in 1877, noted the seemingly precarious position of Batang's Commissariat Officer Zhao at the time: "Chao [Zhao] asked if we had any rifled artillery in our portmanteaus. This question was put to us in all seriousness. On our replying in the negative, he said, "Ah! If you only could have given me one or two I soon would have made these Tibetans say 'La-so'; now I often have to say 'La-so' to them." This unpremeditated

⁸⁹ Fu Songmu, *Xikang jiansheng ji* (Chengdu: Chengdu gongji yinzhi gongsi, 1912), 4. Also quoted in Wu Fengpei, ed., "Ji Qing Guangxu sanshiyi nian Batang zhi luan," *Yugong banyuekan* 6, no. 12 (1937): 45.

⁹⁰ *BTXZ*, 9.

question and remark did more to show the true nature of the relations between the Chinese and Tibetans than anything else I had seen or heard.”⁹¹ On his way to assume the position of Amban to Tibet, You Tai (有泰) memorialized in 1903 (GX 29), on Batang and Litang, writing, “The further west one goes, the greater the number of lamas there are in each monastery, and the power of their *khenpos* is greater than that of the local officials.”⁹²

While such descriptions may not be unjustified, this dissertation argues that Qing officials in fact were able to exert tangible imperial influence in the region far beyond mere punitive military expeditions such as those led by Ma Weiqi and Zhao Erfeng in 1905. Influencing Batang’s native chieftains and lamas, and through them, the Batang people, required patience and local understanding, but positive results with wide-sweeping implications reaching as far away as Paris and London were possible on numerous occasions. Such results remind us that remote and often overlooked regions like Batang play meaningful roles in larger historical developments.

Initial Establishment and Bureaucratic Structure

As discussed above, the Kangxi Emperor’s campaign to suppress the Zunghars significantly impacted Batang and represents the beginning of the Qing’s permanent presence there. To support their military activities on the Tibetan plateau, the imperial court undertook a number of administrative measures that tied Batang closer to the empire. For example, in 1719 the Qing court established official transit stations (驛站) between Dartsedo and Batang for use by military and civil officials and those persons handling official correspondence. Batang alone

⁹¹ Gill, *The River of Golden Sand*, 215.

⁹² Item no. 0006 (GX 29.12.27) in *Qingmo Chuan Dian bianwu dang’an shiliao*, ed. Sichuan sheng minzu yanjiusuo (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 8 (hereafter *QCBDS*).

had three transit stations within its borders. Also, upon the proposal of General Nian Gengyao, the Qing court established a Brigade Commander (游擊) position to oversee five hundred Qing soldiers to be stationed in Batang in 1724 (YZ 2). At the same time, the court set up an Assistant Brigade Commander (守備) to oversee two hundred soldiers stationed between Litang and Batang and a Detachment Patrol Officer (汛外委) at the Dri River ferry crossing at Drubanang (Gru ba nang, 竹巴龍), southwest of Batang proper.⁹³ As with other imperial positions, officials and soldiers stationed in Batang were to serve for three years before rotating to new assignments. In fact, many rank-and-file soldiers spent many more years in Batang and some retired there.

The most significant early Qing administrative reform in Batang was the establishment of a Commissariat Officer position in 1728 (YZ 6) to support the efficient supply of Qing troops stationed in central Tibet, which by this time had reached several thousand.⁹⁴ The significance of this reform lies in the fact that it introduced a new force in local governance. The Commissariat Officer greatly enhanced the imperial presence in Batang, and soon additional officials, both civil and military, as well as Han merchants, would arrive, forever altering the local landscape of power. While Batang's native chieftains and monks largely maintained their influence over local society in the early Qing, the Commissariat Officer's priority was to protect communication and supply routes between Lhasa and Dartsedo. These routes were rarely threatened in the early Qing, and as a result imperial officials exerted little direct influence on Batang people at this time. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, circumstances would arise that demanded imperial officials play a greater role in local society.

⁹³ *BTXZ*, 9-10; and Batang xian diming lingdao xiaozu, *Sichuan sheng Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou Batang xian diminglu*, 34.

⁹⁴ Wu, "Ji Qing Guangxu sanshiyi nian Batang zhi luan," 45.

Continuing its administrative re-structuring, Sichuan authorities formally incorporated Batang into Yazhou's Dartsedo Sub-Prefecture (雅州府打箭爐廳) in 1729 (YZ 7). In the following year, the Qing court added twelve recently pacified territories to the administrative responsibility of the Batang native chieftain, including Upper and Lower Linkashi (上下臨卡石), Gangli (崗里), Longshi (隆石), Upper and Lower Sua (上下蘇阿), and Guobu (郭布).⁹⁵

In 1744 (QL 9), the imperial court removed the Commissariat Office from Batang, a sign the court thought the region had become stable. No less than a year later during the first Jinchuan campaign, the court re-established the office, only to remove it again after suppressing Nyarong. In 1748 (QL 13), it was again re-established in the second Jinchuan campaign, remaining until it was finally abolished in 1905 with Zhao Erfeng's wide-sweeping administrative reforms throughout Kham.⁹⁶ As part of the Qing's temporary drawdown in Batang, its Assistant Brigade Commander (守備) was transferred to Dragyab, and Dragyab's Squad Leader (把總) was transferred to Batang in 1746 (QL 11), most likely to strengthen the *de facto* border between China and Tibet. While records do not explicitly identify the conclusion of the Brigade Commander position in Batang, we can assume that it also closed in the mid-eighteenth century as part of the temporary reduction in military force.

Despite initially drawing down in Batang, the necessity of keeping Nyarong under control during the Jinchuan campaigns showed the Qing court the strategic importance of Batang. As a result, the Qing court began to augment its presence in Batang in 1748 by establishing Brigade Vice Commander (都司) and Company Commander (千總) positions. In 1775, they

⁹⁵ Some of these areas have alternative Chinese transliterations. Linkashi is sometimes written as Lengkashi (冷卡石); Gangri is also known as Gangriluo (杠日落); and Longshi is also known as Roulongxi (柔龍西).

⁹⁶ For analysis of the Qianlong Emperor's Jinchuan campaigns, see Dai, *The Sichuan Frontier and Tibet*, 117-146; and Alexander Woodside, "The Centre and the Borderlands in Chinese Political Theory," in *The Chinese State at the Borders*, ed., Diana Lary (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 15.

added another Squad Leader position to bolster security surrounding the official transit stations between Dartsedo and Lhasa, and three years later in 1778 (QL 43), the court added to Batang's growing imperial bureaucracy another Brigade Vice Commander and upgraded one of the Squad Leader positions to a Company Commander.⁹⁷ These officials were responsible for military affairs and civil administration, and they also assisted the Commissariat Officer with managing the shipment of supplies and salaries to soldiers stationed in Tibet, maintaining public order, and facilitating small-scale land reclamation projects.⁹⁸

By the time Qian Zhaotang departed Batang in 1845, his office oversaw a growing staff of imperial and local officers and soldiers that included a forwardly deployed Brigade Vice Commander, a Special Detachment Company Commander (專汛千總), and a Detachment Patrol Officer, all of whom were dispatched from inland China. Supporting these officials was a staff of one hundred thirty-two individuals, ranging from interpreters to stable hands, foot soldiers to oarsmen, all of whom received some form of salary and compensation from the Commissariat Officer. While Qing officials occasionally met with local opposition, the presence of such a large imperial operation in Batang certainly stimulated the local economy and thereby may have improved the standard of living for Batang's residents.

In addition to managing the civil and military staff under his command in Batang, the Commissariat Officer oversaw Batang's two native chieftains and seven local Company Commanders (*gya pon*, 土百戶). When it recognized Batang's Company Commander positions, the Qing court originally intended for imperial officials to fill them. However, due to strong influence of Batang's local elite and the dearth of officials available from inland China, the

⁹⁷ *BTXZ*, 10.

⁹⁸ Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shilüe*, 79.

Commissariat Officer in fact appointed local headmen to these positions. He originally chose these local officials based on their “achievements and loyalty,” but over time the Commissariat Officer delegated the selection and monitoring of these lower level positions to Batang’s native chieftains. In practice, these positions, just like the native chieftain positions, became hereditary.

Below the Company Commanders were garrisoned soldiers. In the early eighteenth century, as many as seven hundred troops were stationed in Batang. Over the years this number declined, and by the time of Qian Zhaotang’s tenure in Batang, only eighty-three cavalry and infantry soldiers remained to support the Qing’s imperial presence there. In addition, early Qing regulations required that two hundred twenty-five local cavalry and infantry soldiers be stationed throughout the region. Qian was not able to make a complete survey of the soldiers on his payrolls in Batang, but he suggests that that number had already declined by over half at the time of his arrival, making the total number of troops in Batang no more than two hundred.⁹⁹ While the administrative changes the Qing court implemented in Batang may not have had immediate or dramatic effects on the local socio-political landscape, it is clear the Qing court exerted its influence locally through employment and, when necessary, in times of war, as we have seen above.

Responsibilities and Authority

At the time the Commissariat was established in Batang, the town consisted of two walled compounds—the “lama town” (喇嘛城), which was dominated by Ba Chöde Monastery, and the “imperial town” (皇城), a largely residential complex that included the estates of Batang’s two native chieftains. Aligning himself with the commanding power of the monastery,

⁹⁹ Qian, *Batang zhiliüe*, 3a-3b and 6b-7b.

Batang's first Commissariat Officer established his offices within the "lama town," where his successors would remain until the end of the dynasty.¹⁰⁰ In addition to the symbolic power of being associated with Batang's most important religious institution, practical factors also influenced the Commissariat Officer's choice of location for his yamen. When Yue Zhongqi arrived in Batang in 1719, he brought with him as many as 2,000 soldiers, a large portion of which were garrisoned in Batang. Needing quarters in which to work and live, the Qing army constructed a fortified compound of offices and barracks adjacent to Ba Chöde Monastery. As the number of garrisoned soldiers in Batang decreased, the army turned over some of their barracks to the monastery, which they used to house additional monks. It is likely that the Commissariat Officer similarly took advantage of available space behind the thick walls of the Qing garrison when he arrived in 1728. As we shall see, despite the close proximity of the local yamen and Ba Chöde Monastery, Commissariat Officers worked more smoothly with Batang's native chieftains and struggled to persuade local lamas on matters of importance to the Qing court. Such struggles, however, did not preclude Commissariat Officers from successfully asserting imperial policy in Batang.

While it was not uncommon for high officials merely traveling through Batang, such as You Tai (mentioned above) and Feng Quan (to be discussed in Chapter Four), to look down on Ba Chöde Monastery and the native chieftains, imperial officials and soldiers stationed there took a much different view. Evidence from Qian Zhaotang and other sources discussed in Chapter Three even suggests that some (but certainly not all) imperial officials and soldiers stationed in Batang for extended periods of time maintained amiable relations with local

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 5a; and *BTXZ*, 61.

Tibetans, including monks.¹⁰¹ Qian Zhaotang, for example, was both an active participant and astute observer of local society, even composing forty couplets about Batang history, society, and customs.

So what can we learn from Qian Zhaotang's portrayals of Batang? He begins his introductory notes, "Batang returned to the fold over one hundred years ago. It has looked up with gratitude to the country for nourishing it with its deep grace. When they are exempt from barbarian grain taxes, they increase their portorage. This happens often. Native chieftains are frequently invited to receive annual rewards of valuable goods." Among the reasons for compiling his gazetteer, he also notes that while "The border peoples are crude, and there is nothing in them that one should strive to emulate," among the Tibetans, "Batang native chieftains are the most deferent."¹⁰² More generally, Qian's tone and content suggests that Batang in the mid-nineteenth century was relatively stable. He does allude to some long-standing feuds, but following the suppression of the Zunghars and the Gurkha campaigns, Qian records no military activity for Batang. It is not surprising, therefore, that troop levels had declined significantly. Qian also does not mention difficulties with Batang's native chieftains or lamas, content that often took center stage in accounts written by later Qing officials stationed in Kham. It seems that the Qing court's use of imperial titles, seals, and charters of investiture, the concomitant rights and obligations to collect taxes from the local populace, and various rewards in recognition of the contributions of Batang's elite in earlier military campaigns had, to a certain extent, won over Batang's secular elite. At the same time, the court's slightly less formal system of rewarding local religious leaders with titles and financial support for their monasteries

¹⁰¹ Commissariat Officers regularly transferred to new positions at the end of their three year assignments in Batang. Other officials, and especially enlisted soldiers, often chose to remain in Batang for many years.

¹⁰² Qian, *Batang zhilüe*, 1a-1b.

described earlier had created good will among Batang's religious elite for the empire and its representatives.

Qian and presumably other officials before him moreover had by all accounts positive relationships with Batang's populace. Commissariat offices were located within the compound of Ba Chöde Monastery, evincing a lack of fear of the over one thousand monks who were resident there. Qian also funded the construction of a City God Temple in 1845 (DG 24) with the support of Batang's native chieftains and the local Han people, which numbered well over one hundred at the time. He also funded the construction of a local ceremonial altar.¹⁰³ Further evincing his cultural sensitivity, Qian describes Batang's incorporation into the Qing imperial realm in one of his couplets: "In ancient times, clothing, leather, grains, and meat were lacking. I remember you returned your allegiance in the year of the rat."¹⁰⁴ While not particularly inspiring language, what is notable here is that while the events he is referring to occurred in 1719 (KX 58), he foregoes the imperial Chinese calendar in favor of the Tibetan calendar, which identifies 1719 as the year of the rat.¹⁰⁵ This is a subtle reference, but one that clearly shows the influence of local culture on Qian.¹⁰⁶ In other poems, he muses on Batang's warm climate; home life in which women work and men are at ease; how to prepare tsamba, the Tibetan staple foodstuff, and tea; and the beauty of the local sunset.

On the economy, Qian focuses on agricultural production, discussing summer wheat and autumn grains, the richness of the soil that allows for more than one planting each year, the

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 5b.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 19b.

¹⁰⁵ The Tibetan calendar is based on Buddhist teachings found in the Kalachakra tantra (Tib., *dus kyi 'khor lo*), a Sanskrit text translated into Tibetan in the 11th century.

¹⁰⁶ Qian, *Batang zhilüe*, 19b; and Gu Zheqin, "Qian Zhaotang he ta de 'Batang zhuzhi ci,'" *Zhongguo Xizang* 2 (2004): 105.

primitiveness of the farm tools, and the importance of regional markets. He also notes that outside Batang proper, Yunnan raw silver did not circulate because its real value on the market was so low. Transactions were instead completed with tea, and change was made with highland barley or, for smaller amounts, carving debts in wood.¹⁰⁷

Traveling through Batang over thirty years later, Gill confirms the wide-spread currency of tea in the region. Writing about his visit to Batang in August 1877, he states:

Before the introduction of the rupee, tea-bricks were used as currency...and “even now in Bat’ang a brick of ordinary tea is not merely worth a rupee, but in a certain sense *is* a rupee, being accepted without minute regard to weight, just like the silver coin, as a legal tender. Since the influx of rupees this tea-coinage has been very seriously debased, having now lost 25 per cent of its original weight. The system of double monetary standard is approaching its end, at any rate in Tibet; for in May last the Lamas of the Bat’ang monastery, having hoarded a great treasure of bricks, found it impossible to exchange them at par, and had to put up with a loss of 30 per cent.”¹⁰⁸

In addition to agricultural production and currency, Qian also expresses some regret at the lack of development of Batang’s natural resources, apart from the healthy production of salt in Yanjing.¹⁰⁹ He notes, for example, that the native chieftains had shut down a gold mine in southern Batang due to resistance from the local people.¹¹⁰

Qian was not a mere observer of local culture. His use of several Tibetan words and phrases in his poems and descriptions suggests that he participated in local society. He names and describes the different types of local officials; comments on the deep faith of Tibetans, such that a family with two sons would send one to the monastery, or send their daughters to be nuns; outlines the basic structure of Ba Chöde Monastery and the different positions of authority in its leadership, noting, for example, that the number of Gelug monks in Batang’s territory was set at

¹⁰⁷ Qian, *Batang zhiliu*, 16b.

¹⁰⁸ Gill, *The River of Golden Sand*, 131.

¹⁰⁹ Qian, *Batang zhiliu*, 18a-18b.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 18a.

1,195, but that in recent years the number had increased to over 1,200 monks at Ba Chöde Monastery alone.¹¹¹ He also discusses how *khenpo* and native chieftains welcomed and sent off Qing officials, noting the great expense to the local people such ceremonies entailed; how monasteries collected revenues in the form of salt, butter, and cloth; how nomads lived in black tents and depended on selling butter and grass for a living; how difficult the demands of corvée labor were for those bound to provide it; how Tibetans removed their hats, extended their tongues, and waited to the side as a sign of respect to him and others of higher social status; and the unique position of “translators” (通事) and the easy potential for corruption among them. Qian also writes that a family with ten head of livestock was considered rich, a standard that later Western travelers contradicted.¹¹² Further commenting on Tibetan clothing and jewelry; giving and receiving khata; wedding and funeral traditions; religious festivals, dances, and teachings; butter sculptures; local weights and measures; and calendars, Qian is even observant enough to distinguish the two types of Tibetan script being taught to local Tibetan children. All these examples highlight the fact that while some imperial officials may indeed have abused their positions of power or remain disengaged from local society in Batang, others clearly learned a great deal about local society and culture. In so doing, such officials were better able to maintain peace and stability within their jurisdictions.

The open-minded and inquisitive attitude shown by Qian would not be found in later Qing officials in Batang, and gradually the stability that characterized his tenure would erode. The relatively early date of his gazetteer is important because it provides a Chinese picture of the realm before the arrival of foreign missionaries, who would disrupt Batang society throughout

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 19a.

¹¹² Note that Gill, writing 35 years later in 1877, identifies a different standard of wealth: “In this part of the country, a man with three or four hundred head of cattle is rich, while one who has only twenty or thirty is considered poor.” Gill, *The River of Golden Sand*, 222.

the remainder of the dynasty. Qian was spared the international attention his successors faced in attempting to resolve increasingly complicated and expensive incidents involving missionaries within their jurisdiction. Chapter Three focuses on these missionaries and the ramifications their activities had locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally. Before doing so, however, I will introduce one final influential element of Batang society, Han merchants.

Han Merchants

Just as the Qing response to the Zunghar advancement into central Tibet influenced local Tibetan officials and precipitated the permanent stationing of imperial officials and soldiers in the region, so did this campaign alter Batang's socio-economic structure. As Yue Zhongqi moved towards Tibet, a coterie of Shaanxi merchants took advantage of the armed escort and followed the military to Batang in 1719. On the economic front, these merchants were the first to bring raw silver to Batang, and from this time silver, in combination with an increasingly rich variety of other currencies, circulated in the region through the late nineteenth century.¹¹³ Socially, soon after their arrival the Shaanxi merchants established a charitable Chinese language school,¹¹⁴ the first of several schools to be set up by outsiders in Batang and the beginning of a trend that distinguishes Batang from other principalities in both Kham and Tibet as a whole. As I will argue in subsequent chapters, education and the new ideas it instilled in people of Batang were the driving forces for numerous dramatic changes in Batang's political and social landscapes.

By 1727 (YZ 5) the number of Han merchants and craftsmen in Batang had reached forty. Similar to many Chinese communities sojourning in unfamiliar territory, the Han people in

¹¹³ BTXZ, 9. Known as a *dabao* (大宝), one ingot of silver (*ding* 錠) was made up of 50 *liang* (兩).

¹¹⁴ Yuan and Li, "Jiaoliu yu ronghe—guanyu Batang Hanzu de ge an fenxi," 93.

Batang established a mutual aid society known as the Han Commercial Society (漢商公會) not long after settling in Batang.¹¹⁵ Known colloquially as the “God of Wealth Society” (財神會) because of the public festival in honor of the God of Wealth it organized annually on the fifteenth day of the third month of the lunar year, Han residents established this society to, among other things, “maintain outside contacts, solidify the unity of the Han merchants, show compassion to widows and orphans, aid the poor, and support the weak.”¹¹⁶ Further evincing the organization and permanent presence of Han residents in Batang, a number of secret societies (哥老會) came to Batang, including the Tongdian (潼滇), Chongde (崇德), Xisheng (西聖), and Congxing (從興) societies. Although precisely when these other organizations were established is not clear, it is likely they did not form until the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Unfortunately, other than brief mention of these informal yet important networks being banned soon after the Communists took control of Batang, historical records that discuss their activities are not available.

Concomitant with the increased military presence in Batang as a result of the Zunghar campaign, the number of Han settlers in the region grew steadily.¹¹⁷ By 1748, the number of Han settlers had reached nearly one hundred, at which time the members of the Han Commercial Society contacted the leader of the Qing garrison in Batang seeking permission to construct a Guandi Temple (關帝廟). Financially supported by local members and others outside Batang, it was finally completed in 1764 (QL 29). Located in the eastern residential section of the town, this temple complex was impressive by Batang standards. It included a literary hall, drum and

¹¹⁵ This organization was known in Tibetan as *Gya tsong ba* (*Rgya tsong ba*).

¹¹⁶ *BTXZ*, 10.

¹¹⁷ See Millward, *Beyond the Pass*, 113-231, for a rich discussion of the important role Han merchants played in the Qing conquest of Xinjiang.

bell towers, a performance stage, a sanctuary to the Goddess of Mercy, and numerous statues of gods and heroes from traditional Han Chinese folklore. Classes for children of association members, many of whom were offspring of marriages between Han men and Tibetan women, or Tibetan children who simply wanted to study there, were also offered at the temple.¹¹⁸ By this time, the Han Commercial Society consisted of over 80 commercial families, as well as 83 individual military officers and soldiers.¹¹⁹ The construction of this temple complex reveals two important aspects of elite society in Batang. First, financial resources among the Han residents in Batang were substantial. Second, the connection between Batang's commercial and imperial government sectors was blurred. While we cannot say that the Han Chinese universally acted with one voice, the mutual influence between the Qing officials and the merchant community was certainly substantial.

In 1870 (TZ 9), Batang experienced a major earthquake. While the epicenter was located near Drubanang a few miles southwest of Batang proper along the Dri River, the center of Batang experienced major damage. According to memorials to the Qing Grand Council (軍機處) as contained in *The Veritable Records of the Qing Dynasty* (大清歷朝實錄), this earthquake destroyed over ninety percent of the buildings in the region, including the major monasteries; caused landslides that blocked rivers; and wiped out 400 *li* (里) of major roads.¹²⁰ Following the quake the town burned for five days, and over two thousand people were killed. Upon learning of the destruction, the Qing court raised money to compensate the victims of the earthquake, including the family of native chieftain Tashi (Bkra shis, 扎喜), who was killed in the

¹¹⁸ *BTXZ*, 412-413.

¹¹⁹ Yuan and Li, "Jiaoliu yu ronghe—guanyu Batang Hanzu de ge an fenxi," 93.

¹²⁰ 1 *li* = 0.576 km, or approximately .33 miles.

earthquake.¹²¹ French missionaries, who had settled in the town only a few years earlier, highlighted the earthquake in their annual report to Paris. In the *Annual Bishop's Report* of 1872, Monsignor Chauveau wrote, "A violent earthquake that destroyed the town of Batang in April 1870 and caused innumerable disasters deserves particular mention here. In this catastrophe...the three members of our fellowship in Batang were marvelously protected, and there was but one death and two wounded among the Christians, while the pagan ones were so cruelly struck that one-third of the population appears to be destroyed. The number of victims may be 3,000, among which four hundred are lamas."¹²² Traveling in the region a little over one year later, Gill also remarks on the destruction of the earthquake:

In 1871 Bat'ang was visited by a frightful series of earthquakes, which, lasting over many weeks, devastated the whole neighbourhood. In the town itself not one house was left standing, and the loss of life was awful; there was not one family in which there was not one dead. The traces of this appalling calamity are still to be seen for many miles around this ill-fated town. The hill-sides are rent and torn, and huge slopes of *débris*, hurled from the mountains, have in many places buried and obliterated the ancient paths.

The town is now perfectly new, and every house is fresh; of these there are about two hundred, containing three hundred families....¹²³

While much more has been written about this earthquake, the rebuilding of the Guandi Temple in the wake of this disaster is worth highlighting as a significant expression of interethnic cooperation among Batang's elite. Batang Commissariat Officer Wu Futong (吴福同) and leader of the Han Commercial Society Cao Yulin (曹玉林) gathered money from the society's members and obtained additional financial support from the head and deputy native

¹²¹ *QSL*, TZ 9, Months 5, 9, and 11; and *BTXZ*, 11. Note that the editors of *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi* inaccurately identify the native chieftain killed in the earthquake as the deputy native chieftain Kelzang Peljor (Skal bzang Dpal 'byor, 格桑班鸠). He also died in 1870, but it was the head native chieftain Tashi who died in the earthquake. Kangding minzu shizhuan bianxiezu, *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi*, 36.

¹²² Joseph Pierre Chauveau, *Rapport annuel des évêques, n° 57: Mission du Thibet* (1873).

¹²³ Gill, *The River of Golden Sand*, 218.

chieftains, Ba Chöde Monastery, and both Sichuan and Tibetan businessmen and officials.¹²⁴ It is not unlikely that other community-centered buildings were rebuilt with the support of similar fundraising efforts. When construction was completed in 1874 (TZ 13), the rebuilt temple was even larger than the original. Moreover, local members took this opportunity to rename their temple complex as the Sichuan, Shaanxi, and Yunnan Tri-Provincial Meeting Hall (川陝滇三省會館), and to rename their society as the Tri-Provincial Native Place Association (三省同鄉會).¹²⁵ This renaming is significant because it reflects a change in purpose of the Chinese population in Batang. Having married local women and had children in Batang,¹²⁶ Chinese people saw themselves less as sojourning merchants and more as permanent residents who identified with their native places. The re-definition of their primary social organization reflects this change.

Further demonstrating their reorientation, Batang's Han residents began adapting their own popular folktales to suit local audiences. For example, they began to describe characters from the immensely popular *Tales of the Three Kingdoms* (三國演義), which figured prominently in both the original Guandi Temple of the Han Commercial Society and the newly-built temple, in relation to King Gesar (Chinese: 格薩爾王), a legendary Tibetan folk hero. Batang residents, both Han and Tibetan, equated Guan Yu (關羽) with King Gesar, Guan Ping

¹²⁴ Yuan and Li, "Jiaoliu yu ronghe—guanyu Batang Hanzu de ge an fenxi," 93. Cao's name is also written as (曹玉琳). See Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shilüe*, 108.

¹²⁵ Yuan and Li, "Jiaoliu yu ronghe—guanyu Batang Hanzu de ge an fenxi," 93-4.

¹²⁶ It is important to note that wealth and social status prevented non-nobility from marrying into the local noble classes. As a result, Han residents exclusively married commoners. Only in the late Qing following Zhao Erfeng's military action and reforms did the social barriers preventing cross-status marriages begin to deteriorate.

(關平) with Gesar's younger brother, and Zhou Cang (周倉) with Gesar's uncle. Among the Han, this story was known as the "Barbarian Three Kingdoms" (蠻三國).¹²⁷

The activities of the Tri-Provincial Native Place Association included sponsoring the annual festival in honor of the God of Wealth, for which it was known throughout the Batang community. The association also provided its members a place to hold wedding and funerals, as well as the necessary banquet equipment and clothing for such occasions. The most significant interface the association had with the local populace, however, was in its role as mediator of disputes. While specific examples are no longer extant, secondary sources indicate that the association not only resolved disagreements among its members but it also mediated disputes with local Tibetans. This suggests that Han merchants had become sufficiently successful to gain the trust and respect of a large portion of Batang society, and some of their other activities support the financial success of the Tri-Provincial Native Place Association. For example, after completing the Guandi Temple, the association raised money and constructed a City God Temple (城隍廟). By 1949, its members had built over ten additional halls in honor of various local gods worshipped by the different people that made up the association.¹²⁸

Apart from the Tri-Provincial Native Place Association, other social networks existed in Batang.¹²⁹ These organizations, commonly known as "friendship association" (朋友會), were usually gender-divided, but almost always multiethnic. These voluntary organizations were usually small, including ten to twenty members who focused on mutual assistance for social events such as weddings and funerals. They also regularly performed as a group at annual

¹²⁷ Yuan and Li, "Jiaoliu yu ronghe—guanyu Batang Hanzu de ge an fenxi," 94.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Precise dates for the creation of these associations are not available, but it is likely that they were not founded until the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Nevertheless, given the functional similarities between these organizations and the Tri-Provincial Native Place Association, I mention them here.

festivals. Female groups were called “sisters worship associations” (拈香妹妹會), and male friendship associations were also prevalent, the two largest being the “Batang Youth Association” (巴塘青年會) and the “Batang *Lo Chung* Association” (巴塘乐群會).¹³⁰ Members of the Tri-Provincial Native Place Association, together with a few Tibetan members, made up the former association, while local Tibetan men, with some Han members, made up the latter association. While records detailing their activities are not available, it is significant that important figures in Batang society during the Republican period, including Kelzang Tsering, Jiang Anxi, and Liu Jiaju (劉家駒, Kelzang Chönjor, Skal bzang Chos ‘byor, 格桑群觉), were all members of the Batang Youth Association.¹³¹ I will discuss the historical context and contributions of these individuals to Batang society in Chapter Six.

The scant historical evidence available before the mid-nineteenth century also suggests that Batang’s local society maintained some diversity. For example, in 1798 (JQ 3), Batang’s Muslim Brigade Vice Commander, Ma Zhengpin (馬正品), erected a mosque on Gyapangdeng (Rgya spang steng, 架炮頂), a hill just to the southeast of the city. Not only did this mark the beginning of an Islamic community in Batang, but it also represents the first historical evidence of the expansion of Batang’s administrative and cultural center. Previously, Gyapangdeng was the town’s burial grounds. As we will see, Muslims were not the only religious group to establish a presence on Gyapangdeng. In 1870, missionaries from the Paris Foreign Missionary Society built a church and mission there. In the early years of the twentieth century, American missionaries, primarily from the Disciples of Christ Missionary Organization, also constructed a

¹³⁰ Here, *lo chung* is a Tibetan word meaning youth.

¹³¹ Yuan and Li, “Jiaoliu yu ronghe—guanyu Batang Hanzu de ge an fenxi,” 94.

large missionary compound on the hill, including a hospital, orphanage, school, and residences, the remains of which stand to this day.

The Han community in Batang of course did not have the same resources at their disposal as Batang's other power holders. They lacked the religious influence of Ba Chöde Monastery, the imperial support of the native chieftains, and the vast economic resources of both. Nor did they have the military and logistical resources of Qing imperial officials in Batang. Nevertheless, by the mid-nineteenth century Han merchants in Batang had become sufficiently successful to play a coordinated role in local society by offering dispute resolution, education, and other services to the people of their community. As a result, their importance in Batang's socio-economic should not be overlooked.

Conclusion

In the early Qing two powerful groups dominated the people of Batang: the monastic leaders of Ba Chöde Monastery and the secular elite. These two groups shared ownership of all land in Batang, and the occupants of their domains were hereditarily bound to the monastery, a member of the secular elite, or sometimes both. This socio-economic arrangement allowed the monastery and secular elite to enrich themselves at the expense of the local populace. When the Dalai Lama dispatched a reincarnate lama to manage Ba Chöde Monastery in 1652, the monastery's religious hold over the people only increased. Similarly, the arrival of two brothers with instructions from the Dalai Lama to supervise the collection of taxes in Batang in 1703 further increased the power of Batang's secular elite.

The Qing campaign to expel the Zunghars from central Tibet in the early eighteenth century left a lasting impact on Batang. The permanent garrisoning of Qing soldiers throughout

the region in 1724, not to mention the establishment of a Commissariat Office in Batang proper in 1728, significantly altered Batang's socio-political structure by introducing a new power holder to the region. No longer were decisions of Ba Chöde Monastery and the secular elite absolute. Qing officials, supported by imperial soldiers, wielded important influence as soon as they arrived. However, through the mid-nineteenth century they rarely exercised their power explicitly. Instead, they preferred to work through Batang's secular elite, which the Qing court had formally coopted with imperial titles and charters of investiture.

Finally, we cannot overlook the Han merchants who settled in Batang in the wake of the Qing expedition against the Zunghars. Han residents organized themselves via a variety of social networks, the most important being the Tri-Provincial Native Place Association, which managed a large local temple, offered education, and used its good offices to settle disputes among local residents.

While some unrest may still have existed, by the mid-nineteenth century Batang's quartet of power holders—Ba Chöde Monastery, Tibetan native chieftains, Qing imperial officials, and Han merchants, had maintained a delicate balance of power in Batang that allowed residents to be free from wide-spread violence for over a century. While Ba Chöde Monastery and the native chieftains continued to enrich themselves from their land holdings and most residents still only sustained subsistence incomes from farming and/or pastoralism, the region remained relatively peaceful. This stability was not to last. The arrival of foreign missionaries in Batang in 1864 would severely disrupt Batang society, with ramifications from their appearance on the Sino-Tibetan frontier reaching as far away as Beijing, Paris, and London.

Chapter Three: Batang's Missionary Cases

“For the last fifteen years French missionaries have been traveling to Batang and Litang spreading religion.... Suddenly, on October 10, 1873 (TZ 12.8.19), the common people of this area [Batang] became malicious and drove out the missionaries of this area in all directions. Surrounding the church, they attacked it for four days. At first, they attacked it by throwing stones. They continued by damaging, robbing, and looting it. Later with strong axes they tore down the church. Since October, they've also burned down the adjacent buildings, and it has already turned into wasteland. Therefore, I entreat the high commissioners of this country to take this misfortune and pass it to your honorable king, asking him to investigate and take care of it, and to wipe his eyes and see it all.”

—Joseph Pierre Chauveau, Bishop of Tibet, writing to Louis de Geoffroy, French Minister to the Qing Empire, 1874¹

Introduction

This chapter discusses the gradual incorporation of Batang into the Chinese state by examining in detail four “missionary cases” involving French priests resident in Batang in the late nineteenth century, during which time Batang's power holders adopted *ad hoc* responses to unpredictable local circumstances. Batang's first four missionary cases occurred in 1873, 1879, 1881, and 1887. On the surface, these cases are not extraordinary. Like many missionary cases in China proper, they involve the destruction of church property and/or injury (even death) to foreign priest(s). Close examination of these cases, however, reveals a rich array of details that can deepen our understanding of several important historical discussions.

First and foremost, Batang's early missionary cases shed light on the unique role Qing officials played in maintaining order on the frontier and, in so doing, increasing imperial power over the local populace. Until the mid-nineteenth century, Qing officials in Batang exercised little power locally. As snap-shots of imperial frontier administration in an increasingly

¹ Zhang Guiyang, ed., *Jiaowu jiaoran dang*, vol. 3 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, 1981), 1030-31 (hereafter *JJD*).

important corner of the Qing Empire, these early missionary cases also demonstrate the prominence remote frontier regions like Batang could achieve on the international stage. In so doing, we must reconsider the dominant historical narrative that the late Qing was incapable of effective local governance. While metropolises frequently take the lead in historical narratives, a richer understanding of the ebb and flow of a country's history necessitates careful examination of activity on its frontiers. In the case of Batang and Kham in general, due in large part to the resourcefulness and flexibility of local Qing officials, imperial governance was effective and increasingly strong.

This chapter will also lay the groundwork for my discussion in Chapter Four of Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet Feng Quan, his murder at the hands of Batang residents in 1905, and the assertive Qing military response and radical reforms led by Zhao Erfeng in Batang and Kham in the last years of the Qing Empire. Historians frequently cite Feng Quan's murder as a knee-jerk reaction by Batang residents to his proposals to curb the influence of monasteries in Tibetan society. This chapter will show that the circumstances leading to his murder are much more complicated. Similarly, historians generally depict Zhao Erfeng's early twentieth-century military, political, and socio-economic campaign in Khams as a critical turning point in Khams history, and even in the broader realm of Tibetan history. The major role Zhao played in Khams and Tibetan history leading the Qing response to Feng Quan's murder, in which French missionaries were also victimized, is undeniable. Nevertheless, Batang's earlier missionary cases, the only cases of anti-missionary violence found anywhere in Tibetan inhabited areas at the time, demand that we re-think our understanding of Zhao's motivations in instituting bureaucratic restructuring in Khams. This chapter will provide the background necessary to demonstrate that Zhao was not merely a Han chauvinist intent on conquering Tibet. Rather, Zhao inherited a long

history of missionary troubles in-and-around Batang that complicated his motivations in the region. Like Zhao's colleagues before him, late Qing officials in Beijing, Chengdu, and Batang were under both international pressure to fulfill China's treaty obligations to protect foreign missionaries in the region and domestic pressure to halt the perceived threat of western countries invading the empire via Tibet. Moreover, as I will show, Zhao was ideologically driven to pacify the region, strengthen the waning Qing Empire, and promote Confucian-style civilization.

Finally, this chapter will discuss the dramatic influence the introduction of a new powerful social group had on local frontier society. Batang's traditional power holding establishment—native chieftains and monastic leaders—coexisted peacefully with the Qing civil and military authorities stationed in the region for over one hundred years following Kangxi's campaign to expel the Zunghars from Tibet largely because Qing officials rarely delved into local administration. In fact, apart from supporting the occasional military campaign, such as those the Qing waged against the Khampas of Nyarong (1747–1749, 1771–1776) and against the Gurkhas of Nepal (1791-1792), Batang's Commissariat Officer's primary responsibilities were only to ensure official communications moved smoothly and garrisoned soldiers in the region received their salaries and necessary supplies. They left local affairs to Batang's traditional power holders to manage. However, following the arrival of foreign missionaries, tension quickly arose between Qing imperial officials and Batang's religious establishment. With the arrival of French priests, Tibetan Buddhism faced competition from a new foreign religion on its own soil. The presence of French priests irritated not only monks in Batang but also Tibetan officials in Lhasa, and mutual enmity immediately arose between the French priests and local monks. When Batang's religious leaders realized that Qing officials were both protecting their

foreign competitors and facilitating their activities in Batang, they extended their distrust, and eventual hatred, to Qing officials as well.

Table 3.1: Batang’s Missionary Cases

| Year | Description | Location(s) | Ramifications |
|-------------|---|---|--|
| 1873 | Local residents destroy churches and drive out missionaries | Batang, Mangli, and Yanjing | Batang native chieftains provide 1,500 silver <i>liang</i> in compensation to the French |
| 1879 | Retreating Tibetan soldiers damage and loot church | Mangli | Minor financial compensation provided to the French; Mangli church relocated to Yarigang (Yar ri sgang, 亞海貢) |
| 1881 | Bandits rob and kill Father Brioux | Between Batang and Yanjing | Batang native chieftains and Ba Chöde Monastery leaders provide over 1,900 silver <i>liang</i> in compensation to the French; Commissariat Officer Ji Zhiwen captures and executes culprits, leads a small-scale punitive expedition against Sanyan (三岩) |
| 1887 | Local residents destroy churches, drive out missionaries, and dig up Catholic graves | Batang, Yarigang, Yanjing in Sichuan; Cizhong (茨中), Weixi (維西), and Adunzi in Yunnan | Qing court provides 20,000 silver <i>liang</i> in compensation to the French; missionaries are hindered from returning to Batang for over ten years; Ji Zhiwen fines culprits |
| 1905* | In a general uprising against Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet Feng Quan, Batang residents kill Fathers Mussot and Soulié; destroy churches in Batang proper, Yarigang, and Yanjing; kill and/or drive out from Batang and southwestern Kham Tibetan congregation members | Batang, Yarigang, Yanjing in Sichuan; anti-missionary violence spreads to southwestern Kham | Ma Weiqi and Zhao Erfeng lead a punitive expedition against Batang residents; native chieftains and monastic ringleaders executed; Zhao initiates comprehensive political, economic, and social reform in Batang, expanding it to all of Kham |

* The 1905 case will be discussed in Chapter Four.

As seen in the table above, between 1873 and 1905 five major cases involving missionaries occurred in Batang, the most of any county in Sichuan in the same period except for Chongqing (重慶), which also had five missionary cases.² The first, second, and fourth of

² Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shiliu*, 60-61.

Batang's missionary cases were not unlike many other relatively minor cases in coastal China that had arisen since the arrival of missionaries in China in the early nineteenth century. These three cases involved burning down churches; expelling and sometimes killing missionaries; punishing local members of the church; and digging up the graves of locally-buried missionaries. The third missionary case had broader influence, resulting in a small-scale punitive action by Qing soldiers against those people charged with robbing and then killing a French missionary. The fifth missionary case differed radically from typical missionary cases in inland China in that foreign missionaries were ancillary target of violence by local Tibetans primarily directed against a senior Qing official. This case, which I will discuss in Chapter Four, led to a massive military effort by the Qing Empire. This punitive expedition resulted in the death of Batang's two most prominent secular leaders, the destruction of Ba Chöde Monastery and the dispersal of its monastic population, and the institution of direct imperial rule from Chengdu. Before turning to these missionary cases, it is necessary to understand the organization that dispatched French priests to Batang and the general activities of earlier missionaries in Kham and Tibet.

The Paris Foreign Missionary Society and the Great Game in Tibet

In recent years, much has been written about opium and its effects on Chinese history. However, an often overlooked result of the Opium Wars, particularly in China's interior, is the effect that foreign missionaries, whom the 1858 Treaty of Tianjin required the Qing Empire to protect, had on local society.³ As we shall see, foreign missionaries profoundly influenced Batang society on numerous levels.

³ Article VIII of the Treaty of Tianjin states, "The Christian religion as professed by Protestants or Roman Catholics, inculcates the practice of virtue and teaches man to do as he would be done by. Persons teaching it, or professing it, therefore, shall alike be entitled to the protection of the Chinese authorities, nor shall any such,

The Paris Foreign Missionary Society (*Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris*, hereafter abbreviated M.E.P.) established their official presence in southwest China soon after the Qing court approved the Treaty of Tianjin with their announcement of the formation of the Diocese of Tibet. The M.E.P. had been active in Southeast Asia since the organization was founded in the mid-seventeenth century, and French Catholic missionaries began proselytizing in China, including Tibetan border areas, since that time despite imperial decrees forbidding Christianity in the Qing Empire. Having obtained the official protection of the Qing government for their activities through the 1858 Treaty, French missionaries began to expand their presence in Tibetan-inhabited areas by penetrating deeper into central Tibet and, when possible, establishing permanent missions in Tibetan-inhabited areas along the border. Their hope, like those of many other eighteenth and nineteenth century Christian missionaries, was to reach Tibet's capital of Lhasa and from there spread Christianity to all of Tibet.

The French had in fact already made numerous attempts to enter Tibet via various routes before 1858, but apart from explorers Évariste Régis Huc and Joseph Gabet reaching Lhasa briefly in 1846,⁴ the same year M.E.P. officials transferred responsibility for Tibet from the Indian diocese to the Sichuan diocese, Tibetans thwarted their efforts each time. While French missionary activity in the southwestern part of the empire did not initially concern Qing officials, it caused great consternation among Tibetans, who immediately felt threatened by foreigners, especially those who preached a religion different from Buddhism. In late 1863, Wangchuk Gyalpo (Dbang phyug Rgyal po, 汪曲結布), a representative of the Ministry of Finance (Rtsis khang, 商上), the most influential ministry in the central Tibetan government, contacted Qing

peaceably pursuing their calling, and not offending against the laws, be persecuted or interfered with.” Harley F. MacNair, *Modern Chinese History; Selected Readings* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1923), 287-91.

⁴ Évariste Régis Huc and Joseph Gabet, *Travels in Tartary, Tibet and China, 1844-46*, trans. William Hazlitt (1928; reprint, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1998).

officials in Lhasa for assistance in repelling foreigners from entering Tibet. In response, Qing High Commissioner to Tibet Man Qing (满慶) and Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet En Qing (駐藏幫辦大臣恩慶) jointly memorialized the Qing court on November 21, 1863:

Wangchuk Gyalpo requested that we memorialize on his behalf. The contents of his request state: “The Frenchmen Charles René Alexis Renou (罗勒拿),⁵ Jean Charles Fage (箫法日), and others are on the eastern roads of Tibet. Because they hate the Tibetan people and officials, do not allow them to come to Tibet. They are also colluding with the rebel Gonpo Namgyal (Mgon po Rnam rgyal, 工布朗結) of Nyarong.⁶ This spring, Renou dispatched a man surnamed Liu (劉) to transport tea from Dartsedo, and in the Batang and Litang areas they are spreading it among the Han soldiers. They are trying to buy their sympathy.⁷ Moreover, they are propagating rumors that Gonpo Namgyal of Nyarong has always hated the central Tibetans. They also don’t dare mistreat the Han officials and soldiers....

“The head Batang native chieftain has already been lured in by them [the French] and has surrendered to the Nyarong rebels. This Renou again went to Gartok, where he proclaimed that High Commissioner Jing (景大人)⁸ had determined that he had received imperial orders, and that all the territory of Cawabomuga (擦瓦博木噶)⁹ in central Tibet was to be transferred to Renou as a gift for him to manage permanently. Also, [he said] it was not permitted in principle for even a single Catholic to be obstructed from entering Tibet.

“Liu...is still transporting tea from Dartsedo, and they are using it to buy people’s sympathy. According to the report from the Battalion Commander in Gartok, because of this the hearts of Tibetans are unsettled. The reason Renou has violated the treaty is because he is scheming to take Tibet. I already have evidence. I confirmed that in 1847 (DG 26) Renou had slipped in via Xining (西甯). He was stopped at the Tibetan border

⁵ M.E.P. Archives, “Charles René Alexis Renou,” no. 439.

⁶ Gonpo Namgyal’s name is also transliterated as 贡布朗杰. See Yudru Tsomu, “Local Aspirations and National Constraints: A Case Study of Nyarong Gonpo Namgyel and His Rise to Power in Kham (1836-1865)” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2006) for a careful study of this important figure in nineteenth century Tibetan history.

⁷ As described in Chapter Two, tea was a primary form of currency in Kham, although rupees from India would begin to circulate in Tibetan areas in the last decades of the nineteenth century. As tea travelled west from Dartsedo, its value increased exponentially. A. De Rosthorn writes, “According to M. Desgodins (La Mission du Thibet p. 300), it would appear that the transport from Tachienlu [Dartsedo] to Pat’ang [Batang] about doubles the price, trebles it at Ch’amuto [Chamdo], and quadruples it at Lasa [Lhasa].” A. De Rosthorn, *On the Tea Cultivation in Western Ssuch’uan and the Tea Trade with Tibet via Tachienlu* (London: Luzac & Co., 1895), 38.

⁸ A former High Commissioner to Tibet.

⁹ Located in present-day northwestern Yunnan.

with Sichuan by the former High Commissioner to Tibet Qi (琦) and sent out to Guangdong. Now he has returned to our country....

“Subsequently, that country [France] and our empire concluded a treaty. Although it permits missionaries in every location, it does not permit interference in official business. Renou and Fage are based in Menkong (們空),¹⁰ and already in the areas of Batang, Gartok, and Chamdo they are calling themselves ‘officials’ (大人). They are also bringing with them Liu, who is unreliable, from Sichuan. They are posing as officials. They are working together and acting tyrannically. Since I am alleging that they are defrauding the Tibetans and, I suspect, ordering the Han officials to subjugate the Tibetans with them, so the Tibetan monks, lay people, and officials have knowledge of Renou and Fage’s presumptive and deviant behavior. If they hear that they are coming to Tibet, they undoubtedly will have bribed Han and Tibetan people. On the way they will probably proselytize to them.

“Tibet itself is a broad part of this country. It is a Gelug area. Tibet borders on Zhemengxiong (哲孟雄)¹¹ and Ladaka (拉達克)¹² in the southwest. It is basically connected with Britain (披楞).... Previously, because of statements that the French missionaries were going to enter Tibet through Sichuan, the British raised banners and gathered soldiers throughout Zhemengxiong. They are determined to come to Tibet to open it to trade. When the French entered Tibet from the east, the British then entered from the southwest.

“Careful examination shows that while Renou and Fage swear their intention in coming is to spread religion, in fact they desire to seize Tibet. The intention behind these two countries who want to take Tibet is not in Tibet. As soon as they take Tibet, they will arrive in Dartsedo, and the mountains and rivers of a vast territory will all belong to other people. They [the British and French] will then obtain a shared border with Sichuan, and as soon as this happens, I fear that inland China will no longer have peaceful days. Therefore, united with the Tibetan officials and people, I swear on my life that we will not allow them to come to Tibet. It is not that we dare to violate the treaty, but rather that we are protecting the entire territory of the country.”¹³

¹⁰ Located west of the Dri River in an area traditionally under the jurisdiction of the Batang native chieftains.

¹¹ Located west of Yadong (亞東) in territory administered by India but still claimed by the People’s Republic of China.

¹² Present-day Ladakh.

¹³ Wen Qing, Jia Zhen, and Bao Yun, eds., *Chouban yiwu shimo* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1930), 23-24 (juan 260, TZ 21), quoted in Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shilüe*, 91-92.

In response, the Tongzhi Emperor commands, “I strictly order all the border areas to be carefully inspected. If there are inland missionaries that have infiltrated Tibet, then you must move quickly to take them back. Do not allow them the opportunity to steal across the border.”¹⁴

This communication demonstrates that the high level concern about the intentions of missionaries in Tibetan areas began quite early, less than five years after the signing of the Treaty of Tianjin. As we shall see, Qing and Tibetan concerns about the motivations of foreign missionaries in eastern Tibet would prove justified. The French exerted great pressure on the Qing to accommodate their missionaries, and they were not beneath offering Qing officials *realpolitik* assistance in repelling British interests in Tibet, which would become even more ambitious than Wangchuk Gyalpo feared when British soldiers under the command of Francis Younghusband marched into Lhasa in 1904. While a variety of factors hindered the Qing Empire’s ability to respond to foreign actions on the borders of Tibet, this memorial and other communications from Qing officials in Tibet and Sichuan contradict the commonly-held view of post-Opium War China as an empire that was weak, incompetent, and ultimately ignorant of international politics. On the contrary, at least in the southwestern corner of its empire, Qing officials were keenly aware of foreign scheming and actively attempted to control this activity with their limited resources.

Despite the emperor’s proclamation to remove Renou and Fage from Tibet, the French persisted, and they soon requested Qing military protection for their missionaries to travel into central Tibet for missionary work. However, when the British learned of this request, their representative in Beijing lodged a formal protest with the Zongli Yamen (總理衙門), the Qing government’s office in charge of foreign affairs. The British, of course, had their own designs in

¹⁴ Wen, Jia, and Bao, *Chouban yiwu shimo*, 25, quoted in Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shiliue*, 92. See also *QSL*, TZ 3.1, and Deng Qiancheng, “Shilun Qingmo zhi Minguo Kangqu waiguo jiaohui,” *Minguo dang’an* 3 (2006): 51-7.

Tibet, particularly in developing trade between India and Tibet, and they were suspicious of French activity along the border between Yunnan, Tibet, and their colonial lands in Burma. Just a few years later, in 1868, they sent T.T. Cooper, a former British agent of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce, as an unofficial representative into Tibetan areas of western Sichuan in search of potential trade routes between Sichuan and British colonies in Burma and India. In an ironic encounter with French missionaries in Batang, Cooper chronicled the Frenchmen's disappointment upon learning that he did not intend to travel to Lhasa but would instead explore a possible southern trade route into Assam. Cooper notes, "The good Fathers were somewhat selfishly, though naturally, disappointed at this determination, for if I should succeed in reaching Lhássa, there would then be no excuse for the authorities to keep *them* out of Central Thibet; and it was natural to suppose that if the Thibetans maltreated me or arrested my progress, the British Government would resent such interference with one of its subjects, and teach the Thibetans to respect peaceable Europeans."¹⁵ The British pressured the Qing court to deny France's request for permission to establish missions in central Tibet precisely to protect their own imperial trade interests. As I will show below, Batang would continue to play a role in Great Game machinations over Tibet between French and British diplomats throughout the nineteenth century.

The Qing court eventually acquiesced to British demands, and the French were forced to abandon, at least temporarily, their plans to establish an independent Diocese of Tibet led by a bishop based in Lhasa. Instead, they concentrated their efforts in the Tibetan border regions of

¹⁵ Thomas Thornville Cooper, *Travels of a Pioneer of Commerce in Pigtails and Petticoats: Or, an Overland Journey from China Towards India* (1871; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1967), 252. Cooper chronicles his standoff with two to three hundred mounted Tibetan soldiers at the fork in road leading toward Lhasa later in his journal, 282-84.

western Sichuan along the *de facto* border between central Tibet and China.¹⁶ The archives of the Catholic Diocese of Sichuan note:

In 1864, the Diocese of Tibet was abandoned by the [French] Mission in Beijing. The Chinese used the excuse that they could not ensure the protection of French missionaries in Tibet. Although this idea is imaginary and violates the treaty, we in the end acknowledged that it was reasonable. However, people think the real reason this diocese was abandoned was that they [the Chinese] feared upsetting the British, and also that the Russians would not be happy to see the French making incursions into Tibet. Although we crossed the border [into Tibet] and had success, we still hoped to maintain the full protection of our missionaries. But on this point we were not successful, and we were forced back to Sichuan and Yunnan.¹⁷

The M.E.P. reorganized itself first by establishing a new diocese in western Sichuan with a bishop permanently headquartered in Dartsedo, after which they soon set up mission stations in western Sichuan and the northwest corner of Yunnan. The M.E.P. mission in Batang was their northernmost outpost and located closest to Tibet proper. The Batang mission consisted of a main church in the center of Batang that was staffed by two missionaries and smaller branch churches in Mangli, located west of Batang proper along the main road towards Chamdo, and Yarigang, a more remote area a few days journey south and well within Batang's traditional territory. French missionaries in Batang were also responsible for a branch mission outpost in Yanjing, eight days south of Batang proper through the bandit-infested lands of Sanyan, yet still within its territory. One or two French missionary resided in each of Batang's three branch outposts.

While there is some disagreement among historical sources on exactly which year French missionaries began their activities in Batang, evidence suggests that Father Bourry (巴布埃) established the M.E.P.'s first permanent mission on the outskirts of Batang proper on the

¹⁶ Sichuan dang'an guan, ed., *Sichuan jiaoran yu yihetuan dang'an* (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1985), 20-21.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

opposite bank of the river at Sonlonnang (Son lon nang, 四里龍) in 1864 (TZ 3) by erecting a church and two residences.¹⁸ Little information is available about his activities in Batang, but only two years later trouble had already arisen. Foreign powers jockeying for influence on the Tibetan plateau, increasing missionary activity in eastern Tibet by the French, and growing trade activity in southwestern Tibet by the British continued to concern Tibetans in Lhasa, and in response central Tibet's four major monasteries—Sera (Se ra), Ganden (Dga' ldan), Drepung, and Tashi Lhunpo (Bkra shis Lhun po), called on all Tibetans to protect Tibetan Buddhism against foreign aggression. Their proclamation urged all Tibetans “to swear on their lives not to have any contact with foreigners and not to permit foreign influence from invading [Tibet].”¹⁹ As demonstrated in Chapter Two, monks in Batang maintained close ties with Lhasa, and they quickly heeded this call to action by burning down Father Bourry's church and expelling him from the region.

Despite the 1865 decree from Lhasa urging all Tibetans to expel foreigners from their land, the French returned to Batang two years later led by Fathers Jean Baptiste Goutelle (顧德爾) and Jean Charles Fage. While no documentation is available, it is likely that the Batang Commissariat Officer worked with the native chieftains and lamas to secure a guarantee that the missionaries could return without trouble. For the first few years of their mission, Goutelle and Fage encountered only minor difficulties. For example, upon discovering that no one would sell

¹⁸ Liu Chuanying states that French missionaries first arrived in Batang in 1859 (XF 9), yet he offers no primary historical source in support of this claim. Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shiliu*, 60-61.

Goré, in his notes on the history of the French mission to Tibet, remarks that missionaries arrived in the ‘grasslands’ of Litang and Batang in 1861, the same year the M.E.P. established a mission in Dartsedo. However, he does not clarify if the missionaries stayed in Batang at this time or settled only later. Francis Goré, “Un siècle d’Apostolat au Thibet (1846-1952)” (un-published notes), M.E.P. Archives, 2.

Finally, archives from the Catholic Diocese of Sichuan state that Father Bourry arrived in Batang in 1864. Sichuan dang'an guan, *Sichuan jiaoran yu yihetuan dang'an*, 20.

See also *BTXZ*, 11; and Deng, “Shilun Qingmo zhi Minguo Kangqu waiguo jiaohui.”

¹⁹ Deng, “Shilun Qingmo zhi Minguo Kangqu waiguo jiaohui,” 55.

them property in Batang for their mission, they simply rented property and lived alongside local Tibetans. Taking advantage of the general chaos and the need for cash following the massive earthquake in 1870, Goutelle hastily acquired property for the mission within the city and built a small chapel and residence at the base of Gyapangdeng.²⁰ Available records suggest relations between the missionaries and local society remained peaceful until 1873, when missionary actions again raised the ire of local Tibetans. Qing officials were forced to respond formally to this “missionary case,” thereby initiating a downward spiraling cycle of events that both ruptured the goodwill that had existed between the local Tibetans and the Qing officials for many years and brought Batang’s native chieftains and lamas closer together. With each case of conflict between missionaries and local Tibetans, Tibetan responses escalated. Under greater pressure from foreign powers, the Qing government had no choice but to expand their presence in the region so as to increase their ability to suppress anti-missionary violence. What is unique about this first period of Qing expansion in Batang is its *ad hoc* nature. Despite years of anti-missionary violence in Batang and other regions, neither the Qing court nor provincial officials offered a clear vision on how to handle such problems. Each case, therefore, required local officials to improvise responses to address the demands of French missionaries and diplomats, as well as Qing officials in Beijing and Chengdu. It was not until the early twentieth century that Sichuan provincial officials began to think seriously about Batang’s missionary problems and the status of Kham writ large.

Over the next several decades, tensions between French missionaries and local Tibetans flared up periodically. The spark for each incident was often minor, but the repercussions of anti-missionary violence forever altered the makeup of Batang’s socio-political fabric. These incidents directly impacted broader Tibetan history, as well as the history of Qing relations with

²⁰ M.E.P. Archives, “Jean Baptiste Goutelle,” no. 543, and “Jean Charles Fage,” no. 546.

foreign countries, especially France and Britain. In-depth analysis of official documents related to Batang's first major missionary case in 1873 and four subsequent cases in 1879, 1881, 1887, and 1905 will reveal the unintended strengthening of Qing imperial frontier governance, the importance of local Qing officials in both shaping and implementing Qing frontier policy, and the hardening of socio-political roles among Batang's Tibetan elite. In so doing, I will show the far-reaching impact of Batang in late nineteenth and early twentieth history of Tibet and China.

Batang's First Missionary Case

As outlined in Chapter Two, power in Batang was shared among leaders of Ba Chöde Monastery, native chieftains, Qing imperial officials, and Han merchants. Through the middle of the nineteenth century, this power-sharing arrangement remained stable. Monastic leaders and native chieftains continued to dominate the population, Qing officials continued to ensure the smooth flow of official communication and the distribution of salaries to soldiers garrisoned in the region, and Han merchants continued their small-scale commercial activities. External stimuli were rare, and no group saw reason to adjust the status quo.

The arrival of French missionaries in Batang severely disrupted local society. Batang's religious establishment felt threatened, the Qing Commissariat Officer had to accept new responsibilities, and the native chieftains suddenly found themselves being asked to implement imperial orders that ran contrary to popular local opinion. In this section I take up Batang's first major missionary case to illustrate the beginning of significant changes and realignments among Batang's power holders, including the constant far-reaching power of Ba Chöde Monastery; the increasingly ambiguous political power of Batang's native chieftains; and the rising power of Qing officials in the region. I will also show the important role knowledgeable local officials

played in frontier administration as events thrust Batang onto the stage of international diplomacy.

Batang's first missionary case began on October 10, 1873 (TZ 12.8.19), when monks and lay people from Batang attacked the French Catholic church in Batang proper, burned it down, and ran off with the property of the French missionaries. On October 15, they drove Fathers Jean Baptise Goutelle and Louis Pierre Carreau (何神甫) out of the town. The anti-missionary violence in Batang proper soon spread south to Yanjing, where the French also had a mission, and on October 27 Fathers Auguste Desgodins and Félix Biet were driven out of there as well. Just as quickly as the violence arose, relative calm returned to Batang as soon as the missionaries were gone and their property destroyed.²¹

The first official notice of this incident appears in June 1874, some six months later, when Bishop Joseph Pierre Chauveau (丁碩卧) of the Diocese of Tibet in Dartsedo requested provincial authorities in Chengdu investigate it. The following month, French Minister Louis de Geoffroy (熱福禮) officially informed the Zongli Yamen in Beijing of this incident. Requesting that Qing officials punish the bandits and compensate the missionaries for damage to their property, Minister de Geoffroy included in his petition a letter he received from Bishop Chauveau, who wrote:

For the last fifteen years French missionaries have been traveling to Batang and Litang spreading religion, yet they have not gotten along peacefully or harmoniously with the people. At present, for the last twelve years we have directly purchased land and constructed buildings and a church. Both the gentry and the common people recognize this, and it has never been obstructed. Moreover, this area is under the jurisdiction of Sichuan Province, and all local Chinese officials have authenticated the deed of the land that was purchased for this church by affixing their seals.

Suddenly, on October 10, 1873 (TZ 12.8.19), the common people of this area [Batang] became malicious and drove out the missionaries of this area in all directions.

²¹ Joseph Pierre Chauveau, *Rapport annuel des évêques, n ° 78: Mission du Thibet* (1874), M.E.P. Archives.

Surrounding the church, they attacked it for four days. At first, they attacked it by throwing stones. They continued by damaging, robbing, and looting it. Later with strong axes they tore down the church. Since October, they've also burned down the adjacent buildings, and it has already turned into wasteland. Therefore, I entreat the high commissioners of this country to take this misfortune and pass it to your honorable king, asking him to investigate and take care of it, and to wipe his eyes and see it all.²²

In response to the French request, Zongli Yamen officials ordered Sichuan Governor-General Wu Tang (四川總督吳棠) and Chengdu General Kui Yu (成都將軍魁玉) to investigate this incident thoroughly and settle it quickly. They, in turn, instructed the Sub-Prefectural Magistrate of Dartsedo, Bao Zhuo (打箭爐同知鮑焯), and the newly re-appointed Batang Commissariat Officer, Zhao Guangxie (巴塘糧務委員趙光燮), to report on this matter.

In his first report to the Zongli Yamen dated September 14, 1874 (TZ 13.8.4), Chengdu General Kui Yu highlighted the core issue in this case: the tension between the missionaries and the monastic establishment. He notes that the French had resided in Batang for over ten years with little trouble, but in 1873, “the lamas devised to beguile the slave households and instigated them to dispel the foreigners. They falsely claimed that the earthquakes, droughts, ferocious wild beasts, locusts, and rats had been caused by the foreigners. Everyone took up vicious weapons, and in swarms they arrived at the homes [of the priests]. They insulted, fought with, and robbed them. They looted their property and destroyed their homes.”²³ Kui goes on to argue that this case is different from other missionary cases in China proper (內地) and thus requires delicate handling. He notes that imperial civil and military officials resident in Batang feared the “unreasonableness” of the lamas and requested an official be sent to resolve the case. However, Kui is hesitant to dispatch any official from China proper because he would not be familiar with Tibetan affairs. With this reasoning, he suggested, “This case has two parties: the western

²² *JJD*, vol. 3, 1030-31.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1034.

missionaries and the Tibetan lamas. It is not the case that someone from China proper can be familiar [with Tibet], so it is difficult to regard as appropriate to instruct the dispatching of someone to take care of this unique and thorny affair. We should request the capable officer Zhao (趙) to come to Dartsedo to discuss this, and then have him depart again for Batang. I will then direct the native chieftains to handle these affairs satisfactorily.”²⁴

Little is known about Zhao apart from the fact that he had served in Batang successfully for three years already²⁵ and therefore presumably understood the challenges Qing officials could face when trying to assert their influence among Tibetans. A few years after the successful resolution of this case, Gill notes that Zhao had strongly impressed Father Desgodins, who had been stationed in Yanjing for many years. Travelling through Batang in August 1877, Gill writes, “Monsieur Desgodins always spoke of him [Zhao] as a model magistrate, who endeavoured to deal fairly with all classes; altogether he was a remarkable man, and a bright contrast to the generality of Chinese officials.”²⁶ Kui’s nomination of Zhao to resolve this case was an *ad hoc* decision, but it marks the first instance of what would become a trend for senior officials to rely on a small coterie of Qing officials with knowledge and experience in Tibetan frontier administration to resolve problems in Batang. Later Qing and Republican officials in Batang would earn similar praise from foreign residents and travelers, and both French and Qing officials would call on the expertise of officials who had previously served in Batang to resolve other thorny issues.

Familiar with Batang’s unique circumstances, Zhao was keenly able to analyze the situation. He knew, for example, that not only local monks, but also the Kashag (Bka shag, 噶

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shilüe*, 109.

²⁶ Gill, *The River of Golden Sand*, 215.

慶)²⁷ and High Commissioners to Tibet were wary of French missionary activities in Batang. In his report dated March 30, 1875 (GX 1.2.23), he, like Kui, began by emphasizing that this case differed from typical missionary cases in China proper because “neither of the two parties involved in this case is Chinese,” and thus “this is not the same as handling negotiations between Han and foreigners.”²⁸ He also contended that this case had four primary causes: uncultured and stubborn monks; the threat posed by Catholic priests to local monks; an obstinate Catholic priest; and poor local governance.

Corroborating French claims that lamas were behind the recent unrest,²⁹ Zhao wasted no time to lay the blame on local monks, the beginning of a trend in which Qing officials and French missionaries would see local monks as the primary culprits in anti-missionary violence. With an attitude of superiority common among Qing officials, Zhao described Batang’s monks in unflattering and condescending terms: “Their character is stubborn, their language incomprehensible. Although it is difficult to oversee and instruct them, even still we cannot forcefully punish them by driving them out. In vain they wrangle and contend among themselves. Although I have maintained my neutrality without prejudice or partisan, these stupid ones are ignorant. How could it be possible to easily influence them? Supposing we hurriedly presented them with punishment, it would be difficult to ensure that they would not become resentful. This, in turn, would hinder their path toward becoming cultured (向化之路).”³⁰

This characterization of Batang monks and Tibetans in general suggests that Zhao considered Tibetans to be fundamentally different from Chinese, and we can therefore infer that

²⁷ The council of ministers responsible for administering Tibet and carrying out the instructions of the Dalai Lama.

²⁸ *JJD*, vol. 3, 1054.

²⁹ Joseph Pierre Chauveau, *Rapport annuel des évêques, n ° 57: Mission du Thibet* (1873), M.E.P. Archives.

³⁰ *JJD*, vol. 3, 1054.

he excluded them from the Chinese cultural sphere. As I discussed in Chapter One, in recent years, scholars such as Evelyn Rawski and Pamela Crossley have produced groundbreaking research that emphasizes the inclusiveness of Qing imperial rhetoric,³¹ thereby compelling us to reconsider the once dominant narrative of traditional Chinese history that focused on a China-centered view of the world as put forth by Fairbank and other mid-twentieth century western scholars. Contemporary arguments by Rawski, Crossley, others are extremely persuasive, and we now have a much more nuanced understanding of the Qing court's multifaceted view their empire, which they consciously designed to be inclusive of various ethnic groups located within and on the borders of the empire.

However, Zhao Guangxie's fundamental assumption that the two parties in this case are not Chinese (化外之人) suggests that this ideology was not necessarily pervasive in Qing officialdom. This is not to say that Zhao possessed the traditional "Chinese worldview." Rather, his encounters with Tibetans—and most certainly the encounters of other frontier officials—were more complex than a simple dichotomy between the old Chinese worldview and a much more inclusive ideology put forth by recent western scholarship. In other words, while the imperial center was promoting a rhetoric of inclusiveness, Zhao's comments suggest this imperial message was not necessarily spread throughout the empire. In fact, in this remote corner of the empire, the differences between Chinese and Tibetans were visceral for Zhao, and Chinese officials charged with governing these areas were not afraid to discuss these differences when communicating with the court. Not unrelated, Zhao emphasizes the importance of differentiating negotiations between Han and foreigners with those between Tibetan and foreigners. In this present difficulty, Zhao sees himself as representing a third, almost neutral, party. As tensions

³¹ See Rawski, *The Last Emperors*; Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*; and Elliot, *The Manchu Way*.

increased with future missionary cases in Batang, it became increasingly difficult for Qing officials to maintain any semblance of neutrality between local monks and French missionaries.

Closely related to laying blame on local monks, Zhao argued that the fundamental conflict between Buddhism and Catholicism also contributed to this incident. He wrote:

Hitherto the Tibetan natives (西藏番夷) believed in Buddhism. Regardless of the size of a matter, they will always ask the lamas to petition the gods and divine the probable outcome. Just after Bishop Chauveau sent the priests to Batang to spread religion, natural disasters spread across the region. Earthquakes and severe dry weather diminished their livelihoods. They petitioned the gods and prayed. Moreover, the doctrines of the lamas and the missionaries are not the same, which means that they are not in harmony. As a result, the lamas said that they foresaw numerous disasters in the following years because foreigners had come to Batang to spread their religion. For this reason, they dupe each other, and the people are fearful and trembling.³²

As outlined in Chapter Two, the influence of Batang's monastic leaders was multi-faceted, but the religious hold of Ba Chöde Monastery over the people represented the core of its power. Just as central Tibetan officials feared the activities of foreigners on their borders, Batang's religious leaders felt directly threatened by the presence of foreign missionaries in their territory.

Representing an alternate choice for local residents, Catholicism challenged their spiritual monopoly. Perhaps even more important, it also threatened the economic livelihood of the monks, since members of the Catholic congregation were no longer compelled to provide donations to, or request religious services from, the monastery.

While Zhao does stress the relevance of religious differences between indigenous monks and foreign priests in this conflict, he does not see these differences as insurmountable. He points out, for example, that "The priests who went to Yanjing and Mangli continued to get along well with the local people, but Father Goutelle in Batang was not at all friendly with the Tibetans. Since ordering his servant to beat up a Tibetan from Linkashi last year, he has not been punished.

³² *JJD*, vol. 3, 1054.

As a result, the barbarians are all indignant and angry. Everyone began to feel insecure, and even the women and children registered [with the yamen].”³³ In other words, what happened in Batang was more a result of a difficult priest unwilling to allow his servant to be punished and not, at least in Zhao’s mind, a clash of religion differences. It is reasonable to conclude that the local people, upset and frustrated with the French priest in Batang, turned to the monks of the local monastery to articulate their concerns to the Qing officials. The monks then took advantage of this opportunity to express their own discontent with the presence of foreign priests in their region and incited the people to drive them out. M.E.P. reports corroborate Zhao’s impression of Father Goutelle, noting that he particularly irritated the people of Batang. Bishop Chauveau wrote in his annual report to Paris that soon after Father Goutelle returned to Batang in March 1874 to rebuild the church, local resentment toward him immediately arose again. Wanting to avoid a recurrence of violence, Zhao urged Father Goutelle to spend some time in Yanjing, whose people were much more tolerant of the French missionaries’ presence. Father Goutelle complied, and tensions eased in Batang.³⁴

Uncultured monks, an intransigent priest, and the fundamental religious differences between them certainly contributed to this instance of unrest in Batang. Yet Zhao devotes the majority of his report to the most important factor in this missionary case: poor local governance, a theme that became increasingly critical as tensions rose in Batang in later years. Zhao noted, for example, that “native Tibetans...only pay me lip service.” He also points out that when the local people drove out the priests, “Commissariat Zhou (周)³⁵ informed us that he was initially in Dartsedo. When he heard of the incident, he still did not return to his post [in Batang]. The native

³³ *JJD*, vol. 3, 1054.

³⁴ Chauveau, *Rapport annuel des évêques*, n ° 78.

³⁵ A reference to Zhou Dashang (周達上), incumbent Batang Commissariat Officer at the time of the incident.

kind [夷類, *i.e.*, Tibetans] subsequently saw him as irrelevant. Sometimes he would permit things, other times he would overturn things. It has already been two years since he was removed from office. This case is hung up for this reason. It is no wonder the foreigners have grievances. The cause of this case is the fact that the Tibetans disregard the Han officials. In other words, they do not follow our orders.”³⁶

Zhao’s admission of the failure of Qing officials, himself included, to assert their power over the local population reflected what had become the reality in Batang. Since their arrival in the early eighteenth century, Qing officials commanded a large garrison of troops that allowed them to support and contribute to military campaigns. While the rarely spoken threat of using these troops to influence local society was ever-present, Qing officials in fact did not exercise this power. After a century of relative dormancy due to the absence of major military campaigns in Tibetan areas, Batang’s local garrison had decreased in size, and the influence of the Commissariat Officer had withered correspondingly. The local populace no longer expected Qing officials to influence local governance, nor was administering Batang one of their official duties. This was the responsibility of Batang’s two native chieftains. With arrival of foreign missionaries, Qing officials had no choice but to insert themselves into local governance to regain their relevance and authority in local matters, a process that severely disrupted Batang’s balance of power.

Wanting to show his superiors his ability to handle this situation effectively, Zhao narrated in great detail his subsequent actions. He began by stating, “Talking only in high level terms about these circumstances is useless and deserving of rebuke. How can we achieve the foreigners settling down while keeping the native kind submissive? I and others have been

³⁶ *JJD*, vol. 3, 1054-55.

stationed here for approximately three years. I am familiar with the circumstances of the Tibetans and have settled many Tibetan affairs. In my humble opinion, I have established a method to control the Tibetans. One must employ both graciousness and majesty, rewards and punishments. When all know graciousness, they are moved by it. When they fear the law, they show solicitude.”³⁷

Zhao’s first act was to strengthen his military power, which he did by recruiting twenty-one crack troops from Sichuan. Upon their arrival, perhaps as a show of force, or perhaps simply as entertainment, Zhao called together the native chieftains and “summoned the knowledgeable and aged abbots (*khenpo*) and lamas from each monastery, and the *gutsa* (*sku tsab*, 古噪)³⁸ and local headmen (頭目)—in total over forty people—to the yamen. Immediately, I moved a number of soldiers from the yamen and in cooperation with the local crack troops marshaled everyone in formation according to rank. I strongly proclaimed your majesty and expressed my ideas, and then I served a meal of mutton and spirits, which I gave as a necessary reward.”³⁹

While it is likely that former Commissariat Officers held banquets with Batang’s elite from time to time, records that document such occasions are not available. Zhao’s description of his engagement with Batang’s power holders is no doubt colored by both his Confucian feelings of superiority and his desire to demonstrate his abilities to senior officials in Chengdu, but certain specific details of his exchanges reveal key aspects of power in late nineteenth century Batang and hint at significant changes to come. For example, browbeating the lamas, Zhao

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1055.

³⁸ *Gutsa* are lesser-ranked military officials of the native chieftains. Batang’s two native chieftains shared approximately one hundred twenty *gutsa*. Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shilüe*, 189.

Fu Songmu (傅嵩林), in his chapter on Tibetan officials, suggested *gutsa* had non-military functions as well. He describes *gutsa* as “internal officials of the indigenous official, who divides affairs into managing grain taxes and controlling suits.” Fu, *Xikang jiansheng ji*, 35a.

See also Qian Zhaotang, who described *gutsa* as low level managers of corvée labor. Qian, *Batang zhilüe*, 19a.

³⁹ *JJD*, vol. 3, 1055.

pointed out that “the earlier earthquakes were in fact natural disasters and that they could not blame the foreigners for them. Like them, they were just spreading their religion, and this was their job. Neither side should harm or interfere with the other.”⁴⁰ Knowing that the lamas might not accept this reasoning, Zhao also argued, “All the lands of the churches in each location, which was purchased with their silver, belong to the foreigners. You Tibetans, since you had already sold the land avariciously in the past, have allowed them [the foreigners] to live within the borders. How could you then covet and resent them, destroy [their property], and expel them? This is your own transgression.”⁴¹ Successfully convincing his guests, Zhao proudly reported, “the lamas, *gutsa*, and native people of Batang, Yanjing, Mangli, and the four villages separately entered into binding agreements in Tibetan, which the native chieftain transmitted up to me.”⁴² These agreements promised full compensation to the French for their losses and allowed the French to return to Batang and peacefully spread their religion. For Zhao and Qing imperial officers in Chengdu and Beijing, this is a significant accomplishment, perhaps the first major assertion of Qing power in Batang in over a century. From Zhao’s perspective, moreover, he saw his role in this matter as that of a neutral judge tasked with settling a dispute between two parties—the people of Batang and the French missionaries. However, from the Tibetan perspective, Zhao’s defense of the French was certainly seen as an affront to Tibetan Buddhism and anything but neutral. While it would still be many years before local Tibetans conflated Qing officials with foreigners, the seed of this misunderstanding was unknowingly planted by Zhao Guangxie at his banquet with Batang’s power holders.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1055-56.

Zhao was very proud of his ability to reach formal agreements with Batang residents to compensate the French and allow them to return, but he also acknowledged that some issues remained unresolved. For example, he admitted that when he returned the priests' clerical collars, which local people had stolen, to them, "This caused the Tibetans to stir up trouble, which the native chieftains were unable to suppress."⁴³ In this brief statement, Zhao clearly reveals that his power in fact did not extend to the people of Batang themselves. Rather, he could only work through native chieftains and other power holders in Batang to affect change on the ground. In response, Zhao ordered, "Batang head native chieftain Lobsang Wangdu (Blo bzang Dbang 'dus, 羅宗旺登) and deputy native chieftain (here, 副土官) Jampa Jetsun (Byams pa Lce btsun, 扎巴吉村) each to record their major faults three times and in this way exhibit their light punishment."⁴⁴

This case shows that Qing officials relied on local native chieftains to advance their interests in Batang. I refer to this arrangement as a semi-*laissez faire* approach to frontier management. Under this arrangement, Qing officials saw the native chieftains neither as independent actors nor as representatives of the interests of the local populace. Rather, officials like Zhao viewed native chieftains as extensions of the imperial bureaucracy and therefore subject to their orders. Unable to influence the local population directly, Zhao depended on the native chieftains to carry out his commands—from suppressing local discontent to compelling lamas and other leaders of the unrest to sign Tibetan documents binding them to compensate the missionaries for lost property. When the native chieftains failed in their responsibilities, Zhao did not hesitate to punish them. While in the past local people may have seen the native chieftains as

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *JJD*, vol. 3, 1055-56. Head native chieftain Lobsang Wangdu was also known as Asang Chönjor (A bzang Chos 'byor, 阿桑群覺). Deputy native chieftain Jampa Jetsun was also known as Guozong Zhabao (郭宗札保). Kangding minzu shizhuan bianxiezhu, *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi*, 35-36.

their agents vis-à-vis Qing officials, it is likely that they began to doubt the efficacy of their hereditary leaders and increasingly turned toward the monks to uphold their interests in response to the steadily growing imperial presence in Batang. At the same time, as anti-missionary incidents became more complex and the ability to obtain resolution and maintain peace on the frontier more elusive, Batang's native chieftains came under greater imperial scrutiny, a process that drove them closer to local monks and strained the effectiveness of local officials' semi-*laissez faire* methods of governance. This unintended consequence of Qing officials asserting imperial will in Batang will be revealed more clearly in my discussions of subsequent missionary cases below.

Zhao also found it necessary to punish one other person in this case, Cao Yulin, a leader of the Han Commercial Society and scribe for the native chieftain.⁴⁵ Although we don't know the precise details of Cao's involvement in this case beyond him causing "a great deal of mischief,"⁴⁶ we do know that Zhao secretly sent Cao to Dartsedo in a further effort to maintain stability in the region and immediately filled the position of scribe to the native chieftain with someone else. When Cao arrived in Dartsedo, he was removed from office and not permitted to return to Batang.⁴⁷ Zhao's singling out Cao for punishment is extremely interesting and suggests Cao most likely wanted the missionaries out of Batang. On the one hand, Cao represented Han interests in the region, and thus we may conclude that Han merchants in Batang were also opposed to the missionaries' presence there. On the other hand, closely related to the local native chieftains, Cao's involvement suggests the native chieftains, while purportedly serving Qing interests, may have also wanted the missionaries out. While we cannot draw any definite

⁴⁵ Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shilüe*, 108.

⁴⁶ *JJD*, vol. 3, 1056.

⁴⁷ Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shilüe*, 112.

conclusions about Cao's role in this incident, it may very well be possible that among the power holders in Batang, it was only Qing officials who were willing to support the missionaries' presence there at this time. When Commissariat Officer Zhou left Batang temporarily for Dartsedo, the missionaries' primary supporter was absent, and Batang's remaining power holders may have felt emboldened to take action to drive the missionaries out of town and destroy their property.

Further analysis of communications involving Batang's missionary cases reveals the distinctive skills of Qing officials appointed there. On the ground, they are positioned to be more sensitive to, and tolerant of, local circumstances. As we have seen above, Zhao was able to use his experience to resolve Batang's first missionary case through a rather simple yet effective use of rewards and punishments for Batang's power holders. More unique for Qing officials like Zhao is their nuanced understanding of not only local politics but also the larger realm of international politics than their more senior colleagues in Chengdu and Beijing. Unfortunately, their views and suggestions are often lost as their original communications move up through the imperial bureaucracy.

Interestingly, foreign missionaries and diplomats seemed to realize the distinctive strengths and weaknesses of local Qing officials. When attempting to pressure the Chinese to satisfy their demands, foreigners did not hesitate to blame certain local officials for their inability to govern while relying on other Qing officials, and even requesting them by name. For example, two years after the conclusion of Batang's first missionary case, French Ambassador to China Deveria (德微理亚) wrote to the Zongli Yamen to request Zhao Guangxie, who was still serving in Batang, look into a separate incident: "The areas around Dartsedo are still unstable, rumors are everywhere, and I deeply fear the missionaries will be hurt. I request that you order Sichuan

provincial authorities to dispatch civil official Zhao Guangxie and military official Shao Chengzong (邵承宗) to protect them and avoid an accident from happening.”⁴⁸ Upon receiving the request from the Zongli Yamen, Sichuan Governor-General Ding Baozhen (四川總督丁寶楨), fearing another wave of Tibetan violence against the missionaries, immediately ordered Bao Zhuo in Dartsedo to investigate. Bao, in turn, secretly sent an officer to Batang to determine if the French Ambassador’s claims were accurate, and this officer reported that Father A Dee (阿德俄),⁴⁹ a newly arrived missionary, was simply unfamiliar with the local situation, uncomfortable with the cold reception he had received from the monks, and had exaggerated the problems in the region to the French Ambassador.

In his report to Ding Baozhen, Bao noted that Zhao Guangxie communicated directly with Bishop Chauveau and requested that Father A Dee be transferred so as to prevent further anti-missionary discord in Batang. Upon the arrival of Father A Dee’s successors, Fathers Félix Biet (畢天雲)⁵⁰ and Auguste Desgodins (丁德安), the situation returned to normal, and “there are absolutely no supposed rumors and the missionaries live at peace and carry out their work happily.”⁵¹ Significantly, Bao’s analysis goes beyond the local. He is keenly aware of the increasing number of foreigners traveling in Tibetan regions, and he therefore began to track their movements through Dartsedo, the eastern gateway to the Tibetan plateau. He also wisely suspected that the French might have additional motives, such as trade, compelling them to reside in Tibetan areas. Such insights show that Bao was aware foreign missionaries in Tibet

⁴⁸ *JJD*, vol. 3, 1217.

⁴⁹ I was unable to identify the French name for this individual.

⁵⁰ Father Biet was more commonly referred to as 畢天榮.

⁵¹ *JJD*, vol. 3, 1219.

were a long-term challenge with potentially serious ramifications on China's relationships with foreign countries. He concluded his report by stating, "At present although the Tibetans are at peace, in the end we cannot ignore the big picture. I have impressed in letters to the missionaries our responsibility to protect them at all times in order to promote peace and friendship among all. Moreover, in the future we will be even more careful in protecting people who come to Tibet from other countries and will not tolerate malevolence."⁵²

The destruction of French mission churches in Batang, Mangli, and Yanjing in 1873 is but the first of five major cases involving anti-missionary violence to occur in Batang in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This case represents a significant evolution in relations between Batang's power holders. We see for the first time Batang's Commissariat Officer strongly asserting Qing orders to compensate and protect French missionaries. However, he was not able to assert his power independently. Adopting a semi-*laissez-faire* approach to frontier management, he instead relied on the native chieftains to implement his orders. In so doing, the native chieftains faced the dilemma of having to carry out orders that were not consistent with local popular opinion. How the native chieftains dealt with this dilemma and how other power holders reacted to the Qing's assertion of power in Batang is revealed in the discussion of Batang's subsequent missionary cases.

In this section I have also shown the *ad hoc* nature of the Qing response to missionary trouble. Zhao Guangxie's methods of governance— simple rewards such as banquets for good behavior and the threat of punishment for causing disturbances—are far from creative, but he does have a plan to administer the region, and his tone indicates a resolute desire to carry it out. Subsequent events discussed below will demonstrate the gradual maturation of the Qing's frontier administration in Batang beyond improvised reactions to unforeseen circumstances.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 1220.

Finally, in this case we see the debut of Batang on the stage of international diplomacy. Anti-missionary violence forced provincial and imperial officials to pay attention to events in Batang, if for no other reason than to ensure the safety of missionaries there. In this case, Qing officials were able to satisfy the demands of French diplomats and religious leaders quickly, effectively, and without complications. Resolving subsequent cases proved to be more challenging.

Batang's Second Missionary Case

In summer of 1877, William Gill passed through Batang on his way from Dartsedo to Adunzi. Fearing that he intended to deviate from his stated route towards Lhasa, both Commissariat Officer Zhao Guangxie and Batang's head native chieftain Lobsang Wangdu personally escorted Gill upon his departure from Batang, together with approximately one hundred Han and Tibetan soldiers under Zhao's command. When they approached the same fork in the road where Cooper had encountered several hundred armed Tibetans blocking his route in 1868, Gill noted, "On the opposite hill, some three hundred Tibetans were encamped, who had come out to oppose us, if we should attempt the road to Lassa [Lhasa]. When first they saw us coming they had fired off warning guns, although Chao [Zhao] had sent to them to say that we were going to A-tun-tzŭ [Adunzi]."⁵³ Gill's party passed with no further incident. The next incident at this crossroads, which precipitated Batang's second missionary case, would not be so easily resolved. In this section, I narrate the events surrounding Batang's second missionary case. These events reveal central Tibetan attempts to assert their power in Batang, increased militarization in the region, and the growing responsibilities of the Batang Commissariat Officer

⁵³ Gill, *The River of Golden Sand*, 215.

in maintaining regional stability and governance. In so doing, I also shed light on the overlapping claims of sovereignty in Batang's western territories.

Batang's second missionary case began in the winter of 1879, a little over four years after its first missionary case was concluded. It involved three primary events. First, upon hearing that Austro-Hungarian aristocrat Count Béla Széchenyi (攝政義伯爵) and his retinue were to pass through Batang on their travels into central Tibet, Tibetan officials along the *de facto* border between Tibet and Sichuan sent several thousand troops from Gartok across the Ningjing Mountains into Batang western territories to obstruct them. The Dalai Lama's government in Lhasa also dispatched civil and religious officials to dissuade the foreigners from proceeding. However, rather than bringing reason and calm to the region, these central Tibetan officials exacerbated tensions between local Tibetans and the French missionaries. Second, through negotiations and threats of military action, Qing officials in Sichuan and Tibet convinced the Tibetan soldiers amassed along Batang's western border to retreat without any conflict or engagement. Passing by the Catholic Church in Mangli, however, the soldiers tore down its doors, broke out its windows, and ran off with some of the church's property. Third, following repayment and compensation for the lost property at the church in Mangli, officials in Sichuan entreated the missionaries and their followers to relocate to the safer and more remote village of Yarigang, still like Mangli equidistant from Batang and Yanjing, but on a much less traveled road and far removed from the border with areas under central Tibetan control.

As with the first missionary case, determining exactly what transpired is difficult given the limited nature of the historical resources. Careful examination of documents contained in the edited volumes of the *Archives of Religious Affairs and Missionary Cases* (教務教案檔), particularly communications between Ji Zhiwen (稽志文), who succeeded Zhao Guangxie as

Batang Commissariat and expectant magistrate of the prefecture (侯補知縣), again proves critical. The first inkling of new trouble came in the spring of 1880 when French Minister to Beijing Jules Patenôtre (巴特納) sought assistance from the Zongli Yamen regarding an issue in Batang. In his request dated March 13, 1880 (GX 6.2.3), he stated that, “he had received a letter from the church in Dartsedo, which said that in December of last year, the Batang native chieftain abandoned his position and went across the border. At the same time, there were ruthless Tibetan lamas who were both causing disturbances to this church and the believers of this religion and also stealing their property and tearing down their houses. I am unaware of the specifics at this moment, so please send a letter with details. You should also inform senior provincial officials and, in order to maintain peace, send someone to suppress [the disturbances] and protect [the believers].”⁵⁴ While Patenôtre faults the Batang native chieftain and “ruthless Tibetan lamas” for this incident, later evidence reveals that perpetrators were in fact soldiers recruited by central Tibetan authorities.

The Zongli Yamen subsequently ordered Chengdu General Heng Xun (成都將軍恒訓) and Sichuan Governor-General Ding Baozhen to investigate this matter and report back. Heng Xun worked diligently to gather the facts surrounding the incident and work towards a solution. In compiling his lengthy report, Heng both ordered reports from Batang’s new Commissariat Officer, Ji Zhiwen, and interviewed Batang’s former Commissariat Officer, Zhao Guangxie, who had just returned to Chengdu from Batang. Heng’s report, which he submitted approximately two months later, offers a wealth of information on the facts of this case and the motivations of imperial officials involved in administering Batang. He began by outlining the basic facts of the case, stating:

⁵⁴ *JJD*, vol. 4, 785.

According to what was written in November 1879 (GX5.10), the Tibetans sternly ordered Gartok to send troops to block the foreign official Count Széchenyi. They also sent additional soldiers from Nyarong as reinforcements. The people were numerous and domineering. In December, the forces that were coming broke down the doors and windows of the Mangli church and took out the tables, chairs, and other wooden items, as well as the hay for the horses, beets, and wild turnips. In January, he [Ji Zhiwen] ordered the native chieftain to return the wooden items and to compensate [the missionaries] for the repair of the church doors and windows. They discussed compensation for the hay and beets in the amount of five *liang* of silver. At that time he paid the silver, and the matter was finished.⁵⁵

As the second incidence of anti-missionary activity in Batang in less than a decade, the French were very concerned about the vandalism and property theft at their church in Mangli and sought answers. Satisfying the French was important to Qing officials, but Heng Xun and Ji Zhiwen quickly understood this case raised larger issues as well. Responding to Patenôte's initial complaint, in which he suggested both the monks and native chieftains in Batang instigated this incident, Heng Xun pointed out that "undisciplined" Tibetan soldiers caused the damage, and "From the beginning the native chieftain was not involved. Moreover, to involve the native chieftain and have him compensate for the repair of the doors and windows with silver *liang* is a baseless implication. Nevertheless, he willingly accepted it. It is a fact that there is no pretext for strife between the native chieftain and the church."⁵⁶ Despite Heng's strong defense of the native chieftains' lack of involvement, he still supported Ji Zhiwen's decision to have the native chieftains compensate the missionaries for their losses. He does this because Qing officials at the time knew Batang's native chieftains were essential to their power and maintaining stability in Batang. As we saw in the first missionary case, effective Qing officials like Ji Zhiwen did not engage in direct governance. Rather, they worked through Batang's traditional power holders, most frequently dealing with the two native chieftains and

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 801.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

occasionally with monastic leaders from Ba Chöde Monastery. Officials like Zhao Guangxie and Ji Zhiwen understood that direct administration by Qing officials could easily backfire and destabilize a sensitive yet important corner of the empire, so they worked together with Batang's traditional elite to resolve problems in ways that ensured stability and, to the degree possible, social harmony, in Batang. This *ad hoc*, semi-*laissez faire* approach to frontier governance is the defining characteristic of late Qing frontier administration in Batang. As the stakes surrounding missionary cases increased and Qing ambitions in eastern Tibetan areas grew in the waning years of the empire, local officials found it increasingly difficult to use this approach effectively. Following Batang's major uprising in 1905, in which French missionaries were also victimized, the Qing court abandoned it completely by implementing bureaucratic restructuring (*gaitu guiliu*) and replacing local Tibetan officials with Han civil servants. Tellingly, while Heng refuted the French claims of native chieftain involvement in this case, he did not come to the defense of the Batang monks, despite the preponderance of evidence in this case suggesting their lack of direct involvement. Such a slight reveals a growing distrust of monastic leaders in Batang on the part of Qing officials.

Beyond the property damage to the church in Mangli, the larger issue in this case involved questions of sovereignty in Batang's western domains. In other words, who was able to exercise their power and authority there? As outlined in Chapter Two, the Yongzheng Emperor decreed in 1727 that the administrative border between central Tibet, Sichuan, and Yunnan would be at Ningjing Mountain, which was located west of the Dri River, and a stele was erected atop this mountain to mark the border. Despite this clear geographic marker, the western border of Batang's traditional territory remained amorphous. Yanjing, for example, was located southwest of Ningjing Mountain, yet it still fell under the jurisdiction of Batang's native

chieftains. Sanyan, another region under the purview of Batang's native chieftains, made up much of the territory north of the mountain.⁵⁷ After the Yongzheng Emperor demarcated the border at Ningjing Mountain, both Yunnan and central Tibetan authorities protested his decision over their losses of tax revenues. The court rejected their appeals, and the lack of further complaints suggests authorities from central Tibet, Sichuan, and Yunnan had tacitly accepted the ambiguous nature of Batang's western border by the mid-eighteenth century.

The increasingly invasive activities of foreigners along Tibet's eastern border beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century, however, compelled central Tibetan officials to take action to assert their power in Batang. Initially, upon hearing that Count Széchenyi was coming to Batang and might continue west towards central Tibet, the Dalai Lama's government sent a delegation of officials and monks led by Lord Shakya (Dpon po ShAkya, 颇琿香噶) and the representatives of Lhasa's three great monasteries to Gartok. Here, they worked with the *teji* (*tha'i rje*, local governor) to coordinate their efforts to block Széchenyi's advance into central Tibet.⁵⁸ Following precedent, the delegation worked with the *teji* to recruit local soldiers as a show of force to compel Széchenyi to turn south into Yunnan rather than head west into central Tibet. Upon their arrival in Gartok, there is no indication that the delegation had any other instructions from Lhasa.

The High Commissioner to Tibet in Lhasa had also heard rumors about the “extremely fierce” forces gathering in Gartok to oppose Széchenyi, so he sent Secretary Kai (夷情部主事開)

⁵⁷ Sanyan, located in present-day Gongjue County (貢覺縣) near Shanyan Village (山岩鄉), is situated slightly northwest of Batang proper, on the western side of the Dri River, on a route connecting the northern and southern routes between Dartsedo and Lhasa. It was traditionally under the jurisdiction of the Batang native chieftains, and later the Derge royalty. The Chinese pronunciation of this region closely approximates its Tibetan pronunciation, Sanyan (Sa ngan), literally “badlands.”

⁵⁸ The Dalai Lama first appointed the Markham *teji*, who resided in Gartok, in 1726. Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, 76.

of the Native Affairs Office to lead a delegation of other Tibetan civil and religious officials to work with Lord Shakya and local authorities to avoid violence.⁵⁹ Despite rushing toward Batang, two important things happened before Kai's arrival. First, Széchenyi saw with his own eyes from atop Cashu Mountain (Tsha shod, 茶樹山) on the eastern side of the Dri River the growing number of troops gathered to oppose his westward advance, and he immediately decided to follow the recommendation of Batang officials to proceed south.⁶⁰ This might have diffused the situation were it not for what happened next. Most likely travelling separately from their newly recruited soldiers, Lord Shakya's delegation at some point was ambushed by the "wild Tibetans of Sanyan (三岩野番)." Ji Zhiwen notes that their mule loads were looted and several people were injured in the attack.

Sanyan had a long-standing reputation for lawlessness and banditry, and the people there were indiscriminate in their raids, attacking Qing officials, missionaries, and even central Tibetan officials. Cooper described them in 1868:

The banditti of this neighbourhood are famous throughout Thibet, and defy alike the Chinese and Thibetan authorities. Living in the fastnesses [*sic*] of the mountains, they hold the more peaceable inhabitants in complete terror. Nothing will induce them to betray the robbers, and in order to secure themselves from the depredations of the freebooters, they screen them in all cases from the authorities. When accused of sheltering the banditti, in order to save themselves from the consequences, whole families flee to the mountains, and swell the robber ranks. To make matters worse, it is a well-known fact that all the chief Thibetan authorities, even those at Bathang, have a secret understanding with the freebooters; for a fee to any of them will generally reproduce stolen property, and even pass a traveler unmolested through the robber district.⁶¹

Sanyan's banditry, in fact, is recorded as early as 1740, when Yunnan Governor-General Gong Qing (雲南總督公慶) sent five hundred troops to the region in response to an attack there, and

⁵⁹ Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 266. These were unranked specialists on the staff of the High Commissioner to Tibet.

⁶⁰ *JJD*, vol. 4, 806-07.

⁶¹ Cooper, *Travels of a Pioneer of Commerce*, 276-277.

its past is an important underlying factor in the Qing response to Tibetan soldiers massing on the border.⁶² Less than a year before Széchenyi arrived in Batang, several Sanyan bandits ambushed newly appointed Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet Wei Qing (維慶) at Dashibao (大石包) on his way to Lhasa in 1879 (GX 5). The bandits robbed Wei Qing's entourage and beheaded several of his porters and grooms. Wei Qing was forced to retreat to Batang, where he recuperated before assuming his position in Lhasa. In response, "the local officials took the local leaders to investigate and arrest them, yet they still dared to shoot their weapons and violently resist."⁶³ The Guangxu emperor subsequently ordered Chengdu General Heng Xun, High Commissioner to Tibet Seleng'e (色楞額), and Wei Qing to command local officials "to fastidiously arrest and seriously punish" the Sanyan bandits because what they had done was "intractable."⁶⁴ Sanyan brigands, however, would continue to prove a thorn in the side of Sichuan officials trying to maintain order in the Tibetan borderlands. As we shall see in Batang's third missionary case, the murder of French Catholic priest Brioux in 1879 at the hands of Sanyan brigands compelled Ding Baozhen to memorialize the emperor requesting three thousand troops be positioned in Batang and Litang to prevent future troubles by Sanyan brigands, in addition to providing a deterrent to British merchants flowing into Tibet. Ding's request was denied due to lack of funding, but his concern about Batang's western territories is clear.⁶⁵ Despite various efforts by both central Tibetan and Qing forces, Sanyan remained a source of trouble through the 1940s.

⁶² *QSL*, QL 5.10, juan 128, 7-8.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, GX 6.11, juan 124, 5.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, GX 6.11, juan 124, 5.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, GX 11.7, juan 230, 12-13.

Following their assault at the hands of Sanyan brigands, Lord Shakya's delegation, in the words of Sichuan Governor-General Ding Baozhen, "were incensed, and dispatched numerous native troops from Chamdo, Dragyab, Diegai (叠盖), and Gartok as a show of their great power. There was no explanation for this."⁶⁶ As a result, Qing officials had to deal with an overwhelmingly large number of Tibetan soldiers from all over eastern Tibet poised just across the Dri River from Batang and ready to deter Széchenyi, who had already abandoned his plan to proceed toward central Tibet. Less than twenty years earlier, Tibetan soldiers had crossed the Dri River to suppress an uprising in Nyarong, and they still occupied that area, much to the consternation of Qing officials who lacked the resources to expel them. Given the fact that soldiers from Nyarong had joined forces with soldiers recruited by central Tibetan authorities and, having crossed the Ningjing Mountains, were now amassed just west of the Dri River, Qing officials certainly feared the distinct possibility of a central Tibetan move to cross the river and take control of Batang. Were they to do so, they would effectively control southern Kham and the most important route for official communications between Chengdu and Lhasa.

Wanting to solve this problem as soon as possible while not escalating tensions in the region any more than necessary, Heng Xun continued to dun Batang officials for the latest intelligence on Tibetan troop movements while ordering them to do everything possible to halt their advance across the river. At some point after Széchenyi had left Batang for Yunnan, Qing officials learned of a disturbing development from Lord Shakya. It seemed that now the Tibetans were targeting not only Széchenyi but also all foreigners in the Batang region, including the missionaries. Compiling information from Secretary Kai Tai via the office of the High Commissioner in Tibet and his own officials in Batang, Ding Baozhen wrote:

⁶⁶ *JJD*, vol. 4, 804.

The intention of the Tibetans is to expel the foreigners. They have sent many troops, and within a certain time they will arrive in Batang. The Native Affairs Office does not have the strength to oppose them. Moreover, we received a communication stating that these Tibetans handed over an order in Tibetan saying that the Batang officials and native chieftains must expel the foreigners from every location. It also demands the native chieftain produce an agreement promising never to allow foreigners to enter Tibet. Then and only then will they withdraw their troops. Otherwise, they will go directly to Batang and burn down the churches and homes of the native chieftains.

Moreover, we've heard that these Tibetans have ordered the native chieftains of Batang, Litang (Li thang, 裏塘), Hor (Hor khog, 霍爾), Drango (Brag 'go, 章谷), and Diegai, as well as to all the monasteries, monks, and laypeople of Adunzi, Zhongdian, and Weixi in Yunnan that not a single foreigner will be permitted to cross the border.⁶⁷ They also will not permit the people to welcome or send them off as they did previously.... They publicly issued an order, the words of which were without manners. They even dared to use troops to intimidate the native chieftains into agreeing and informed the monks and laypeople on the borders of Sichuan and Yunnan not to allow foreigners to cross the border....These facts are perverse and unreasonable.

They have not the slightest fear, and although the order to expel [the foreigners] and burn down [the churches and homes of the native chieftains] has not yet been acted upon, these Tibetans have gathered troops numerous times to obstruct foreigners. They do not listen to reason, and this is already their custom. This time they even called up troops for no reason. Coercion is rampant, and if we do not take precautions against the Tibetan soldiers acting outrageously, they may suddenly flood across the border into Batang and the region will meet with disaster. Moreover, I fear that they will harm the foreigners, and this will make things even more difficult to take care of.⁶⁸

Up to this point, sovereignty over Batang's territories west of the Dri River was shared between Beijing and Lhasa. A few years later in 1906 a local Qing official in Yanjing quipped while writing about the intransigence of the local monastery, "Yanjing is located on the border between Sichuan, Yunnan, and Tibet, but if you ask Tibet about it, they say it belongs to Sichuan, and if you ask Sichuan about it, they say it belongs to Tibet."⁶⁹ The same ambiguity and ambivalence of sovereignty applied to Sanyan and other territories north of Yanjing. Despite the

⁶⁷ Litang refers to present-day Litang County (理塘縣); Hor to regions north and northeast of Batang; Drango to present-day Luhuo County (爐霍縣).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 804.

⁶⁹ *QCBDS*, no. 0082, 103.

ambiguity of some territories west of the Dri River within Batang's traditional jurisdiction, Qing officials considered the Dri River as a hard-and-fast border beyond which central Tibetan soldiers could not be allowed to cross. The central Tibetan demand for Qing officials and Batang native chieftains to sign a document pledging never to allow foreigners to transit through Batang into central Tibet, as well as their threat to destroy the churches, expel the foreigners (thereby putting additional foreign pressure on the Qing officials), and destroy the homes of the native chieftains were excessive and transcended the *de facto* border demarcating sovereignty between central Tibet and Sichuan in the minds of Qing officials. They could not allow these threats to be realized.

Similarly, and perhaps more significant, the Tibetans, at least those who authored the ultimatum, saw Batang's territories west of the Dri River as a liminal zone in which they had the right to assert their sovereignty when threatened. Foreign missionaries had been active in Kham for over twenty years, but Tibetans only prepared their military defenses when they learned that a foreigner was crossing the Dri River and therefore might head toward Lhasa. This happened with Cooper in 1868, Gill in 1877, and Széchenyi in 1879. Perhaps frustrated with increasing activity of foreigners in and around Batang, this time central Tibetans asserted themselves much more boldly than in the past. Not hesitating to reach beyond the range of their liminal sovereignty, they demanded Qing officials, native chieftains, monks, and local people on the eastern side of the Dri River agree to prohibit foreign travelers from crossing the river into the liminal zone of their sovereignty and to cease welcoming and sending off foreign travelers in the region. The central Tibetans threatened to destroy not only the foreign churches, but also the homes of the native chieftains if their demands were not met. This threat suggests little sympathy existed among central Tibetan leaders for the hereditary secular leaders of Batang, despite their positions

originating from the Lhasa appointments of their ancestors two centuries earlier. It also shows central Tibetans' intense distrust of the motives of foreign travelers.

Qing officials, on the other hand, did not see obstructing foreigners as a legitimate reason for central Tibet to raise local troops. Well-aware of the privileges the 1858 Treaty of Tianjin accorded to foreign travelers and missionaries throughout the empire, Qing officials did not necessarily welcome foreign travelers or missionaries in Tibet due to central Tibetan distrust of all things foreign, but they certainly objected to the central Tibetan's threat of military action against Batang to prevent such activities in Tibet. Echoing this frustration, the *Veritable Records of the Qing* records the following reaction of the Guangxu Emperor upon learning about the brazen actions of the Tibetans to block Széchenyi's travels, "Foreigners traveling into Tibet is permitted by treaty.... For now, let Song Gui (松淮),⁷⁰ Seleng'e, and Trulku Zechenggai (責成該呼圖克圖) off lightly and enlighten the monks and lay people, telling them to let the foreigners enter Tibet. They are few in number, and they should be able to go forward without any bullying or oppression. There is no need to be recklessly suspicious and create problems."⁷¹ In addition, Qing authorities did not consider suppressing Sanyan as a legitimate reason for central Tibetan officials to call up local soldiers. Suppressing banditry, Qing officials thought, was an imperial responsibility, even if the brigands were located west of the Dri River in territory over which their sovereignty was shared with central Tibet. That local Tibetans would assert their authority there caused Qing officials concern and indignation. In fact, only a few years later, Qing officials in Sichuan would authorize a punitive expedition against Sanyan.

⁷⁰ Song Gui served as High Commissioner to Tibet, 1874-1879.

⁷¹ *QSL*, GX 5.8, juan 99.

With this in mind, we should be careful not to read too much into the anti-foreign motivations of central Tibetan authorities massing troops along Batang's western border. Qing reports clearly indicate central Tibetan officials were angry that Sanyan bandits had attacked their own high level delegation, and this attack certainly motivated central Tibetan officials to increase their military strength in the region. We cannot of course know if the central Tibetan soldiers were prepared to carry through their threats to cross the Dri River, but their words alone evince a sharpening of rhetoric and increasing of tension in Batang.

Ding Baozhen and Heng Xun adopted a series of military and diplomatic measures to contain the Tibetan soldiers on the west side of the river and thereby maintain the integrity of the Qing's exclusive sovereignty over most of Batang while acknowledging shared sovereignty in Batang's traditional domains west of the Dri River. On the military front, Ding responded to repeated requests from Ji Zhiwen for military support. Writing to the Zongli Yamen, Heng Xun had previously noted:

According to the Commissariat Officer's report, the strength of the soldiers in his [Ji Zhiwen's] detachment is very weak, and the native chieftain fears the Tibetans as if they were tigers. If the Tibetans do in fact come, it will be extremely difficult to take care of them both. . . . As for this case, the Tibetans came to Batang because foreigners were traveling there, and because there are churches in almost every part of Batang. They came and stayed because they wanted to expel the foreigners and destroy the churches. Moreover, the Tibetan soldiers are numerous and domineering. They don't follow reason, and this has already become their custom. They want to expel the foreigners from every location, and it is difficult to guarantee that they will not do it. If we do not take precautions, I honestly fear that the Tibetan soldiers will recklessly and without knowledge one day flood in, and then we will have a dilemma.⁷²

Soon thereafter, Ding reported on his progress to the Zongli Yamen:

Your servants at present have already ordered Deputy General Kuang Wenbang (副將況文榜) of the Abundant Peace Battalion (阜和協營) [in Dartsedo] to choose at his discretion three hundred soldiers and low-ranking officers and quickly lead them to this station [Batang] to work together [with Ji Zhiwen] and come up with a plan. The most

⁷² *JJD*, vol. 4, 802.

important thing is for them first to disperse the Tibetan troops. On the one hand, they will strengthen our defenses and suppress [the Tibetans]. I have also ordered Commissariat Ji Zhiwen and Battalion Vice Commander Li Wanchun (都司李萬春) to lead the local leaders and troops and together defend the Dri River's ferry. On the other hand, they will protect the churches and must not implement this ridiculous agreement, thereby preventing future calamities.... We cannot have their reckless behavior causing calamities.⁷³

The deterrent force of Batang's enlarged garrison, which increased by over two hundred percent with the arrival of additional troops from Dartsedo, proved very effective in restoring order to the region. Heng Xun noted that these troops allowed Ji Zhiwen to:

take advantage of this opportunity to take defensive measures and suppress and persuade [the Tibetans]. If he does this, the Tibetans will be able to understand the general meaning of things, and they will all disperse and return to living in their pastures on their own accord....

In conclusion, their most important responsibility is to disperse and suppress [the Tibetans]. On no account can they take this matter lightly and attack. They should avoid careless speech. As for the matters of the Tibetans sending troops to enter Batang and wanting to expel the foreigners, it is in fact headstrong and unseemly behavior. They do not have the slightest fear, and recently everything these Tibetans have been doing is causing unrest. This time without a reason they are looking to quarrel. This is an extremely serious matter, and we can by no means not prepare.⁷⁴

While providing additional military support to Ji Zhiwen was valuable, restoring and maintaining order also required internal diplomacy. Not only did Ding "send an immediate dispatch to the High Commissioner to Tibet requesting he quickly recall the Tibetan official Lord Shakya...and also that the Tibetan soldiers retreat in order to avoid things deteriorating with each passing day,"⁷⁵ but he and Heng Xun also "jointly commanded the Commissariat Officer [in Batang] to persuade them to disperse... [and we] ordered him to strictly defend the main road

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 804-05.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 803.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 805.

along the Dri River and to conscientiously protect each of the churches.”⁷⁶ Ji Zhiwen took his duties seriously, and in combination with diplomatic pressure from the High Commissioner in Tibet, Qing officials were finally able to compel the Tibetan soldiers to disperse. Reporting to Heng Xun, Ji wrote:

For months I persuaded them, but these Tibetans are stubborn without exception. Their intention is that we must permanently guarantee in writing that no foreigners will enter Tibet, and also that we must assent in the future to the expulsion of French churches. Before they start to pull back their troops, both conditions must be satisfied.

Your servant again sent forward two translators bearing tribute from Dragyab in Outer Tibet (后藏). I ordered them saying that this matter was not trifling and was not something that the civil and military officials and native chieftains of Batang could manage.... Several times these Tibetans pressed us, and we had already nearly exhausted our strength blocking the two roads. Just at the time when we could not press them further, we received a reply from High Commissioner to Tibet Se.... At present, he has already sent a stern order to the Native Affairs Office ordering their swift withdrawal. Because they immediately obeyed the order, ...according to numerous intelligence reports, the Tibetan soldiers had already retreated a few days earlier and most of them have returned to Gartok.

How can your servant doubt these Tibetans came with keen determination? We have not captured a single one. Why did they retreat so suddenly? I still did not have faith in them, so I continued to investigate carefully, and I began to learn from Se’s immediate reports to the Native Affairs Office. His words were extremely strict.... We all know that the trouble these Tibetans are fomenting is of their own making. Therefore, all the troops protecting Shakya Namgyal Tsering (ShAkya Rnam rgyal Tshe ring, 香噶朗結策忍)⁷⁷ day and night did not let him move. It was like those Tibetan officials had also exhausted their plans and resources. When they began to order the local people to respond by providing horses for the Native Affairs officials, they got up, turned around, and very quickly withdrew their soldiers and left.

The three churches in Batang were fortunately protected and everyone is safe. This is due to the power of the commands of High Commissioner to Tibet Se’s immediate orders. Now because of Se’s pure, intelligent, and resolute prestige, others in fact stand in awe of his courage, which is spreading widely. I have been demanding that all the Tibetans that forced the soldiers to chase and expel the foreigners in Batang settle their accounts, and we have been wrangling for several days. Recently, they received stern commands from

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 802.

⁷⁷ The full name of Lord Shakya, head of the delegation from Lhasa.

High Commissioner to Tibet Se, and the Tibetan officials and others have already withdrawn their troops and left.⁷⁸

In this and other subsequent communications involving this case, we begin to see the character of Batang's newly arrived Commissariat officer, Ji Zhiwen. Like his predecessor Zhao Guangxie, Ji Zhiwen radically contradicts typical portrayals of Qing officials on the Tibetan frontier as corrupt and condescending towards non-Han people. Ji, in fact, comes across as a champion of local Tibetans and often acted with their best interests in mind. For example, in one of his first reports upon taking up his position, Ji both defended the Tibetans of Mangli as “mature”⁷⁹ and argued in support of the native chieftains' lack of involvement in this case:

Your servant [Ji Zhiwen] arrived to take up this office in January 1880 (GX 5.12), and I understood that there were several thousand Tibetan soldiers, but that there was no way to make official inquiries with them. The Mangli Tibetans after all are mature barbarians along the Sichuan border. How could they take advantage of this disorder to profit? The facts are not consistent with this. At present I have ordered the native chieftain to summon the people who took the property and to have them immediately confess to the church their faults with elegance. I have also estimated the cost of the stolen property and the doors and windows broken by the swords of the Tibetan soldiers and made compensation. Recently I received from the native chieftain a statement he took from the church in a foreign script saying the accounts are settled....

On February 23, 1880 (GX 6.1.14), your servant immediately replied to Dartsedo Bishop Biet (畢主教) that this matter was settled and that I have determined that this was a case of Tibetan soldiers who were intent to insult. In fact, this was not a case of the Batang native chieftains and local people daring to hold on to their past resentment, but it has been brought about by another wave of events.... Because Mangli is closely connected with the Tibetan border, the Tibetans' character is difficult to determine.⁸⁰

In addition to defending local Tibetans against false accusations, practicality is another defining characteristic of Ji Zhiwen's tenure in office. Throughout his time as Batang's

⁷⁸ *JJD*, vol. 4, 811-12.

⁷⁹ “Raw” (生) and “mature” or “cooked” (熟) are adjectives Chinese used to describe varying degrees of acculturation to Chinese tradition. See Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*; Magnus Fiskesjö, “On the Raw and the Cooked Barbarians of Imperial China,” *Inner Asia* 1, no. 2 (1999): 139-68; and Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 806-07.

Commissariat Officer, and even in retirement, Ji Zhiwen worked toward finding efficient solutions that allowed everyone in the Batang area to live in peace. In this particular case, as the central Tibetan soldiers amassed on Batang's western border, he called on the *khenpo* of Ba Chöde Monastery, which at that time had upwards of 1,800 monks, to inquire if he intended to abide by the central Tibetan call to drive out all foreigners from Tibetan lands. The *khenpo* reportedly said that he would obey Ji Zhiwen as the representative of the Emperor and no other, but Ji remained unconvinced. As a precaution, Ji recommended to the French that their missionaries and congregation in Mangli temporarily evacuate south to Yanjing. As for the missionaries in Batang, Father Desgodins noted that Ji Zhiwen said, "He would cut off his own head before he allowed them [the central Tibetans] to lay a hand on us."⁸¹ Moreover, evincing his awareness of the international ramifications of what was happening in this remote corner of the empire under his watch, Ji urged the missionaries to lobby their representatives in Beijing. Desgodins continued, "The Mandarin Ji of Batang informs me that my mission will be completely destroyed if I do not write to our Ambassador in Beijing to defend it from the lamas of Lhasa."⁸²

Beyond his practical measures of protecting the missionaries and their congregation in Mangli and urging them to petition their Ambassador, Ji Zhiwen also quickly settled the financial losses of the Mangli Tibetans with his own funds. Only afterwards did he collect compensation from the native chieftains, who bore ultimate responsibility for the losses in their domain. At the same time, Ji did not hesitate to offer his vision of what was best for Batang. He was quick to defend the native chieftains against false accusations from the missionaries, and he even refused an order from his superiors in Chengdu to reinvestigate the causes of the damage to

⁸¹ Pierre Philippe Giraudeau, *Rapport annuel des évêques: Mission du Thibet* (1880), M.E.P. Archives.

⁸² *Ibid.*

the church in Mangli, arguing “Your servant will not re-investigate the Mangli Tibetans because I do not want the church to arouse dislike among the people. In so doing we can hope for long-term peace between the Tibetans and the missionaries. We can also avoid the Mangli people from feeling hatred and stirring up trouble. Rebellion and disturbances have many causes. The root of this affair is trifling....”⁸³

Having clarified the financial obligations and settled accounts with the French, Ji Zhiwen proactively proposed to Heng Xun that the Mangli church and its congregation be relocated to a more suitable location in Batang to prevent a possible recurrence of violence between the local people and the church. This is another example of his practical approach to administering the Batang region. It also represents another example of Qing officials’ *ad hoc* policy making, which more times than not in the late nineteenth century originated not from Beijing or Chengdu but from the field in Batang. In his proposal, Ji first pointed out that the Mangli church’s location along a major road made it difficult to manage. Comparing Batang’s three churches, he wrote, “One of [the churches] is located close to this office, and looking after it is assuredly easy. Another one is in the Yanjing area, a secluded and out-of-the-way place. The people there are relatively simple, and in addition things are at peace. It is only the Mangli church that was built alongside a major road. The border with Tibet is extremely near. Perhaps because of Tibetans’ corvée duties to receive and send off people, or perhaps because both Han and Tibetan officials traveling to Dartsedo, Litang, and Batang have no other roads to take that do not pass through here and because the distances between stations are extremely far, it is arduous to look after it.”⁸⁴ The heavy corvée duties of Batang’s people to which Ji refers would become a common complaint by Batang’s power holders when attempting to explain anti-missionary violence in the

⁸³ *JJD*, vol. 4, 806.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 831.

late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. What Ji fails to mention is that it is not only Han and Tibetan officials that depended on this system of *corvée* labor. French missionaries and other foreigners also took advantage of it.

In addition to their frustrations from the burdens of *corvée*, Ji suggested that local Tibetans in Mangli remained very suspicious of the missionaries when he noted, “In Mangli the Tibetans and the church regard each other as strangers. Their joys and sorrows are unrelated... They [the people of Mangli] also fear that the missionaries secretly keep travelling foreigners inside who will suddenly cross into Tibet. Whenever they are blamed for something, it is not insignificant. And so for those who seek trouble with the church, the majority of them do so for these reasons.”⁸⁵ Not surprisingly, the French were also aware of how they were seen by many Tibetans. Writing to his headquarters in Paris, Father Desgodins remarked, “As in the past...the Lhasa government, lamas, and their supporters seem very willing to defend the entrance to Tibet from European travelers. This year again there was a false alarm in which Tibetan soldiers from Gartok came to protect the border. However, careful observers expect their opposition will not last... They are reluctant to receive English and Russians because they fear that they may be accompanied or followed by missionaries.... Basically, their ill-will is above all a political bias. They are confident that we are sending out scouts to take hold of their country.”⁸⁶ With these factors in mind, Ji concluded that relocating the Mangli church to a less conspicuous location offered the best solution. Heng Xun wholeheartedly supported Ji’s proposal and forwarded it to the Zongli Yamen for their consideration.

Despite the approval of his superiors in Chengdu and Beijing, Ji had difficulty convincing the French priest in Batang of the soundness of relocating the Mangli church. In fact, the local

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ August Desgodins, *Rapport annuel des évêques, n ° 197: Mission du Thibet* (1879), M.E.P. Archives.

priest refused to discuss the matter with Ji, claiming that only the bishop in Dartsedo could authorize such a move. Ji later determined, however, that the priest “is afraid that the Batang people will ridicule him. He is also apprehensive towards Tibetans. These things cause him to consider giving up his land to be shameful. He also fears that the Mangli people will not pay back the original price of his land. These are his excuses.”⁸⁷ To allay the priest’s concern about the finances involved in a possible move, Ji ordered the native chieftains to look in to repair costs for the church and the possibility of having the Mangli Tibetans repurchase the church’s land. He also had the native chieftain identify and survey a plot of land in the Yarigang region of Batang and prepare to mortgage it to the church. When the native chieftain reported that the people of Mangli were destitute following recent military action in the region, Ji was undeterred and “at once verbally approved a loan to the people of Mangli for the price of the land and the cost of the repairs. A few days later, the native chieftain divided into years the debt owed by the people of Mangli and paid it back. In so doing, we extended the wealth of the people.”⁸⁸

Regarding the priest’s concern about being ridiculed by the people of Batang were he to relocate the Mangli church, Ji argued, “If we want to seek long-lasting peace on the border, we must always make plans and implement them. If these actions are successful, then foreigners can certainly trust the efforts of all officials in Sichuan-Tibetan areas. In addition, Batang can make the Tibetan situation in Gartok a bit smoother, and this will make it so that the priest no longer has any excuses. In fact, this will lead to less ill will in Sichuan-Tibetan areas.”⁸⁹ The local priest

⁸⁷ *JJD*, vol. 4, 832.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

continued to resist, however, so Ji decided to petition Bishop Biet in Dartsedo directly.⁹⁰

Describing his meeting, Ji noted:

We met with Bishop Biet and told him that the central Tibetans (藏番) are wicked, cross, and difficult to talk to. Time and again because the Mangli church is extremely close to the Tibetan border, suspicion and doubt frequently arise. They use whatever pretext they can to create provocations, and this leads to unrest between the people and the church. We therefore decided to relocate the Mangli church nearer to Yanjing. We also spoke pleasantly about setting up ways that both sides could reach a compromise.

The Bishop responded by saying that the French church is situated on the Sichuan side of the border and in fact is not in Tibetan territory. In addition, since establishing the Mangli church themselves, there has not been a single person who crossed the border into Tibet. How can the Tibetans then cross the border to create trouble and insult us for no reason? And now, although the High Commissioner to Tibet strictly and urgently ordered them to retreat, I have yet to hear of punishments for the Tibetans. If we again relocate the church and its congregation, then the Tibetans will definitely be looked at apprehensively by foreigners, who will be made fools of. What the Tibetan people say is all excuses....

Your servants entreated him numerous times, telling him that because Mangli is not an auspicious region, for this very reason problems often arise there and that we especially feel that the merits [of staying in Mangli] do not make up for the trouble. We also carefully explained the benefits and drawbacks and enjoined him to consider it thoroughly. Again, according to what Bishop Biet said, the number of French churches established in China is many, and they have never had the case of moving a congregation. The reason they purchased the land was so that they would not have an excuse to increase fees for the congregation.... His words remained hesitant.

We again forcefully said that Mangli is located far from Batang, so the ability of the Batang civil and military officials, and also the native chieftains, to take care of it is low. This is why the situation is hopeless and nothing can be done. By making the troubles disappear, the people and the church can be at peace in the future. We said that if he is not understanding of this matter, imagine if later there is again another incident? Is this also not reason why you should respect the great pains taken by officials to protect the Tibetan areas of Sichuan?

Our words roused him to make an effort, and the Bishop began to say that this year the Tibetans created provocations, and that he is deeply indebted to us for dispatching troops to protect them and suppress [the Tibetans]. Near and far everyone knows that the foreigners are sincerely and deeply grateful. Since we continued to discuss the matter, your servants again exhorted him saying that since we ourselves respect the efforts of officials to protect [the region] everyday, we should both compromise. Yet when it comes to the Yanjing area, we still hope to protect it at all times and not to allow Tibetans to

⁹⁰ Félix Biet had served in Batang until he was appointed to succeed Joseph Pierre Chauveau as Bishop of Tibet.

obtain an inch of territory or again create waves. Subsequently, the Bishop sent a letter to the priest in Batang telling him to prepare things as we discussed.⁹¹

Having successfully lobbied Bishop Biet, who would describe Ji as “a heaven sent protector” in his next report to Paris,⁹² Ji Zhiwen returned to Batang to facilitate the church’s relocation. In his progress report to Heng Xun, Ji wrote:

I immediately calculated the value of all the land and property of the Mangli church and ordered the native chieftain, accompanied by the original owner of the land, together with [representatives of] the church to calculate things perspicuously. Based on the calculations prepared by your servant Ji Zhiwen, I made advanced payment to the church and wrapped things up precisely. I also informed Yanjing of the total value of the property and land returned in Mangli and ordered the native chieftain to allot a plot of land [in Yarigang] and lease (出典) it to the church....

On September 11, 1880 (GX 6.8.7), the two priests César Alexandre Biet (畢天祥)⁹³ and Pierre-Philippe Giraudeau (倪德隆), together with the two native chieftains and headmen from the two regions of Mangli and Yanjing, were at the offices of the Batang Commissariat to determine precisely what items the church should receive and what items they should turn over. All three sides transferred things clearly.... As for my debt on the advanced payment I made on the Mangli church, the two native chieftains have an acknowledged agreement and will repay it annually.⁹⁴

Ji Zhiwen’s explanation of these events is quite clear, but it is important to note how he handles the property transactions in the above communications. Historical records indicate that in the past native chieftains exclusively regulated and enforced property rights. Qing officials did not get involved in land tenure issues. Similarly, while Qing officials may have had ultimate oversight over tax collection and corvée labor services in Batang, the administration of such services was left solely to native chieftains. Ji Zhiwen broke with such precedents with his semi-*laissez faire* approach to frontier administration. Rather than have the native chieftains

⁹¹ *JJD*, vol. 4, 833-34.

⁹² Desgodins, *Rapport annuel des évêques*, n ° 197.

⁹³ César Alexandre Biet was the older brother of Bishop Félix Biet.

⁹⁴ *JJD*, vol. 4, 834.

exclusively handle the transfers of property in Mangli and Yarigang, he himself fronted the large sum of money necessary to repurchase the Mangli land and make necessary repairs to the church property, and then he mortgaged it back to the original owners in Mangli. He also put up the money to purchase the new land in Yarigang and mortgaged it to the church. Only after ensuring that all transactions were settled did he instruct the native chieftains to take over administration of these arrangements. As the demands of missionaries complicated Batang's socio-political fabric, Qing officials like Ji Zhiwen stepped in to settle complex matters. In so doing, they began to take power away from Batang's native chieftains. This disruption to Batang's traditional balance of power slowly destabilized the region.

So what conclusions can we draw from a case that, on the surface, seems like simple looting by Tibetan soldiers anxious to deter a foreigner who had already decided not to attempt to enter Tibet? First, Batang's second missionary case attracted greater attention from authorities in Lhasa, Chengdu, and Beijing. With the Tibetans choosing to mass large number of soldiers in Batang's western territories, Ji Zhiwen felt compelled to seek reinforcements to augment his rather weak regiment of troops in Batang from Heng Xun in Chengdu. While the actual damage in this case is significantly less than the former case, the response by both the Tibetans and the Qing government was markedly greater. Not insignificantly, the Qing renewed its precedent of sending soldiers to Batang to maintain stability in the region, something the court had not done since the Jinchuan campaigns against Nyarong in the 1720s. Remilitarization, albeit only temporary, by both central Tibetan and Qing authorities raised tensions, increased Batang's profile, and set the stage for future violence in Batang.

Second, we see that sovereignty remained contested in Batang. Despite the Yongzheng Emperor's decree identifying Ningjing Mountain as the partition between central Tibet, Sichuan,

and Yunnan, Batang's traditional jurisdiction extended to Yanjing, which was located southwest of the Ningjing range, and Sanyan, which was located north of the mountain. Moreover, Qing tolerance of central Tibetan influence in Batang's western territories created a liminal zone of shared sovereignty that covered much of Batang's territories west of the Dri River. However, this missionary case also demonstrates that Qing tolerance had its limits. The simple fact that central Tibetan authorities made demands on all Batang Tibetans—native chieftains, monks, and lay people alike—indicates central Tibetans felt their power and sovereignty extended beyond this liminal zone into Batang's territory east of the Dri. Qing officials could not ignore such assertions of power by central Tibetans, so they mobilized both military and diplomatic resources to compel central Tibetan authorities in Gartok to withdraw their soldiers. In so doing, Qing officials confirmed the Dri River as the *de facto* border dividing Sichuan and central Tibetan sovereignty while maintaining shared sovereignty with Lhasa over Batang territories west of the river.

Finally, we must not forget the important role that local official Ji Zhiwen played in managing affairs on the ground while translating responses from Beijing and Chengdu to meet local needs. Ji's ability to reach practical solutions to resolve local problems is admirable, but in satisfying the demands of the French missionaries Ji gradually assumed a greater role in local governance. As the power of the Commissariat Office grew, Batang's Tibetan power holders, especially leaders of Ba Chöde Monastery, felt increasingly threatened, and long-standing relationships among Batang's traditional power holders began to deteriorate and local society began to destabilize. As we shall see, Ji would soon face even more complex challenges requiring him to use his skills of resolving conflicts between local Tibetans and foreign missionaries to maintain order in Batang.

Batang's Third Missionary Case

In 1881, less than one year after the conclusion of Batang's second missionary case, an outbreak of smallpox plagued the region. According to French reports, over four hundred monks from Ba Chöde Monastery and countless lay persons died in the epidemic. Hoping to reduce the simmering mistrust between the missionaries and the local monks, Father Giraudeau successfully vaccinated a few local children.⁹⁵ His kindness seemed to have little effect, however. Only a few months later tensions in Batang escalated even further with the murder of French Catholic priest Jean-Baptiste Brioux (梅玉林) on September 8, 1881 (GX 7.7.15). Father Brioux had been transporting the annual shipment of silver and supplies from Dartsedo to French M.E.P. missions south of Batang proper⁹⁶ when he died at the hands of Sanyan bandits and monks from Ba Chöde Monastery. Although this case did not involve extensive damage to property or a standoff between central Tibetan and Qing soldiers as Batang's first two missionary cases did, the murder of a foreign national sharpened even further the attention of Qing officials on the region and impelled them to search out the culprits and bring them to justice. Raising Batang's profile domestically and internationally, this case also allowed Ji Zhiwen to exert greater imperial power in Batang. Through his criminal investigation into Father Brioux's murder, his punitive expedition against the Sanyan brigands, and his subsequent administrative reforms in the region, Ji continued to adapt imperial orders to meet local circumstances on an *ad hoc* basis. At the same

⁹⁵ Hu Xiao, "Faguo chuanjiaoshi Ni Delong zai Sichuan Zangqu huodong kaoshu," *Zongjiaoxue yanjiu* 2 (2011): 165-70.

⁹⁶ Félix Biet, *Rapport annuel des évêques: Mission du Thibet* (1881), M.E.P. Archives. Previous Chinese- and English-language scholarship on missionaries in Kham and Tibet is fraught with inaccuracies and erroneous assumptions. Even a scholar as well-versed in early twentieth century Kham history as Hsiao-Ting Lin offers an error-filled analysis of Father Brioux's murder, claiming, among other things, that Brioux was killed because he was on his way to Lhasa. Basic primary source research does not bear out this or several other assumptions he makes. See Hsiao-ting Lin, "When Christianity and Lamaism Met: The Changing Fortunes of Early Western Missionaries in Tibet," *Pacific Rim Report* 36 (2004).

time, stretching the boundaries of his semi-*laissez faire* approach of working through the native chieftains, he began to adopt more aggressive and hands-on methods of frontier management. Finally, Ji's handling of this case also sheds light on the question of liminal sovereignty raised in the previous section.

Imperial records for this case begin with a letter dated October 28, 1881 (GX 7.9.6), from Sichuan Governor-General Ding Baozhen to the Council of State. Quoting Ji Zhiwen, Ding wrote:

Ji Zhiwen sent in a report stating that...upon returning from Dartsedo, on August 10, 1881 (GX 7.7.16), when he was three stations away from Batang at Benchamu (奔叉木), he received an urgent report from his office in Batang. This report said that the Batang church's priest Father Brieux had been robbed and killed. He quickly returned in the middle of the night and consulted in person with Father Biet, another priest who lived with Brieux. He learned that on August 9, Brieux was escorting thirteen loads of western goods to Yanjing, where they were to be used by the churches there.... Because his loads were on his own mules and horses, and also because there were Tibetan traders, servants, and horses from Dragyab traveling with him, he presumed there would not be any hindrances, so he did not go to the Commissariat to inform [the officials of his need] to be looked after. Who would have thought that the Tibetan traders from Dragyab would fall behind and that Brieux would go forward alone? He only had a few people accompanying him. He set up a tent at Hetaoyuan (核桃園) near Mantang (蠻塘), where he was robbed and killed by barbarian Tibetans.⁹⁷

He [Ji Zhiwen] also consulted with the church members that accompanied him, and Xiang Xingshun (向興順) said that on this day Brieux traveled to Dashibao, which is twenty *li* from Hetaoyuan. Because the Dragyab Tibetans had fallen behind, he had the servants set up the tents at Mantang, and then they waited. When the local soldier Sijiluo (四即洛) heard this news, he quickly went to Xiang and said, "*Jag pa*⁹⁸ come and go unpredictably, so under no circumstances should you camp here. I beg you to return." Brieux's goods had already arrived there, so he was unwilling to go back and immediately settled in.

At the first watch of the night, he heard the dogs barking and ordered Xiang Xingshun to go out of the tent and see what was happening. Suddenly three men held him down on the

⁹⁷ Brieux's murder took place in present-day Dagading Village, Zhubalong Township, Mangkang County (芒康縣朱巴龍鄉達噶丁村). See Bao Luo and Juan Lamu, "Jindai Yanjing Lawengsi shijian yuanyin fenxi—jian lun qi xiangguan wenti," *Xizang yanjiu* 3 (June 2006): 17.

⁹⁸ A Tibetan term for bandit, transliterated in Chinese as 夾壩.

ground while several dozen people crowded around the tent. Brieux fired his foreign gun from inside the tent, and the explosion immediately felled one person. The crowd of bandits retreated slightly, but they again quickly surrounded the tent on all sides and wildly threw stones at it. Wielding his gun, Brieux fired repeatedly, and the injured fell to the ground. The thieves moved forward chopping and cutting, and he perished.

Xiang Xingshun took advantage of the situation to get free and hide. When the next morning came, he checked his list of items for missing goods and calculated that thirteen mule loads of goods, two riding horses, two large boxes, and one brick of tea had been stolen. Based on what Ji Zhiwen made clear after going there himself, Brieux's head and face had been cut up and beaten with knives and rocks. Bloodstains made things indistinct, and while his right wrist was broken, his left wrist had also been chopped up. Clearly, he had died from his injuries.⁹⁹

Father Brieux's death was of great concern to officials in Beijing. Upon receiving Ding Baozhen's memorial, the Council of State immediately informed the Zongli Yamen, and soon thereafter the Guangxu Emperor urged that the bandits be dealt with to the fullest extent of the law without delay so that "the foreigners will not have any excuses."¹⁰⁰ The following day, the Zongli Yamen informed the French minister of Brieux's death and the measures local officials were taking under the order of the Emperor to ensure the perpetrators were captured and brought to justice. Including a copy of Ding Baozhen's memorial, Zongli Yamen officials noted that the Emperor ordered that this matter be handled with the greatest rigor.¹⁰¹

Having dealt with numerous missionary cases throughout the empire and almost incessant demands by foreign diplomats for retribution, Qing officials looked carefully at all parties who might be held responsible for a particular incident. In this case, the assailants were obvious to blame for Brieux's death, but Ding Baozhen also pointed out to the Zongli Yamen that Brieux himself was also at fault, noting "Father Brieux had come to Batang as a missionary many years ago, and things between the local people and the missionaries were peaceful.... He

⁹⁹ *JJD*, vol. 4, 853.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 855.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

did not inform the Han and local officials at the yamen or the native chieftains to arrange escorts and went ahead himself. When one of the Tibetan soldiers learned of this news, he traveled a far distance and urged him numerous times to stop, but he again held to his opinions and was not willing to go back. As a result of this, he suffered death.... It is clearly known that Brioux was responsible for his own misfortune.”¹⁰² While missionaries were not legally bound to inform Qing officials of their travels, the court had ordered all officials to request missionaries inform them of intended travel so that they could arrange appropriate escorts and thereby ensure their safety. Accounts from foreign missionaries and travelers in Batang almost always make reference to their imperial escorts, so we may conclude that it was commonly accepted by both missionaries and Qing officials that sharing such information was in everyone’s best interests given Batang’s sometimes hostile environment. Nevertheless, for reasons unknown Brioux frequently disregarded common practice. Ding Baozhen noted with consternation that Brioux, whose character he considered “bigoted,” had traveled all the way from Chengdu to Batang without informing local officials along the way.¹⁰³ In this case, not only did he not inform Batang officials, but he even departed ahead of a large caravan headed to his same destination. To protect his office from potential foreign claims, Ji quickly consulted with Brioux’s colleague in Batang, Father Biet, who acknowledged Brioux’s failure to inform his office of his travel and signed an affidavit stating that the church “would not take offense” for Brioux’s death.¹⁰⁴

Regarding Brioux’s assailants, Ji Zhiwen was quick to acknowledge that they came from Sanyan, the same region in Batang’s western territory where a delegation of Tibetan officials from Lhasa was attacked just over a year earlier. Despite successfully convincing the Tibetan

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 853-54.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 856.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 853-54.

soldiers to disperse after they had damaged the church at Mangli, managing Sanyan remained a challenge for Qing officials. Ding Baozhen emphasized, “It is my humble opinion that the barbarian Tibetans of Sanyan are in fact a different breed of wild savage. They do not submit to the authority of the Han officials or native chieftains... [even though] in the end this land is under the jurisdiction of the nearby native chieftain. It is as if there is no one regulating them.”¹⁰⁵ Both to bring Brioux’s assailants to justice and to assert Qing sovereignty over Sanyan, Ding ordered Ji Zhiwen to lead a military expedition of over six hundred Qing soldiers into Sanyan that would “pursue, investigate, and capture them [the bandits], as well as recover the stolen goods and mete out punishment so that we can hope for a quick resolution that will reign in those far away people.”

On the same day that the French responded to the Zongli Yamen’s notification of Brioux’s murder, Zongli Yamen officials received another communication from Sichuan Governor-General Ding Baozhen, in which he commented further on the intransigence of Sanyan Tibetans: “Tuo Keduan (托克湍)¹⁰⁶ wrote saying that he learned the barbarian Tibetans of Sanyan have not yet submitted to the jurisdiction of the Commissariat or the native chieftains. They are ferocious and uncontrollable. It is simply that they are beyond the pale. Throughout history they have relied on their deep mountain valleys and secretiveness, so it is difficult to capture them. Repeatedly they secretly come out to rob and plunder on the main road.”¹⁰⁷

As Ji Zhiwen was preparing to march on Sanyan, he began to hear rumors suggesting the Sanyan brigands did not act alone when they attacked and murdered Father Brioux. Making

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 854.

¹⁰⁶ A vice commander-in-chief (副都統) ordered by Ding Baozhen to lead troops to Batang to cooperate with Ji Zhiwen on the investigation and capture of the Brioux’s assailants.

¹⁰⁷ *JJD*, vol. 4, 856.

inquiries, he discovered that around the time of the murder there were many Tibetans from Sanyan coming and going to Ba Chöde Monastery posing as traders. Suspecting the criminals had fled to the monastery for protection as was common in Tibetan areas, Ji ordered a small detachment of soldiers to visit the monastery and pressure them to turn over anyone involved in Brieux's murder. Given the common practice of the monastery accepting criminals hoping to escape punishment, Chöde monastic leaders did not feel obligated to assist Ji in his investigation. Refusing to cooperate, monastic leaders rebuffed Ji's detachment.

Soon thereafter, Ji Zhiwen learned the names and locations of some of the brigands involved in Brieux's murder. Reporting on their arrest, Ji noted:

We secretly ordered the native chieftain to personally lead the arresting party...and he arrested two *jag pa* at Lower Xisonggong Gama (下喜松工噶瑪) named Gonpo Chöpel (Mgon po Chos 'phel, 工布曲批) and Chönjor (Chos 'byor, 策珠). We also recovered thirty-seven *juan* in foreign money, six bolts of blue cloth, and seven bricks of tea. We confirmed through his inquiries that these were items lost by the foreigner in question and the next day brought them back. When questioning Chönjor and others, according to their testimony, they didn't avoid saying that they robbed and divided the stolen goods. They also said that they saw with their own eyes Jampa Lekshe (Byams pa Legs bshad, 降巴納小) and other monks from Dinglin monastery¹⁰⁸ robbing, but they have been stringently detained [within the monastery].¹⁰⁹

This was a serious discovery. The monks of Ba Chöde Monastery were not only harboring criminals, but they had also been implicated in the attack on Father Brieux. Ji Zhiwen quickly ordered Ba Chöde's *khenpo*, Lekshe (Legs bshad, 勒限), to release Jampa Lekshe and others responsible for Brieux's murder to him for questioning. While they admitted they had accepted Jampa Lekshe and Sherab Gendun (Shes rab Dge 'dun, 殺熱根堆) in the monastery, the leaders and *ge khö* lama, who were responsible for internal monastic discipline, argued that the two individuals were not in fact responsible for any crimes and thus should not be turned

¹⁰⁸ A reference to Ba Chöde Monastery, known at the time in Chinese as Dinglin Monastery (丁林寺).

¹⁰⁹ *JJD*, vol. 4, 865.

over for questioning. Venting his frustration, Ji wrote to Tuo Keduan in Chengdu, “We informed these monks that Jampa Lekshe and others had already been identified by others as robbing and holding stolen goods and that they should hand them over for questioning. How dare they trump up a story to shield them! These lamas are always trying to frame Chönjor, while Jampa Lekshe and others are still holed up in their monastery. They have still not yet been turned over to the authorities. It is my opinion that in this case of robbery by Sanyan Tibetans, monks from this monastery participated and obtained stolen goods. This is extremely unexpected.”¹¹⁰

Continuing his investigations, Ji learned that while Lama Phagpa Kunzang (‘Phags pa Kun bzang, 八家公頃),¹¹¹ a senior *trulku* in Ba Chöde Monastery, denied the involvement of anyone from the monastery, other lamas testified that Jampa Lekshe and others accompanied the Sanyan brigands on the day of Brieux’s murder and even returned to the monastery together with Chönjor and some of the stolen goods. They also learned that Jampa Lekshe was from Xisonggong, the same place where the native chieftain had earlier arrested Gonpo Chöpel and Chönjor. This evidence convinced Ji that monks from Ba Chöde Monastery had participated in the attack on Father Brieux and were colluding to obstruct his investigation. As highlighted earlier, in the past, Batang’s Commissariat Officer rarely involved himself in criminal investigations, preferring instead to allow the native chieftains and/or monastic leaders to settle local conflicts. Brieux’s murder was a different matter. Rather than turn the investigation over to Batang’s native chieftains, Ji was compelled to handle this matter himself. He reasoned, “Why didn’t I file a complaint with the native chieftain? There are a variety of details to consider. In

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Lama Phagpa Kunzang was also known as Lama Ba Ge (喇嘛八閣). He held the eighth highest position in the monastery and would play a significant role in Batang’s fifth missionary case and the death of Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet Feng Quan. See *QCBDS*, no. 0044, 60; Wu Fengpei, ed., *Zhao Erfeng Chuanbian zoudu* (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1984), 14-15; Zhou and Ran, *Zang Chuan Fojiao Siyuan Ziliao Xuanbian*, 319; and Yang, “Kangningsi jingji huodong diaocha,” 73.

general, everything is very suspicious, and now because this case involves a foreign religion, the monastery does not dare offer up anyone. I sincerely fear that if I move too quickly to seek them to hand over [the culprits], then the monastery will definitely stir up doubts and misgivings. I do not want them fomenting discord.”¹¹² In fact, Ji assumed a leading role in the investigation of Brieux’s murder by orchestrating the collection of evidence, commanding the native chieftain to act on that evidence to arrest the two *jag pa*, and conducting the interrogations together with the native chieftain. As in previous matters, Ji leaves most of the implementation details to the native chieftains, thereby maintaining at least the façade of his semi-*laissez faire* approach to frontier governance. However, there is one detail that Ji takes care of himself—confronting the leadership of Ba Chöde Monastery. As noted in Chapter Two, it was common practice for Tibetan monks to discipline their brethren for most crimes, even those committed against lay persons. It was also common practice for lay persons who had committed a crime to escape punishment from native chieftains by taking refuge in a large monastery like Ba Chöde Monastery. Ji Zhiwen was certainly aware of these practices. He also likely suspected the native chieftains alone could not successfully convince Ba Chöde senior monks to hand over any monks or lay people involved in Father Brieux’s murder that were hiding out in the monastery. Given the high profile nature of this case, Ji was under intense pressure to produce the culprits and bring them to justice. He felt he had no choice but to confront Ba Chöde Monastery and demand they turn over any suspects himself. By asserting Qing authority to demand suspects from the monastery, Ji directly challenged Batang’s traditional system of justice and the relationship between Ba Chöde Monastery and the native chieftain elite.

His superiors continued to pressure Ji Zhiwen for results, but he obviously understood circumstances on the ground much better than his colleagues in Chengdu, let alone those in

¹¹² *JJD*, vol. 4, 865-66.

Beijing. He knew that quick action on his part could easily lead to greater discontent among the monks at Ba Chöde Monastery, so he urged caution going forward. As for the military expedition into Sanyan, he stated, “it happened that just a few days earlier a heavy snow sealed off the mountain, so it is not the right time to attack the Sanyan Tibetans.”¹¹³ Noting that “the circumstances of this case are extremely serious,” Ding Baozhen and Tuo Keduan supported Ji’s measured response and urged him to work with Ba Chöde Monastery’s Lama Phagpa Kunzang to bring the accused into custody and question all the suspects so as to ensure he obtained a complete account of Brieux’s murder.¹¹⁴

Approximately forty days later, Chengdu General Qi Yuan (岐元) wrote to the Zongli Yamen informing them of the latest developments in the case based on communications received from Ji Zhiwen. He explained that expectant Department Magistrate Yang Gong (委員知州楊鞏) and Dartsedo Subprefectural Magistrate Li Zhongqing (打箭爐同知李忠清) had departed for Batang with orders to demand that Ba Chöde Monastery turn over Jampa Lekshe and others involved in Brieux’s death. To their surprise, the monastery not only continued to refuse to hand them over for questioning but “thereupon on January 4, 1882 (GX 7.11.15), several hundred monks from almost every region assembled together at that monastery and actually schemed to resist the officials and soldiers.”¹¹⁵ Sensing the precariousness of this situation, Ji Zhiwen feared that negotiating with the monastic leadership in Batang would only foment greater discord, so he reached an agreement with the *khenpo*, *ge khö*, and other important leaders of Ba Chöde Monastery to hold a meeting at a monastery in Sanba, which was located over thirty miles southeast of Batang proper. Here, everyone “was able to maintain mutual sincerity and make

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 866.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 870.

repeated proclamations, such that the *khenpo* began to understand that he was mistaken, and he wept with appreciation.”¹¹⁶ While Ji’s account of the *khenpo*’s remorse was surely exaggerated, the monastic leadership in the end agreed to turn over monks Jampa Lekshe and Sherab Gendun to Ji Zhiwen for questioning, most likely due the perceived threat that the arrival of additional Qing officials and soldiers in Batang portended.

Under orders to question the suspects and “jointly determine that nothing is concealed regarding the robbery and murder of the foreigner,” Ji Zhiwen continued to work with Ba Chöde’s monastic leadership and the native chieftains to investigate Brieux’s murder. Together, they formed a panel of judges and determined from the testimony of Xiang Tianshun (向天順),¹¹⁷ a servant of Brieux who accompanied him, that in fact “on that day [of the robbery and murder], Gonpo Chöpel had walked past the tent of the foreigner carrying a knife during the day. The other three criminals [*i.e.*, Chönjor, Jampa Lekshe, and Sherab Gendun] were traveling together with Gonpo; of this there is no doubt.”¹¹⁸ The joint panel of judges also learned through their questioning that the Sanyan bandit Gonpo Chöpel and Chöde monk Sherab Gendun were most heavily involved in this case, and they thus decided to sentence them to death. This joint hearing is extremely significant because it represents a new form of legal proceedings in Batang. As we have seen in Qian Zhaotang’s local gazetteer, former Commissariat Officers had very little influence on Batang’s judicial process and certainly no formal role in rendering legal decisions. Hearing cases was not one of their official responsibilities, and available historical evidence does not even suggest the existence of a system, formal or informal, for people to file suits or for Qing officials to investigate crimes in Batang. Justice had been left to Batang’s native

¹¹⁶ *JJD*, vol. 4, 870-71.

¹¹⁷ Note that Xiang’s name is misspelled here. His name is actually Xiang Xingshun (向興順) as cited earlier.

¹¹⁸ *JJD*, vol. 4, 871.

chieftains and monastic leadership to administer. The presence of foreign missionaries in Batang changed this arrangement, and given the gravity of Brieux's murder, Ji Zhiwen had no choice but to insert himself into the local judicial process, thereby assuming a greater share of power in Batang. Yet Ji was savvy enough to know that assuming absolute power would only sow distrust of Qing officials, so he continued his practical, semi-*laissez-faire* approach to governance by convening native chieftains and monastic leaders to interrogate the suspects in this case jointly and to render a collective decision. By all accounts, this method was successful in satisfying Qing officials and French priests and diplomats. In addition, as best we can tell the leadership of Ba Chöde Monastery and Batang's native chieftains accepted Ji's expanded authority, at least for the time being, in the interest of maintaining social order in Batang. Ji's leadership role in this criminal case extended far beyond his official responsibilities as Commissariat Officer and represents a significant extension of Qing authority in Batang.

Questions remained, however, about when and how to carry out the sentences of the now condemned culprits. Continuing his cautious approach, Ji Zhiwen explained:

If we must wait for the remaining brigands to be captured so as to carry out their punishments together, then because Batang actually does not have a jail, I fear if we delay for a long time it will obviously stick out, and not only could this lead to other issues, but among the foreigners their excuses will also certainly be delayed, thus leading to other ancillary issues. Please allow us first to carry out the execution of Gonpo Chöpel and Sherab Gendun in Batang so as to instill fear in others. As for Chönjor and Jampa Lekshe, they will be detained at once in Dartsedo for additional questioning. As soon as we have captured the remaining criminals, we will then again carry out questioning and depositions and determine their sentences.¹¹⁹

Officials in Chengdu agreed, and Gonpo Chöpel and Sherab Gendun were executed on Ji's orders. In the course of his investigation, Ji also determined that Batang's native chieftains bore some responsibility for Brieux's death because they had "the audacity to dispatch" a *gya pon* (甲

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 871.

琫)¹²⁰ from Sanyan to administer the area where Brieux was killed on their behalf. Ji argued that this “led to all sorts of collusion” between the *gya pon* and local bandits, and he therefore concluded that both the native chieftains and the *khenpo* of Ba Chöde Monastery had to share responsibility for compensating the church for their financial loss, which totaled more than 1,900 silver *liang*.

Chengdu General Qi Yuan concluded his memorial with praise for Ji Zhiwen, noting that he “handled this case safely and with the utmost speed. He even dared to get Bishop Biet to acknowledge the conclusion of the case. Even more, he was tough and reliable.”¹²¹ Other also praised Ji for his efficient handling of this case. Bishop Biet, in a letter to his colleague, wrote of his “extreme thankfulness” for Ji Zhiwen keeping things peaceful despite repeated robberies in the region.¹²² The French Minister in Beijing, moreover, wrote a letter of appreciation to the Zongli Yamen in which he thanked Qing officials for resolving this case and went on at length about the deep friendship and mutual interests shared between France and China.¹²³

Upon receipt of Ji Zhiwen’s report, Sichuan Governor-General Ding Baozhen immediately approved his recommendations, and in his subsequent memorial to the Grand Council he clearly put the blame for Brieux’s death on the Sanyan Tibetans, arguing “[Brieux’s death] is the result of lax enforcement by Batang’s two native chieftains and the *khenpo* of Ba Chöde Monastery.”¹²⁴ French M.E.P. missionaries similarly blamed the Sanyan Tibetans,

¹²⁰ This official Tibetan title is often transliterated in Chinese as *jiaben* (甲本).

¹²¹ *JJD*, vol. 4, 871.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 873.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 877.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 873.

although they saw Brieux's murder in a more conspiratorial light. Bishop Biet, for example, noted:

In the last twenty years we often met the Tibetan looters of Sanyan, but they never robbed or attacked us. I should add that the lamas of Lhasa forced us two years ago to withdraw [from Mangli]...so they resolved to send these looters against us. In the absence of any evidence, I would limit myself to this insinuation, but now the facts are clear. The murder of Father Brieux is not a simple accident on the road. A conspiracy was hatched in advance, and I do not hesitate to believe that our dear Brother shed his blood for his religion and that his killers were bribed by the lamas who have sworn our destruction, not because we are foreigners, but because we preach a religion that is not Buddhism. In the last year two edicts have been published from Lhasa that are against us. The murder of Father Brieux is the result of these edicts.¹²⁵

In response, Ji Zhiwen had no choice but to determine some form of punishment for the monastery and native chieftains. In addition to holding both parties financially responsible for compensating the French for their losses, Ji recommended that the native chieftains be demoted by losing the right to wear a feather, a privilege previously granted to their predecessors by the Qing court. Such punitive actions against Batang's traditional power holders, while minor, represent a further assertion of power by Qing officials. As for the monastery, Ji did not indicate any additional punishment.

At the same time, the Sichuan Governor-General knew that not all of the Sanyan bandits had been captured and brought to justice, so he began to reassert pressure on Ji Zhiwen to capture the remaining bandits. As we've seen above, however, both the Qing court and the Dalai Lama struggled to assert their sovereignty over Batang's western territories, and violence, theft, and murder were nothing new in Sanyan. Despite the Guangxu Emperor ordering "civil and military officials of the region to diligently capture, arrest, and severely punish [the criminals]," following the ambush of Assistant High Commissioner Wei Qing by Sanyan bandits in 1879,

¹²⁵ M.E.P. Archives, "Jean-Baptiste Brieux (1845-1881)," no. 1379.

local officials had made little progress.¹²⁶ Lord Shakya and his retinue, sent by Lhasa officials to prevent foreigners from entering Tibet via Batang, were also robbed by Sanyan residents in the same year. Then Sanyan bandits killed Father Brieux in 1881. In a span of less than two years Sanyan bandits attacked three different retinues—a senior Qing official, a senior Tibetan official, and a foreign priest, thereby proving Sanyan’s reputation as a place that was “fierce and uncontrollable to the extreme” was well-earned.¹²⁷

Although Ji Zhiwen had earned accolades from his superiors and the French for his performance in catching the ringleaders of the robbery and murder of Brieux, it took him some time to convince Ding Baozhen and Tuo Keduan that immediate pursuit of the remaining bandits who had escaped was not feasible. He initially cited the winter, which had closed off most of the passes between Batang and Sanyan, and then the fact that the French were satisfied with their progress on the case, as sufficient reasons to delay a punitive expedition into Sanyan. However, not understanding Batang’s local circumstances, Ding and Tuo demanded that he proceed immediately: “Within twenty days you must come up with a way to offer rewards and not waste any time to investigate and capture [the remaining bandits]. You must get them and report back. If you do not get them by the deadline, then you will be severely reprimanded. You must infiltrate the bandit’s lair, diligently capture and arrest them, and report back.... You must take care of your own results and under no circumstances use these excuses to delay.” Further evincing his ability to craft imperial policies to match local circumstances, Ji Zhiwen continued to petition his colleagues in Dartsedo to delay military action against Sanyan until the appropriate time. Only after Yang Gong and Li Zhongqing, his colleagues from Dartsedo,

¹²⁶ *QSL*, GX 6.11, juan 124.

¹²⁷ *JJD*, vol. 4, 884.

reiterated Ji Zhiwen's reasoning did Ding and Tuo in Chengdu relent and allow him to wait until spring to advance.¹²⁸

While Ji Zhiwen made preparations for a spring assault and surveyed areas surrounding Sanyan from the east, Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet Wei Qing, still resentful for being attacked en route to his post two years earlier, sent an expedition of Tibetan and Han soldiers to Sanyan from the west. Although Wei Qing seems to have taken action without coordinating with Qing officials in Batang, Ji recognized the opportunity, and he accelerated his planning. When envoys from upper and middle Sanyan came to him "begging for assistance,"¹²⁹ Ji knew the tables were turning in his favor. Taking advantage of Sanyan's weakness, Ji Zhiwen quickly had notices prepared in Tibetan and Chinese and sent them out with Tibetans who were familiar with the Sanyan region to distribute to the local people in hopes of encouraging them not to listen to those inciting trouble and to act responsibly. As a result, "the people of Upper and Middle Yanda [Sanyan] had fear in their breasts and didn't dare assist in the evil doings."¹³⁰ Soon thereafter, he attacked Eastern Yanda and, despite confronting a crowd of 900, dispersed them with only minor loss of life. Realizing the difficulty of a prolonged confrontation, Wang Gen (汪根), a well-respected lama from Sanyan's largest monastery, Cana Monastery (擦納寺), offered to surrender voluntarily and requested forgiveness on behalf of the people in the region. However, Ji Zhiwen pressed his advantage and temporarily put him off. Rooting out the leaders who had instigated numerous cases of banditry in this unforgiving region with impunity since the time of the Qianlong Emperor, Ji even went so far as "to investigate clearly the non-law abiding families, completely burn down their homes, and divide up their fields for the peaceful Tibetans" in the

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 869-71.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 885.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

village of Zida (紫打).¹³¹ Residents of neighboring villages quickly surrendered to avoid a similar fate. Not long thereafter, Ji identified two additional bandits involved in Brieux's murder that were soon turned over to him by the people of Sanyan's Zongba (宗巴) region. These two bandits violently resisted their arrest, however, and died before they could reach Batang. Ji Zhiwen nevertheless "took their heads to show the church and had them displayed on poles beside the river as a clear warning."¹³² He also obtained the confession of another bandit who participated in the raid on Wei Qing's delegation.

Ji Zhiwen's successful criminal investigation was due largely to his own initiative to pursue the various culprits involved. In so doing, Ji increased Qing imperial power in Batang. However, he would not have accomplished as much as he did without the cooperation of the native chieftains and monastic leaders. Therefore, while Ji's authority among Batang's power holders increased significantly, he understood the efficacy of his semi-*laissez-faire* approach to frontier governance and attempted to maintain it.

Ji Zhiwen followed up his criminal investigation with a series of administrative reforms that further demonstrate his practical approach to conflict resolution. For example, working through the two native chieftains and Wang Gen, the conciliatory lama of Cana Monastery, Ji instituted an innovative system to ensure peace remained in Sanyan whereby the headman of each Sanyan tribe provided a hostage to reside in Batang. Describing Ji's system, Ding Baozhen wrote:

If in the future there is even the slightest hint of robbery on the main road, he [Ji Zhiwen] will investigate which tribe of *jag pa* it is and then question that tribe's hostage. Whether or not the hostage is reliable will rest on a written guarantee from the Cana Lama. These

¹³¹ *Ibid.*; and Liu Zanting. *Minguo Wucheng xianzhi*, in *Zhongguo difang zhi jicheng Xizang fuxian zhi ji*, eds. Huang Yunsheng and Huang Xiaoshi (Chengdu: Bashu chubanshe, 1995), 151-152.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 885-86.

Tibetans were afraid of being attacked and captured, so in general they asked to surrender one after the other and sent a hostage....

Each of the tribes that returned their allegiance has promised to come up with ways to capture and turn over the criminals [involved in the cases of Father Brioux and Assistant High Commissioner Wei Qing], so they must first send a hostage to Batang. After they have captured and turned over the *jag pa*, we will then make an exchange. Upon learning this, the Sanyan Tibetans showed their gratitude and became virtuous. Passage on the main road is smooth.¹³³

Ji also worked with head native chieftain Lobsang Wangdu to replace numerous headmen with “*gutsa* carefully selected from notable families who had the power to patrol and defend” so as to avoid further collusion between local Tibetan administrators and bandits.¹³⁴ He also had the native chieftain create a register to record the names of all the new headmen. If in the future a hostage were to escape, then this register would also record whether or not the new headman had colluded with him. Most significant, Ji impressed upon the native chieftains that Sanyan now fell under Batang’s jurisdiction and that they were therefore responsible for maintaining order there. As a show of combined force, Ji and native chieftain Lobsang Wangdu led a punitive expedition to Xisonggong, the Sanyan home of Father Brioux’s assailants, where they burned down the homes of two local leaders “to prevent the evildoers from having any support.”¹³⁵ At the time, it seemed that the Qing had effectively established its sovereignty over Sanyan, although this would not be the last time Qing soldiers fought there. Again lavishing praise on Ji Zhiwen, Sichuan Governor-General Ding Baozhen summarized Batang’s third missionary case in his final memorial dated March 31, 1883 (GX 9.2.23):

The Batang native chieftains did not exert themselves, and they let the borderland headmen deceive them into colluding together. This gradually led to banditry, deviancy, and the fomenting of numerous incidents. This time, we sent troops to exterminate them,

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 886.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 907.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

and the Commissariat Officer Ji Zhiwen and his soldiers were able to clear out the dens, capture the leaders, and have the various tribes return their allegiance to us. He had them send hostages, and the main road is smooth and clear. He also secured a written agreement from the native chieftain to forever protect the main road. The scourge of Sanyan can be forever removed. The priests of the church and the monks and lay people of the monastery have each agreed in writing to co-exist in peace and harmony. Foreign religion can be peaceful in the long-term. He has truly taken care of matters satisfactorily.¹³⁶

Ji Zhiwen's actions in Batang and Sanyan following the murder of Father Brioux are yet more examples of Qing officials inserting themselves into traditional frontier governance. The murder of a foreign national brought Batang into the international spotlight yet again as imperial officials in Beijing pressed provincial and local officials to search out the culprits and bring them to justice. In addition to raising Batang's profile, Brioux's murder provided Ji Zhiwen an opportunity to exert greater imperial power in Batang. Through his criminal investigation into Father Brioux's murder, his punitive expedition against the Sanyan brigands, and his subsequent administrative reforms in the region to confirm Qing sovereignty over Batang's western territories, Ji continued to mold imperial orders into practical solutions to meet local circumstances. By both initiating change and working with Batang's native chieftains and monastic leaders, he began to transform the semi-*laissez faire* approach to frontier management with more assertive and hands-on methods that inadvertently weakened the power of the native chieftains and, in the eyes of Batang's monks, more closely aligned the Qing Commissariat with foreign missionaries. Ji Zhiwen's actions in this missionary case represent another significant step along Batang's path of incorporation into the Qing Empire.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 908.

Batang's Fourth Missionary Case

Following Ji Zhiwen's handling of Father Brieux's murder and his work to improve relations between M.E.P. missionaries and the local community, tensions noticeably eased for a brief period in Batang. In his 1884 annual report to Paris, Bishop Biet described how Fathers Biet and Couroux¹³⁷ were unsuspectingly accosted by an escort of a high ranking Mongolian lama passing through Batang because they did not dismount from their horses per Chinese custom when they encountered him on the street. Evincing a tolerance and understanding of the French perhaps unique to the Tibetan plateau, the *khenpo* of Ba Chöde Monastery and eight other Batang headmen went to the lama and explained the situation on behalf of the French missionaries. "Since this time, Tibetans and Chinese have seemed to approach us more often. The *debas* still persevere in their good provisions, and the lamas are less wild and greet us rather readily, especially when they are alone."¹³⁸ While conflicts could and did arrive quickly and without notice, relations between the missionaries and local people in Batang were at times peaceful.

Nevertheless, only a few years passed before another wave of anti-missionary violence swept over Batang. As with the first major missionary case, Qing officials in Beijing learned about Batang's fourth case involving French M.E.P. missionaries not from local or provincial officials but from French diplomats. Also like the first case, this incident involved the destruction of Batang's three churches and the expulsion of the priests. Unlike the first case, however, the resolution of this case dragged on for well over a decade, during which time Qing officials prevented French missionaries from returning to Batang. What the French saw as Qing intransigence compelled them to launch a diplomatic campaign that reveals much about Batang's

¹³⁷ Father Marie Bénigne Couroux (白義思) took up his position in Batang in 1880.

¹³⁸ Félix Biet, *Rapport annuel des évêques, n° 278: Mission du Thibet* (1884), M.E.P. Archives.

role in the Great Game on the Tibetan plateau between Britain, France, and Russia. Batang's fourth missionary case also demonstrates that as Qing officials continued to expand their authority in Batang, boundaries between local power holders hardened and Qing officials became increasingly isolated.

The first document to mention this particular incident is a diplomatic note from French Minister in Beijing Fernand Arthur Souhart (蘇阿爾) to the Zongli Yamen. Dated October 8, 1887 (GX 13.8.22), approximately three months after the unrest began, he wrote:

Recently I received a report from Bishop Biet of the western Sichuan diocese, which includes Dartsedo and Batang. He stated that the churches in Batang and surrounding areas have suffered damage, and the situation is extremely worrisome.... On July 20 (GX 13.5.30), they suddenly encountered people from outside of Batang who had received bribes from Tibetan lamas. They directly attacked the churches in the area and burned them down. Our priests had gone in advance to the local officials to explain the situation clearly, but this time even though they were there in person, the officials still did not exert their power and simply folded their arms and stood by watching. After the churches were burnt down and plundered, they still did not try to capture the brigands or punish them.

I received a follow-on letter from this place that said after the churches in Batang, as well as the fields and buildings around them, were completely burnt down, all the members of the church were driven out beyond the borders of the region. Their fields, homes, livestock, and clothing were all divided up such that nothing remained. The coffins of missionary Brioux, who was killed previously in 1881 (GX 7), and seven other church members were dug up by the brigands, and their corpses were drowned in the river. That the situation has progressed to the point where the brigands now live on the same land [formerly owned by] the church members indicates that they have returned to their old ways.¹³⁹

After requesting that Sichuan authorities develop plans to protect their missionaries, punish the brigands, compensate them for their losses, and allow the priests who had fled to Dartsedo to return to Batang, the French Minister outlined what he determined were the causes of this unrest, which had actually spread south into Yunnan, reaching as far as Cizhong, Weixi, and Adunzi, where M.E.P. churches were also destroyed and their missionaries forced to flee. He wrote that

¹³⁹ *JJD*, vol. 5, 1419.

in addition to an incompetent Qing official in Batang, “Bishop Biet has a clue for the reasons behind this incident, which is that lamas from Lhasa are leaders, and they incited the people from outside Batang to burn down the churches. If your investigations prove this to be true, then I pray that your office informs the High Commissioner in Tibet, who is responsible for administering the territory, that henceforth no lamas are permitted to send people across the border into China’s Sichuan Province to attack Catholic priests or burn down and rob our churches.”¹⁴⁰

Complicating analysis of the root causes of this incident, the only other extant document describing the beginnings of this case is Bishop Biet’s annual report to Paris. Echoing Minister Souhart, Biet described this incident as a plot by Lhasa monks to drive out French missionaries and eradicate their organization, which the monks thought threatened to undermine their spiritual and economic domination of the local populace. He speculated that the Lhasa government had felt encouraged by its perceived success in halting Colman Macaulay, Financial Secretary to the Government of Bengal in India, from leading a delegation to Lhasa in 1885, and thus once again renewed their call for monasteries throughout Tibetan areas to eradicate all foreign influence.¹⁴¹ Biet also complained about the “cowardly and inept” Chinese Commissariat Officer Zhou Dashang,¹⁴² who had returned to Batang for a second tour after twenty years, as exacerbating the situation. Not insignificantly, Biet also pointed out that before deciding to flee the increasing violence and looting by monks and lay persons in Batang, Fathers Giraudeau and Soulié took

¹⁴⁰ *JJD*, vol. 5, 1419.

¹⁴¹ See Colman Macaulay, *Report of a Mission to Sikkim and the Tibetan Frontier: With a Memorandum on our Relations with Tibet* (N.p.: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1885).

¹⁴² Commissariat Officer Zhou was away from Batang when the first major missionary case occurred, resulting in the complete burning down of the French missionary compound in 1873.

temporary refuge in the residence of Batang's deputy native chieftain.¹⁴³ This would not be the last time French missionaries sought the protection of Batang's native chieftains.

Soon after receiving the diplomatic note from the French Minister, Zongli Yamen officials wrote to Sichuan Governor-General Liu Bingzhang (劉秉璋) asking him to verify and investigate the current situation in Batang.¹⁴⁴ Because the French Minister accused lamas in Lhasa of instigating the violence in Batang, the Zongli Yamen also informed Wen Shuo (文碩), High Commissioner to Tibet, of this incident. Responding to the Zongli Yamen from Lhasa, Wen vehemently denied the involvement of monks from Lhasa, arguing:

When the preliminary news came saying that the Batang missionary case of this year had to have been caused by [Lhasa] Tibetans, I still could not sincerely believe it. Although there is vague information that Bishop Biet has learned, this is hearsay that has passed through many hands. How can this kind of thinking and rumor be considered sufficiently reliable?

If we are to speak of such rumors, then between September and October of this year [1887] there were rumors in central Tibet that the churches in Batang had been destroyed in a feud because the priests liked to search for treasures in the ground. They were always arbitrarily digging everywhere, and the local people feared that they were harming the natural order (風水). They already complained and urged them to stop numerous times, but the priests didn't listen to them. For this reason, the situation changed. So fault lies with the French. Therefore, how can we rely on these words of hearsay?¹⁴⁵

Wen's logic is sound, but subsequent communications from Batang frequently cited the involvement of outside people in the unrest. Moreover, given the coordinated nature of the anti-missionary violence that occurred almost simultaneously across a broad geographic area, not to mention the fact that Lhasa monks had previously issued several calls for Tibetans to expel

¹⁴³ Félix Biet, *Rapport annuel des évêques: Mission du Thibet* (1887), M.E.P. Archives. See also *JJD*, vol. 6, 1333; and Lamb, *Tibet, China & India, 1914-1950*, 4.

¹⁴⁴ *JJD*, vol. 5, 1420.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1421. Scholars generally agree Tibetans followed a set of practices and beliefs very similar to Chinese *fengshui*, although the origins of the Tibetan system are unknown. As for precisely what kind of digging the French were doing, we can only speculate that Father Jean Andre Soulié (蘇烈), who had recently arrived in Batang, was collecting plant samples around the valley. He would later publish several articles on the flora of eastern Tibet.

foreigners from the plateau, it is difficult to imagine Lhasa not being involved in this missionary case.

Although it seems that the High Commissioner to Tibet was out of touch with Lhasa decision makers, Wen Shuo does offer unique insight into Tibetan perspectives on foreigners and growing concerns about their intentions in Tibet. Alluding to the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1886 that opened Tibet to trade with India, Wen pointed out:

Recently, the British have made numerous attempts to open up trade, and because of this they [Tibetans and British] are becoming increasingly incompatible. The Tibetans think the British are scheming at every opportunity to use China's authority to coerce and threaten them, but their restraint runs deep. Tibetans foolishly think foreigners are all the same, so we can say that initially they were not clear about who is British and who is French....

At present the Tibetans and British are diametrically opposed. Perhaps it is possible to consider this case to have been incited by [central] Tibetans, but during the Tongzhi reign Batang already had a missionary case. At that time, Tibetans and British had no quarrels, so can we also say that [central] Tibetans caused the incident? In addition, since the beginning of the Tongzhi reign, missionary cases in every province are numerous. Can all be said to have been caused by [central] Tibetans? If we blame Tibetans this way, then Tibetans will have reason to pass the blame on to someone else.¹⁴⁶

Wen went on to question the motives of Bishop Biet, suggesting that there were “villainous people in the interior regions that are plotting affairs,” and that Biet might be one such foreigner.¹⁴⁷ In his conclusion, Wen again dismissed Biet's accusation that Lhasa monks were behind the unrest in Batang and refused to make any inquiries with the central Tibetan government about it. It is likely that Wen's lack of action with central Tibetan authorities further emboldened anti-foreign elements in Lhasa to continue their anti-missionary activities along the borders.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

An important distinguishing characteristic of this missionary case is the diplomatic attention the French dedicated to it during the long time it remained open. Immediately following Minister Souhart's note, they began to press the Zongli Yamen for results, particularly a timetable for when their missionaries could return to their posts in Sichuan and Yunnan. Freedom of movement for missionaries, they reminded Qing officials, was guaranteed by the Treaty of Tianjin. The Zongli Yamen, however, did little more than pass on French concerns to Sichuan officials and urged them to settle the case quickly.¹⁴⁸ After further investigation, Sichuan officials responded that new Commissariat Officer, Han Qinggui (韓清桂), had informed them that his predecessor at the time of the incident, Zhou Dashang, whom Bishop Biet partially blamed for the violence, did not complete his investigation. Wanting to please his superiors, Han stated that he was still looking into matters and had already dispatched local officials and soldiers to search for Father Bourdonnec,¹⁴⁹ who had disappeared after the violence began. He later showed up in Dartsedo. Pending the completion of his investigation, Han also stressed to Sichuan officials not to allow the missionaries to return to Batang given continued local opposition.¹⁵⁰

Confronted with what he saw to be bureaucratic stalling and imperial red tape, Father Couroux decided to take matters into his own hands. Nearly four years after being expelled, Father Couroux, citing concerns about his congregation, secretly departed Dartsedo for Yanjing via Yunnan. Upon arrival, he wrote that he received "the best possible reception everywhere, with local headmen, subprefects, some lamas, and even the head of the Ramda lamasery coming

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1422.

¹⁴⁹ Based in Yanjing, Father Pierre Marie Bourdonnec (蒲德元) had arrived there in 1880.

¹⁵⁰ *JJD*, vol. 5, 1429.

to wish me welcome and offer me presents.”¹⁵¹ Not wanting to appear discourteous, Couroux wrote to the Batang Commissariat Officer shortly after his arrival, noting that while new incumbent Wang Jiarong (王家容) was “astonished” at his presence in Yanjing, he did not cause any difficulties for him once there.¹⁵² Couroux also pointed out that the Batang native chieftains were even more courteous than before and published an edict demanding that no one cause harm to the missionaries and their congregation on punishment from the native chieftains themselves.¹⁵³

Reporting to Sichuan Governor-General Liu Bingzhang, Wang in fact was shocked to learn that Couroux had returned to Yanjing, and he immediately “ordered the head and deputy native chieftains to protect him and commanded the intendant interpreters to convince the Tibetans not to create another disturbance in the hopes that the Tibetans and foreigners can be at peace.”¹⁵⁴ Like his predecessor Ji Zhiwen, Wang adopted a semi-*laissez faire* approach to frontier governance. He knew he lacked sufficient Qing resources to protect Couroux himself, so he worked aggressively through the native chieftains to achieve his goals. Evidence suggests the native chieftains continued to cooperate. Not surprisingly, Couroux’s bold decision to return to Yanjing against imperial wishes fueled speculation among Qing officials regarding French motives in the region, just as High Commissioner to Tibet Wen Shuo had intimated. At the same

¹⁵¹ Félix Biet, *Rapport annuel des évêques, n ° 415: Mission du Thibet* (1891), M.E.P. Archives.

¹⁵² Rockhill noted that Wang had a poor reputation. Traveling through Batang in 1891, he wrote, “The soldiers tell me the Liang-t’ai [Wang] is a blackguard and treats them all very badly. I fancy this is true. I have been hearing of him ever since I came on the highroad; he is the man who pays the soldiers in tea, fixing its value at twice what it is worth here, and dividing the profits of his rascality with the Commissary General at Ta-chien-lu.” Little else is known about Wang Jiarong. William Woodville Rockhill, *Diary of a Journey Through Mongolia and Thibet in 1891 and 1892* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1894), 345-46.

¹⁵³ Biet, *Rapport annuel des évêques, n ° 415*.

¹⁵⁴ *JJD*, vol. 5, 1501-02, as quoted in Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shilüe*, 167.

time, Couroux's seemingly warm reception provided additional evidence for the French that their other missionaries should be allowed to return to Batang.

While he begrudgingly accepted Couroux's presence in Yanjing, Wang also highlighted both local and international reasons why it was imperative that other missionaries not be allowed to return to Batang in his report, arguing:

Tibetans favor Buddhism, while foreigners worship Catholicism. The two are as incompatible as ice and charcoal. They are completely different. Moreover, as for why this case of the burnt down churches has not been resolved, besides the Tibetan disposition being like dogs and goats, they are extremely anxious and especially difficult to predict. . . . As for the atmosphere in this Tibetan area, families have many sons. One son is kept to maintain the family line, and the remaining become lamas. In this way they follow Buddhism.

In addition, they are naturally very suspicious. As soon as a foreigner lifts a finger, they all think he has broken a Buddhist tenet. They will first disseminate anonymous notices, and then they will continue by gathering together groups of people who fear not a thing. We local officials use grace to explain things, but they are unable to follow us. If they demonstrate and obstruct us, I again fear things will turn contentious. Moreover, our country is in the midst of many affairs, who would dare to act on their own and create a border provocation? For these reasons, the more the Tibetans are recalcitrant, the more taking care of business is impeded.¹⁵⁵

Sichuan Governor-General Liu Bingzhang and Chengdu General Qi Yuan fully endorsed Wang's actions and his recommendation that the missionaries not be allowed to return to Batang in their report to the Zongli Yamen, but officials there offered little support, pointing out that Couroux's travel documents remained valid and that the treaty allowed them access to Batang.

Doing his best to satisfy the Zongli Yamen demands for action on Batang's latest missionary case, Liu Bingzhang proposed two reasons why four years after the destruction of the three churches in Batang local officials had not made significant progress. First, he reminded Beijing that although Batang was under Sichuan's jurisdiction, its residents were all Tibetans, and "everyone who controls the Tibetans is a lama." Lamas and Tibetans, moreover, were so

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

distinct from inland Chinese that “even the characters of their dogs and goats are different.” Because they were so different, Liu argued, they “they persistently do not listen to [official requests to allow] the foreigners to rebuild their churches, therefore circumstances make it difficult to allow the priests and their congregations to return.” While Liu’s reasoning up to this point offers at best a thin explanation for lack of progress on resolving this case, the second half of his report is much more telling. Liu makes it very clear that, in his opinion, the French were seeking too much in compensation and “arbitrarily making threats” that made it difficult for him to manage. As a result, he explained, “We had no choice but to postpone slightly working on it [the case] so as to avoid them [the French] greatly exaggerating their demands.”¹⁵⁶ In short, Liu was intentionally dragging his feet.

Despite Qing officials at all levels effectively barring the missionaries from returning to their churches, the French continued to demand access to return to Batang, Yanjing, and Yarigang, where “local officials would protect them according to the treaty,”¹⁵⁷ even though they knew very well that Tibetans still opposed their presence. In typical bureaucratic fashion, the Zongli Yamen continued to offer platitudes to the French while pressing Sichuan Governor-General Liu to resolve this case as soon as possible.¹⁵⁸ In a note to French Minister Auguste Gérard (旋阿蘭), the Zongli Yamen commented, “As for the matter of the missionaries still returning to the locations of their original churches, the sentiment of the local people is unwilling [to accept this], and it is difficult to force the situation. If the missionaries insist they want to go forward, supposing the situation is irregular, local officials will certainly have difficulty protecting them. We must request that your Highness inform Bishop Biet that he cannot allow

¹⁵⁶ *JJD*, vol. 5, 1506.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1728.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1566.

them to go forward so as to avoid additional disturbances.”¹⁵⁹ Minister Gérard quickly responded by pointing out that all the missionaries have valid passports stamped by Chinese officials, as required by Article 13 of the treaty, so they should be allowed to proceed and have the full protection of local officials.¹⁶⁰ The French continued to demand the Chinese fulfill their treaty obligations and allow their missionaries to return to Batang.¹⁶¹

While French frustrations increased with each response from the Zongli Yamen, the situation in Batang remained tense. In 1896 (GX 21), eight years after the initial incident, Batang Commissariat Officer Chen Pu (陳溥) reported to Chengdu General Gong Shou (成都將軍恭壽) on recent significant developments in his attempts to negotiate the return of the missionaries. Meeting together with the native chieftains and *khenpo* of Ba Chöde Monastery, Chen informed them that the missionary case was now closed, that compensation had already been made, and that he would no longer investigate the burning down of the churches. However, when he told them that the missionaries would be returning to their original churches and that he expected them as leaders in Batang to do their best to protect them, “all the lamas were completely silent and seemed to hold an impregnable resolve. The native chieftains used their anger and offensiveness to make excuses. I tried to convince them repeatedly, but they unanimously stated that deliberations, requests, and deciding how to act [were necessary], and then the meeting broke up. Subsequently, the head and deputy native chieftains, the *khenpo*, and the lamas submitted a document under their names. It is my opinion that these Tibetans already have

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1730-31.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1731-32.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1733-34.

formed a blood oath, and that they have done so voluntarily.”¹⁶² Chen forwarded a copy of their petition.

Documents written in the voice of Batang’s native chieftains and *khenpo* are extremely rare and offer valuable insight into the thinking of Batang’s power holders in the late nineteenth century. Head native chieftain Tashi Jetsun (Bkra shis Lce btsun, 扎西吉村),¹⁶³ deputy native chieftain Jampa Jetsun, and *khenpo* of Ba Chöde Monastery Yonten Chöpel (Yon tan Chos ‘phel, 雲登群批) began their petition to Batang Commissariat Officer Chen Pu by admitting their leadership role in the anti-missionary activities of the last decade. Describing those activities, they wrote, “We, the humble native chieftains and *khenpo*, at once in accordance with our joint discussions gathered together all the headmen and gave them notice. At that time, these headmen...swore a blood oath to burn down those churches. Later, if foreign missionaries were to come again, we would be willing to kill them, and each of us would escape on our own. If anyone would allow them to stay, we would eradicate his entire family.”¹⁶⁴

This admission represents a key turning point in the relationships among Batang’s power holders. Heretofore, Batang’s Commissariat Officer had no reason to doubt the allegiance of the two native chieftains. While native chieftains might not have always performed efficiently, Commissariat Officers were able to implement imperial policy by working through them under the flexible, semi-*laissez-faire* arrangement discussed earlier. However, by continuing to antagonize local monks over a series of years, the missionaries had effectively driven a wedge between the native chieftains and the Qing officials, thereby pushing the native chieftains, who at times in the past served as an important counterbalance to Batang’s monastic leaders, closer to

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 1772.

¹⁶³ Head native chieftain Tashi Jetsun was also known by his Chinese name, Luo Jinbao (羅進寶).

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

Ba Chöde Monastery. As Commissariat Officers took on greater responsibilities to protect and defend the French missionaries, they gradually increased their power at the expense of the native chieftains, and the counterbalance they offered began to deteriorate. Knowing that their own power rested largely on the wealth provided to them by the tenant residents of their estates, most of whom were devout Buddhists and thus subject to the influence of Ba Chöde Monastery, Batang's native chieftains therefore began to align their interests more closely with Ba Chöde Monastery's leaders. In so doing, they put themselves in opposition to Qing officials, who remained bound by the Treaty of Tianjin to ensure the protection of foreign missionaries throughout the empire.

After admitting their support for driving the missionaries out of Batang, the native chieftains and *khenpo* went into greater detail about their specific grievances against the French, arguing that “in the past the activity of foreigners in Batang was treacherous and refractory, and this caused droughts several years in a row, our crops to fail, and plague to spread through our livestock. Our gods were mutually envious and heaven and earth had not been forgiving... [but] after they [the churches] were destroyed, annual harvests have been slightly better.”¹⁶⁵ They also highlighted the burdens of corvée labor, stating “We think that most of the people [of Batang] are corvée laborers, and their difficulties are already extreme. The corvée duties between transit stations are incessant, and the people are often exhausted by corvée transport. Now if we press them, we sincerely believe it will be difficult to erase their grievances.... We, the native chieftains and *khenpo*, think that the enmity of the people must be investigated and that it is difficult to say their anger is a crime. This is the actual state of affairs.”¹⁶⁶ A common theme echoed in the past by many others, including former Commissariat Officers Qian Zhaotang and

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1773.

Ji Zhiwen, concerns about corvée in Kham continued to vex Qing officials well into the twentieth century.

Most relevant to the Qing court's continuing negotiations with the French, Batang's native chieftains and *khenpo* explicitly stated their intentions regarding the possible return of French missionaries to Batang:

Most recently we heard that the foreigners will be returning to their original churches. We would rather fight with them to the death and absolutely cannot allow this.... We heard that the august Emperor, whose graciousness is taller than the sky and richer than the earth, compensated them [the French] 20,000 silver *liang*, but [they think] this is still insufficient. It is like they possess malicious designs, abruptly wanting to return to their original churches. We can see their serpent-like intentions, their wolf-like character, their tricks and multiple schemes. On the surface they are proselytizing, but secretly they are doing depraved things. In fact they are damaging our customs. We are intensely angry, and if we do not do away with them soon, they will truly do great harm to the region.

We Tibetans think [the missionaries] will certainly come, and we earnestly request our superiors to block them. If you are able to prevent them from settling down, all our people will be deeply obliged. If you are not able to stop them, supposing even one person [missionary] has selfish intentions, then he will bring great calamity upon the masses, and the situation will be such that we might escape to places far away. How can the great Emperor allow foreign missionaries to proselytize here while some insignificant people like us perform corvée labor? We will only listen to your commands, but we swear to no other that we will die before we rest [keeping the foreigners out].

When we, the native chieftains and *khenpo*, heard the emotional words [of the people], we resolutely swore a pact. In fact, we have a very awkward predicament. If we force them, then we will certainly foment great calamity. In fact, we cannot take responsibility for this.... As for the foreign missionaries imploring to come, if they suddenly encounter something unexpected, and if by chance a life is injured, who will accept the blame? We truly cannot offer protection. Give the matter careful thought.

We are including here a translation of the original document, begging that you high civil and military officials make a decision based on the merits of the case and report to your superiors that they be blocked.¹⁶⁷

The resolution of Batang's traditional leaders is clear. They had fought in the past to expel the missionaries, and they were willing to do so again to keep them from returning. At the same time, they twice threatened to flee the region and resettle elsewhere if missionaries were allowed to

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1773-74.

return. Tibet in fact has a long history of disenfranchised people avoiding hardship by simply escaping from their current situation.¹⁶⁸ In this particular context, Batang's traditional power holders were implicitly threatening to undermine the Commissariat's tax base by migrating elsewhere.

Hoping to reach a compromise that would satisfy both the people of Batang and the French, Chen Pu included with the petition from the native chieftains and *khenpo* a proposal whereby: 1) the Batang church would be permanently closed and its missionaries would continue to reside in Dartsedo; 2) priests would delay their return to Yarigang until an appropriate time; and 3) the Yanjing church would stay open with local officials continuing to provide protection to the best of their ability.¹⁶⁹ Upon receiving the proposal, the French found it difficult to believe that Qing officials were still stalling, almost nine years since the initial incident. Their Minister even pointed out, "Sichuan authorities and the Commissariat Officer both said that the Yanjing missionaries are living in peace and quiet with the local people. However, Yanjing lies furthest west and is very close to the Tibetan border. On what reasoning can you impede them from returning to Batang and Yarigang?"¹⁷⁰ Trying to move matters forward, the Minister stated that he had recently learned that Ji Zhiwen, the Batang Commissariat Officer at the time of the previous two missionary cases, was residing in Chengdu. Noting that the local native chieftains and *khenpo* were sincerely grateful to Ji Zhiwen, the Minister was confident that Ji Zhiwen could arrange for the safety of the missionaries in Batang and Yarigang, thereby allowing Qing

¹⁶⁸ See Melvyn C. Goldstein, "Serfdom and Mobility: An Examination of the Institution of 'Human Lease' in Traditional Tibetan Society," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 30, no. 3(1971): 521-534; Melvyn C. Goldstein, "Reexamining Choice, Dependency and Command in the Tibetan Social System: 'Tax Appendages' and Other Landless Serfs," *The Tibet Journal* XI, No.4 (1986): 79-113; and William M. Coleman IV, "Writing Tibetan History: The Discourses of Feudalism and Serfdom in Chinese and Western Historiography" (M.A. thesis, University of Hawai'i, 1998).

¹⁶⁹ *JJD*, vol. 5, 1776-77.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1779.

officials to fulfill their treaty obligations, and he requested provincial officials consult with him.¹⁷¹ Before the Zongli Yamen had a chance to respond, they received a memorial from newly arrived Sichuan Governor-General Lu Chuanlin (鹿傳霖) that offered a glimmer of hope for the missionaries.

Dated March 19, 1896 (GX 22.2.6), Lu pointed out that Batang Commissariat Officer Chen Pu recently informed him that at present the missionaries “can be allowed to proceed to Yarigang. It is only Batang where the Tibetan sentiment is tyrannical, proud, and stubbornly resolute. I have tried to convince them numerous times, but they would die before following my orders.”¹⁷² Lu Chuanlin continued, “Chen Pu intends to go to Dartsedo to discuss and try to reach agreement with them [the French] in person. If they agree only to go to Yarigang and not to go to Batang, then we will obtain a written note saying such, and also that we will protect their movements. Otherwise, I fear as soon as they arrive in Yarigang, they will want to go to Batang.”¹⁷³

Whether because of the rumors that the missionaries would return to Yarigang or other reasons, the situation in Batang worsened in late 1896. The deteriorating situation was reflected first in Commissariat Officer Chen Pu’s relationship with the native chieftains and lamas. Chen noted, for example, that “when I personally went to see them, they slammed their doors and wouldn’t receive me. When they would come [to see me], they would just say a few words, and as soon as we started arguing they would leave.”¹⁷⁴ But the ill-will towards the Commissariat did

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1779-80.

¹⁷² *JJD*, vol. 6, 1207.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1223.

not stop at mere rudeness. In a memorial to the Zongli Yamen dated November 15, 1896 (GX 22.10.11), Sichuan Governor-General Lu Chuanlin quoted Chen Pu:

On the evening of June 28 (GX 22.5.18), the Tibetans again gathered a large number of people who shouted out loudly in unison. They surrounded my compound and attacked. Wild stones were flying horizontally and bullets fell like rain for over an hour. Commander Wu Yizhong (都司吳以忠) heard the news, and when he brought troops the Tibetan masses started to disperse and leave. Looking at the outside of the main gate, everything has been broken. Fortunately, no one was injured.

I inquired with the native chieftains, who said this was caused by my pressing the missionary case. The next day, the mountain passes were closed [because of snow], so it seemed that several hundred people could not disperse. Again the native chieftains persuaded them numerous times, and they began to disband and leave. It seems that the missionaries do not know this situation. If we do not clearly warn the missionaries about rashly going forward, then other problems will certainly arise. Please consider this matter carefully.¹⁷⁵

This attack on the Commissariat Officer's compound represents the first definitive instance of violence specifically directed at Qing officials in Batang. It is evidence that the collective effect of Commissariat Officers' efforts to protect the French missionaries had not only increased their power in Batang but also unwittingly convinced the people of Batang that Qing officials preferred to advance the interests of the French over their local needs. As we shall see, the idea that Qing officials and foreigners were colluding together to oppress the people would only become more widespread in Batang.

Hoping to reach a compromise, Chen Pu traveled to Dartsedo to discuss matters with Assistant Bishop Giraudeau and other priests. Although the priests initially insisted on their right to return to all three locations in Batang, Yarigang, and Yanjing as guaranteed by the treaty, they soon conceded to forego Batang. Before allowing them to proceed, Chen Pu insisted on returning to Batang to ensure the native chieftains and *khenpo* of Ba Chöde Monastery would accept this

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1223-24.

agreement.¹⁷⁶ Just as Chen Pu was negotiating with Giraudeau in Dartsedo, a French consul in Chongqing was meeting with local officials to discuss the same matter. Continuing to apply diplomatic pressure on Qing officials, the consul demanded the missionaries be allowed to return to Batang within two months. Otherwise, he would either travel to Chengdu to meet with the governor-general to secure their permission to travel, or he would simply escort the missionaries to Batang himself as allowed by the treaty.¹⁷⁷

To his credit, while the diplomatic negotiations went on in Chongqing and Beijing, Chen Pu worked with the native chieftains and *khenpo* to encourage the Batang people to accept the return of the missionaries in the face of increasing difficulties. Quoted in a note from the Zongli Yamen to the French Minister, Chen reported, “I have tried to persuade the Tibetans, but they will not obey. In the end, the masses dared to burn down my compound, so I had to run back to Dartsedo, where I met with the missionaries and urged them to delay their movement.”¹⁷⁸ The destruction of the Commissariat Officer’s compound suggests that the anger of the people of Batang now had a new target. It seems that they not only wanted to keep the French missionaries from returning, but they also wanted to drive out the Qing officials. Moreover, another note from Batang’s native chieftains and Ba Chöde Monastery *khenpo* hinted at their own frustrations as they attempted to bend the people of Batang to the will of the Commissariat Officer. Batang head native chieftain Tashi Jetsun wrote to Chen:

We, the three *chö zong* (*chos rdzong*),¹⁷⁹ strictly commanded all the people under our authority to dwell in peace at home and pasture and not to create distrust or cause quarrels. While proclaiming your order, how could these people not only not obey, but even go so far as to blaspheme and send complaints back against the favoritism and

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1224.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1225.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 1227.

¹⁷⁹ This Tibetan term, literally “dharma fortress,” is transliterated in Chinese as 曲宗.

protection of us, the three *chö zong*? Supposing these missionaries intentionally proceed, we swear that we would rather give up the lives of all the masses. Their will is exceedingly stubborn, and the people are unwilling to reestablish the churches peacefully.

We, the three *chö zong*, tried to convince them hundreds of times, but these people are resolute in not following us. They particularly think that we are shielding [the missionaries] because we have received a large bribe. If the missionaries definitely want to reach here, we, the three *chö zong*, do not dare offer them protection.¹⁸⁰

In this note, Batang's most influential power holders refer to themselves as the three *chö zong*.

This is a concept of power in traditional Tibet that privileges upholding the integrity of the Buddhist faith above all else. Evoking this concept now is significant on many levels. For instance, this concept shows that, despite over two hundred years of official imperial presence in Batang, Batang's traditional power holders still looked toward Tibet, and not the Qing Empire, for their political models in the late nineteenth century. More relevant to the current situation, evoking the *chö zong* concept symbolizes the further hardening of boundaries between Batang's power holders. While the native chieftains were willing to cooperate with Qing officials, their allegiance to protecting Buddhism is absolutely clear, and they are no longer willing to take responsibility for the safety of foreign missionaries in Batang as they had done implicitly in the past.

Commenting on the notice from Batang's traditional power holders, Chen cautioned that, "The hatred Batang Tibetans have for missionaries is incomparable to that of inland people. If these missionaries recklessly proceed, we are deeply worried that this will foment severe problems. We think a note should be passed to the French Minister in Beijing requesting he cable the missionaries to temporarily delay moving toward Batang so as to avoid problems.... If the missionaries definitely want to rush and proceed forward, they must provide a note in writing stating that in the event something happens, they cannot hold local officials responsible because

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

they do not have the power to provide any protection.”¹⁸¹ Under the circumstances, the French missionaries in Dartsedo agreed to delay their departure, although French diplomats continued to press their case through official channels.

Given the increased violence in the region, Zongli Yamen officials remained very concerned about allowing the missionaries to return to Batang, so they requested their Ambassador in Paris remonstrate directly with the French government. Hoping to bring the Batang case to a close himself, the Chinese Ambassador to France, Qing Chang (慶常), met twice with French Foreign Minister Gabriel Hanotaux to discuss the Batang missionaries in November 1896 (GX 22.10). While the Chinese were being cautious, the French wanted action. Highlighting the threat the British posed to the Qing Empire in the southwest, Foreign Minister Hanotaux pointed out that they recently learned from their Beijing office that the British wanted to open a back road into Sichuan and the upper reaches of the Yangzi River through Yunnan and Tibet, and that they had already sent a trader to go from Yunnan into Tibet in search of a route. As a result, the French simply wanted to send their Chongqing consul to Batang to look in to the British activities in the region.¹⁸² Qing Chang however, was doubtful of the minister’s motivations and urged him not to act on rumors, let alone spread them. Such sustained pressure on Qing officials and the high level attention this case received by the French clearly indicates that the French saw their missionary presence in Batang as a comparative advantage in the Great Game for hegemony in China and Tibet vis-à-vis the British, a stance that a French consul in Chongqing soon confirmed. Qing officials, on the other hand, seem to have merely been trying to ensure the safety of the provocative missionaries in an unstable frontier region.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 1244-45.

Still lobbying Qing officials, the French consul in Chongqing met with Qing official Lai Henian (賴鶴年) to discuss their progress on the Batang case soon after the two month deadline he proposed earlier had passed. The French consul pressed for military action against the lamas in Batang, going so far as to suggest that the lamas there would not continue to create trouble if they knew Qing officials had a “friend” secretly supporting them, but Lai rejected the French overture and berated the consul for thinking of “friendship” in such terms.¹⁸³ In a subsequent conversation a few days later, after the French consul had again failed to convince Lai that military action was necessary, he stated more clearly the French position on Batang and Tibet. In so doing, he clearly brings Batang into the Great Game between France and Britain. Highlighting the international importance of Batang, the consul explained, “Tibetan affairs are changing daily. You must send the missionaries back to Batang soon. Supposing you cannot maintain Tibet, other countries will interfere. Our humble country can assist China in speaking out. Because traders and missionaries from our country are generally not in areas neighboring Tibet, there is only Batang that is not far away. If our missionaries are not in Batang, even though our country wants to speak out [on China’s behalf], other people will certainly say that we have no stake in the matter and have no reason to be of assistance. Therefore, this matter is of great bilateral relevance and cannot be delayed.”¹⁸⁴

Qing officials had hesitated to take action in Batang for over a decade, but Lu Chuanlin, Sichuan’s governor-general who was well-known as an aggressive advocate of direct administration of Tibetan areas in western Sichuan, saw the situation as an opportunity to

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1233.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 1238.

strengthen Qing control in a challenging frontier environment.¹⁸⁵ Picking up the French Minister's request to consult with former Commissariat Officer Ji Zhiwen on resolving the missionary problem in Batang, Lu recommended to the Emperor that Ji be reinstated and sent to Batang.¹⁸⁶ The Emperor approved, and Lu followed up by requesting the court permit him to build new, stronger garrisons in Litang and Batang to protect the important southern route into Tibet and to prevent foreigners from prying their way into the region. He also shared his plan to send a provincial military commander with extensive knowledge and experience with Tibetan affairs into the region after the winter snow melted to determine how best to establish new garrisons and deploy troops.¹⁸⁷ These and other aspects of Lu Chuanlin's forward policies in Kham will be discussed more in Chapter Four. Here, we should simply note that Ji Zhiwen's return to Batang was just one part of Lu Chuanlin's larger plan for western Sichuan.

Ji Zhiwen wasted no time getting down to business in Batang. Arriving on April 11, 1897 (GX 23.3.10), Ji reported to Lu Chuanlin less than one month later that, "Batang is peaceful and quiet." He requested that Lu inform the Bishop that the missionaries must "drop their previous grievances and not make harsh demands on the Batang lay and religious people in the hope of keeping long-term peace."¹⁸⁸ Calling together native chieftains, monastery leaders, and local headmen, Ji Zhiwen learned from the native chieftains that while the people of Batang currently had no grievance against the French missionaries, prior to the destruction of the churches over a decade earlier, "the region was becoming more and more impoverished. Therefore, the ignorant religious and lay people thought the foreigners had some ingenious and depraved skill that

¹⁸⁵ See, for example, Wang, *China's Last Imperial Frontier*.

¹⁸⁶ *JJD*, vol. 6, 1245.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 1246-47.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1248.

allowed them to do anything. They were secretly suspicious that the foreigners possess black magic, and that they caused the end of spring to be unbearably hot, which withered the wheat sprouts. In August the highland buckwheat had not yet been harvested, and then they encountered a severe frost, which led to all the average people not having any grains to harvest at the end of the year.”¹⁸⁹ This complaint about poor harvests, as well as other concerns Ji heard about heavy corvée labor demands, echoed previous statements by Batang’s traditional power holders regarding the causes of the destruction of the churches.

The native chieftains then admitted to Ji Zhiwen they had been lax in protecting the churches, but they also claimed that “among the masses that burned down the churches, there were extremely large numbers of people not under our administration.”¹⁹⁰ While the native chieftains do not say from where these people came, we can infer they came from areas under central Tibetan control, most likely upon instructions from Lhasa. In response, Ji berated the native chieftains, arguing:

Regardless of whether they [the outside people] are monks or laypeople, if they are in Batang, then they fall under your native chieftain jurisdiction. This is no excuse to shirk your responsibility. If the local monastery supported those people in not accepting your authority, then the power of you native chieftains cannot control them. You also should have requested the local civil and military officials to transmit your concerns to the governor-general so that you can maintain law and order at all times. If you do not keep a careful eye on things before something happens, then you are enjoying the privileges of a position without doing a stroke of work. If you look into things one-by-one after they happen, you are just hoping for temporary ease.¹⁹¹

Ji’s statement reflects several significant efforts on his part to restore order to Batang, all of which impacted the local balance of power. On the one hand, Ji explicitly bolstered the power of the native chieftains. Regardless of whether the people who burned down the Catholic churches

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1249.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

were Batang residents or outsiders, Ji reminded the native chieftains that they had the responsibility and authority to maintain order within their jurisdiction. At the same time, Ji asserted that the native chieftains also had jurisdiction over monks in Batang. Knowing that the native chieftains and Ba Chöde Monastery leaders did not always see eye-to-eye on what was best for Batang, this was a major move on the part of Ji to strengthen native chieftain power vis-à-vis Ba Chöde Monastery. To back up this new assertion, Ji went on to stress that if the native chieftains had trouble maintaining order, then they should call on local Qing officials rather than allowing local people or monks to take matters into their own hands. In so doing, Ji made it very clear that if they felt their power threatened, then the native chieftains should call on Qing officials for assistance. This was the ideal semi-*laissez-faire* method of frontier governance for Ji, an arrangement in which day-to-day management of Batang was left to local power holders while Qing officials carefully monitored the situation to ensure peace and stability.

Ji Zhiwen addressed the native chieftains' economic concerns in a similar manner, reminding them that, "although Batang receives grain taxes from [you] Tibetans, the court allows us to keep as much as possible for local use. It does not go back to inland China. More important, every year we have to rebuild our transit stations in Batang, and we annually spend several ten thousands of cash (金). When you encounter a natural disaster, we mercifully distribute relief aid. We treat you Batang Tibetans as graciously as nature is bountiful. How can you not know to be thankful and on the contrary stir up numerous missionary cases, waste national resources, and bring worry to the Emperor? What sort of attitude is this?"¹⁹² Although missionaries had been barred from Batang for over a decade, Ji Zhiwen was able to secure the guarantees of the native chieftains, Ba Chöde Monastery leaders, and local headmen that the missionaries would suffer

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

no harm upon returning to Batang in less than a week. The speed with which Ji resolved this festering case alone demonstrates the efficiency of his semi-*laissez faire* approach to frontier management.

Less than a month later, Assistant Bishop Giraudeau, together with Fathers Soulié and Grandjean,¹⁹³ were welcomed back to Batang, with Lu Chuanlin reporting that “there was not a single word of dissent among the monks and lay Tibetans in the border regions, including in Batang.”¹⁹⁴ Their churches and residences destroyed and their land occupied by others, the missionaries had no choice but to borrow a residence from Commissariat Officer Ling Zhuozhang (凌倬章) as temporary quarters. While this arrangement made it easier for Qing officials to protect the missionaries in the event of trouble, it also certainly erased any doubt in the minds of local Tibetans that Qing officials’ first priority was the well-being of the missionaries and not themselves. This conflation of missionaries and Qing officials in the minds of local Tibetans reached a crescendo in Batang’s fifth case of anti-missionary violence, which I will discuss in Chapter Four.

Although the return of the missionaries to Batang was a major step forward in resolving this case, the French remained tenacious, and their demands continued to impact Batang residents. The French ministry in Beijing argued that the perpetrators of the original crimes had not yet been brought to justice and that the Batang missionaries were encountering obstacles in rebuilding their churches. They demanded that Ji Zhiwen remain in Batang until the missionaries “return to their original peaceful state,” despite reports that his health was failing.¹⁹⁵ Suspecting that the missionaries may already be bringing trouble on themselves, the Zongli Yamen replied

¹⁹³ Paul Clélestin Grandjean (常保祿).

¹⁹⁴ *JJD*, vol. 6, 1251-52.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1249 and 1252.

that the missionaries were required to inform the local officials of their movements so that protection could be provided, and that if they failed to do so, local officials could not take responsibility in the event something happened to them.¹⁹⁶ Evinced once again his practical approach to local administration, Ji noted in his next report, “As for the ringleader of the Tibetan bandits in Yarigang who beat Soulié and destroyed the church, we have already identified three people, detained them, and whipped them as punishment.”¹⁹⁷ As was common practice in Tibetan areas, Ji allowed the local headman to pay a fine on their behalf, and they were released.

Regarding those who destroyed the Batang church, Ji cautiously advised, “Excluding those who have died over the last ten years, at present there are still...several people, all of whom have been handed over by the relevant native chieftain, monastery, or headman. If we punish them too harshly, the lamas in the monastery will certainly not be able to resolve their anger and hatred for the missionaries, so we plan to imitate the Tibetan example and punish them lightly with a fine of silver *liang*.”¹⁹⁸ In yet another iconic example of practicality, Ji immediately announced the fines would be used to alleviate, if only slightly, some of the burdens of corvée transport through Batang. In what would be his last report from Batang, Ji wrote:

It is my opinion that the facilities on Dashuoshan (大朔山), the accommodations at the Batang transit stations, and the City God Temple (城隍廟) in Batang are all collapsing, with the wind and rain peeling off layer after layer. In total there are three locations, and the project will cost several hundred packages of tea. We intend to have the lead instigators of the Tibetan bandits provide compensation for the repairs. The responsibility will be on the native chieftains and upright individuals to manage it. We estimate they will urge those families involved in the disturbances to provide compensation to be used in the project. The criminals understand this admonition and will not again have deep

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1253.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

hatred against the missionaries. The minds of the missionaries will also be set at ease, and we can quickly resolve this case.¹⁹⁹

Within the month the Tibetans had rebuilt the church in Batang, and Bishop Giraudeau confirmed in writing that this case was now closed. Ji Zhiwen, who in a matter of weeks closed a case that had lasted well over a decade, returned to Chengdu, where he soon succumbed to his chronic illness and died. While Ji made every effort to conclude this case, one remaining document, a French-language translation of an agreement signed by Batang's two native chieftains and the *khenpo* of Ba Chöde Monastery from 1900 (GX26.1), almost two years after he had departed Batang, suggests some issues remained unresolved for the French. After acknowledging that all parties involved had finally agreed to a resolution of all the grievances surrounding the 1887 destruction of the churches in Batang, Yarigang, and Yanjing, Batang's traditional power holders agreed to announce publically five additional clauses:

1. Batang natives who wish to become Christians have this freedom. For those who are established on land and therefore paying [tax] tribute, they can still be Christians and continue to live on their land. They will pay tribute like everyone, but we cannot require them to do anything further simply due to the fact that they are Christians.
2. Regarding the construction of lamaseries, the recitation of prayers by the lamas, etc., obligatory personal contributions of money for these things are not required by Christians.
3. If Christians are involved in legal matters, it will be both the Chinese Mandarin and the native chieftains who will judge them. They can recuse themselves.
4. The natives under the jurisdiction of the Chinese Mandarins, native chieftains, and lamas do not have the right to interfere in their affairs.
5. Lamas are similarly subject to the authority of the Chinese Mandarins.²⁰⁰

Through these clauses, Batang's power holders attempted to clarify a number of important issues that emerged due to the long-term presence of missionaries in the region. For example, the first

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1253-54.

²⁰⁰ Adrien Launay, *Histoire de la mission du Thibet*, vol. 2 (Lille: Desclée, de Brouwer et cie, 1903), 328-330.

clause would likely have satisfied concerns by Batang's native chieftains and monastic leaders regarding tax revenues from Christians. As discussed earlier, Tibetan power holders, and especially the monastic establishment, largely saw foreign missionaries as a threat to both their spiritual and economic holds over the local people. This first clause clearly states that becoming a Christian does not exempt one from required tribute or tax obligations to the monastery or native chieftain, thereby protecting the interests of Batang's traditional power holders. The second clause, on the other hand, protected Christians from being dunned by the monastery for special contributions, a common practice and not an insignificant source of income for monasteries. The remaining three clauses clarified legal jurisdictions in Batang. Further strengthening the power of Qing officials vis-à-vis Batang's native chieftains and lamas, Christians involved in crimes were to be judged jointly by Qing officials and native chieftains. More significant, by bringing monks under the authority of Qing officials, the fifth clause formally eradicated the judicial power of Ba Chöde Monastery. No longer did the monastery have the authority to render legal decisions over Christians in Batang; no longer did the monastery have the power to discipline members of its own community, and no longer could the monastery serve as a refuge for lay persons wanting to escape punishment. With this edict, whatever semblance of cooperation between Qing officials and the leaders of Ba Chöde Monastery that still existed was effectively wiped away. Despite the seeming finality of this agreement, Batang's long history of conflict between the local people, French missionaries, and Qing officials would soon take an even more dramatic turn for the worse.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed four major “missionary cases,” incidents involving French missionaries that for various reasons attracted the attention of the Zongli Yamen in Beijing. Through a careful reading of official correspondence related to these cases, supplemented by French language records housed in the M.E.P. archives, I have shown how local Qing officials like Zhao Guangxie and Ji Zhiwen worked to manipulate Qing imperial policies formulated in Beijing or Chengdu to match local circumstances. I have also highlighted the significant role a seemingly minor corner of the empire like Batang could have on events well-beyond not only its own borders, but even beyond the boundaries of the Qing Empire itself, as it became a site of contestation in the Great Game between France and Britain. Finally, I have shown how the arrival and persistent presence of French missionaries in Batang acted as a catalyst that brought about irreversible changes to Batang’s traditional socio-political fabric. To provide the protection for French missionaries required by the Treaty of Tianjin, Qing officials slowly but surely inserted themselves more deeply into the process of frontier decision-making, a process that formerly was left to native chieftains and monastic leaders. The semi-*laissez faire* approach to frontier management, in which Qing officials like Zhao Guangxie and Ji Zhiwen attempted to implement imperial policies by working through Batang’s native chieftains, gradually increased their power in the region. As local governance transitioned from indirect to direct rule, Batang slowly became more integrated into the Qing Empire. Through their efforts, Qing officials, sometimes knowingly and sometimes not, reoriented and hardened formerly flexible and organic relationships between Batang’s power holders. In the process, they allowed themselves to be seen as allied with the missionaries, which left them with fewer and fewer effective tools to shape frontier administration. How Qing officials continued to administer

Batang with its increasingly rigid and complex socio-political framework is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Four: Batang in the Late Qing: Reform and Rebellion

“Since we opened our doors, powerful neighbors have been waiting for the right opportunity to move in swiftly and set up colonies. China is slowly being seized by force. Foreigners consider all the lands that historically belonged to us but have not yet been organized as their future colonies, and they will forcefully occupy them.... Because the frontier has never had an official bureaucracy, it long ago lost its law and order.... Recently the Dalai Lama Ngawang Namgyal (Ngag dbang Rnam rgyal, 阿旺郎結) has suddenly begun to consider rebellion. As soon as he begins to have different thoughts from those of the Tibetan people, the covetous passion of the foreigners will become uncontrollable.”

— Zhao Erfeng, Sichuan-Yunnan Border Affairs Commissioner (川滇邊務大臣), April 19, 1910 (XT 2.3.10)¹

Introduction

This chapter addresses Batang’s further incorporation into the Qing Empire in the last decade of the dynasty. As shown previously, Qing officials through the late nineteenth century adopted *ad hoc* responses to a variety of incidents involving foreign priests in Batang. Their actions clearly led to an expansion of imperial power in the region, but this was not necessarily their intention. By responding to international diplomatic pressure, local officials were merely trying to maintain local stability and protect the interests of foreign missionaries in Batang. Influenced by the liberal spirit of the New Policy (新政) reform efforts in eastern China and long-standing controversies in Kham, officials in Sichuan and Tibet began to reexamine the importance of the Kham frontier to Sichuan and China’s stability at the turn of the twentieth

¹ *QCBDS*, no. 0546, 592-93. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama was given the name Jetsun Ngawang Lobsang Thupten Gyatso Jigdrel Wangchuk Chokle Namgyal Pelzangpo (Lce btsun Ngag dbang Blo bzang Thub bstan Rgya mtsho ‘Jigs bral Dbang phyug Phyogs las Rnam rgyal Dpal bzang po), but he is more commonly known by his abbreviated name, Thupten Gyatso (Thub bstan Rgya mtsho, 土登嘉措).

century. They also took tentative steps toward increasing their power in Kham, beginning with a small-scale land reclamation project in Batang.

This project and the broader discussions of imperial officials on Kham, Tibet, and the security of the empire in general took on added significance with the British invasion of central Tibet under Colonel Francis Younghusband between December 1903 and September 1904. Approximately six months after the British retreated, the murder of Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet Feng Quan (鳳全) in March 1905 and the death of another French missionary at the hands of Batang residents heightened imperial concerns about their southwestern border. Intensifying pressure from abroad and internal interest in developing Kham compelled Qing officials in Sichuan, backed by the Qing court, to launch long-term, comprehensive policies to strengthen their power and control over the Kham frontier and, eventually, Tibet. Batang played a fundamental role in their plans.

This chapter demonstrates that the late Qing's aggressive frontier policies in Batang and Kham were not knee-jerk reactions to the murder of Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet Feng Quan. Rather, growing out of late nineteenth century policy debates between then Sichuan Governor-General Lu Chuanlin, the High Commissioners in Tibet, and the Qing court, strategic expansion of Qing power in Kham began much earlier. Strengthening imperial power in Kham so that the empire would be better positioned to resist foreign aggression was a primary consideration of imperial officials, but it was not their only concern. Another key component of the Qing's new policy toward Kham was economic development, specifically increasing local agricultural output, and officials identified Batang as an ideal location to implement the region's first Qing-sponsored land reclamation project in the early years of the twentieth century. Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet Feng Quan took a keen interest in this project upon

arriving in Batang in 1905, and he quickly began making plans to expand its scale. He also took it upon himself to proclaim a series of measures designed to limit monastic power throughout Tibet. Feng's actions immediately antagonized the people of Batang, who rose up and killed him. In so doing, they set off a chain of events that radically altered Batang's power structure and left a lasting impact on both local and wider Tibetan history.

Late Qing Frontier Policy in Kham

Beyond Batang's missionary cases discussed in the previous chapter, a series of other events in Kham and Tibet beginning in the mid-nineteenth century compelled Qing officials to look more closely at western Sichuan and begin to develop a comprehensive plan to increase their power in the region. The first of these events began in 1860, when Gonpo Namgyal, an ambitious indigenous leader in central Kham's Nyarong region, invaded several neighboring territories controlled by different native chieftains. Hoping to deflect Gonpo Namgyal's influence in their own territories and maintain stability in Kham, the indigenous leaders of Derge and the Hor principalities appealed to both the Qing Empire and central Tibet for military assistance in curbing Gonpo Namgyal's influence in the heart of Kham and, if possible, removing him from power. Preoccupied with the suppression of much larger rebellions throughout China proper, including the Taiping, Nian, and Muslims rebellions, Qing officials only offered minimal support. The Dalai Lama's government in Lhasa, however, was willing and able to provide assistance. In 1863, Lhasa sent a large contingent of troops to Nyarong, and after two years of fighting their army defeated Gonpo Namgyal. The central Tibetan government then appointed a resident High Commissioner of Nyarong (*mdo smad nyag khog spyi khyab*) to rule Nyarong and superintend Derge and the Hor principalities. Still focusing on other internal

rebellions, the Qing court did not contest Lhasa's assertion of its power in Nyarong, and they quietly accepted the incorporation of these areas into the central Tibetan administrative system in 1866.² Despite their inability to act at the time, Qing officials did not forget Nyarong.

Central Tibetan control over Nyarong continued uncontested for the next thirty years, but when an opportunity arose to redress their former impotence and reassert their power in the center of Kham in 1895, Qing officials acted swiftly. Frustrated by the heavy burdens of supporting central Tibetan civil and religious officials in Nyarong, local headman Yeshe Thupten (Ye shes Thub bstan, 益喜吐布丹) led a rebellion against their direct rule in 1895.³ He quickly appealed to Qing officials in Sichuan for support, and newly-arrived Sichuan Governor-General Lu Chuanlin responded by dispatching Qing soldiers to Nyarong. These troops quickly pacified the region, and Lu proclaimed the region once again to be under nominal Qing control, even though central Tibetan officials still remained in Nyarong after their military defeat. However, Lu Chuanlin favored more than mere nominal control in Nyarong, which he saw as “the window into Sichuan”⁴ from Tibet. Citing the rising influence of the British in central Tibet, the potential motivations of the Russians to the north, and what he saw as the ineffective governance of the Dalai Lama, Lu proposed a forward policy that called for the withdrawal of all central Tibetan officials and soldiers from Nyarong and the installation of Han officials in their place. The Qing court enthusiastically approved Lu's proposals, but protests by the new High Commissioner to Tibet, Wen Hai (文海), to the Grand Council and the Dalai Lama to the Court of Colonial

² Yudru Tsomu, “Local Aspirations and National Constraints: A Case Study of Nyarong Gonpo Namgyel and His Rise to Power in Kham (1836-1865)”; Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet: Together with a History of the Relations Between China, Tibet and India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 5; Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New York: Potala Publications, 1984), 187; and Wang, *China's Last Imperial Frontier*, 69.

³ Kangding minzu shizhuan bianxiezu, *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi*, 43.

⁴ Zhao, *Qingshi gao*, juan 438, liezhuan 225.

Affairs (理藩院) thwarted Lu's plans. Both Wen Hai and the Dalai Lama strongly opposed Sichuan officials directly administering Nyarong, and the Qing court decided to rescind its earlier approval of Lu's proposal.

Soon thereafter, Wen Hai drafted a memorial dated October 1897 (GX 23.9), in which he strongly criticized Lu's impetuous handling of the Nyarong issue, as well as his botched attempt to punish Sanyan bandits, who had recently robbed the incoming Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet Na Qin (訥欽).⁵ When Chengdu General Gong Shou (成都將軍恭壽) submitted a memorial accusing Lu of falsely using his name in support of Lu's unilateral action to annex Derge and incorporate it into Sichuan Province, the Guangxu Emperor decided to remove Lu from his position.⁶ With Lu's removal from office, all his forward initiatives were reversed and/or abandoned.

Despite losing his position as governor-general of Sichuan, Lu Chuanlin continued to advocate for the strengthening of Qing control over Kham in the face of foreign threats. With the support of Zhang Zhidong (張之洞) and as a close advisor to Zaifeng (載灃),⁷ he published his *Draft Plan for Nyarong* (籌瞻疏稿) in 1900, arguing that British and Russian grand designs in Tibet necessitated Qing officials to dedicate greater resources to ensuring western Sichuan strengthen its "fence" (藩籬) against foreign intrusion.⁸ Just three years later, Lu returned to

⁵ *QCBDS*, no. 0020, 26-27.

⁶ *QSL*, GX 23.9, juan 410, and GX 23.10, juan 411; and Wang, *China's Last Imperial Frontier*, 69-84.

⁷ Zaifeng, also known as Prince Chun (醇親王), was the younger half-brother of the Guangxu Emperor and father to Puyi, the last emperor of the Qing dynasty. Before being suppressed by Empress Dowager Ci Xi (慈禧太后), Zaifeng advocated for a strong Qing military and forward action in Tibet. See Ho, "The Men Who Would Not Be Amban and the One Who Would," 231; and Adshead, *Province and Politics in Late Imperial China*, 57-58.

⁸ Lu Chuanlin, *Chou Zhan shugao*, in *Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan*, vol. 28, Shen Yunlong, ed. (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1974), 1-312, and in *Xizangxue Hanwen wenxian huike*, vol. 2, Xizang shehui kexueyuan Xizangxue Hanwen wenxian bianjishi, ed. (N.p.: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suwei fuzhi zhongxin, 1991), 79-355.

officialdom, this time as a member of the influential Grand Council, where he would continue to advocate forward policies in Nyarong and Kham that he thought were necessary to secure the security of Sichuan and the entire empire.

Lu's concerns about foreign imperialism reflected growing nationalist thought throughout China in the late nineteenth century. Regarding China's southwest, Lu's concerns about foreign aggression were not unfounded. Following the murder of British Consul August Margary in Yunnan in 1876, the British pressed Qing officials for explicit rights to explore land routes in Sichuan, Tibet, and Qinghai as stipulated in the Chefoo Convention signed that year.⁹ In addition, in 1890 the two countries signed the Convention Between Great Britain and China Relating to Sikkim and Tibet, which recognized the British protectorate over Sikkim, established a trade office in the central Tibetan border town of Yadong (亞東, Gro mo rdzong), and exempted British goods imported into Tibet from India from duties for a period of five years. Combined with steadily increasing missionary activity in western Sichuan, the increasingly obvious intentions of the British to force Tibet open greatly concerned Qing officials, especially those in Sichuan.

Those fears were realized when the British invaded central Tibet in the winter of 1903. As Colonel Francis Younghusband led his army slowly toward Lhasa, High Commissioner to Tibet You Tai scrambled to strengthen his position vis-à-vis the British by requesting the newly appointed Sichuan Governor-General, Xi Liang (錫良), dispatch 4,000 soldiers from his Chengdu garrisons to Lhasa. Although he was a seasoned imperial official with many years of experience in eastern China, Xi Liang openly admitted his unfamiliarity with border affairs so soon after assuming office in Sichuan. Despite being new to the situation, Xi Liang knew it

⁹ These British efforts were largely unrealized. Zeng Guoqing, "Zhao Erfeng ji qi Batang jingying," in *Qingdai Zangshi yanjiu*, ed. Zeng Guoqing (Lhasa: Xizang renmin chubanshe, 1999), 20.

would take months for such a large contingent of soldiers to reach Lhasa, and he was strongly opposed to increasing the Qing military presence in central Tibet. Not wanting to risk an expensive failure, Xi Liang refused You Tai's request.¹⁰ With only a small detachment of soldiers under his command, You Tai struggled to make himself relevant in Lhasa. As Younghusband neared Lhasa, the central Tibetan government recommended the Dalai Lama flee to Qinghai and Mongolia lest he be forced to sign an unfavorable agreement with the invading British. As a result, You Tai was left with no choice but to stand aside and let the Dalai Lama's representatives negotiate concessions with the British, including opening additional British trade marts in Gyantse (Rgyal rtse, 江孜) and Gartok (Sgar thog, 噶爾亞沙), imposing an extreme indemnity on Tibet, and forcing Tibet to recognize the British-defined border between Sikkim and Tibet.¹¹

Although British troops soon withdrew from Lhasa, their easy march into Tibet's capital convinced some Qing officials it was necessary to take concrete action to secure its western frontier, and the Grand Council, on the recommendation of its new member Lu Chuanlin, began to advocate a more aggressive Tibet policy in late 1904. The Qing court, for example, immediately rejected the Lhasa Convention signed by Younghusband and the Dalai Lama's representatives, and they sent diplomats Tang Shaoyi (唐紹儀) and Zhang Yintang (張蔭棠) to India to renegotiate a revised agreement between China and Britain. Under the new terms, which were finalized in 1906, China agreed to pay Tibet's indemnity and Britain recognized China's sovereignty over Tibet. As I will demonstrate below, Batang was also to play a key role in the court's renewed forward plans for Kham and Tibet.

¹⁰ Liu Tingshu, *Bu ping ming* (N.p.: n.p., n.d.), 16a-17a. For a thorough overview of Xi Liang's career as a Qing official, see Roger V. Des Forges, *Hsi-Liang and the Chinese National Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

¹¹ Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, 284-287.

Beginning with Fu Songmu in 1912 and continuing through the twenty-first century, Chinese scholars have strongly emphasized the impact of the Younghusband expedition to Lhasa on the Qing Empire's renewed interest and more assertive policies in Kham and central Tibet. There is no doubt that the British intrusion influenced Qing attitudes toward Kham, but as I have shown in Chapter Three, incidents involving foreigners in Batang predate Younghusband by several decades. Ensuring the protection of foreigners in Tibetan areas, in fact, had also become an important factor in determining imperial policy. At the same, local events in Kham, particularly the central Tibetan administration of Nyarong since 1866, informed Sichuan officials' thinking about their western border regions and compelled them to take concrete actions to strengthen state power along the Sino-Tibetan frontier. In other words, a reaction to foreign imperialism was but one of many factors that influenced late Qing frontier policy in the southwest.

Batang at the Turn of the Century

As senior Qing officials in Beijing, Chengdu, and Lhasa debated how to address the growing presence of missionaries in Kham and the increasing pressure of foreign powers just beyond the borders of the empire, the Batang region itself remained relatively stable. Qing officials had gradually increased their power through their organic *semi-laissez faire* approach to frontier management over the preceding decades, but Batang proper remained at peace. Even the return of French missionaries in 1897 seemed not to create waves among the people. Nevertheless, unrest remained, particularly in Sanyan, Batang's western region where Qing sovereignty remained in question.

As alluded to in Chapter Three, Sanyan banditry continued to plague Qing officials in the late nineteenth century. In 1897, Sichuan Governor-General Lu Chuanlin reported to the Qing court that bandits in Sanyan had raided Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet Na Qin's caravan and stolen a chest containing his memorials.¹² In his characteristically aggressive approach to frontier affairs, Lu ordered Sichuan Provincial Military Commander Xia Yuxiu (夏毓秀) to look into the matter, and Xia subsequently sent his subordinate, Commander Han Guoxiu (清軍門韓國秀), to attack Sanyan. The Qing court responded to Lu's memorial in August 1897, writing, "The wild Tibetans of Sanyan have still not submitted, and recently they have again wantonly robbed us. If you are able to capture the ringleader, then that itself will be a clear warning. If they fail us and resist, then you should immediately evaluate the local situation and carry out both offensive actions and pacification efforts."¹³ Reflecting the continued influence of foreign missionaries on both local events in Batang and strategic imperial calculations in Chengdu and Beijing, not to mention renewed problems with the French, Lu pointed out in a subsequent memorial an additional reason to solve the banditry problem in Sanyan: "The missionaries in Batang have recently rebuilt their churches, and the wild Tibetans of Sanyan frequently come out and plunder. As soon as they bring problems to the missionaries, a host of problems will result. Therefore, in consideration of the previous cases of pillaging and damage, we will use military force to frighten them in the hopes of avoiding later peril."¹⁴

Working closely with former Commissariat Officer Ji Zhiwen, who was still in Batang wrapping up the fourth missionary case, Han Guoxiu successfully obtained the support of

¹² Na Qin took up office in December 1895 (GX 21.10) and departed Tibet in October 1898 (GX 24.9). *QSL*, GX 23.9, juan 410.

¹³ *QSL*, GX 23.8, juan 409.

¹⁴ *QCBDS*, no. 0022, 33.

Batang's two native chieftains and Ba Chöde Monastery, each contributing local soldiers and/or supplies to his camp as he prepared to launch an offensive against Sanyan. Despite his bolstered army, Han underestimated the complexity of Sanyan's geography and the resourcefulness of its people, and he failed miserably. Zhao Erfeng later noted that not only was the Qing expedition forced to surrender to Sanyan bandits, but Xia Yuxiu agreed that the village of Baijiangong (白降工), which was traditionally under Batang's administration, would be turned over to Sanyan. Moreover, aware of the widespread influence of Baijiangong's Cala Monastery (擦拉寺)¹⁵ throughout the region, and their possible collusion with local bandits, Xia agreed that Cala Monastery would annually receive 400 silver *liang*, which was to come from the salaries designated for Batang's garrisoned soldiers, and five families from Sanyan's Zongba region would annually receive 140 *ke* of buckwheat as "road insurance" to protect travelers from robbery in the region.¹⁶ Given the embarrassing performance of Lu Chuanlin's military officers in Sanyan, it is no wonder that High Commissioner to Tibet Wen Hai was so critical of Lu's handling of this long-standing problem. It is also another example of the Qing's attempt to extend its power in Batang's traditional territory west of the Dri River, a largely autonomous, liminal zone where central Tibetan and Qing officials shared nominal sovereignty.

After the court dismissed Lu Chuanlin, Chengdu General Gong Shou succeeded him, and approximately three months later Gong Shou adopted a different approach to Sanyan. Rather than surrendering sovereignty to the local monastery and paying them bribes to avoid further harassment as Xia Yuxiu had done, Gong Shou determined it better to invest local headmen with

¹⁵ Note that this is the same monastery that surrendered to Ji Zhiwen in 1882. Ji referred to the monastery as Cana Monastery (擦納寺).

¹⁶ *QCBDS*, no. 0719, 790-91. See also Wang Chuan, "Qingdai Changdu Sanyan diqu zhengshi shiyi," *Xizang yanjiu* 4 (2000): 57-58.

official titles, thereby formally folding them into the imperial system of frontier administration, a long-standing imperial practice that Yue Zhongqi first implemented in Batang and other parts of Kham in the early eighteenth century.¹⁷ Gong noted that plans to do this had existed for some time, so he therefore requested the establishment of local Battalion Commanders (土千戶) in upper, middle, and lower Sanyan under the authority of Batang's native chieftains. The Guangxu Emperor, whose attention was once again drawn to Batang, ordered him to proceed as proposed.¹⁸ Despite Gong Shou's efforts to establish Qing sovereignty over Sanyan, these newly-designated local headmen not only did not restrain local bandits from menacing people passing through the region but, according to some Qing officials, they even participated in the banditry themselves.

As for Batang proper, extant records suggest the turn of the century was rather stable, albeit just for a few years. Jean Soulié, a French priest resident in Kham, including Batang, from 1887 until his murder in 1905, does mention a long-standing case over pasture rights in northeastern Batang that involved both native chieftains. According to Soulié, the deputy native chieftain visited the region of "Chou" around 1895 to try to resolve the dispute. Despite his good intentions, his actions greatly irritated the local people, who eventually drove him off into the mountains by shooting at him. Since that time, they refused to submit taxes to Batang, a situation the head native chieftain was unwilling to accept. In 1898, the head native chieftain, who was "loved by the people," returned to Chou and with his "good words" resolved the dispute.¹⁹

¹⁷ The practice of coopting local leaders by granting them imperial titles was widespread in the Qing. See, for example, Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate*, 48-63; and Johanna Menzel Meskill, *A Chinese Pioneer Family: The Lins of Wu-feng, Taiwan 1729-1895* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

¹⁸ *QSL*, GX 23.12, juan 413.

¹⁹ Jean André Soulié, "Géographie de la principauté de Bathang." *Revue La Géographie* 9 (1904): 87-104.

Batang's relative calm was unfortunately not to last. As concern about the need to strengthen the empire's western border increased, Qing officials began to take concrete action. In August 1896 (GX 22.7), Sichuan Provincial Supervising Censor Wu Guangkui (給事中吳光奎) memorialized saying, "in order to bring under control the extremely bad state of Tibetan affairs," the court should look carefully at the Batang and Litang region, which he described as "Sichuan's gateway to Tibet." Advocating the establishment of direct rule by Qing officials in the region, Wu proposed, "If they assume control of affairs, then they can solicit merchants from Sichuan to reclaim wastelands and also initiate mining operations."²⁰ Like Gong Shou's proposal to invest local leaders with imperial titles, Wu Guangkui's recommendation to reclaim wastelands was a common Qing strategy to increase their influence on the frontier, which they had used successfully in numerous contexts.²¹ The Qing Grand Council quickly passed this memorial to then Sichuan Governor-General Lu Chuanlin, instructing him to consider it and take appropriate action. After careful consideration and discussions with tea merchants, soldiers, and other officials familiar with the region, Lu concluded:

In my opinion, the native chieftains of Batang and Litang were pacified and brought under the jurisdiction of the Commissariat Officers and their soldiers long ago. If we again set up Han officials, this is best done after bureaucratic restructuring (改土歸流). However, in the territory administered over generations by the native chieftains, they are not extremely cruel, but the local people are discontent, impatient, and closed-off. They are extremely difficult [to govern] and for no reason get very worked up. This causes everyone to be mutually suspicious, to toss about and collude with others, and to provoke rebellion.

In recent years "eat or be eaten" defines native chieftain lands, and although there has not been an absence of inter-Tibetan conflict, we can certainly discuss who is at fault. There are cracks that we can exploit, and then we can deter them with military might. For

²⁰ Wu Fengpei, ed., *Qingdai Zangshi jiyao xubian* (Lhasa: Xizang renmin chubanshe, 1984), 105.

²¹ See, for example, Millward, *Beyond the Pass*, for land reclamation policies in Xinjiang; Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, for Taiwan; and John E. Herman, *Amid the Clouds and Mist: China's Colonization of Guizhou, 1200-1700* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007) for Guizhou.

example, recently the villains of Nyarong dared to rebel, and subsequently we will be able to implement bureaucratic restructuring there.

Apart from this, each native chieftain area is difficult to discuss in general terms. Each area has local Tibetans living all over with absolutely no Han residents. They also fervently believe in Buddhism, and monasteries are everywhere. Although most are not satisfied with their positions in life, the local people willingly accept their usurious exploitation and do not dare get angry. The monasteries are inveterate and cannot be gotten rid of. In addition, it is not easy to transform them. For all of these reasons, I determined that setting up Han officials is still something that should be put on hold....

Only the immediate vicinity of Batang has level and open land, a temperate climate, and staple crops growing. I carefully consulted with tea merchants familiar with the road to Tibet and experienced soldiers and learned that only the area of Batang between the two mountains has a comparatively warm climate and can grow staple crops. However, the surplus land is [already] under cultivation. There is no land that can be cultivated and the local people do not know how to farm. Since staple crops cannot be grown, how can we recruit people for land reclamation and farming? These are the difficulties of land reclamation.²²

In response, the Guangxu Emperor wrote, “Obviously there is no need to discuss this.” Lu Chuanlin’s strong opposition to Wu Guangkui’s proposal to establish Han officials in Batang, develop local agriculture, and explore mining options is somewhat surprising given his aggressive approach in Sanyan and Nyarong. It is likely that he preferred to concentrate his efforts on Nyarong, where he hoped to quell the uprising and return the region to Qing control. We can conclude that bureaucratic restructuring and economic programs were of only secondary concern to Lu.

Despite Lu’s initial failures to extend Qing power into Kham, continued instability in the region and increasing pressure from the British on Tibet’s southern border following Lu’s dismissal as governor-general compelled Sichuan authorities to again press the court to reconsider their approach to Kham. Wu Guangkui and other Sichuan officials memorialized twice in 1903 urging the court appoint a senior official to manage the Sichuan border several months before Younghusband began his march out of Sikkim and into Tibet. The *Veritable*

²² Wu, *Qingdai Zangshi jiyao xubian*, 114-15.

Records of the Qing Dynasty notes in August 1903 (GX 29.7, four months before Younghusband invaded central Tibet) that the head of the Sichuan Provincial Treasury memorialized, “The situation in Sichuan and Tibet is acute. I request that someone be appointed to manage the Sichuan border areas and set up agricultural colonies for land reclamation and mines for commerce.” But Sichuan’s newly-appointed governor-general, Xi Liang, who was much more cautious in dealing with frontier affairs than his predecessor, was hesitant. While acknowledging the seriousness of problems on the frontier, he argued to the court that, “Agricultural land reclamation colonies and mines for commerce cannot resolve these perils, but if we are speaking of colonies and mines, it is only the soil in Batang that is fertile and suitable for cultivation. I plan first to initiate mining operations in this territory [Kham]. This will require time, and I expect little results. When it comes to the discussion of establishing land reclamation colonies, I have not yet dared to begin with this first because of its extravagance. This is completely different from commercial mining and in my eyes is an extremely difficult undertaking.”²³

Despite his cautious approach, the court ordered Xi Liang to look into policies to develop the Sino-Tibetan frontier more closely, and approximately four months later Sichuan officials, this time with Xi Liang’s somewhat reluctant support, responded more positively. While pointing out the challenges presented by Kham’s harsh environment and its stubborn native chieftains, Sichuan officials emphasized the “utmost importance of border affairs.” Echoing the earlier plans of Lu Chuanlin, who now sat on the Grand Council, Sichuan officials again urged the court to appoint a senior official to oversee all aspects of Kham’s development, beginning with military colonies to promote land reclamation and opening mines to stimulate commercial activity. Significantly, they recommended that land reclamation begin in Batang:

²³ *QSL*, GX 29.7, juan 519; and Mei Xinru, *Xikang* (Nanjing: Zhengzhong shuju, 1934), 213.

In our opinion Batang's climate is more temperate than the border areas of Dartsedo and Litang. The terrain is also comparatively level. It seems that it is suitable to make preparations for land reclamation work first in Batang. We can look into commercial and mining operations later. The land under the native chieftains returned to the empire long ago, and the people normally show great sincerity. However, their "raw" nature in the end makes them stupid and stubborn. As soon as we begin reclaiming their land, it is certain that they will not give their consent, so for this reason planning will not be easy.... If we wait to gain their trust and then act, then we can respond ourselves to their anxiousness in advance.

We have selected from among Sichuan officials a sincere, honest, and diligent individual who is also familiar with border affairs and dispatched him as Commissariat Officer. He has been stationed in Batang for a long time, where he interacts with the native chieftains and local barbarians on a daily basis. He has gradually become conversant in their language. Because they share the same sentiments, he can explain our reasoning and entice them with benefits.

If there are people who are difficult to instruct, who are not enticed by benefits, or who simply have tyrannical and haughty characters, then we certainly can use strong military force to suppress and awe them. Simultaneously employing power and benevolence is a capable method that will allow us to obtain advantages in numerous regions. Border trouble will not emerge, and since mining operations have already begun [in the Taining (泰寧) region of Tau (Rta 'u)],²⁴ and merchants are self-starting, we can begin working on land reclamation [in Batang].²⁵

This memorial represents a turning point in Qing policy toward Batang and Kham in general. On the one hand, Sichuan authorities wanted to continue their long-standing practice of depending on imperial officials who understood local customs and practices to manage the region. Such thinking effectively endorsed the semi-*laissez faire* approach to local governance utilized by Ji Zhiwen and other Qing officials posted in Batang since the mid-eighteenth century. What is new, however, is the explicit reference to military force in the event Batang's new development projects meet resistance. While military action always remained an option for Qing authorities involved in border affairs, such clear references to its utility in advancing policy initiatives, at

²⁴ Present-day Daofu County (道浮縣).

²⁵ *QCBDS*, no. 0001, 1-2; and Sichuan shengzhi jinbainian dashi jishu bianjizu, "Feng Quan yu Batang shijian benmo," in *Sichuan wenshi ziliao xuanji*, vol. 10, ed. Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Sichuan sheng weiyuanhui Sichuan sheng shengzhi bianji weiyuanhui (Chengdu: Sichuan sheng zhibian weihui, 1979): 22-23.

least in Batang, had been surprisingly absent from official discussions up to this point. The challenges presented by repeated missionary cases in Batang, the continued instability in Nyarong, and pressure from British interests on Tibet's southern border all induced Qing officials to expand their methods of frontier management. Times were changing.

The Qing court soon approved Xi Liang's proposal, and in January 1904 (GX 29.12) the Sichuan Mining Bureau began their preparations to reclaim land in Batang, dispatching Yang Zhimu (楊直牧) and Zhao Long (兆龍) to lead the project and Deputy Expectant Magistrate Tian Congzhou (候補縣丞田從周) to serve as deputy. They were to work together with Batang Commissariat Official Wu Xizhen (吳錫珍), the very official described in such glowing terms in the memorial above, and Vice Battalion Commander Wu Yizhong. Upon receiving Xi's instruction "to start work and not consider this lightly," Wu Xizhen immediately responded that he would take charge of this project and direct the outside officials accordingly. In fact, by making this project his own, Wu Xizhen continued the Qing practice of *semi-laissez faire* frontier administration in Batang. The influence of provincial officials like Yang and Zhao, at least until the arrival of Feng Quan the following year, was non-existent.

Wu Xizhen began by ordering the two native chieftains and the *khenpo* of Ba Chöde Monastery to prepare lands to be reclaimed first by surveying and demarcating borders according to existing understandings of land ownership. While historical records are not extant, native chieftains and Ba Chöde Monastery leaders had been collecting taxes from the local people for centuries, so there existed at least an oral understanding of property rights in Batang. Wu Xizhen's first step in the land reclamation process was to confirm those rights and identify un-reclaimed land suitable for cultivation. The vast majority of such lands, Wu suspected, were owned by the native chieftains and Ba Chöde Monastery, so rather than pushing individual

owners off their land, Wu recommended that this land reclamation project recruit settlers from outside Batang to open up new lands for cultivation. Wu also suggested Xi Liang be flexible in recruiting farmers to be sent to Batang to reclaim land, proposing that settlers be recruited from Yunnan, from which Batang was more easily reached, and also that he be authorized to allow the soldiers garrisoned in the region to participate in land reclamation efforts.²⁶ Xi Liang, still doubtful of the efficacy of the Batang project, initially rejected Wu's proposals. Memorializing the court, Xi Liang reported that while he had initiated the land reclamation efforts, the scale was to be quite small, so the court should not expect great results quickly.²⁷

In May 1904 (GX 30.4), Wu Xizhen and Wu Yizhong reported that after delicate negotiations with Batang's local leaders about the land reclamation project they had obtained the agreement of the two native chieftains, who were "happy to do this and raised no objections." Their enthusiasm is not surprising. As the primary agents of the Qing Empire in Batang, the native chieftains stood to gain by collecting additional tax revenues from newly reclaimed fields. However, the *khenpo* of Ba Chöde Monastery, Alag Jampa (A lags Byams pa, 傲拉扎巴), refused to give his agreement, arguing that "Apart from the pastures, there was no land that can be reclaimed in the plains or in the mountains." Despite lacking the initial support of Ba Chöde Monastery, Batang officials concluded, "Since the head and deputy native chieftains are willing to start work, then the two [who want to proceed] pose no harm to the one who does not want [to

²⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 0007, 9-10.

²⁷ Xi Liang, *Xi Liang yigao zougao*, comp. Zhongguo kexueyuan (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 365-366, quoted in Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shiliu*, 204.

proceed], so we will do our best to begin work.”²⁸ Sometime within the next two months, Ba Chöde Monastery leaders assented to the project and work began in earnest.²⁹

The Qing Empire’s first land reclamation project in Kham, if not on the entire Tibetan plateau, began in Batang with the formulation of twelve governing guidelines announced in June 1904. Understanding the sensitivity of a new project that was designed to bring “around one hundred” Han people into Batang to live alongside Tibetans as agricultural settlers, imperial officials and the native chieftains agreed to limit the initial scope of the project to the village of Cashu Mountain, which was located approximately twenty *li* southwest of Batang proper, even though their surveys had identified uncultivated land in six additional locations in the region. To encourage able-bodied individuals from inland China to come to Batang, the regulations stipulated that the Commissariat Office would compensate all incoming settlers for their transportation expenses, as well provide them with food and lodging in Batang for up to three years. Recognizing the primitive farming methods of local Tibetans, Wu Xizhen hoped these incentives would attract Han settlers with farming experience to make the long journey to Batang from Sichuan. However, perhaps knowing that few Han would take up his offer to work in such an unfamiliar environment, which is in fact born out in initial progress reports, Wu took it upon himself to authorize the release of approximately one quarter of the eighty-three Qing soldiers stationed in Batang to participate in the land reclamation project. Many of these soldiers were actually cultivating small plots already, and Wu Xizhen took advantage of their experience to improve local production. At the same time, the project’s regulations authorized the native chieftains, who Wu noted were known to be “extremely crafty” and “to cause trouble and stir up

²⁸ *QCBDS*, no. 0010, 11-14; Mei, *Xikang*, 214-17; and Jin Fei, “Qingmo Xikang kenwu dang’an shican,” *Bianzheng* 9 (1932): 1-22.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 0011, 14.

fools to cause confusion and disorder,” to employ ten to twenty individuals to assist them in the daily management of the project. While this may have been a move to let the native chieftains obtain additional financial benefit, it is equally likely that Wu Xizhen simply needed people to manage the daily operations of the project and turned to the native chieftains to supply the labor, relying on them once again to assist him in administering the region.

Imperial officials in Chengdu and Beijing envisioned Batang’s land reclamation project as the first step in their strategy to strengthen the empire’s southwestern border against foreign influence and to stabilize the region in response to unrest in Kham. Additional agricultural output would improve the standard of living for Batang’s people while also generating new tax revenue that could be used to fund other development projects in Kham. At the same time, Wu Xizhen designed his project to stimulate economic growth beyond mere agricultural production. The regulations specifically noted, for example, that all laborers and material for the construction of residences and buildings for the settlers on Cashu Mountain were to be procured locally. Beasts of burden were to be purchased from local herders, and when possible farm equipment was to be manufactured or procured locally as well. As we shall see, despite Wu’s good intentions, demand soon outstripped supply, and Batang proved unable to provide sufficient human or material resources to meet the growing needs of Qing projects in the region. Materials and labor had to be brought in to Batang from outside the region to sustain the project, even in its early stages.³⁰

Following Xi Liang’s approval of their regulations, Wu Xizhen and Wu Yizhong soon submitted a progress report on their land reclamation efforts.³¹ Noting that they had obtained the

³⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 0010, 11-14; Mei, *Xikang*, 214-17; and Jin, “Qingmo Xikang kenwu dang’an shican,” 1-22.

³¹ Both Mei Xinru and Jin Fei date this report to 1908 (GX 34), but they are mistaken. By that time Wu Xizhen had left his position as Batang Commissariat Officer, and Wu Yizhong had been killed in 1905 during the uprising against Feng Quan. This report was most likely submitted in May 1904 (GX 30.4), soon after they transmitted their land reclamation regulations to Xi Liang.

agreement of the *khenpo*, an important step in assuring local cooperation for the project, they also decided to begin land reclamation beyond Cashu Mountain. Expressing their concerns about Batang's hot and dry climate in recent years, the poor quality of the soil, and the lack of easy irrigation, they reported:

We fear that even if we plant seeds it will be difficult to expect a harvest, so we have sent our own soldiers to be farmers and inspected the lands ourselves. The four areas of Cashu Mountain, Sonlonngong, Ditanggong (底塘宮), and Zaishidong (載石洞) are located around ten *li* from Batang....³² They can all be irrigated so as to prepare for a drought.... This is the most important part of our reclamation effort. As for the borders of these four areas...in total there is approximately 4,610 *mu* that can be reclaimed. Of these four areas, only Sonlonngong has several Tibetan houses, which can be rented temporarily. The three locations of Cashu Mountain, Ditanggong, and Zaishidong are basically open fields where no one has lived recently.

We thought very carefully and already have constructed one Tibetan house at each of these three locations. Each one has twenty rooms, so our farmers will have a place to live when they come to work. However, laborers are difficult to find in Batang, and July (GX 30.6) will come in the blink of an eye. We needed to start planting, so we could only give the contract for the construction of the three Tibetan houses and all the materials to Tibetan laborers in hopes of completing them quickly.... The Tibetans already started work on June 5 (GX 30.4.22), and they must without exception finish the work by the end of July.

We have again selected from Batang's people—Han and Tibetan, civilian and military—fifty-five individuals with knowledge of farming and dispatched them to Ditanggong as temporary farmers. We have lent them farming equipment and they have set up tents. Their first attempts are set for June 15 (GX 30.5.2). Later as we recruit more and more, then we will gradually expand.... We have [already] dispatched soldiers to Dartsedo, Weixi, Adunzi, and other areas to recruit farmers and manufacture equipment.³³

³² Cashu Mountain is located eighteen *li* southwest of Batang proper on the main road towards Lhasa at the base of present-day Tuoguoding (托果頂). Sonlonngong, here transliterated in Chinese as 茨荔隴, is located seven *li* west and slightly south of Batang proper. Known for its fertile soil, Sonlonngong was also the site of the first French Catholic Church constructed in 1864. Ditanggong is located eight *li* due north of Batang proper, and Zaishidong is located eight *li* northeast of Batang proper. Mei, *Xikang*, 221; and Batang xian diming lingdao xiaozu, *Sichuan sheng Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou Batang xian diminglu*, 30. Note that Relyea incorrectly locates these fields in Qicungou (七村溝), which is approximately twenty kilometers northeast of Batang proper in the present-day Nyewa District (Snye ba chu, 雅哇區) of Batang County. While it was indeed the people of Qicungou that initiated the unrest in Batang by torching the newly-built houses in Sonlonngong, this site, along with the three other land reclamation sites mentioned above, are located much closer to Batang proper than Qicungou. *BTXZ*, 251; and Batang xian diming lingdao xiaozu, *Sichuan sheng Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou Batang xian diminglu*, 67.

³³ Mei, *Xikang*, 220; and Jin, "Qingmo Xikang kenwu dang'an shican," 9-10. It is unclear why these lands, which were seemingly suitable for cultivation, had been uninhabited in recent years.

What stands out in the above report is Wu Xizhen's caution. Not wanting to disrupt local society, he understood the resistance of the Ba Chöde monks to his land reclamation efforts. He was also aware that Xi Liang had relatively low expectations for this project. Although the reported regulations agreed upon with the native chieftains and *khenpo* initially called for approximately one hundred Han from outside Batang to farm the initial fields on Cashu Mountain, Wu recruited locally. He also did not bring in outside laborers but relied on local human resources to meet his needs. As a result, his actions seemed not to cause serious problems among the local population.

Travelling in Batang in September 1904, British Consul in Chengdu Alex Hosie mentioned Wu's land reclamation project in his diary: "An attempt is being made by the Chinese Government to reclaim and bring under cultivation all the waste land in the Batang plain and neighbourhood. Operations began in spring of the present year.... Some 200 Tibetans and Chinese are engaged in the work, and some 200 *mou* have been cleared, while 70 to 80 *mou* are already under crop, principally buckwheat. Houses have been built for the labourers, and these with the cleared land will be leased to intending farmers.... The scheme is at present in the hands of the Commissary, who is looking about for more land to conquer. Needless to say, it is not regarded with a favourable eye by the lamasery, which sees its percentage of land and crops being lessened and its profits likely to be curtailed."³⁴

In his next report dated October 1904 (GX 30.9), Wu Xizhen noted that while current potential land reclamation efforts covered merely 4,610 *mu*, his surveys indicated that as much as 28,500 *mu* could be cultivated in areas further distant from Batang proper, including Dashuo,

³⁴ Alex Hosie, *Mr. Hosie's Journey to Tibet 1904* (1905; reprint, London: The Stationery Office, 2001), 152. In an interesting twist of fate, on his return to Chengdu Hosie met Feng Quan in Dartsedo and briefed him on the road conditions for his upcoming journey to Batang.

Shanba (山壩), and Mangli (蟒里),³⁵ all of which had access to plenty of water for irrigation. In the same report, Wu pointed out that his initial estimates for the four original reclamation sites were low. In addition to surveying 1,200 *mu* more of land in these locations, he suggested that as many as 4,500 *mu* of arid land in Batang proper, consisting of slightly graded hillsides and plots difficult to irrigate, could be cultivated. In other words, Batang offered as much as 33,000 *mu* for possible cultivation. Wu also stated, “The Tibetan houses at Cashu Mountain, Ditanggong, and Zaishidong have been completed and all the tools forged. They are being put to use one-by-one. In Sonlonnong, they have already cultivated over one hundred eighty *mu*, in Ditanggong over thirty *mu*, and in Zaishidong over eighty *mu*. In total there is over three hundred *mu* of cultivated land.”³⁶ Wu Xizhen knew he needed to demonstrate to Xi Liang progress on this symbolic new project, hence his enthusiasm in reporting Batang’s vast potential land resources. Nevertheless, well-experienced in frontier governance, Wu also knew the difficulties in fully realizing that potential, and he therefore worked closely with the native chieftains and *khenpo* to manage expectations and reduce the impact of the project on the local population as best he could. Other officials were not so considerate, however, and adopted a more aggressive stance toward Kham in the tradition of Lu Chuanlin.

Even before Wu Xizhen and his fellows Qing officials initiated their modest land reclamation efforts in Batang, newly appointed Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet Gui Lin (桂霖) prepared “A Lucid Statement on Three Principles for Tibetan Affairs” in 1903 (GX 29), nearly a year before Younghusband would lead his army into central Tibet. As recorded in the *Veritable Records of the Qing*, Gui Lin argued, “The Tibetans are ignorant. The Dalai Lama has

³⁵ Dashuo was often also transliterated as Dasuo (大所), Shanba was more commonly written as Sanba (三壩), and Mangli refers to the same location that once hosted a French Catholic church.

³⁶ Mei, *Xikang*, 221-22; and Jin, “Qingmo Xikang kenwu dang’an shican,” 11-12.

recently been particularly arrogant and imperious. This is not something we can give in to willingly. The Tibetan army only has just over 1,000 soldiers. I intend to recruit 3,000 local soldiers in the border regions and deploy them strategically. I will rotate them out for defensive purposes.” He also proposed that his office be relocated to Chamdo so as to manage the recruitment process of local soldiers. The Qing court determined that “the methods he states cannot be ignored,” and the Guangxu Emperor ordered Xi Liang, High Commissioner to Tibet You Tai, and Gui Lin to discuss these matters in detail and memorialize with their specific plans.³⁷

You Tai and Xi Liang had, in fact, already been discussing these matters. As outlined above, British activities along the empire’s southwestern borders had increased dramatically since the late nineteenth century. The empire had already suffered humiliating and costly military defeats along its eastern coasts, and Qing officials like Lu Chuanlin and Gui Lin advocated solidifying their rear guard by increasing their military strength to prevent further incursions.

Despite the Emperor’s endorsement of Gui Lin’s request to establish a garrison in Chamdo, Xi Liang was reluctant to proceed with militarizing the region, although he did acknowledge the existing challenges there. Explaining to the Emperor in a memorial dated December 17, 1903 (GX 29.10.29), Xi Liang wrote, “Since Nyarong was returned to central Tibetan administration...there are many [in Kham] who only know Tibet and do not know Sichuan. Bandits also engage in life and death struggles over trifling matters. Moreover, [the people of Kham] despise imperial regulations and slight border officials.”³⁸ With this in mind, he proposed an administrative measure to address the problem. Specifically, he recommended that the district of Dartsedo (打箭爐通知) be administratively separated from Yazhou Prefecture (雅

³⁷ *QSL*, GX 29.9, juan 521.

³⁸ *QCBDS*, no. 0004, 6.

州府) and upgraded to an independent sub-prefecture (直隸廳), which would allow him to select from a more qualified pool of talent to fill the elevated civil positions. At the same time, he recommended that the management of the Jianchang Circuit Intendancy (建昌道), which had previously been under Dartsedo's jurisdiction, be brought under the governor-general's office.³⁹ In so doing, Xi Liang would have further direct influence on the administration of Sichuan's volatile border regions and could more closely manage programs designed to foster stability and economic growth like the land reclamation project in Batang.

You Tai, who had recently traveled through Kham on his way to assuming his position in Lhasa, agreed in principle with Xi Liang's proposal, but he argued for greater imperial involvement in the region. In a memorial dated February 12, 1904 (GX 29.12.27), he proposed that the Assistant High Commissioner's office be transferred from Lhasa, its customary post, to Chamdo, which is roughly equidistant from Lhasa and Chengdu, so that Gui Lin could "support coordinated actions on the ground."⁴⁰ You Tai also argued:

Litang and Batang were originally under the jurisdiction of Sichuan. The native chieftains of these two areas are rather deferential and pliant. Already I have enlightened them with great principles, making these things known in order to glorify your righteousness. There are none that do not show their gratitude and respect. However, among those born and raised in the barbarian areas, it is not that there are none that have tyrannical and arrogant behavior. In the event there is a trifle, strife will flare up. If local officials were able to render substantial supervision, then peace would prevail and there would be no incidents. However, the monks in all the monasteries are proliferating, and the power of the *khenpo* occasionally emerges from their midst. As for these monks, they abuse the people by exploiting them, and they use all means to coerce the people. If debts are not repaid, then they resort to every form of search and repossession. Even when rogue barbarian Buddhists plunder and rob on the roads, if victims make an accusation to the authorities, the victimizers will in turn demand a *guili* (規禮, a kind of bribe).

³⁹ Xi, *Xi Liang yigao zougao*, 368-70, as quoted in Sichuan shengzhi jinbainian dashi jishu bianjizu, "Feng Quan yu Batang shijian benmo," 11-12.

⁴⁰ Sichuan shengzhi jinbainian dashi jishu bianjizu, "Feng Quan yu Batang shijian benmo," 13.

Because of this, in the region of Dragyab,⁴¹ which forms the border between Batang and Chamdo, cases of robbery number as many as the trees in a forest, and travelling merchants dare not go forward. My humble opinion is that these Tibetan monks are all our children. Supposing they are pious and worship the Buddha, then it is certainly not that our country's laws do not cover them. Moreover, as for the intervention of the monks in these areas, they have been rampant and without inhibition. If we do not force them into submission quickly, I fear suddenly the tail will begin to wag the dog, and putting things back in order will be more difficult.⁴²

Criticizing not only the inability of native chieftains to suppress ubiquitous brigandry in the region but also the oppressive practices of monasteries in Litang and Batang, You Tai clearly wanted Gui Lin in Chamdo. At the same time, fearing that further hesitation to take decisive action would allow conditions on the Tibetan plateau to deteriorate to uncontrollable levels, You Tai proposed to increase Qing presence in the region by stationing a large garrison of troops organized along the lines of Zeng Guofan's Xiang army, which was known for its strength and organization, to support the Assistant High Commissioner's new posting in Chamdo.⁴³

Reflecting growing concerns about foreign pressures in Tibet, he concluded his memorial with the following recommendation: "I propose to establish a substantial garrison in the Chamdo area and also to settle the stationing of a high official there and make defensive preparations by drilling troops.... Externally, we should be able to establish a fence of fear, while internally we can bring calm to the Sichuan border."⁴⁴

Submitting his own memorial on the subject, Xi Liang also argued that having a senior official stationed in Kham would restore social order, provide better protection for foreign missionaries, and allow merchants and official communications to pass through the region

⁴¹ Here, You Tai is referring to Sanyan banditry.

⁴² You Tai, *Zouyi*, in Wu Fengpei, ed. "Ji Qing Guangxu sanshiyinian Batang zhi luan," *Yugong banyuekan* 6, no. 12 (1937): 43; *QCBDS*, no. 0006, 8; and You Tai, *You Tai zhu Zang zougao*, in *Qingdai Zangshi zoudu*, ed. Xizang shehui kexueyuan Xizangxue Hanwen wenxian bianjishi (Beijing: Zhongguo Zangxue chubanshe, 1994), 1185.

⁴³ *QCBDS*, no. 0002, 2-3.

⁴⁴ You Tai, *Zouyi*, in Wu, "Ji Qing Guangxu sanshiyinian Batang zhi luan," 43; and *QCBDS*, no. 0006, 8.

uninterrupted.⁴⁵ He did not mention the proposal to establish a garrison in Chamdo in this memorial, but subsequent communications between Xi Liang and You Tai, in which Xi Liang refused to supply You Tai with soldiers to bolster his bargaining position with the British in Lhasa, indicate Xi Liang remained reluctant to expend Sichuan's military resources on the Tibetan plateau. Xi Liang instead preferred to focus on bureaucratic reform and other development projects in Kham. In March 1904 (GX 30.2), the court approved the memorials submitted by Xi Liang and You Tai and ordered Gui Lin, who had been waiting in Chengdu, to depart for his new posting in Chamdo. However, Gui Lin was unable to assume his position. Suffering from an eye problem, he delayed his departure from Chengdu and eventually petitioned to be relieved of duty. Taking this vacancy as an opportunity to influence Tibetan policy more directly, Xi Liang recommended the Emperor appoint Feng Quan to the position.

There is a tendency in histories of Tibet to assert that the British invasion of Lhasa compelled Qing officials to focus on their southwest frontier and take action to strengthen their control there.⁴⁶ There is no doubt that Younghusband's actions on the Tibetan plateau fostered a strong response from the Qing, but to claim that this was the sole, or even primary, stimulus for the late Qing's forward policy in Kham and Tibet is to accept the now debunked historiography of a static, paralyzed China that was only capable of responding to external, Western stimuli.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *QCBDS*, no. 0008, 10.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 205-223; Warren Smith, *Tibetan Nation: A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 151-174; and Grunfeld, *The Making of Modern Tibet*, 55-61.

⁴⁷ This Western-dominated historiography was most succinctly outlined in: Ssu-Yu Teng and John K. Fairbank, *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923* (New York: Antheneum, 1966). Paul Cohen led the reevaluation of this paradigm, calling for historians to create a "China-centered history of China." See Paul A. Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

As I have shown thus far, Qing efforts to stabilize the Sino-Tibetan frontier and increase their presence there began well-before the British army would step into central Tibet.

The Feng Quan Incident

This section examines Feng Quan's short tenure as Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet, the majority of which he spent not in Chamdo, his place of assignment, but in Batang. During his brief one hundred days in Batang, Feng Quan announced a series of radical policy proposals for Batang and Kham in general that local people stringently opposed. Feng Quan refused to compromise, and the people of Batang eventually rose up and killed him, his retinue of assistants, and a small military escort. They also killed several French missionaries in the region and destroyed their churches. The events surrounding the Feng Quan Incident in Batang echoed across the Tibetan plateau, forever altering both local understandings of power in Batang and Sino-Tibetan relations.

Following the British imposition of the Lhasa Convention on Tibetans in September 1904, the Qing court's urgency to increase their influence in Tibet rose dramatically, and strengthening their control in Kham remained a critical part of their strategy. Reflecting the increased importance of the Tibetan border regions, the Qing court issued the following decree in September 1904 (GX30.8):

Tibet has been a dependency (藩屬) of our empire for over two hundred years. This territory is expansive and rich in variety. In the past foreigners drooled over it, and in recent days the British army has entered Tibet, where they coerced the Tibetans, shed their blood, and violated the Treaty [of Tianjin]. The situation is unfathomable. It is urgent that we consider how to prevent harm and increase our assistance from every possible angle. We should arrange land reclamation to begin in the border regions, and we should train soldiers in martial skills. In so doing we can hope to recover our interests while assisting our resistance. Only then can we sufficiently strengthen our fences (藩籬) ourselves.

Previously we ordered Feng Quan to be posted in Chamdo...and all the border regions of Tibet from the southeast to Sichuan and Yunnan are all to be diligently managed by Feng Quan. He is to establish methods to maintain peace. He is also to investigate earnestly all land that may be beneficial to us and open agricultural and pastoral colonies. He is to use soldiers as farmers, whom he will train regularly. He will use his judgment to recruit labor to open mines and use the abundant resources to provide salaries for them.⁴⁸

This decree offers the most cogent explanation of the duties and responsibilities of Feng Quan's new position in Chamdo as Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet. The court authorized him to train soldiers, set up agricultural land reclamation colonies, and recruit laborers for mining operations. As we will see, Feng's decision to interrupt his journey to Chamdo and remain in Batang in fact had little to do with his affinity for the region's temperate climate as other scholars have claimed.⁴⁹ Rather, he remained in Batang because he felt he could best carry out the various duties of his position from this location.

Feng Quan was a seasoned imperial official with twenty-eight years of experience in Sichuan when he was appointed Assistant High Commissioner. His colleagues regarded him as very capable and diligent in his work, albeit sometime arrogant.⁵⁰ As a long-serving Qing official in Sichuan, he was certainly aware of Tibetan issues, but his on the ground experience dealing with Tibetans was non-existent, having served primarily in Chengdu and surrounding counties. Although he often sought counsel from officials and soldiers "knowledgeable of Tibetan matters," his headstrong approach to rapid reform in Kham and Batang suggests he rarely heeded the advice he sought from others. Nevertheless, Feng Quan hoped to carry out the court's instructions and accelerate the very nascent attempts initiated by Governor-General Xi Liang to strengthen Qing power in Kham.

⁴⁸ *QSL*, GX 30.8, juan 534.

⁴⁹ Warren Smith, for example, makes this claim. Smith, *Tibetan Nation*, 169.

⁵⁰ See Zha Qian, *Bian Zang fengtu ji*, juan 2 (Beijing: Zhongguo Zangxue chubanshe, 1990), 1b; and Alex Hosie, British Foreign Office Records, F.O. 228/1549, Hosie to Satow, 11 June 1904, quoted in Adshead, *Province and Politics in Late Imperial China*, 61.

When Feng Quan was appointed Assistant High Commissioner, the court gave him command of one battalion of five hundred soldiers and authorized him to recruit 1,000 local soldiers to be stationed with him in Chamdo. However, at the time he received these orders, his new battalion was stationed in Qingxi (清溪), far to the southeast of Dartsedo. Therefore, Feng Quan departed Chengdu in September 1904 (GX 30.8), with an escort of only one hundred new graduates trained at Police Academy in Chengdu, which had only opened two years earlier. Educated to be local police officers and constables in Chengdu, Feng's escorts sported uniforms with Western-style insignia and hats, as well as leather boots, clearly demarcating them as a different from typical Qing soldiers. Upon taking up his position in Chengdu, Governor-General Xi Liang was even reported to have criticized the Police Academy uniforms as ostentatiously foreign.⁵¹ Despite their smart dress, Feng's escorts were woefully unprepared for the rigors of travel in Tibet or, as we shall see, military engagement.⁵² Arriving in Dartsedo approximately two months later, Feng Quan requested permission to recruit and train local irregulars in Kham to complement his escort. Having consulted with Dartsedo Subprefectural Magistrate Liu Tingshu (打箭爐同知劉廷恕), who had been working on the Kham frontier for over a decade, Feng argued that he could easily recruit enough men to form a battalion with the assistance of the native chieftains in Dartsedo, Litang, and Batang. He also suggested that he leave behind half of his personal escort in Dartsedo so that they could train, to the degree possible, additional militia

⁵¹ Bons d'Anty to Dubail, 23 September 1903, France, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Chine, Politique Intérieure, Dossier Général, vol. 7, quoted in Des Forges, *Hsi-Liang and the Chinese Nationalist Revolution*, 47, note 4. See also Kristin Stapleton, *Civilizing Chengdu: Chinese Urban Reform, 1895-1937* (Cambridge: Harvard Asia Center, 2000), especially Chapter Three, on the history of the Chengdu police force, a key part of the city's New Policy reforms.

⁵² *QCBDS*, no. 0024, 37; and Des Forges, *Hsi-Liang and the Chinese Nationalist Revolution*, 74.

soldiers.⁵³ The Emperor responded, “Conscientiously train them. I earnestly hope that it will be effective.”⁵⁴ Feng Quan’s subsequent memorials show that it was not concern for his own safety but a strong desire to return Nyarong to imperial control that fostered his interest in recruiting local militia. Lu Chuanlin, now sitting on the Grand Council, undoubtedly influenced Feng’s emphasis on military training for this purpose.

While Batang’s strategic location on the border with central Tibet along the southern road was critical, it was not the sole focus in Kham for Xi Liang or Feng Quan. Although not affecting Batang directly, Batang people were certainly aware that Qing authorities were becoming more active in Kham. For example, in September 1904 (GX 30.8), on Feng Quan’s recommendation, Xi Liang ordered the native chieftain positions in Drango to be abolished. As part of Drango’s bureaucratic restructuring, Xi Liang established an agricultural colony staffed by Qing soldiers and overseen by rotating Han officials. In addition, in the same memorial in which he requested permission to recruit and train local soldiers to bolster Qing power in the region, Feng Quan expressed interest in extending the empire’s reach into the far western edge of Kham while not ignoring efforts already underway in Drango. Feng noted, “In making arrangements for Sichuan and Tibetan affairs, agricultural colonies and military training are extremely important duties. However, Drango is in the midst of a conflict. I want to maintain the security of the front road to Tibet, so I will begin by managing the areas of Damshung (‘Dam gzhung, 達木) and Thirty-nine Tribes (三十九族). I also want to protect the back roads in the

⁵³ *QCBDS*, no. 0024, 37; Xizang shehui kexueyuan Xizangxue Hanwen wenxian bianjishi, ed., *Qingdai Zangshi zoudu* (Beijing: Zhongguo Zangxue chubanshe, 1994), 1274, hereafter *QZZ*; and Liu, *Bu ping ming*, 1a-1b.

⁵⁴ *QSL*, GX 30.11, juan 537, as quoted in Wu, “Ji Qing Guangxu sanshiyinian Batang zhi luan,” 44.

Sichuan border regions, so I will begin this work by establishing a new agricultural colony in Drango.”⁵⁵

In addition to the agricultural colony at Drango, Feng Quan attempted to carry out the wishes of the Qing court by aggressively campaigning to recover Nyarong. His superior, High Commissioner to Tibet You Tai, however strongly opposed Feng’s actions, citing potential difficulty in convincing Tibetan officials in Lhasa to give up their control over the region, yet another example of the weakened position of the High Commissioner in Lhasa. Frustrated with You Tai’s handling of the British invasion of central Tibet in 1904, the Qing court overruled You Tai and endorsed Feng’s argument on the importance of reestablishing Qing control in Nyarong and expelling Lhasa officials. Nevertheless, after Feng Quan requested the court to order the Tibetan officials to return to Lhasa, fervent local opposition among the native chieftains and lamas rapidly arose, and Feng Quan was forced to back down.

Continuing their efforts to develop Tibetan areas with the aim of bringing them under greater Qing control, Feng Quan and Xi Liang quickly approved a request from a Sichuan businessman to open a mine in Taining in Tau, northwest of Dartsedo. Feng and Xi strongly believed commercial operations like mines could provide additional tax revenues with which to fund their border operations. For centuries, local people and monks from Garthar (Mgar thar) Monastery in Taining had panned the river for gold, so when outsiders began infringing on their profits, they quickly resisted, destroying the mining equipment and killing the Han mine workers in the process.⁵⁶ Dartsedo Magistrate Liu Tingshu sent his Battalion Vice Commander to suppress the violence, but local residents killed all his soldiers. When Xi Liang heard this news,

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* The Thirty-nine Tribes area is located west and northwest of Chamdo.

⁵⁶ During the Qing dynasty, Garthar Monastery was known in Chinese as Taining Monastery (泰寧寺). Today it is known in Chinese as Huiyuan Monastery (惠遠寺).

he quickly dispatched Sichuan Provincial Military Commander Ma Weiqi (四川提督馬維騏) to lead five battalions, totaling 2,500 soldiers, to Dartsedo to prepare to take action against the Taining resistance. Ma, a career military officer who had fought against the French in Vietnam and was known for his ability to suppress rebellions, arrived in Dartsedo in early April 1905 (GX 31.3), leading Manchu Green Standard soldiers that had been reorganized and retrained into New Army Reserve troops.⁵⁷ Just a few days later Xi Liang learned of an even larger uprising at Batang, which had reached its pinnacle in the last days of March. Xi Liang subsequently ordered Ma to resolve the Taining issue as soon as possible and, after regrouping, proceed immediately to Batang.

Although several days distant from Batang, the Taining uprising is important for two reasons. First, it showed Batang residents that local people could rise up against imperial forces that infringed on their interests, among them natural resources that local people believed belonged to the region's traditional leaders, both secular and religious. It is very likely that the people of Batang saw Feng Quan's aggressive land reclamation projects in the same light that Taining residents saw new mining operations in their territory. More important, the uprising in Taining demanded the attention of Liu Tingshu in Dartsedo and Xi Liang in Chengdu. As we shall see, Feng Quan sensed potential trouble in Batang and sent numerous requests for military reinforcements to Liu Tingshu and Xi Liang in the days immediately prior to the uprising. However, both officials refused his requests, citing the more immediate needs to suppress the active resistance in Taining.

Known for his aggressiveness, Feng Quan remained true to form in Batang. Approximately one month after his arrival, he penned two memorials, both dated January 26,

⁵⁷ Zhao, *Qingshi gao*, juan 459, liezhuan 246; and Sichuan sheng Ganzi junfenqu junshi zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, ed., *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou junshi zhi* (Ganzi: Sichuan sheng Ganzi junfenqu, 1999), 96.

1905 (GX 30.12.21), that spelled out his plans explicitly. Having quickly inspected the experimental land reclamation work initiated by Xi Liang and undertaken by Wu Xizhen and Wu Yizhong, Feng noted that while local officials were making tangible progress, his inspections indicated their estimates on potential land for cultivation were exaggerated and because, “the soil is mixed with sand and stones, in fact the land that can be cultivated and brought to maturity does not exceed five or six thousand *mu*.”⁵⁸ Nevertheless, he predicted with steady work they could easily expand the project from three hundred to one thousand *mu* within the year with the use of military labor. Regarding strengthening Qing control in the region, Feng Quan did not mince words:

Currently, our strength is facing great difficulties, and obtaining funds is not easy. Your servant’s character is circuitous and careful. I do not desire to waste public funds. But I should carry out this plan, and I especially do not dare just to go through the motions perfunctorily and cause harm. So I immediately corresponded with Governor-General Xi Liang to trim down the two defensive battalions within the pass into one robust battalion. Combining them with the troops your servant has already recruited, there will be at least one thousand men. They will be stationed in seven defensive camps and three agricultural camps in Dartsedo, Litang, and Batang. Regulations for their pay and the organization of the camps will carefully emulate the Xiang army.⁵⁹ After becoming an army they will be deployed systematically.

Before that time I should proceed to my duty station in Chamdo. Yet that place is known as a barren area. Not only is the amount of arable land small and the people of Chamdo very tyrannical and haughty, but there are no people that can be recruited [as soldiers]. Please allow me to adjust my recruitment of soldiers to select crack troops and to train and dispatch capable military personnel. I will station them in Gartok, Chamdo, Dragyab, and Shuobanduo (碩般多) as military outposts. Using their skills they will suppress and pacify the people. They will not dare to be even slightly involved in any carelessness.

Your servant is remaining in Batang to lead the agricultural colony and training. In addition, the torment of banditry in Litang is not yet restrained, so I urgently must develop systematic plans to improve things. I previously ordered that we recover Nyarong, and we cannot lose this opportunity. In my humble opinion, Batang is six hundred *li* from Nyarong. One can reach there in ten days. Chamdo is over one thousand *li* from Nyarong. If one encounters an issue needing attention, moving has numerous

⁵⁸ QZZ, 1274.

⁵⁹ A reference to the Hunan army of Zeng Guofan, who was instrumental in suppressing the Taiping rebellion.

obstacles. Directing each of these matters, I would often have to rush off to Sichuan or Nyarong. It is almost as if I am to be stationed in Chamdo I cannot control things from afar.

But your servant still has something further to propose that is very closely related to the military colony at Drango. We must grasp the timely opportunity to recover the Nyarong territory, and afterwards establish reconstruction efforts and set up defenses. We must also connect with the native chieftains in the vicinity and manage the experimental gold mine in Taining. We must carefully oversee matters, and it is quite proper to be stationed in Dartsedo to make arrangements, whereby working in concert [with the native chieftains] we can start to be of use. I should therefore request that in the future I remain in Batang for half the year and temporarily reside in Dartsedo for half a year. All matters can be handled by the appropriate persons, thereby avoiding harm....⁶⁰

As we can see from this memorial, Feng Quan did not waste any time upon arriving in Batang, quickly beginning his efforts to open agricultural land reclamation colonies, train soldiers, and recover Nyarong. He also proposed to divide his time between Batang and Dartsedo so as to carry out his duties more effectively. While he does not state it directly, he knows that even pursuing his responsibilities from Batang will be difficult. Basing his operations in Chamdo, which is located much further from Sichuan and the supplies he needs to support his operations, he now realizes is unrealistic. Feng Quan's argument is cogent, yet the Qing court felt Chamdo was the appropriate duty station for the Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet, and they ordered him to proceed there.⁶¹ Nevertheless, with a better understanding of circumstances on the ground, Feng Quan ignored the court's direction and continued his work from Batang. His efforts impacted Batang in three primary areas.

First, having inspected Wu Xizhen's experimental land reclamation project and read his survey reports, Feng Quan immediately ordered that the project be expanded. However, the approach Feng Quan took departed significantly from Wu's. Rather than move gradually, using local people and resources as Wu had done, Feng ordered the scale of the project be more than

⁶⁰ *QZZ*, 1274-75.

⁶¹ *QSL*, GX 31.1, juan 541.

tripled within one year. He not only employed Qing soldiers garrisoned in Batang but also ordered the recruitment of an additional forty-five Han farmers and laborers from outside Batang to begin land reclamation in three new parts of Batang: Dumra (Ldum rwa, 桃園子), Duzulong (獨足龍), and Zaishidong (載石洞).⁶² Feng himself also noted in the memorial above that the influx of settlers and his own retinue had already strained food supplies in Batang. Leaders of Ba Chöde Monastery, suspicious of the project from the beginning and likely the original owners of most of the land now targeted for development, soon understood Feng's plans threatened an important source of income, so they encouraged the people of Sonlonnong, in whose community the majority of land reclamation efforts had so far taken place, to resist Feng's planned expansion. The people of Sonlonnong in turn petitioned Feng Quan several times to suspend his expansion plans, likely arguing that the additional burden of supplying Feng Quan's soldiers and future settlers with grain left them with insufficient food to feed themselves. In what was becoming a pattern of response to requests for accommodation, Feng Quan consistently rebuffed their pleas.

Second, Feng Quan also successfully recruited one hundred new local Tibetan soldiers and began regular, Western-style military training exercises for them and his retinue of fifty Han soldiers, tactics that his Chengdu Police Academy graduate escorts knew well, and likely very familiar to Feng Quan, who had built his career on bandit suppression campaigns in Sichuan. In this sense, we can consider Feng Quan to belong to a more reformist cohort of officials

⁶² Yuan Xiaowen and Li Jin, "Jiaoliu yu ronghe—guanyu Batang Hanzu de ge an fenxi," *Heilongjiang minzu congkan* 1 (2001): 94. In fact, Feng Quan is referring to the same places where Wu Xizhen and Wu Yizhong had already begun land reclamation efforts. Dumra is located approximately ten kilometers southwest of Batang proper on the main road toward Lhasa, adjacent to Cashu Mountain. Duzulong is an alternative spelling of Ditanggong, and Zaishidong (載石洞) is a different spelling for Zaishidong (載石洞). See "Baan gaikuang ziliao jiyao," in *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, ed. He Guoguang (N.p.: Citangjie yulinzhang daiyin, 1936); and Batang xian diming lingdao xiaozu, *Sichuan sheng Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou Batang xian diminglu*, 32.

supportive of the New Policy reforms sweeping much of China proper.⁶³ Feng's purported purpose was to train these recruits in preparation for a campaign to recover Nyarong, but their very public activities in Batang certainly aroused concern. Batang people were accustomed to Qing soldiers in town. As described in Chapter Two, the Commissariat had overseen a Qing garrison in Batang since the early eighteenth century, when as many as five hundred soldiers had been stationed there. Over the last two centuries their numbers had dwindled to less than one hundred, and while drilling certainly occurred, their earlier techniques and routines had likely become familiar to local people long ago. Moreover, it was not uncommon for at least some soldiers to marry local women and settle in Batang after completing their three years of service, further breaking down barriers that may have existed between local Batang residents and garrisoned Qing soldiers. Feng Quan's soldiers, on the other hand, were different. They wore western-style uniforms, marched to the beat of a foreign drum, and responded to orders in an unfamiliar language, neither Chinese nor Tibetan. They also carried new, more advanced rifles. Rather than seeing them as a foreign novelty, however, the people of Batang, already resenting Feng's new soldiers for creating local food shortages, also likely feared them.⁶⁴

Finally, suspicious of the size and influence of the monasteries in Litang and Batang, Feng Quan requested in his second memorial from Batang dated January 26, 1905, that the court re-proclaim previous limits on the number of monks housed at monasteries in Tibetan areas petitioned by Nian Gengyao in 1724. Outlining his argument, Feng memorialized:

In the Litang area the native chieftains have long been weak. Every day they work by exploiting the Tibetan people, and ninety percent of the buildings are vacant. The monks are numerous and the people few. The number of lamas in the great monastery exceeds

⁶³ See Roger R. Thompson, *China's Local Councils in the Age of Constitutional Reform, 1898-1911* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1995); and Stapleton, *Civilizing Chengdu* for thorough analysis of the New Policy Reforms.

⁶⁴ Liu, *Bu ping ming*, 1b.

four or five thousand. They take advantage of this to subjugate the native chieftains and ruthlessly exploit the Tibetan people. They have had this long-standing habit for too many years. Our garrisons and defensive military outposts are feeble. The civilian and military officers [just] stare at each other and no one dares to do anything. Plundering is as frequent as before, and half of them take the monastery as a place of refuge. This leads to travelling merchants having to pay bribes to the monastery to guarantee their safety. If we want to seize a *jagpa* [bandit], invariably the monks will take another bribe, allow him to escape, and sit around in idleness....

Recently there was the case of the French Father Bourdonnec being robbed. Fortunately, no one was injured. The territories of Huangtugang (黄土岡) and Ganhaizi (乾海子) are haunted with bandits. This year, I directed the civil and military officials of Dartsedo and Litang, as well as these native chieftains, to arrest them before a strict deadline. I also directed them to dispatch rank-and-file soldiers from Batang, and local officials offered cash rewards to assist in apprehending them in the hopes of capturing the bandits.

The Jiaochu Lamasery (茆出喇嘛寺) colluded with the criminals, and together they have been heavily punished in order to pacify the region. However, to fully uproot and eliminate these problems, we cannot do without placing certain limits on the monasteries. If we do not immediately plan in this way, then others will successively emulate these bad examples, and I fear they will inhibit us from taking care of matters in the future. I intend to request that you proclaim the former system whereby all large monasteries in native chieftain territories cannot exceed three hundred monks, and that for a limited period of twenty years the system of tonsuring be temporarily suspended.⁶⁵ Hereafter, we will determine numbers based on registered persons, and we will not permit even a single monk to be calculated secretly [ordained off the books]. As for monks who are now under the age of thirteen, I will order their families to take custody of them and have them return to secular life.

Your servant has strictly commanded the native chieftains and *khenpo* to order the monks of the large monasteries to return to their original tribes, but I will also build small monasteries for those studying Buddhism to live separately. By these means I will divide their power. I request that you jointly instruct the Lifanyuan to deliberate the implementation of these policies. With such methods, the number of monks will decrease daily, and the number of [lay] people will increase daily for the next twenty years. The efficacy of having land with people on it is very obvious in comparison to families roaming about and insincere believers sitting around in idleness.⁶⁶

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

⁶⁵ Tonsuring refers to the ceremony whereby new entrants are ordained in a monastery.

⁶⁶ *QZZ*, 1275-76.

This memorial is widely cited as the primary source of the enmity that Batang people directed toward Feng Quan, and there is no doubt that it contributed directly to his demise at their hands. While this proposal was certainly an affront to the people of Batang, for the Qing court it was an attempt to re-enforce a policy from the Empire's earlier days. In other words, Feng Quan was not proposing a new policy. In fact, he was merely requesting that the court re-proclaim a policy first proposed by Nian Gengyao in 1724 in response to similar circumstances in Tibet that obstructed imperial power. Both Nian, who proposed limiting monasteries to two hundred monks, and Feng rightly equated the massive numbers of monks in monasteries with their overwhelming power and influence in local society.⁶⁷ From Feng's perspective, the monasteries undermined the power of the native chieftains to such an extent that when a monastery harbored a suspected criminal, native chieftains and local Qing officials had no recourse. Given the long history of anti-missionary violence in the region, it is significant that Feng Quan uses the example of bandits who had attacked a French priest outside of Litang to make his point. At the same time, Feng Quan pointed out that the monasteries negatively impacted local production. He noted, for example, the demands for "road insurance" that monastic officials in Sanyan and other locations placed on merchants traveling in the region, suggesting that such actions hindered the development of commercial activity. He also pointed out what he considered to be the absence of common people in the region. Attributing this situation to monastic over-population, he argued that more common people would mean more laborers, who in turn could increase production in the region.

⁶⁷ Dung dkar Blo bzang 'Phrin las estimates the number of monks in central Tibet and Kham to be 319,270 in 1733, not long after Nian's announced his policy. Assuming the population of those regions to be approximately 2.5 million at that time, monks constituted about thirteen percent of the total population and about twenty-six percent of the male population. See Dung dkar Blo bzang 'Phrin las, *Bod kyi chos srid zung 'brel skor bshad pa* (Beijing: n.p., 1983), 109; and Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, 21.

While the court considered his recommendation to limit the size of monasteries, Feng Quan consulted with his staff on his next steps in Batang. The general attitude of his staff toward Feng's aggressive proposals is not known, but Zha Qian (查騫), who became Litang's Commissariat Officer in 1905 right after Feng's demise, highlights the dissent of one experienced officer. Zha noted that Feng's senior advisor, District Magistrate Qin Zongfan (秦宗藩), in fact refused to draft or endorse his proposals to the court. Qin, who had accompanied former High Commissioner to Tibet Sheng Tai (升泰) in Lhasa from 1886 to 1890, where he participated in negotiations with the British, had lived and worked in Tibetan areas for many years, and he advised Feng Quan against proceeding with his plans to advance Batang's bureaucratic restructuring and limit the number of monks in individual monasteries.⁶⁸ However, even though he did not have explicit permission from the court, Feng Quan publically proclaimed his intentions and began to move forward, demanding the native chieftains and *khenpo* have the lamas from the large monasteries return to their homes and, at the same time, construct small monasteries to accommodate those who wanted to continue their monastic training. The court would later instruct Feng Quan "to deliberate and memorialize" again, but their instructions would be too late.⁶⁹ Feeling increasingly threatened on both the economic front due to expanded land reclamation efforts and the spiritual front due to impending monastic limits, Ba Chöde Monastery had no choice but to act to protect their interests.

Further fearing Feng's intentions, local people submitted numerous petitions to Feng Quan that hinted at violence and unrest if he did not curb his programs and improve his soldiers' discipline, but they again met with disdain. Feng Quan in fact turned a blind eye to any concern

⁶⁸ Zha, *Bian Zang fengtu ji*, juan 2, 5a.

⁶⁹ Wang Xianqian, ed., *Donghua xulü* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1890), juan 191, as quoted in Wu, *Qingdai Zangshi jiyao xubian*, n.p.

expressed by Batang's local people. His focus remained on Wu Xizhen's experimental land reclamation project, and he saw Ba Chöde Monastery, which easily swayed the thinking of the local people, as an obstruction that needed to be removed to expand his land reclamation efforts. As Feng Quan mentioned in his memorial, not long after he arrived in Batang, bandits robbed French priest Father Bourdonnec outside Litang. Upon hearing rumors that the bandits had close connections with Ba Chöde Monastery, Feng Quan ordered local officials to investigate and punish severely all those involved. This action certainly did not help his already strained relationship with the monastery.

Perhaps sensing the potential for violence, Feng Quan wrote to his friend and colleague in Dartsedo, Liu Tingshu, on January 20, 1905 (GX 31.1.26), to request that the fifty police academy graduates he had left behind there advance to Batang:

I deeply apologize for not writing to you for such a long time.... I have been posted in Batang for some time, but my state of mind is quite low. I very much want to recover Nyarong, and you have personally attended to this task, contributing all your efforts throughout. However, there was the communication from Meng Qin (夢琴)⁷⁰ who directly stated that recovering Nyarong is completely out of the question. This infuriated me. At present I have forwarded up the chain of command the urgency of this matter. We will see how the court thinks and then take action. You have worked for your country with virtue and have a clear conscience.... If in the end we cannot take action on this matter [of recovering Nyarong], then I will hang up my hat and retire. I plan to wait for approval of my memorial, and then I will immediately take action. I generally anticipate returning to Dartsedo around the time of the Duanwu Festival [June 7, 1905].

In addition, I understand Battalion Commander Zhang Hongsheng (張鴻聲) long ago arrived in Dartsedo. If the battalion he led has merged into an army by dismissing the others, I urged that you command him to select two hundred⁷¹ armed soldiers and lead them out of the pass to Batang during the first part of February (GX 31.2). Following my previous order, one hundred will be posted in Litang and the remaining will come to Batang where they will await further postings.

⁷⁰ Style for High Commissioner to Tibet You Tai, who indicated his continued refusal to allow Qing officials in Sichuan to attempt to regain control over Nyarong.

⁷¹ *QZZ* indicates this number to be twenty thousand, clearly a typographical error. Liu Tingshu's *Bu ping ming* correctly indicates this number to be two hundred.

Feng Quan's letter reveals that his primary focus remained on recovering Nyarong, even after residing in Batang for two months. Petitions from Batang local residents and a possible threat of violence did not yet concern him. Rather, Feng lamented the fact that his superior You Tai rejected his proposal to recover Nyarong, by force if necessary. In subsequent weeks, however, tensions in Batang rose significantly, and Feng Quan sent several letters to Liu Tingshu seeking assistance. On March 24, 1905 (GX 31.2.19), Feng Quan's brief missive sent via immediate courier to Liu Tingshu reads:

Previously I hurriedly sent a letter urging you to dispatch Zhang Hongsheng in command of two companies of crack Han soldiers to go quickly to Litang to defend against the Tibetan bandits. In recent days, Tibetan bandits in Batang have called together three to four hundred people, and every day they wantonly steal and loot. They claim they will burn down the church and surround and attack the yamen. Although I am remaining calm and composed, the strength of our soldiers is inadequate, and there is nothing that I can do about it. I am therefore sending this immediate communication to you so that you will forthwith select capable sentry guards who are familiar with Tibetan matters and, together with the fifty defensive soldiers I left behind in Dartsedo, lead them quickly to Batang as a show of strength and to aid in deterring them. I also request that you order them to prepare extra weapons and ammunition to assist in our response. This is of utmost importance.⁷²

The following day, Feng Quan sent another communication to Xi Liang stating, "The Tibetan bandits in Batang have emerged, and they are pillaging. They are saying that they will obstruct our military exercises and land reclamation work. Their harassment has reached the yamen. I dispatched soldiers to chase them down and arrest them, but their route took them by the monastery. How could they [the monks] dare to open fire and injure the men? I am beginning to understand that most of the disturbances caused by the Tibetan bandits are caused primarily by the monks. I have quickly called on the battalions in Dartsedo to advance to Litang and Batang."⁷³ Feng Quan's pleas for assistance, despite increasing violence in Batang, fell on deaf

⁷² *QZZ*, 1280.

⁷³ *QCBDS*, no. 0032, 47.

ears, as both Liu Tingshu and Xi Liang remained preoccupied with more immediate problems at their mining project in Taining, where Qing soldiers had already been killed.⁷⁴

As recorded by two Qing officials, Batang Commissariat Officer Wu Xizhen and Litang Commissariat Officer Zha Qian, the situation in Batang dramatically deteriorated in the following days. Zha, who took up his position as Litang Commissariat Officer just a few months after Feng Quan's death as Ma Weiqi was leading his expedition to Batang, wrote at length about the violence in Batang, noting, "Rumors were rapidly spreading saying that 'the short uniforms of the defensive guards Feng Quan brought with him and the foreign drums and training exercises are all from the foreigners. Feng Quan is not an imperial envoy, and he will confiscate our land, livestock, and property, and present them to the foreigners.' As a result, the Tibetans became very clamorous, and between March 26-27, 1905 (GX 31.2.21-22), the situation boiled over."⁷⁵

On those days the people of Qicungou, a cluster of seven villages located northeast of Batang proper, torched the fields in Sonlonnong and killed some of the Han farmers working there, marking the first bloodshed in the escalating conflict.⁷⁶ The outbreak of violence, reported Wu Xizhen, alarmed French priest Father Henri-Georges Mussot (牧守仁), who abandoned his church and sought protection in the compound of deputy native chieftain Jampa Jetsun. However, based on a report from one of Jampa Jetsun's staff members, Father Mussot and one of his

⁷⁴ Zha, *Bian Zang fengtu ji*, juan 2, 1b.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 2b.

⁷⁶ Qicungou's seven villages include: Dam (Gdam, 黨村 or 黨巴村), Shikhatang (Gzhis kha thang, 魚卡通), Buxutong (布須同), Shigogang (Bzhi mgo sgang, 易古工 or 英古貢村), Maoxi (卯溪), Tramagang (Phra ma sgang, 扎馬 or 茶馬貢), and Bangxi (邦喜). Liu Dingyi, "Zhao Erfeng jingying Chuanbian wenjian yishu" in *Sichuan wenshi ziliao xuanji*, vol. 6, ed., Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Sichuan sheng weiyuanhui Sichuan sheng shengzhi bianji weiyuanhui (Chengdu: n.p., 1963), 19; and Batang xian diming lingdao xiaozu, *Sichuan sheng Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou Batang xian diminglu*, 69.

congregation members, Ao Fuxing (敖復興), fled from the compound during the night of March 29 (GX 31.2.24) without informing anyone of their intentions. The disappearance of a foreigner during a time of heightened tensions greatly concerned Wu Xizhen, who immediately dispatched soldiers throughout the region to search for him. However, a week later Wu learned via letter that Father Mussot had “encountered trouble” and was most likely killed, although the location of his body could not be easily determined.

Following Father Mussot’s disappearance, Wu Xizhen communicated with the head native chieftain and Lama Phagpa Kunzang of Ba Chöde Monastery, urging them to calm the growing crowds, even authorizing them to offer cash rewards to those who assisted them. Despite Wu’s efforts, the people remained defiant and, refusing to disperse, their numbers only grew. On the evening of April 2nd (GX31.2.28), Wu learned that a building at the land reclamation site in Zaishidong had been torched. Wu immediately reported this to Feng Quan, who seemed surprised at the boldness of the local residents, who by now had proceeded to cut off the supply of water and firewood to Feng Quan’s compound.⁷⁷ To better defend his position, Feng Quan ordered Battalion Vice Commander Wu Yizhong to lead a contingent of eighty newly-trained local soldiers outside the compound and protect it from the exterior. At the same time, he had head native chieftain Tashi Jetsun and deputy native chieftain Jampa Jetsun organize several dozen *gutsa* to protect the interior of his compound. Finally, he ordered Wu Xizhen to work with local Han residents to patrol the streets and gather information about possible actions the crowd might take.

Wu Xizhen noted in his report chronicling Batang’s uprising that on that evening (April 2nd), “As the time neared the first watch, just as the clock struck, the Han residents suddenly

⁷⁷ Zha, *Bian Zang fengtu ji*, juan 2, 3a.

heard the sound of cries and gun shots mere inches away. There were several groups of Tibetan bandits, approximately 3,500 to 3,600, who were infiltrating and harassing them from all sides. No one could stop their violence. One group surrounded and stayed at the church, where bullets fell like rain.”⁷⁸ One soldier was killed and several injured while defending the church, which quickly burned to the ground. The same evening crowds attacked Wu Xizhen’s temporary residence, the home of Aten (A brtan, 阿登), a staff member (業壩) of the head native chieftain. Flying stones and gunfire raged through the night, and Wu Xizhen fled to the safety of a *gutsa*, where he joined over twenty other Han residents seeking refuge from the violence.

The crowd also exchanged sporadic gunfire outside Feng Quan’s compound that evening, but by the dawn of April 3rd, the local people had dispersed. Only now did Feng Quan begin to fear for his life, and taking advantage of the lull in violence he fled to the compound of the head native chieftain. According to Zha Qian, by this time the local soldiers that Feng had recruited had all abandoned him, leaving him with only the fifty police academy graduates who had accompanied him from Chengdu. Not wanting to confront either the head native chieftain in his compound or Feng Quan’s protective force with their modern weapons, the crowd surrounded Tashi Jetsun’s compound but did not attack it. Within the compound, Feng Quan advised his local interpreters (同事) to meet with the monks to tell them that he would provide additional funds to make up for their burdens. However, Qin Zongfan, Feng’s senior advisor who had already opposed Feng’s proposal to limit the size of the monasteries, alone disagreed. Arguing that face is extremely important to Tibetans, Qin himself volunteered to meet the monks and to try to restore order in Batang. Unfortunately, soon after departing Feng’s compound, local

⁷⁸ Liu, *Bu ping ming*, 5b; and *QZZ*, 1282.

Tibetans seized him and, considering him a traitor, shot him in the head.⁷⁹ Wu Xizhen reported that later that day, “like ants these bandits swarmed together in even greater numbers, and the sound of gunfire became even more chaotic.” In addition to Qin Zongfan, Battalion Vice Commander Wu Yizhong and more than ten other soldiers were killed on April 3rd. Many more suffered injuries, including deputy native chieftain Jampa Jetsun, and among the local residents fighting against Feng Quan there were already over one hundred dead and injured. Despite their casualties, the crowd continued to encircle the head native chieftain’s compound while others looted and destroyed the yamen compound recently abandoned by Feng Quan.⁸⁰

Zha Qian continues his narrative, “Batang’s Mollification Commissioner (宣撫司) Tashi Jetsun and deputy native chieftain Jampa Jetsun had plotted in advance and long wanted to drive Feng Quan out. They strongly encouraged Feng Quan to return as quickly as possible to Dartsedo and then come back with an army to root out the rebels and pacify the uprising. They also frightened Feng, saying that if he did not get out of Batang as quickly as possible then the Tibetans and monks would certainly get hold of key strategic positions and guard the passes. They would also burn down the [homes of] Han residents, and this would spread to our local compound and all of us would then suffer from this calamity.”⁸¹ Heeding the advice of the native chieftains, Feng immediately ordered them to prepare corvée for his departure.

Still holed up in his safe haven with his landlord, a staffer of the head native chieftain, Wu Xizhen was surprised to receive news on the afternoon of April 5 (GX 31.3.1) that Feng Quan had left the native chieftain’s compound and was returning to Dartsedo as quickly as possible. He recorded what happened next:

⁷⁹ Zha, *Bian Zang fengtu ji*, juan 2, 3a.

⁸⁰ Liu, *Bu ping ming*, 5b; and *QZZ*, 1282.

⁸¹ Zha, *Bian Zang fengtu ji*, juan 2, 3a-3b.

I was utterly confused, and thereupon heard the sound of people and the neighs of horses outside my door. I pushed open my window to look, and I saw Commissioner Feng's sedan chair had already passed. The Tibetan bandits were following closely behind carrying their weapons. Your servant quickly descended the stairs and pushed open the door. I ran like mad to catch up and stopping his sedan chair I wept bitterly. Commissioner Feng also wept bitterly and instructed me, "These Tibetans have trouble with me, but with you they have no grudge. I commanded the three *chö zong* to order them to break up and disperse, pardon their crimes, and exempt them from investigation." Because the Tibetan's character is unfathomable, your servant deeply feared he was being duped and urged him numerous times to remain. He absolutely should not have proceeded, but Commissioner Feng would not allow it.

Your servant then asked to accompany him, and Commissioner Feng only allowed me to send him off a short distance, but he ordered me [first] to don my official cap as soon as possible and then proceed. Your servant quickly sent a house servant to return home and fetch my cap, while the sedan chair soon disappeared. In the early afternoon your servant passed by the City God Temple, and my house servant arrived with my cap. My advisors, house servants, and over twenty Han residents were also coming back. Your servant suffered from not having a horse, but it so happened that a soldier in the rear was leading a mule on foot. Your servant in a panic wanted to mount the mule from behind, and in a flurry I was kicked in the left leg by the mule and fell to the ground. The mule had already run ahead, and Commissioner Feng's sedan chair was no longer visible in the dust. The Han residents quickly gathered around me and strongly requested I return home. Your servant's leg was already injured and it was very difficult for me to walk, so I had no choice but to return home for medical treatment in the company of my advisors, household help, and the Han residents.⁸²

Having travelled approximately twenty *li* outside of Batang proper, Feng Quan and his retinue of fifty soldiers arrived at Degodraglam (Sde mgo brag lam, 鹦哥嘴), where the valley becomes constricted and the road narrows.⁸³ Here, a group of Tibetans waited to ambush Feng Quan. With charging Tibetans in the front, more Tibetans blocking his retreat in the rear, and stones and boulders falling from the steep hillsides above, Feng Quan knew his fate was sealed. Later reports state that Feng Quan alighted from his sedan chair and turned himself north towards Beijing. Thanking the Emperor for his vast and mighty grace, he knelt three times, kowtowed nine, and awaited his fate. As several thousand Tibetans swarmed around him, Lobpon Namgyal

⁸² Liu, *Bu ping ming*, 6a; and *QZZ*, 1282-83.

⁸³ Batang xian diming lingdao xiaozu, *Sichuan sheng Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou Batang xian diminglu*, 122.

(Slob dpon Rnam rgyal, 隆本郎吉) approached Feng Quan from behind and shot him dead in the head.⁸⁴ Over fifty others lost their lives as well.

Wu Xizhen was so shocked at this turn of events that he wrote, “Your servant wept bitterly at this heartache and spit up fresh blood. Feeling dizzy, I fell to the ground and was revived but a half hour later. I immediately wanted to die to avoid the bizarre disaster in front of us.” With chaos swarming around him, Wu Xizhen understood the importance of staying out of sight and working through his landlord whenever possible. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the communication between Wu and Feng Quan was not always smooth. One would expect two imperial civil officials in Batang to work closely together, even if they disagreed on policy. While extant documents do verify their collaboration on Wu’s land reclamation project during Feng’s initial days in Batang, later events indicate Feng did not consult with Wu and acted independently. For example, Wu was obviously caught unawares by Feng Quan’s decision to depart Batang. It is also likely that Wu had little say in Feng’s contentious decision to limit the size of monasteries. Wu Xizhen’s report on the uprising at Batang suggests he quickly realized Feng Quan’s aggressive approach could create trouble, so he intentionally distanced himself from Feng as much as possible. Wu’s decision, yet another example of the gradualist, semi-*laissez faire* approach to frontier governance that characterized Commissariat Officers in Batang, clearly saved his life.

Wu knew that Qing officials would respond harshly to Feng Quan’s murder, and so did the people of Batang. Soon recovering his senses, Wu rededicated himself to serving Batang, noting “I work for the region, for the Han residents, and also for Batang, which is the throat of the Sichuan-Tibetan region. Supposing your servant was to die, not only would we lose this

⁸⁴ Zha, *Bian Zang fengtu ji*, juan 2, 3b.

region, but all of Tibet would tremble. This would compound [Batang's] crimes, and it would be reviled for all generations.”⁸⁵ The day after Feng Quan's murder, Batang's two native chieftains added their seals to a petition prepared by representatives of all the villages in Batang explaining the reasons for their actions against Feng Quan. Following Zha Qian, who claimed that Batang's native chieftains colluded with the instigators of the unrest from the beginning and wanted to drive Feng Quan out of the region as soon as possible, almost all Chinese sources condemn Tashi Jetsun and Jampa Jetsun together with the monks of Ba Chöde Monastery. However, certain actions suggest the native chieftains were not fully committed to the anti-Feng Quan activities in Batang. As described previously, they enthusiastically supported the initial experimental land reclamation project proposed by Wu Xizhen several years earlier. In addition, the deputy native chieftain, Jampa Jetsun, provided shelter to Father Mussot when it became clear he would be in danger if he remained in his church. Jampa Jetsun himself also suffered injuries, presumably while protecting Qin Zongfan, who had left the protective walls of the yamen to negotiate with the lamas but was killed en route. Most revealing of their intentions, however, is the petition for leniency and admission of guilt they submitted to Wu Xizhen the day after Feng Quan's murder. Dated April 6, 1905 (GX 31.3.2) and addressed to Liu Tingshu, the native chieftains wrote:

The son of Heaven, the Emperor, entrusted his servant the Lord of Dartsedo,⁸⁶ Liu Tingshu, to oversee imperial law. In the presence of the yamen, the people of all the villages in Batang have translated for your convenience our sorrows in this report:

The reasons for this affair are such that when our superior Lord was in office, Commander Wu [Xizhen] arrived in Batang. After this the civil and military officials had the honor of receiving an order to begin land reclamation work. They quickly observed each of the numerous locations where local people were working. They had reclaimed over several hundred *mu* of land and built several houses, yet the local people still did not dare to obstruct them.

⁸⁵ Liu, *Bu ping ming*, 6a; and *QZZ*, 1283.

⁸⁶ “Lord” in this text is written as *poben* (頗本), a Chinese transliteration of the Tibetan term *ponpo* (dpon po).

Later, on December 24th of last year (GX 30.11.18), Feng Quan arrived here escorting soldiers and others. He quickly instructed his soldiers to teach [local recruits] how to practice foreign drill techniques, study foreign languages, and adopt foreign customs. In addition, he himself began registering all the Han and Tibetan people, young and old, male and female. Because in previous years French churches were established in three locations in Batang, there have been foreigners here. Since that time, their actions have offended the gods and defiled heaven and earth. As a result, in recent years people have become sick and there have been unusual natural disasters. We have suffered from droughts, and our harvests have been less than half of previous years’.

Just as all this was happening and the people were suffering from starvation and destitution, numerous soldiers suddenly arrived. Commander Wu Yizhong also gathered many local workers from other places, but the amount of grain we produced locally was not even sufficient for local people to live off of. Then he [Feng Quan] would not go to other places to arrange for importing grain and stubbornly depended only on local grain. He also prohibited local people from buying any grain for sale. The officials gave all of it to soldiers and local workers to consume and did not care if the local people had any to eat or not. At the same time the local officials and people were having such difficulties, he even ordered the purchase of grains [for his use].

The local officials and people had absolutely no alternative. The public grains that we had provided were soon to disappear, and then nothing would exist for us to consume. He also ordered that if there was someone who did not sell his grain, then he would certainly make the soldiers and local workers go and eat it in his home. For the several months that Feng Quan was in Batang, the local people calculated that he should pay in total two thousand *liang* for labor, beef, mutton, eggs, fuel, and legumes. However, for these accounts that are due and for these hardships, there is still no one to whom we can express our grievances.

Day and night all the people of Batang fervently adhere to Buddhism and respect the classics of the Gelug tradition. Ba Chöde Monastery has over 1,500 monks, and almost all of them recite scriptures. All are devout Buddhists. In our humble opinion, this monastery was established long ago, and over the successive generations of emperors there has not been one that this monastery has not respectfully lauded with boundless fortune and long life. Our very lives are mere benefits of His grace, and they have not created any trouble whatsoever.

Since Feng Quan came to Batang, he did not consider religion important, and he often proclaimed before the people, “Each monastery is only permitted to house three hundred monks. The remaining over 1,200 must immediately return to secular life. If you do not follow this order, then I will definitely have you executed.” Upon hearing this, the common people jointly prepared numerous reports in Tibetan requesting that he not permit this so the region’s difficulties would be quieted. They earnestly requested he be lenient and not implement this. Who would have expected that after submitting these reports, he would not only reject them, but on the contrary reproach us with foul language?

He also falsely accused the local people of being thieves and the monks of the monastery being the chief instigators of a den of criminals.

He had absolutely no compassion for the lives of the monks and common people. He distributed under his own name announcements saying that he has dispatched troops to transport grain and military ammunition. . . . He did all this many times, and some of his special assistants left. Those soldiers who were on guard spread rumors that when they deployed they would first come to attack the monastery and then burn the homes of the common people. For this reason people from each village gathered in Batang to talk about the situation. We wanted to submit a report and requested to do so numerous times. We all wanted to make the officials and people mutually at peace and to calm the region down.

Just as we were conferring, Commander Wu Yizhong personally led troops carrying guns and swords. They were going to attack, and at this time the people in the neighborhood obstructed them. In addition, on March 26 (GX 31.2.21), Commander Wu again led many troops carrying guns and cannons to attack Ba Chöde Monastery. The surrounding wall of the Jiangbaoding Nunnery (將寶鼎庵館)⁸⁷ was completely destroyed by guns and cannons, and over ten *geshe* lamas were killed. A short time later we heard that Feng Quan and Commander Wu were secretly discussing to transfer completely all the people of Batang—Han and Tibetan, commoners and monks—to the administration of the foreigners. This affects both national matters and the local people. We could not even entertain this idea, and therefore we began to see the situation clearly.

However, our natural dispositions are like dogs and goats, and our foolish stupidity arose. Again and again we thought there is no way this can be carried out. We only knew that the great emperor of the Qing dynasty would in fact take this as a true domestic calamity caused by the local interference of a corrupt official. We do not deny that we are guilty. We were temporarily deranged, and we have already murdered two Han officials together with one foreigner. We Tibetans were originally ridding the country of harm, and in fact we had no choice. We beg of your grace to be forgiving and kind and not to start armed conflict. If another imperial official comes with soldiers, then the local people have sworn an oath of allegiance to abandon the ten official transit stations between Litang in the east and Nandun (南墩) in the west. All official correspondence, memorials, and reports will be obstructed. We are willing to kill all the people of the region, not leaving behind chickens, dogs, or even a blade of grass. We swear we will uproot absolutely everything with no regrets.

If in your benevolence and grace you would condescend to consider pardoning our lives, then the people will willingly acknowledge their guilt, and we will carry out the official duties we are charged with, including all official correspondence. We will never forget the universal grace of the great emperor and that we below have gone against him.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ This nunnery was likely located in the vicinity of Gyapangdeng on the outskirts of Batang proper.

⁸⁸ Liu, *Bu ping ming*, 8a-9b; and *QZZ*, 1280-81.

As this text shows, there was clear distinction between Wu Xizhen and Feng Quan in the minds of the Batang people. They tolerated Wu Xizhen's experimental land reclamation efforts, but Feng Quan's arrival raised their suspicions. Significantly, the native chieftains cited Feng Quan's foreignness as their first concern. They immediately associated Feng's novel military exercises and odd habits, such as practicing *taiqi* breathing exercises every morning on the roof of his residence, with the French missionaries in Batang, whom they had long blamed for poor harvests and other calamities. Only following this did they raise the more immediate burdens on Batang's fragile food supplies of additional soldiers and workers brought in on Feng Quan's orders. The native chieftains also pointed to Feng Quan's aggressive policies against the monasteries as a source of trouble. Despite petitioning him to reconsider his plans to drastically curb the number of monks in the region, Feng refused to budge. When Wu Yizhong attacked Ba Chöde Monastery, destroying an exterior wall and killing ten high-ranking and learned monks, the situation deteriorated even more. What pushed the local people to violence, however, was not the expanded land reclamation effort, the possibility of starvation, or the impending limits on the number of monks in local monasteries. It was rather a rumor that Feng Quan intended to turn over their territory to the foreigners that led them to violence. The French priests, it seems, so threatened traditional power holders in Batang that they decided armed resistance was their only recourse.

Many factors influenced the decision of the Batang people to rise up and murder Feng Quan. For example, his proposed reforms, both realized and only proclaimed, directly impacted important sources of power for Batang's traditional leadership and no doubt contributed to the uprising. Prior to his arrival in Batang, Feng's bureaucratic restructuring in Drango was also a wakeup call for all native chieftains in the region that their hereditary positions were no longer

secure. His intention to reduce the size of Ba Chöde Monastery by eighty percent, which would dramatically reduce the monastery's spiritual influence, and his appropriation of more uncultivated land and existing food resources threatened the monastery's economic foundations, both legitimate reasons for the monks to resist Feng. Finally, Wu Xizhen later suggests that outsiders from Chamdo, Litang, Nyarong, and Sanyan participated in the Batang uprising,⁸⁹ and secondary literature on this incident frequently claims that Ba Chöde monks acted on instructions from Lhasa. The *Batang County Gazetteer*, published in 1993, even states that Ba Chöde monks secretly sought and received permission from Lhasa to prevent Feng Quan from entering Tibet and assuming his position in Chamdo, although it cites no primary source.⁹⁰

Each of these factors contributed to Feng Quan's demise, but we must also consider how Feng Quan's methods of implementing his reforms contributed to Batang's uprising. Feng's colleagues regarded him as both capable and stubborn. His contemporary Zha Qian notes Feng Quan was known to be "capable of controlling thieves by vigorously stamping them down," but he was obstinate and arrogant. As I have shown above, Zha also confirms that Feng rarely heeded the advice of others and often contradicted his colleagues and superiors.⁹¹ For example, rather than accepting the advice of his colleagues with much greater experience in dealing with Tibetans, Feng Quan moved forward very quickly with expanding Batang's land reclamation project. While small in scale and producing modest results at best, Wu Xizhen and his colleagues in Batang began this project over a year earlier and encountered no resistance from the local people. Their success is especially significant given the reluctance of Ba Chöde Monastery leadership to support the project from the very beginning and is a testament to the effectiveness

⁸⁹ Liu, *Bu ping ming*, 6b; and *QZZ*, 1283.

⁹⁰ *BTXZ*, 251.

⁹¹ Zha, *Bian Zang fengtu ji*, juan 2, 1b.

of local Qing officials' semi-*laissez faire* approach to frontier management. Moreover, Feng's most controversial policy of limiting the number of monks per monastery and constructing smaller monasteries to accommodate those monks who would continue their studies had not yet received imperial approval. Nevertheless, Feng Quan brazenly moved forward with its implementation.

Beyond his style of policy implementation, Feng Quan's personality proved difficult for local Tibetans to accept. He frequently criticized Tibetans in public, and Zha Qian notes, "It became Feng Quan's nature to hurl abuses [at Tibetans] daily. He was not the least bit vigilant, and he also did not take any defensive measures. When he met with Tibetan headmen, he was careless and without manners. Sometimes he even hit the Tibetan headmen on their heads with his copper cigarette filter and sternly berated them saying, 'Keep you head on your shoulders, because sooner or later I am going to kill you barbarian dogs.'"⁹² Later, when Batang's two native chieftains gathered the region's headmen for an audience with Feng Quan, Feng made them kneel and did not allow them to get up. Embarrassing the head native chieftain in front of his subordinate headmen, Feng Quan derided two important symbols of Tashi Jetsun's imperial authority. Tapping his cigarette filter on Tashi Jetsun's plumed cap, Feng quipped, "You barbarian dogs wear red buttons and plumed flowered caps? When I see your cap covered in yak butter, I know you won't be wearing it for long!" While the native chieftains may have originally supported Qing land reclamation and other reform efforts in Batang, it is very likely they could not bear such insults and joined forces with local people and monks to oppose Feng.⁹³ As Zhao

⁹² *Ibid.*, 2b.

⁹³ *BYXZ*, 251.

Erfeng later wrote, “in the beginning the head native chieftain was not secretly planning to rebel, but as the situation continued he too openly assisted in the wickedness.”⁹⁴

Given Batang’s long-term contentious relationship with foreign missionaries, the obvious anti-foreigner tone of the protesters is significant. It is the foreign drills, including drums and whistles; the foreign clothes; the foreign speech; and the rumors that Feng Quan was actually a representative of foreigners, not the Qing Empire, and intended to turn over the land, livestock, and property of everyone in Batang to the foreign powers that pushed Batang residents to attack him. As outlined in Chapter Three, anti-foreign sentiment was always just below the surface in Batang, and regardless of whatever overtures Feng Quan made toward the French priests there, the simple foreignness of his actions was enough to bring that sentiment to the forefront and spur local residents into acting to protect themselves from threats real and perceived. The fact that Tibetans in Batang still showed respect to the Qing emperor as a great patron of Buddhism indicates that killing an imperial envoy would be quite difficult for them. Killing a foreign envoy, however, would be much easier. The confession of the Batang people makes this point clear.

Out of respect for the Emperor, the Batang people were unwilling to attack Feng Quan in the Commissariat Officer’s yamen, which Feng occupied as his official compound while in Batang. In fact, local people had maintained decent relationships with the Commissariat Officers in Batang for decades, and they said themselves that they did not want to ruin their long-standing relationship with the Emperor. Working through the native chieftains, the people therefore sought ways to convince Feng Quan to return to Dartsedo. When they noticed Feng’s messengers departing over successive days towards Dartsedo without any news of reinforcement coming, their fears of potential retribution decreased, and they became emboldened to take more aggressive action. In many ways, this was not an anti-Qing uprising, but an anti-foreign uprising.

⁹⁴ Zhao Erfeng as quoted in *BTXZ*, 251.

Back in Chengdu, Xi Liang received news of the uprising and Feng Quan's death approximately two weeks later. His immediate handling of the situation reflects his priorities. Xi cabled the Grand Council on April 21, 1905 (GX 31.3.17), the same day he learned of the incident, informing them, "the Tibetans from Batang are rebelling. They have burned down the churches and three French priests are in trouble. Commissioner Feng Quan led his soldiers to do their best to stop them.... Wu Yizhong and twenty soldiers lost their lives in battle, and the strength of the bandits ignited. Feng Quan himself led his defensive detachment in gun fights for several days...but they encountered an ambush...and sacrificed their lives in the end."⁹⁵ What is important here is his emphasis on the safety of the missionaries, something that Wu Xizhen similarly highlighted in his report to Xi Liang on the uprising, over that of Feng Quan. Up to now, Xi Liang had ignored Feng's requests for military support in Batang. It was only after the missionaries encountered danger that Qing authorities in Chengdu chose to act.

The Qing court responded to Xi Liang stating, "What circumstances provoked this instance of Tibetan rebellion? Currently the situation is already unruly. We should send a general immediately to select bright and knowledgeable officials and dispatch additional battalions to advance rapidly. This official [Xi Liang] should examine the circumstances and in coordination with Ma Weiqi attack. As for all the French priests in trouble, we must strictly order all officials to strengthen their efforts and find ways to get them out of danger. Carefully protecting them is of extreme importance. Feng Quan's death was extremely violent. Carefully investigate his death, and those of the other individuals, and memorialize."⁹⁶ The Qing court clearly takes the death of Feng Quan seriously, but what is equally telling is the attention they give the three endangered French priests. Again evincing his concern over the missionaries, Xi Liang sent a telegram the

⁹⁵ *QCBDS*, no. 0033, 48.

⁹⁶ *QSL*, GX 31.3, juan 543.

next day to the Foreign Affairs Office (外務部)⁹⁷ upon learning, incorrectly, that Fathers Mussot, Bourdonnec, and Soulié were safe and under the protection of the deputy native chieftain. Although we should not fault him for wanting to keep the Foreign Affairs Office informed of the latest developments involving foreigners in Batang, his facts were not accurate. Fathers Mussot and Soulié had been killed, and Father Bourdonnec was on the run.⁹⁸

In a subsequent memorial dated May 8, 1905 (GX 31.4.5), Xi Liang summarized the uprising at Batang to date:

Since Feng Quan was selected and designated to serve, he reflected on the current situation and was stimulated by his loyalty and sincerity. He would immediately and without exception dash ahead heedless of safety. Upon arriving in Dartsedo, he received instructions to manage the border regions so as to solidify our fences. After departing the pass, he came to understand fully that monks in the monasteries of Batang and Litang exploited the Tibetan people and sheltered and indulged bandits. The monks arrogantly order the native chieftains about. If these leaders were not repressed more strongly, then border affairs would certainly become more prickly and obstructive.

Because of this, he memorialized requesting the former system be proclaimed to limit the number of monks and temporarily suspend the system of tonsuring monks for twenty years. The monks and others harbored resentment at this and rapidly spread rumors. They pointed out that because the military uniforms and exercises of the troops Feng Quan brought with him resembled Western styles, everything Feng Quan did was for the foreigners.

As for the reclaimed fields in Batang, although there were not many, the Commissariat Officer had opened them up for several years and not had any problems. Feng Quan advocated slightly advancing the reclamation, and resistance arose in a hurry. He sent soldiers to suppress it, and when they passed outside the gate of Ba Chöde Monastery, the monks quickly opened fire and injured the soldiers. This happened on March 26 (GX 31.2.21). Thereafter, they burned the reclaimed fields and banded together with the masses of people.

The churches there are usually seen as being harmful to the region, so Feng Quan strove to protect them. This led to all the more disparagement that he was shielding the foreigners. On April 2nd (GX 31.2.28), the Tibetan masses took advantage of an opportunity to burn down a church, and over twenty soldiers were killed trying to resist them. Batang Battalion Vice Commander Wu Yizhong and Qin Zongfan, who

⁹⁷ The Foreign Affairs Office replaced the Zongli Yamen in 1901 as stipulated in the Boxer protocol.

⁹⁸ *QCBDS*, no. 0034, 48.

accompanied Feng Quan to Batang, were both killed in this calamity. The yamen was also plundered. The Tibetan crowds were very agitated. When ordered to disband, they did not disperse themselves. The next day the monks and native chieftains came to see Feng Quan and requested he move to Litang so as to avoid the Tibetan bandits taking advantage of the situation to cause trouble. Only then could they ensure the safety of all of Batang. They quickly prepared corvée labor.

Originally, because Batang was far, the road difficult, and the cost of grain high, Feng Quan left his soldiers in Dartsedo to train and only brought with him several tens of men. Half of this savagery is because of this. It was more difficult for him to increase his strength, so he planned upon arriving in Litang to call up his soldiers in Dartsedo and continue his plans to punish them. Who would have thought that on April 5th (GX 31.3.1), while travelling through Hongtingzi (红亭子)⁹⁹ he would witness an ambush of Tibetans arise suddenly. Everyone was killed. Feng Quan fought savagely and with energy and held on for a long time. In the end, the masses were many and the soldiers few. Gradually Feng Quan and those accompanying him all met their fate in death....

Your servant has already dispatched Provincial Military Commander Ma Weiqi to Dartsedo, and he has already sent out soldiers who assaulted and rapidly dispersed the monks of Garthar Monastery, which resulted in some dead and injured. Their military might is slightly more solid, and their spirits more settled.... At present, I have decreed that Jianchang Circuit Intendant Zhao Erfeng be dispatched to manage military affairs in Dartsedo. He will advance with haste so that he can coordinate with Ma Weiqi, and they can take care of matters jointly. In addition, because the Batang and Litang areas are under the administrative jurisdiction of the Jianchang Circuit, I have ordered Zhao Erfeng to take responsibility for transporting the grain held in Qionglai (邛崃) and Yazhou (雅州). After he takes up his post, he will set out immediately so as to manage his duties.¹⁰⁰

Although Xi Liang does not yet have all the facts straight, and he occasionally manipulates his depictions of Feng Quan's actions to strengthen his arguments, his priorities are clear: protecting the foreigners and punishing the people of Batang for their crimes.

A detailed discussion of the entire scope of the uprising that began in Batang is not possible here. Suffice it to say that the Batang uprising quickly spread to most of southern Kham, including the volatile Nyarong area. In northwestern Yunnan, monks from Yangbajing (洋八景)

⁹⁹ Another name for Degodraglam.

¹⁰⁰ Xi, *Xi Liang yigao zougao*, 477, as quoted in Sichuan shengzhi jinbainian dashi jishu bianjizu, "Feng Quan yu Batang shijian benmo," 32-33.

Monastery¹⁰¹ and Dongdrub Monastery (Dong grub gling, 東竹林), working in coordination with Batang residents, led attacks against Qing troops in the region for several months before being suppressed.¹⁰² Moreover, it is not surprising that local Tibetans took advantage of the uprising to destroy Batang's two other French churches in Yarigang and Yanjing. French Father Jean Soulié, based in Yarigang, was captured by a mob led by fourteen lamas from Batang. Bound and chained with some members of his congregation, he was tortured for twelve days before being executed on April 14, 1905.¹⁰³ In addition, upon hearing of the violence from sympathetic monks in Yanjing, Father Pierre Marie Bourdonnec, who was stationed in Yanjing, gathered his congregation and fled south into Yi (彝) territory, where he thought he would be safe. Father Jules Etienne Dubernard, who was visiting Father Bourdonnec at the time, accompanied him. They managed to stay ahead of their Tibetan pursuers for three months, but they were eventually caught and beheaded on July 23.¹⁰⁴ In addition to murdering the two French priests, Tibetans in northwestern Yunnan burned down ten Catholic churches and killed a large number of Tibetan Catholics.¹⁰⁵

Beginning with Fu Songmu, Zhao Erfeng's deputy and author of the first comprehensive history of early twentieth century Kham, accomplished Chinese scholars of Tibetan history and anthropology such as Ren Naiqiang (任乃強), Wu Fengpei (吳豐培), and Zeng Guoqing (曾國慶) have consistently highlighted the impact of foreign powers on the development of Qing

¹⁰¹ This monastery is known today in Chinese as Hongpo Ganden Yangbajing Monastery (紅坡噶丹羊八景林).

¹⁰² *JJD*, vol. 7, 1036; and Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shilüe*, 222-23.

¹⁰³ Gaston Alary, ed., *Témoins au Prix de Leur Vie: Dix Prêtres Aveyronnais Tombés en Mission Sous la Violence*. N.p.: n.p., 1986.

¹⁰⁴ M.E.P. Archives, "Pierre Marie Bourdonnec, Nécrologique," no. 1539; and Zhu Jinpu, ed. *Qingmo jiaoran* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996), 748-57.

¹⁰⁵ Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shilüe*, 223.

policy towards Kham and Tibet in the late nineteenth century. They also stress that it was Feng Quan's perceived foreignness in the eyes of Batang residents that compelled them to revolt. The British invasion of Lhasa certainly created a sense of urgency among Qing officials to strengthen their western "fence," and Feng's outward foreignness no doubt contributed to locals' fear and hatred of him. However, the uprising in Batang emerged out of a more complex set of circumstances, including land reclamation, potential limits on monastic populations, food shortages, and Feng's stubborn, rude personality. We should also not overlook the influence of the New Policy reforms in this conflict. As a supporter of a modernized, Western military force in a region where the Qing had minimal control, it is no wonder that local residents reacted with violence. Heretofore, Qing officials in Batang effectively managed the frontier through an organic process of semi-*laissez faire* interventions, making culturally informed decisions based on their unique local knowledge. During the second half of the nineteenth century, they had even successfully expanded the scope of their power through this approach without completely dismantling their long-standing relationships with Batang's two native chieftains and the leadership of Ba Chöde Monastery. Feng Quan's aggressive implementation of policies to strengthen Qing control, some of which were inspired by New Policy reforms, marked the beginning of the end of the Qing's generally non-confrontational approach to frontier management in Batang, a transition that imperial troops soon punctuated.

Punitive Military Campaign

“The policy of managing barbarians by humbling one's self to conquer their hearts only nourishes an abscess and encourages rebellion.”

—Sichuan Governor-General Xi Liang, 1906¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Xi, *Xi Liang yigao zougao*, 470-71, as quoted in Des Forges, *Hsi-Liang and the Chinese National Revolution*, 79.

The rapid suppression of the uprising at Batang was crucial for Xi Liang and the Qing Empire. Located mid-way on the southern road between Dartsedo and Lhasa, Batang was an important base from which Qing officials kept this route open for official travel and communication, as well as for trade. Qing officials often described Batang as the “throat” between Sichuan and Tibet, and Xi Liang knew that if he lost control of it, he would also lose control of the southern road, and then the province would lose substantial profits from the sale of tea permits and revenues from salt taxes, which made up the bulk of trade between Sichuan and Tibet. With his province also having to bear the largest share of the Boxer indemnity after Jiangsu Province (江蘇), 2.2 million silver *liang* per year, beginning in 1901 following China’s defeat by the Western powers, Xi Liang was extremely concerned about the effects of long-term instability in Kham on provincial finances.¹⁰⁷ He wrote in one memorial, “By burning churches and killing officials, the lamas [of Batang] have committed great crimes.... We must extend the command of Heaven in order to suppress the rebellion and restore order.... The finances of Szechwan are in bad straits, but we must increase our troops in order to maintain control.”¹⁰⁸

Xi Liang knew he could not afford to lose revenues from trade and taxes in Kham. At the same time, he was concerned that frontier instability would leave the empire’s southwest border even more vulnerable to foreign encroachment as Younghusband had made so clear in Lhasa just a few months earlier. As a result, Xi ordered Ma Weiqi, who was at the time in Taining, to advance on Batang and quell the unrest as soon as possible. He also commanded Zhao Erfeng to

¹⁰⁷ Adshead, *Province and Politics in Late Imperial China*, 33.

¹⁰⁸ Xi, *Xi Liang yigao zougao*, 477-79, as quoted in Des Forges, *Hsi-Liang and the Chinese National Revolution*, 77.

handle all military logistics for the campaign.¹⁰⁹ As Ma prepared his five battalions to depart Taining in the middle of July 1905 (GX 31.6), native chieftain Tashi Jetsun continued his efforts on multiple fronts to prevent greater trouble for the people of his territory. Diplomatically, Luo quickly submitted the report discussed above that explained the grievances of the Batang people and begged for the emperor's leniency. In the event his diplomacy failed, he also prepared local militias and sabotaged bridges and roads entering Batang to deter a Qing punitive mission. Having been stationed in Batang for several years, Commissariat Officer Wu may have harbored some sympathy for Tashi Jetsun and the local people, but Qing officials in Chengdu and Beijing paid no heed to Luo's pleas. Less than three months after Feng Quan's murder, Ma Weiqi approached the eastern outskirts of Batang.

Ma's frontline prepared for their first encounter with armed militias organized by Ba Chöde Monastery and Batang's native chieftains at Erlangwan (二郎灣), one of three strategic passes between Batang and Litang Tashi Jetsun chose to defend. Ma had heard the pass was under heavy guard, but when his scouts arrived they did not see any trace of resistance. The local people stated, "Several days ago, there were monks sent from Batang, and the headman gathered the common people together to guard the ramparted fort. However, when they saw the great armies coming forward, no one was willing to fight, so the night before they dispersed on their own."¹¹⁰

Ma then advanced to Sanba Pass (三壩關), which was protected by a monastery high on a mountainside. Ma confirmed Tibetans had gathered in the monastery to defend the pass, and on July 20 (GX 31.6.18) his battalions attacked the monastery. During the battle "cannon fire and

¹⁰⁹ *QCBDS*, no. 0035, 49.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 0044, 60; and Wu, *Zhao Erfeng Chuanbian zoudu*, 14.

boulders fell like rain.” The next day, Ma himself coordinated his attack, which left several tens of Tibetans dead. Ma also had three important leaders beheaded on the battlefield. On July 22 (GX 31.6.20), after Ma’s frontline had advanced beyond Sanba Pass, a group of three hundred Tibetans on horseback stormed out of the monastery and attacked his rear supply lines. Ma’s soldiers repelled the assault and drove the remaining Tibetans back toward Dasuo Pass (大所關), the last major pass between Litang and Batang, which was covered in deep snow and precipitous ice even during summer months.¹¹¹ Approaching the pass at daybreak on July 24 (GX 31.6.22), Ma encountered fierce resistance. The following night Ma led a full-frontal assault against his assailants, eventually breaking through their defenses and reaching the pass. Several hundred Tibetans were killed in this battle, and Ma’s soldiers suffered casualties as well.¹¹²

On the opposite side of Dasuo Pass, local Tibetans again engaged Ma’s army at Benchamu (奔察木), where Ma reported stiff resistance. Unable to conquer the attackers but already on the western side of the mountain, Ma’s forces withdrew to Little Bachong (小巴冲). From Little Bachong they entered a long forested valley with steep mountain faces on either side. To protect their advance, Ma launched two flanking maneuvers. Describing the subsequent battle, their last before reaching Batang, he writes:

The first [flank] swept the area between the two mountains and advanced. When they reached Duoban Mountain (多半山) in the southeast, they saw the bandits in the process of transporting rolling trees and thundering boulders. They were preparing to cut off our approach. It was then that our troops painfully routed and dispersed them. The larger army passed through at the foot of the mountain as far as Reshuitang (热水塘), and then over 5,000 bandits came swarming in around us.¹¹³ Left Battalion Officer Ma Ruxian (左

¹¹¹ Also written as Dashuo Pass (大朔關).

¹¹² *QCBDS*, no. 0047, 62; and Wang, *Donghua xulü*, juan 159, as quoted in Wu, *Qingdai Zangshi jiyao xubian*, 174.

¹¹³ Note that a numerical discrepancy exists between the Wu Fengpei and *QCBDS* editions of this memorial. Wu states, “over 1,000 hidden bandit soldiers” (匪伏兵千餘) assaulted Ma’s army. Wu, *Zhao Erfeng Chuanbian zoudi*,

營馬汝賢) and Border Pacification Battalion (靜邊營) Officer Zhang Hongsheng established a line of resistance against the rebels while Left Battalion Officer Li Kechang (左營李克昌) blew them up with large cannon. They attacked the bandits with abandon. At that time our army between the mountains had already ransacked the bandits' rear guard and routed them. The bandit forces then became extremely disorganized, and when we seized the bandits their strength became disorganized.¹¹⁴

On the afternoon of July 28 (GX 31.6.26), Ma Weiqi and his army entered Batang proper, and they immediately proceeded to the compound of the head native chieftain. Hoping to reconcile with Qing officials and prove their interest in peace, Tashi Jetsun and Jampa Jetsun attempted to assist Ma Weiqi as mediators with the monks of Ba Chöde Monastery, who had taken refuge in the monastery along with many other Batang residents. Despite their good intentions to negotiate a return to stability in the region, Ma had both native chieftains arrested immediately. The next day he began his assault on Ba Chöde Monastery. While its formidable packed earthen walls initially protected the monastery, they were no match for Ma's cannons, which soon destroyed them and lit fire to the great halls within the monastery, killing over one hundred and forcing countless others to flee across the river and go into hiding in the mountains. Ma subsequently captured the leader of the monks protecting the monastery, Lama Phagpa Kunzang, and sent soldiers in pursuit of the remaining Tibetans fighting against his troops, many of whom he had learned had fled to Qicungou.¹¹⁵ Contrary to popular depictions of Zhao Erfeng,

14. In contrast, the *QCBDS* version states there were “over 5,000 hidden bandits” (匪伏五千餘). *QCBDS*, no. 0044, 60. It is unlikely that Qing officials would refer to bandits as “soldiers,” so I follow *QCBDS* here.

¹¹⁴ *QCBDS*, no. 0044, 60; and Wu, *Zhao Erfeng Chuanbian zoudu*, 14-15.

¹¹⁵ Lama Phagpa Kunzang is here referred to as Lama Ba Ge. *QCBDS*, no. 0044, 60; and Wu, *Zhao Erfeng Chuanbian zoudu*, 15. In an early retelling of history, Chengdu General Chuo Habu, writing less than two months after receiving the battlefield reports from Ma Weiqi and Zhao Erfeng, asserts that it was not Ma Weiqi who destroyed Ba Chöde Monastery. Rather, he claims fleeing monks set it on fire themselves. See *QCBDS*, no. 0047, 63; and Wang, *Donghua xulü*, juan 159, quoted in Wu, *Qingdai Zangshi jiyao xubian*, 174. Edgar supports Ma's account, writing, “It was the intention of the Chinese General [Ma Weiqi] to first sack and then destroy the huge monastery of Tinglinsze [Ba Chöde Monastery], but the Lamas forestalled him by themselves burning the wonderful buildings and the bridge over the Chihtsuen River, and fleeing with the temple treasures to the inaccessible mountains of Sanai [Sanyan].” James Edgar, *The Marches of the Mantze* (London: China Inland Mission, 1908), 16. Duncan also recounts this controversy, noting, “The [Chöde] monastery was burned about the

it was actually Ma Weiqi who led the assault on Ba Chöde Monastery and ordered the execution of Tashi Jetsun, Jampa Jetsun, and Lama Phagpa Kunzang, all of whom he deemed to be the ringleaders of the uprising. During Ma's initial march into Batang, Zhao Erfeng in fact was primarily responsible for logistical support for Ma's army and not directly involved in the fighting. By the time Zhao arrived in Batang, Ba Chöde Monastery had been completely destroyed and the leaders executed.

Ma concentrated his efforts to rid the region of resistance in Qicungou, home for many of the people who had flooded Batang in the early days of the unrest and torched the new homes built to support the land reclamation project in nearby Sonlonnong. Within days, Ma's soldiers had "cut off many a left ear," a euphemism for killing, and captured numerous prisoners in Qicungou. Vindicating their efforts, they discovered on one captured monk the decorative pearl from Feng Quan's cap and his official plume, and on another prisoner they found clothing belonging to some of Feng Quan's retinue, most likely the "foreign" uniforms that caused such controversy.¹¹⁶ Soon thereafter, Ma Weiqi ordered the execution of Batang's two native chieftains; the acting *khenpo* of Ba Chöde Monastery, Lama Phagpa Kunzang; and Feng Quan's alleged killer Longben Langji, who had been captured in Qicungou. Moreover, the wife of the head native chieftain, Kelzang Wangmo (Skal bzang Dbang mo, 格桑翁姆), and the son, daughter-in-law, grandchildren, and a small number of servants of deputy native chieftain Jampa Jetsun were detained and taken to Chengdu.¹¹⁷ Apart from a few local leaders who managed to escape, the majority of Batang's headmen had been killed during the fighting. In the span of just

year 1905, some say by the Chinese and others claim it was the work of priests in order to prevent the Chinese soldiers from looting the temple and burning the buildings." Marion H. Duncan, *The Mountain of Silver Snow* (Cincinnati: Powell&White, 1929), 75.

¹¹⁶ *QCBDS*, no. 0047, 61-64; and Wang, *Donghua xulü*, juan 159, as quoted in Wu, *Qingdai Zangshi jiyao xubian*, 173-74.

¹¹⁷ *BTXZ*, 253.

a few weeks, Ma Weiqi had reduced Ba Chöde Monastery to ashes and virtually eradicated Batang's traditional secular leadership. From the court's perspective, Ma's campaign was a great success. Life for the people of Batang would never be the same.

Following his triumph in Batang, Chengdu General Chuo Habu (成都将军绰哈布) recalled Ma Weiqi to Chengdu and transferred Ma's responsibilities to Zhao Erfeng.¹¹⁸ In his memorial to the emperor Chuo pointed out, "Following their strong actions, the depravity [in Batang] was purged, distant corners shaken, people's hearts completely set at ease, and the entire region settled.... For the work of reconstruction in this region, including responding to attacks and capturing bandits, I will forthwith order Zhao Erfeng to command the troops and be stationed there. He will carefully increase his vigilance and make appropriate preparations for managing affairs so that a little effort now will avoid permanent problems. I do not predict things to be prickly or obstructive...."¹¹⁹ Before Ma returned to Chengdu, he left Zhao Erfeng in command of the majority of his army, noting that "while Litang and Batang have recently been conquered, the people are not yet obedient in their hearts, those who fled are still awaiting consolation, and there are still many bandits all over. Without a strong army he [Zhao] will not be able to suppress and awe them." Ma and Zhao agree to keep two battalions in Batang and to send one battalion south to regain control in Yanjing. In addition, they dispatched one battalion

¹¹⁸ Zhao was a Han Standard Blue Bannerman known for his military prowess and his close relationship with Xi Liang, who had brought Zhao with him to Sichuan from his previous posting in Shanxi (山西). Zhao, *Qingshi gao*, juan 469, liezhuan 256; and Des Forges, *Hsi-Liang and the Chinese National Revolution*, 32.

¹¹⁹ Wang, *Donghua xulü*, juan 159, as quoted in Sichuan shengzhi jinbainian dashi jishu bianjizu, "Feng Quan yu Batang shijian benmo," 34.

each to Nyagchukha¹²⁰ and Litang to protect the supply lines and keep the official southern road open. The remaining battalion returned with Ma Weiqi to Chengdu.¹²¹

While Zhao continued to make efforts to suppress the uprising that was quickly spreading south and east, Xi Liang worked with You Tai in Lhasa to contain the unrest and prevent it from spreading into central Tibet. Upon learning of the trouble in Batang, You Tai quickly informed the *kalön* (bka' blon) in the central Tibetan government, and they in turn ordered local Tibetan officials not to listen to wild rumors or secretly assist in the violence. You Tai had in fact already learned that those involved in the Batang uprising had sent envoys to Gartok to seek assistance from the local representative of the central Tibetan government, arguing that outside help was needed to protect the Gelug tradition. According to reports from the High Commissioners Office, which were based on information they claimed to receive from the Kashag, this official resolutely denied their request and refused to aid them.¹²²

With the uprising in Batang proper contained, Xi Liang also wrote to the Grand Council on October 4, 1905 (GX 31.9.6). Weighing in on the causes of the uprising, he echoed Chengdu General Chuo Habu's assessment that Feng Quan largely brought about his own demise, noting, "Feng Quan is not without blame. His harsh policies incited the people." However, in a marked departure from his previous cautious approach to border affairs, Xi Liang also rejuvenated the discussion of Nyarong, arguing that native chieftains throughout Kham saw the Qing failure to recover Nyarong as an imperial weakness, thus emboldening them to defy imperial rule. As a result, Xi strongly urged the Grand Council to pressure You Tai to convince the Kashag to recall

¹²⁰ Located between Dartsedo and Litang, Nyagchukha is known today as Yajiang County (雅江縣). In the Qing, it was known as Hekou (河口).

¹²¹ *QCBDS*, no. 0045, 61.

¹²² *Ibid.*, no. 0050, 65-66.

their officials in Nyarong. If the Qing recovered Nyarong, Xi argued, Zhao Erfeng could more effectively manage the frontier and balance his resources such that Batang had the appropriate number of soldiers to prevent further unrest while not straining the empire's ability to provide them with grain and other support.¹²³ Despite Xi Liang's petition, it would still be several years before central Tibetan officials left Nyarong and the region was put under direct imperial rule as Xi Liang proposed.

With Ma Weiqi's departure, Zhao Erfeng led Qing efforts on the ground in Batang. His first priority was to destroy the remaining resistance, which was centered in Qicungou, and it was here that Zhao earned his reputation as "Butcher Zhao" (趙屠夫), a moniker that parents in Kham still use today to frighten their children into maintaining good behavior. In October 1905 (GX 31.9), Zhao lured residents out of the mountains in Qicungou with promises of silver, tea, salt, and clothing. When they arrived to collect what they thought were rewards, Zhao's soldiers slaughtered them. In Qicungou's Shikhatang, for example, his soldiers killed over eighty people in one night alone. In the villages of Tshosangnang (Mtsho bzang nang, 錯松龍) and Yuda (Smyug mda', 英達), they killed seventy-seven and destroyed almost every home.¹²⁴ Zha Qian also notes, "When Zhao's army entered, he completely eliminated the Tibetans of Qicungou's Maoxi. Taking the seven leaders of the evil, he gouged out their hearts and with them still dripping blood he made a sacrifice to Feng Quan."¹²⁵ While Zhao's behavior in Qicungou certainly merits a gory epithet, he had in fact already been given this nickname. As circuit intendant in Sichuan's Gulin County (古蔺縣) in 1904, he led a campaign to suppress banditry

¹²³ *Ibid.*, no. 0051, 66-67.

¹²⁴ Batang xian diming lingdao xiaozu, *Sichuan sheng Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou Batang xian diminglu*, 67.

¹²⁵ Zha, *Bian Zang fengtu ji*, juan 1, 31a-31b.

and was rumored to have killed as many as 3,000 innocent persons. It was here that he first earned the name “butcher.”¹²⁶

As calm slowly returned to Batang, Zhao launched campaigns against neighboring Litang and Chatreng (Phyag ‘phreng, 鄉城), whose monks and residents had participated in the uprising. At the same time, the French began pressuring the Foreign Affairs Office to take action on the deaths of their missionaries and destruction of their property. In November 1906 (GX 32.10), Bishop Giraudeau traveled to Batang to inspect the damage and discuss compensation with Zhao Erfeng. In subsequent discussions with Wu Xizhen, Bishop Giraudeau and Wu agreed on a compensation package for property damages that included cash and in-kind payments, as well as the transfer of ownership of the now deceased deputy native chieftain’s compound to the French. One must wonder what the Batang people thought when they saw the French moving into their former leader’s residence.¹²⁷

A few months later, Bishop Giraudeau and the French Consul in Chengdu met with Sichuan officials of the Foreign Affairs Office (洋務局) and secured additional compensation for the lives of the two missionaries killed during the uprising, which Zhao had earlier claimed he had no authority to negotiate,¹²⁸ and for the construction of convalescent centers in Batang and Yanjing.¹²⁹ The final agreement between the Sichuan Foreign Affairs Office, the French Consul, and Bishop Giraudeau included total compensation in the amount of 121,500 silver *liang*,

¹²⁶ Huang Yuqing and Wang Chuyu, “Zhao Erfeng—tuhu ming de youlai,” in Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Sichuan sheng weiyuanhui Sichuan sheng shengzhi bianji weiyuanhui, ed. *Sichuan wenshi ziliao xuanji*, vol. 30 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1984), 30-34; Zeng, “Zhao Erfeng ji qi Batang jingying,” 19; and Liu, “Zhao Erfeng jingying Chuanbian wenjian yishu,” 23.

¹²⁷ Edward Amundsen, “Diary of a Journey through ‘East Tibet,’” *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* 39 (1908): 91.

¹²⁸ *QCBDS*, no. 0056, 69-70.

¹²⁹ *JJD*, vol. 7, 903-05.

including 44,500 *liang* for the reconstruction of the three churches and damages to the homes and property of congregation members, and 78,500 for the deaths of Fathers Mussot and Soulié, the repair of damaged tombstones of deceased French missionaries, and the construction of schools or hospitals in the area. Xi Liang and Zhao Erfeng agreed that these expenses would be paid from Dartsedo tea tax revenues.¹³⁰ Incidentally, Bishop Giraudeau so impressed Xi Liang and Zhao that on February 1, 1906 (GX32.1.8), they petitioned the Emperor on Zhao's recommendation that Giraudeau be awarded a Class Three button in recognition of his "concern for our diplomatic relations and flexibility," which the Emperor approved.¹³¹

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined Batang's emergence as a strategic region in the final decades of the Qing Empire. I began with a discussion of late Qing frontier policy in Kham, highlighting a series of factors that compelled senior Qing officials in Beijing, Chengdu, and Lhasa to reevaluate their approach to frontier governance. Foreign pressure from British India, culminating in Younghusband's presence in central Tibet throughout most of 1904, undoubtedly influenced decision-makers to consider devoting additional resources to Kham and Batang, but this was not the only factor. Recurring problems with missionaries in the Batang region as discussed in Chapter Three and a long-standing stalemate with central Tibetan authorities over sovereignty in Nyarong also compelled Qing officials to look more closely at what could be done to strengthen their southwestern "fence" and bolster their power in the region. They began with two seemingly small decisions that would eventually radically alter the political and socio-political landscapes of Kham and Tibet.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 906.

¹³¹ *QCBDS*, no. 0063, 76; and Xi, *Xi Liang yigao zougao*, 557.

The first decision was to initiate a land reclamation project in Batang. Under the stewardship of Commissariat Officer Wu Xizhen, this project's initial scope was small, affecting only a few hundred *mu* of land that was cultivated by less than one hundred Han settlers, many of whom were actually Qing soldiers already stationed in Batang. As an experienced frontier official, Wu Xizhen knew the advantages of a semi-*laissez-faire* approach to governance, and he made sure to gain the approval of Batang's native chieftains and Ba Chöde Monastery before going forward and consulted with them regularly.

The second decision was to relocate the Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet from Lhasa to Chamdo, where he could more effectively monitor events in Kham. Feng Quan, an experienced Sichuan official but with minimal knowledge of frontier affairs, was tapped for the position, and he departed for his new assignment in late 1904. En route he stopped in Batang, where he took a keen interest in Wu Xizhen's land reclamation project and aggressively pushed to expand its scale. At the same time, disgusted by what he thought were bloated monastic populations that allowed religious leaders to oppress the native chieftains and local people, Feng Quan publically ordered that all monasteries in Tibetan areas be limited to three hundred monks and that no new monks be tonsured for the next twenty years. Feng Quan's actions, in combination with his haughty attitude, were too much for the people of Batang to bear, and in late March 1905 they rose up and murdered him and his personal retinue of fifty soldiers and advisors.

The Qing response to the murder of Assistant High Commissioner Feng Quan was speedy and harsh. Commander Ma Weiqi led approximately two thousand soldiers to Batang with the support of Zhao Erfeng in the rear. In his subsequent military campaign, Ma captured and executed Batang's two native chieftains, despite their attempts to walk a fine line between

working with Feng and other Qing officials and representing the desires of the local people. Many other headmen in districts and villages throughout Batang were also killed or captured trying to repel Ma's assault. Ba Chöde Monastery, moreover, was completely destroyed, and its leadership was either captured and executed or fled to other regions. Untold numbers of monks and lay persons also died in the fighting.

By the end of 1905, Batang hardly looked the same as it had a year earlier. Ba Chöde Monastery, arguably the region's most powerful religious institution, lay in ashes, its monks either dead or in hiding. Batang's traditional secular elite, moreover, had also been virtually wiped out through fighting and executions. As a result, Batang suffered a near absolute power vacuum. Qing officials knew that any attempt to return to the former methods of indirect rule would be impossible, and Ma Weiqi's overwhelming victory in Batang presented Zhao Erfeng with the opportunity to try to rebuild a critical region between Sichuan and Tibet in an image of his own creation. How Zhao went about that state-building project is the subject of Chapter Five.

Chapter Five: Batang in a New Era: Political Restructuring, Economic Reform, and Social Transformation

“Our initial task is to develop Kham territories and widely implement education to transform [its people]. Internally, we will solidify Sichuan, and externally we will care for the Tibetan areas. After our power reaches Lhasa, central Tibet (衛藏) will finally be in our grasp, so we can transfer the governor-generalship of Sichuan to Batang and set up governors (巡撫) in Lhasa and Sichuan. Mimicking the example of northeast China (東三省), we will establish a governor-general for the three western provinces. In so doing we will prevent the covetousness of the British and at the same time control the Dalai Lama’s dependence on foreigners.”

—Zhao Erfeng, Jianchang Circuit Intendant, writing to Sichuan Governor-General Xi Liang, 1903¹

Introduction

As seen in the passage above, Zhao Erfeng had grand designs for Batang as early as 1903, well before he even set foot in Kham. This chapter discusses the late Qing Empire’s new approach to Batang and Kham as conceptualized and led by Zhao in the wake of Feng Quan’s murder. Driven by both practical and ideological concerns, Zhao’s plans involved three stages: military submission; political restructuring; and a series of reforms focused on economic development and social transformation. Chapter Four discussed the military subjugation of Batang proper. This was just the beginning of Zhao’s military exploits. Over the next six years his campaigns would bring all of Kham’s traditional principalities east of the Dri River, and some to its west, under direct rule by Han magistrates appointed by the Qing Empire. His army would even march all the way to Lhasa. Rather than retell the broad scope of Zhao Erfeng’s

¹ Feng Youzhi, *Xikang shi shiyi* (Kangding: Wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui, 1992), 13-14; and He Yimin, “20 shiji chunian Chuanbian Zangqu zhengzhi jingji wenhua gaige shulun,” *Xinan minzu xueyuan xuebao: zhexue shehui kexue ban* 22, no. 6 (2001): 40.

campaigns in Kham, which has been adequately discussed elsewhere,² this chapter addresses the more specific impact of late Qing endeavors in Batang's traditional territory.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section discusses how Zhao Erfeng reconfigured Batang's political landscape through bureaucratic restructuring and other administrative policies. The second section highlights Zhao's attempts to stimulate economic growth in Batang through land reclamation projects, tax reform, corvée labor standardization, transportation and communication improvements, and commercial development. Section three covers Zhao's social reforms in Batang, focusing on education and the promotion of Confucian values and public health. Finally, section four moves beyond Batang proper to examine how Zhao expanded Qing authority in territories within the traditional domains of Batang's native chieftains: Yanjing, Sanyan, and Derong. Each phase of Zhao's reforms was in preparation for his ultimate goal of transforming the people of Batang, Kham, and eventually Tibet into imperial subjects and creating a new, independent province of Xikang (西康) in western Sichuan.

This chapter demonstrates that we can no longer consider Zhao to be merely a Han chauvinist intent on conquering Tibet for the glory of the emperor. Rather, he was under both international pressure to protect foreign missionaries in the region and domestic pressure to stop the threat of western countries invading from the west. Moreover, unlike his predecessors, who approached frontier governance on an *ad hoc* basis, Zhao's ideological drive compelled him to pacify and develop the region by establishing clear, long-range plans to fully incorporate Batang and all of Kham into the Qing Empire. These plans included a new local political and bureaucratic structure, economic development, and social transformation. Batang, the first principality in Kham to suffer military conquest in the twentieth century, was Zhao's laboratory

² See Wang, *China's Last Imperial Frontier*; and Relyea, "Gazing at the Tibetan Plateau."

for state-building. The political, economic, and cultural plans he tested here he subsequently replicated across Kham. With a large and well-equipped army under his command, he produced results, particularly in terms of definitively determining Qing sovereignty and solidifying Qing power in Batang and some other areas of Kham through the direct rule of Qing officials. Zhao's efforts also reveal that the late Qing Empire was not without imagination, vitality, or the capacity to implement new reforms, which forces us to question the standard narrative of the failure of the late Qing's New Policy reforms. At least on the Batang frontier, the New Policy reforms achieved tangible positive results.

Political Restructuring

Faced with increasing foreign pressure on its southwest border and restless Tibetans in Kham, the uprising in Batang led the Qing court to realize that effective management of the Sichuan frontier required comprehensive reform. To that end, Sichuan Governor-General Xi Liang and Chengdu General Chuo Haobu recommended the court create the position of High Commissioner for Sichuan and Yunnan Border Affairs (川滇邊務大臣) in July 1906 (GX 32.6), just as the court had done for border affairs in Ningxia and Qinghai a few years earlier. Xi and Chuo proposed that this position be charged with a wide range of duties, including on the ground management of mop up operations in Batang and Chatreng,³ training troops, and implementing bureaucratic restructuring and the positioning of imperial officials in the region that would report directly to Sichuan authorities. They also pointed out that the Commissioner, who would be based in Batang, would “provide support to Tibet by putting in order the rear guard to serve as a rear shield. Sichuan, Yunnan, the border regions, and Tibet are all inter-connected and united

³ Upon hearing of the unrest in Batang, monks at Sangpi Monastery (桑披寺) in Chatreng had risen up against Zhao Erfeng and a protracted standoff between Zhao's forces and the monks in the strategically located monastery had already begun. See Wang, *China's Last Imperial Frontier*, 120-29.

they act as one. Through our small efforts now we can forever avoid larger problems. This is the plan for the southwest.”⁴ Not surprisingly, Xi and Chuo recommended Zhao Erfeng, who had in their minds performed admirably supporting Ma Weiqi and then leading Qing efforts in Kham, be appointed to the position.⁵ The court approved Xi and Chuo’s memorial, and Zhao humbly accepted the position the following month. Until his death in Chengdu during the violence surrounding the collapse of the Qing dynasty, Zhao’s vision for Kham would evolve, but he remained focused on a series of core initiatives that he first initiated in Batang, which he saw as a future provincial capital.⁶

This section discusses Zhao’s efforts to effect political change in Batang. Beyond the simple military suppression of Batang’s uprising and execution of its leaders as discussed in Chapter Four, Zhao permanently altered Batang’s traditional power structure in two significant ways. First, instituting bureaucratic restructuring (改土歸流), Zhao dismantled Batang’s existing power structure. Removing native chieftains and other indigenous secular rulers from power, he erected a new bureaucratic system of governance that centered on a Han magistrate appointed from Chengdu who was supported by Han and Tibetan representatives. In addition, Zhao attempted to curb the influence of Tibetan monasteries in Batang through a series of administrative regulations. Together, these two efforts virtually eradicated, albeit temporarily, the authority of Batang’s secular elites and its monastic establishment, thereby allowing Qing officials to expand their power dramatically, establish their definitive sovereignty in Batang, and reorient the region’s secular leaders under a new political system before the end of the dynasty.

⁴ He, “20 shiji chunian Chuanbian Zangqu zhengzhi jingji wenhua gaige shulun,” 40.

⁵ *QCBDS*, no. 0075, 90-91.

⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 0076, 91.

Bureaucratic Restructuring

Barely one month after assuming his new position as Border Affairs Commissioner, Zhao reported on his progress in Batang to Xi Liang on September 26, 1906 (GX 32.8.9), noting, “The areas of Batang and Litang are densely populated, their land fertile, and they truly are like a part of the hinterland beyond the pass. In order to recover them quickly, I am planning to manage my regiments and establish a strong garrison to serve as a base to control the border and aid Tibet. Heaven has given us an opportunity with the self-destruction of the native chieftains.”⁷ He also reported that he had ordered Batang Commissariat Officer Wu Xizhen to represent him in all matters and charged him with undertaking a census, determining appropriate grain taxes, and clearing the main roads to facilitate transportation.

Soon thereafter, in October 1906 (GX32.9), Zhao announced in Chinese and Tibetan forty-three articles in his “Regulations for the Reconstruction of Batang” (巴塘善後章程) that explained in greater detail Wu Xizhen’s expanded responsibilities. These regulations represent Zhao’s first attempt at comprehensive reform on the local level and became the blueprint for expanding Qing power in other principalities in Kham. At the core of Zhao’s efforts to expand Qing power was bureaucratic restructuring, and he began his “Reconstruction Regulations” accordingly, writing, “As for bureaucratic restructuring, the primary and deputy native chieftains in Batang have already been put to death. From this point forward, the positions of native chieftain are permanently eradicated, and we will implement bureaucratic restructuring. No matter Han or barbarian, everyone is a subject of the Emperor.”⁸ In case there was any doubt in the minds of local Tibetans about the permanence of this change and the imposition of direct rule,

⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 0078, 92.

⁸ Sichuan dang’an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 95-96.

Zhao melted down the seals of Batang's two native chieftains and confirmed that their charters of investiture had been destroyed in the battle to suppress the uprising.⁹

Simply abolishing the native chieftain positions was not enough for Zhao. He also dismantled in name the longstanding traditional support structure of the native chieftain system by dissolving the positions of *mag pon*, *xieao*, *genbu* (rgan po, 更卜), *baise* (百色), *gutsa*, and others.¹⁰ While the headmen who held these hereditary positions, most of which were not formally recognized by imperial officials, may have formally lost their traditional titles, as we shall see in Chapter Six, they often informally retained their positions of power within Batang society, especially those who quickly pledged allegiance to the Qing Empire. However, the native chieftains, who were judged to be responsible for the death of Feng Quan and the uprising against the Qing, not only lost their lives. Their families were exiled to Chengdu and their land and property, along with the land and property of Ba Chöde Monastery, and others who had fought against the Qing, was confiscated by Zhao Erfeng, who later announced he would recruit new tenants to farm these lands. In an interesting twist that certainly had to raise doubts in the minds of local Batang people about Zhao's commitment to abandoning the native chieftain system, Zhao turned over the residence, personal property, and some of the land of Batang's head native chieftain to the former native chieftain of Derge, whom he had helped escape from his native principality following an internal power struggle with his brother, in January 1911 (XT 2.12), much of which the former native chieftain received tax free.¹¹

⁹ *QCBDS*, no. 0100, 115-16.

¹⁰ In addition to their military duties, *mag pon* managed corvée labor and Tibetan transit stations on behalf of the native chieftains. *Genbu* (misprinted as *gengzhan* (更占) in *QCBDS*, 96) refer to simple village headmen who were responsible for managing corvée and collecting taxes. Xie, Li, and Danzhu Angben, *Zangzu chuantong wenhua cidian*, 599. *Baise* were village representatives who reported to the native chieftains. *QCBDS*, 1146.

¹¹ In exile from his former domain, the native chieftain of Derge withdrew from direct participation in political matters in Kham. *Ibid.*, no. 0758, 844-45.

After abolishing the native chieftain system, deconstructing their network of support, and confiscating their land, Zhao then laid the foundation for a new bureaucratic structure in Batang. Highlighting the critical role of Han officials in this new structure of governance, Zhao ordered, “As for establishing [new] offices, henceforth Batang will adjust to having Han officials who will manage the Han and barbarian peoples in the area, in addition to all matters involving taxes, litigation, and corvée.”¹² As demonstrated in Chapters Two through Four, power in Batang was formerly shared between Batang’s native chieftains, Ba Chöde Monastery, and the Qing Commissariat Officer. Through the resolution of a series of missionary cases in the late nineteenth century, Commissariat Officers gradually expanded their authority in Batang, but their power still remained relatively weak, as their inability to protect Feng Quan evinces. With the native chieftains beheaded and their positions abolished, and with Ba Chöde Monastery in ashes and the monks scattered throughout the region, Zhao successfully dismantled Batang’s network of power and replaced it with a new bureaucratic structure centered on a Han magistrate that would survive the dynasty and endure throughout the Republican period.¹³ This reform is one of his most lasting achievements.

One of the primary purposes of Zhao’s “Reconstruction Regulations” was to remove power from the native chieftains and monastery and place it in the hands of Qing officials. This was easier said than done, and he needed the support of the local people to achieve success. One way he cultivated public support was through public elections (公舉). As outlined in his regulations, Zhao ordered the people to freely elect an “upright” individual to serve as headman in each village or cluster of smaller villages to manage local affairs. Representatives were to be elected to three year terms, and they would receive a small stipend from the local Han magistrate,

¹² Sichuan dang’an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 96-97.

¹³ Sichuan dang’an guan: Min 228: Jiaoyuting: juan 080: c093-94.

in this case the Commissariat Officer, as compensation. Such headmen could be re-elected, but they could also be removed from office by the Han magistrate if their conduct was unfair. Not surprisingly, local people frequently elected *mag pon* and other members of the former native chieftain's support network to serve as local representatives in Zhao's new bureaucratic structure. Although Batang's senior secular leaders had been executed and their positions abolished, lesser headmen, who still maintained authority and respect among the people, were largely able to maintain, if not expand, their influence in Batang's new system of governance.

In addition to abolishing Batang's native chieftain system and replacing it with a system of rotating Han magistrates, Zhao instituted a *baozheng* (保正) system of local governance as another fundamental piece of Batang's new bureaucratic structure.¹⁴ This was but one of many ways that Zhao attempted to remold Batang into something resembling inland China in terms of state-society relations. According to Zhao's regulations, Batang's local magistrate would identify six *baozheng*, three Han and three Tibetan, who would jointly manage taxation and litigation for all of Batang's residents under his guidance. The local magistrate would provide these six representatives with food, salary, and official expenses, so that they would not be tempted to extort payments from the populace, a common practice by native chieftains, their representatives, and monks, according to Zhao, and a well-documented custom among county magistrate employees in inland China.¹⁵ Presaging his emphasis on education, Zhao also ordered that in the future Han *baozheng* must be able to communicate in Tibetan, and Tibetan *baozheng* must be

¹⁴ It is likely that Zhao adapted this system from his brother, Zhao Erxun (趙爾巽), who had implemented adjustments to the local mutual security system that more closely resembled a local government network spanning several villages under a local headman while serving as governor of Shanxi (山西巡撫) in 1902-1903. See Thompson, *China's Local Councils in the Age of Constitutional Reform*, 23-29; and Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 244.

¹⁵ See, for example, Philip A. Kuhn, *Rebellion and its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796-1864* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).

able to communicate in Chinese, so as to overcome the “numerous obstructions” that plagued frontier administration to date.¹⁶ By 1908 (GX 34), Batang’s Commissariat Officer reported that he had successfully instituted the *baozheng* system and completed a population census that recorded just over 23,000 people living in 205 villages that were overseen by forty-one village headmen within Batang’s five *baozheng* administrative units.¹⁷

To facilitate more efficient governance under this new system, Zhao Erfeng intended to create a police academy (巡警學堂) in Batang as early as 1907 (GX 33) that would train local people to work in the new bureaucracy. In a report dated August 31, 1908 (GX 34.8.5), he indicated the academy would accept one hundred twenty students to enroll in a three year course of study who would be dispatched throughout Kham upon graduation. Their responsibilities would include assisting local officials with population surveys and tax collections, maintaining public safety, helping to enforce legal decisions made by local officials, encouraging and recruiting students to enroll in schools, assisting in land reclamation efforts, and improving local roads to facilitate transportation, all key points in Zhao’s comprehensive plan to develop Kham, which is discussed further below.¹⁸

Despite Zhao’s enthusiasm to create a new cadre of bureaucrats in Batang, it was not until the summer of 1910 (XT 2) that the police academy finally opened its doors. Zhao’s decision to locate this institution in Batang again reflects the region’s strategic importance along the “fence” between Tibet and inland China. Highlighting the link between national defense and education, Zhao wrote, “To protect the people and defend the country, policing is in fact a fundamental part of domestic governance, and schools are a gathering place from which we can

¹⁶ Sichuan dang’an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 96.

¹⁷ *QCBDS*, no. 257, 278; and Liu Zanting, *Baan xian tuzhi* (Beijing: Minzu wenhuaguan tushuguan, 1962), 29.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 0194, 213-14.

select talented individuals.”¹⁹ The New Policy reforms sweeping across China influenced Zhao’s decision to establish a police academy in the early stages of his reforms in Kham. As Kristin Stapleton has shown, Chengdu’s police academy, with which Zhao was certainly familiar, played a key role in its late Qing modernization after its establishment in 1902.²⁰ Citing the fact that the Kham frontier needed a police academy in the tradition of similar provincial academies that had been set up across inland China as part of the New Policy reform movement, Zhao also pointed out Kham’s unique circumstances, where “Han and barbarian live side-by-side, the good mixed together with the bad. Moreover, the people have only recently submitted and their wishes are not uniform, so it is necessary that they be orderly and civilized as soon as possible...and policing must do this.”²¹ Zhao allocated 5,000 silver *liang* for the Batang Police Academy’s first year of operation, and one hundred twenty Tibetan graduates of recently created local mandarin schools between the ages of sixteen and twenty enrolled in the program as cadets in 1910. During their planned three year course of study, they were to learn police administration and general affairs, Chinese language, mathematics, mapping and surveying, and calisthenics. Students selected for the program had to speak Chinese and Tibetan and have a rudimentary knowledge of written Chinese. As with other schools established in Batang around this time, all students received free room and board during their studies.²²

In addition to creating a new bureaucracy, Zhao concentrated power in the hands of the Han magistrate by reordering Batang’s traditional system of dispute resolution and centralizing legal authority under the new Han magistrate, stating in his “Reconstruction Regulations,”

¹⁹ *QCBDS*, no. 0662, 712.

²⁰ Stapleton, *Civilizing Chengdu*, 77-110.

²¹ *QCBDS*, no. 0662, 712.

²² *Ibid.*, no. 0662, 712-14. It is not known if the Batang Police Academy continued to operate after the collapse of the dynasty in 1911. It is likely that its cadets never completed their studies.

“Regardless of their size, legal cases from any Han, barbarian, monk, lay person, or Christian must all be decided by the local magistrate. Absolutely no one can interfere in these matters.”²³

The local magistrate would handle the most serious cases himself, while he gave his *baozheng* representatives and locally-elected headmen authority to resolve lesser problems. Addressing the long-standing practice of monastic leaders settling any dispute involving a monk or a tenant on their estate, Zhao specifically prohibited individuals from taking a dispute to a monastery to seek resolution. Regarding the Tibetan custom of paying fines in lieu of incarceration or corporal punishment, Zhao also proclaimed, “The barbarian custom is to resolve a murder through the payment of silver or tea. Human life is of the utmost importance, so how can you solve things so lightly and easily as this? From now a murderer must pay with his life...and bribes in silver to conclude a case are absolutely not permitted.”²⁴ In addition to murder, Zhao demanded the death penalty for banditry and rape, and his “Reconstruction Regulations” also set punishments for other crimes such as petty theft and extramarital affairs, outlining in some detail the various procedures involved in bringing a suit to the magistrate. Such details as administrative fees, hearing dates, and subpoenaing witnesses were necessary because heretofore Qing officials rarely participated in Batang’s judicial process. As outlined in Chapter Two, dispute resolution was formerly the domain of Ba Chöde Monastery and Batang’s native chieftains. These legal regulations are another example of Zhao’s efforts to more closely align Batang’s bureaucratic structure to that of inland China, although the simplicity of his legal regulations compared to the formal Qing code that, in theory, governed the Empire, indicates his frontier administration in Batang remained distinct from inland China. Nevertheless, Zhao’s legal reforms in Batang were some of his proudest achievements. Memorializing on April 19, 1910 (XT 2.3.10), Zhao

²³ Sichuan dang’an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 98.

²⁴ Sichuan dang’an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 96-98.

described the former system of dispute resolution in unflattering terms: “Barbarian legal cases are numerous, and in the past cases, either the native chieftains heard cases of murder or robbery or monks rendered decisions. Whoever was able to offer the higher bribe would be victorious. They did not seek to determine right or wrong, and the barbarians would be forced to keep their resentment to themselves. These crafty and violent ones thereupon would not raise their case again. Rather, they would make plans to take revenge directly through killing and robbery. As a result, multiple cases of robbery would extend for numerous years without resolution.”²⁵ Zhao’s depiction of dispute resolution is not dissimilar to Qian Zhaotang’s portrayal in the mid-nineteenth century, which also focused on the seemingly arbitrary power of the native chieftains and monasteries and the prevalent use of monetary payments as solutions to legal problems. Although such solutions did not conform to Zhao’s sense of justice, we should be wary of accepting his assertion that judicial decisions were made without a determination of “right or wrong.” Unfortunately, primary source materials on legal cases in Kham are not extant to explore this issue further.²⁶

Contrasting Batang’s old ways with his new system of justice, Zhao idealistically boasts: “Since proclaiming bureaucratic restructuring...officials have handled un-redressed injustices among the people, and there have absolutely been no decisions influenced by bribery. They have patiently admonished [the people], made prohibitions according to the legal system, and in so doing stopped murdering out of hatred and resolved disputes. Recently, this trend is gradually

²⁵ *QCBDS*, no. 545, 592.

²⁶ See Rebecca Redwood French, *The Golden Yoke: The Legal Cosmology of Buddhist Tibet* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995) for a reconstruction of traditional Tibet’s “kaleidoscopic cosmology of law” based on extensive interviews with Tibetans living in India.

bringing them under control, and when someone happens to be robbed, everyone knows to bring the case before the Han magistrate.”²⁷

Fundamental to the newly proclaimed power of the Han magistrate, of course, was the fact that his authority derived from the Emperor. Speaking directly to the people of Batang in his regulations, Zhao counseled them on their misunderstandings about certain fundamental assumptions that all imperial subjects must accept, writing, “The people [of Batang] belong to the great Emperor. Other people cannot obtain and own (得而有) them. In the past, the native chieftains also followed the rules of the Emperor. They were only representing him in managing the people. You barbarians didn’t understand this idea, so you said that you belonged to the native chieftains. This is already foolish and laughable, but what is more so is that there are those who say they belong to lamas. This is especially absurd. You do not understand reason.”²⁸ Driving his point home, Zhao emphasized that neither headman nor monk could involve themselves in others’ affairs or interfere in public business.

As I have shown, immediately upon assuming the position of Border Affairs Commissioner, Zhao Erfeng dismantled and redirected Batang’s traditional power structure and erected a new bureaucratic system of governance that concentrated power in the hands of a local Han magistrate. As part of this process, Zhao abolished the native chieftain system, instituted public elections for village leaders, created a *baozheng* administrative structure consisting of Han and Tibetan representatives, and ensured that legal matters were handled through this new structure. Han officials implemented each of these steps with little resistance in Batang, but Zhao knew more measures were needed to ensure the long-term success of his political restructuring.

²⁷ *QCBDS*, no. 545, 592.

²⁸ Sichuan dang’an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 96-98.

Monastic Reform

Concomitant with dismantling the native chieftain system and erecting a new bureaucratic structure in Batang were Zhao Erfeng's efforts to curb what he considered to be the negative influences Tibetan Buddhism among the people, an idea he expressed clearly in his "Reconstruction Regulations":

You all still recite sutras to seek good fortune. How can reciting sutras benefit people? If it was beneficial and the monks of Ba Chöde Monastery recited all day, then why did they suffer this massacre? You call the Dalai Lama a *trulku*, but he was defeated by foreigners and ran off everywhere to save his life. He could not even protect himself, so how can he protect you and bring you good fortune? Your foolishness in fact makes me feel pity for you, so I am wasting no effort to guide you time and again.²⁹

Despite his evident derision, Zhao's approach to Tibetan Buddhism was not iconoclastic. As I will demonstrate, by focusing on reforms to the monastic system Zhao attempted to undermine the economic and judicial foundations of monasteries' power among the people. While he clearly disapproved of certain practices in Tibetan Buddhism, he did not advocate an end to religious worship in Tibet. Rather, he hoped to transform Buddhism in such a way that fostered a more economically productive populace whose loyalty was to the imperial state. On this front, he was hardly successful.

Zhao began this process soon after pacifying the uprising in Batang. Just as he explained to the people of Batang in his "Reconstruction Regulations" that they did not "belong" to the native chieftains, they similarly were not property of monks: "Lamas are monks who have left home. They already cannot have their own family, so how can they own people? Since there are those of you who have land that belongs to the lamas, you can only be called tenants of the

²⁹ Sichuan dang'an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 100-101.

monastery. You cannot be called a lama's people."³⁰ Highlighting his focus on loyalty to the imperial state, Zhao again pointed out to them that everyone in Batang belonged to no one but the Emperor. Similarly, he emphasized that "All the land within the borders of Batang is the land of the great Emperor. For every category of land, regardless of whether it is owned by Chinese, barbarian, monk, or lay person, taxes must be collected. Why are there taxes? Just as people collect rents, officials collect taxes."³¹ This seemingly aphoristic statement is actually very significant because it stripped monasteries of their privileged tax exempt status, a policy Zhao confirmed later in the same regulations when he informed the monks that, "All the monasteries within the borders of Batang are on the land of the great Emperor. Regardless of whether the land is self-cultivated or rented to someone else, everyone must complete their land taxes at the appropriate rate. Just because they are a monastery they should not be any different."³²

Ba Chöde Monastery was one of Batang's largest landholders, and Zhao had confiscated all the monastery's lands following its destruction. Given the paucity of records from this time period, it is difficult to determine precisely what happened to these former monastic lands and their tenants. On the one hand, we do know that Zhao granted to individuals the right to reclaim former monastic lands not already under cultivation in exchange for paying annual grain taxes on their plots. In hopes of increasing tax revenue, Zhao lowered the tax rates on these former monastic lands by as much as thirty percent below regular rates to encourage rapid production, and this policy certainly represented a substantial increase in tax income for the administration under Zhao.³³ What remains unclear is the status of Ba Chöde Monastery's lands leased to their

³⁰ Sichuan dang'an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 96-98.

³¹ Sichuan dang'an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 96.

³² Sichuan dang'an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 97.

³³ Sichuan dang'an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 97.

bound tenants. With their landlord effectively destroyed, did cultivation rights (and the accompanying state tax obligations) transfer directly to the tenants as Zhao stipulated for unreclaimed monastic lands? Or, having confiscated Ba Chöde Monastery's lands, did Zhao then lease the plots to existing tenants in exchange for rent? Answers to such questions would contribute much to our understanding of late Qing land tenure in Tibetan areas as officials formally incorporated territory into the empire, but extant records do not allow us to explore this issue in-depth. Nevertheless, we do know that Zhao, in an act that suggests his attitude toward Tibetan Buddhism was more pragmatic than vindictive, allowed other monasteries that did not participate in the uprising to keep their lands and tenants. Now, however, monasteries were to be treated just like other landholders, having to submit taxes to the state at the newly assessed rates of forty, thirty, or twenty percent of seeds sown depending on the assessed quality of the land.³⁴

Zhao also attempted to limit the power of the monasteries to receive resources from the people. For example, even before issuing his "Reconstruction Regulations," Zhao ordered that notices be posted in Chinese and Tibetan forbidding local people from donating their agricultural produce to monasteries.³⁵ Later, he expanded his order and released the Batang people from their former obligations to provide customary gifts, which might include animals, agricultural products, or handicrafts, to lamas and native chieftains, a significant source of supplementary income for monasteries and headmen. Absolutely no one was permitted to make demands for such gifts, Zhao stated, and if any monk, headman, or local official needed something from the

³⁴ Sichuan dang'an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 96. John Shepherd convincingly argues that the fiscal limitations of the imperial state strongly influenced the incorporation of Taiwan frontier territories and determined the allocation of land rights in the territories it did incorporate. Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 239-307. Fiscal management certainly influenced Zhao's thinking as well, but he was more concerned about limiting monastic power than financing his frontier operations.

³⁵ *QCBDS*, no. 0079, 92-93.

people, then he must purchase it at market price.³⁶ He went on to advise the people of Batang that only monastic tenants owed land rents to a monastery, and those people who did not farm monastic lands were under no obligation to provide the monastery with anything.³⁷ Hoping to further restrict the economic foundation of monasteries, Zhao later prohibited the transfer of goods and property from the deceased to monasteries, arguing that “this vile practice in fact inhibits governance.”³⁸ Zhao’s hope was that when a monk died, his property would revert to his family and not the monastery.³⁹ Reflecting his deep distrust of Tibetan monasteries, Zhao rhetorically asked the people of Batang, “Although you give a large amount of alms, of what benefit is reciting sutras? If you give alms to the gods, but the lamas take and use them, of what benefit is this to the deceased? As for reciting sutras to seek good fortune, lamas in fact spend the entire day reciting sutras. The Dalai Lama also seems to spend the entire day reciting sutras, but a large number of monks of the two monasteries in Batang and Chatreng died by the sword, and the Dalai Lama has now lost his position and fled. From this you can see that people are not kind, yet still the gods and Buddhas do not offer protection.”⁴⁰

Driving his point home, Zhao emphasized that monks were only permitted to collect rents from their tenants and, as discussed above, they were not to interfere in litigation or public business. In addition, upon discovering the extremely high interest rates charged by monasteries for loans, Zhao instituted a graded system of repayment and/or forgiveness over time for loans issued by monasteries. Regulations such as these that directly attacked the economic and

³⁶ Sichuan dang’an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 98.

³⁷ Sichuan dang’an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 96-98.

³⁸ *QCBDS*, no. 0577, 632.

³⁹ Duncan, *Customs and Superstitions of Tibetans*, 169.

⁴⁰ *QCBDS*, no. 0577, 632.

juridical foundations of authority for Batang's monastic communities clearly reveal Zhao's intention to reduce the traditional power of monastic institutions in Batang.

Even more effective in curtailing the power of Batang's monastic communities were Zhao's regulations limiting the size and number of monasteries. He wrote, "Ba Chöde Monastery has already been eradicated, so the local magistrate will use its area in Batang to construct a temple for annual religious rites. As for the remaining nonsensical (無稽) temples, as a rule they are not permitted to [re]build, nor are they permitted to allow more lamas to reside inside. As for the lamas in each of the villages who have not stirred up trouble, they should continue as before. If there are lamas who wish to leave their monastery, allow them to do so."⁴¹ In a symbolic usurpation of Ba Chöde's power, Zhao began construction on a new yamen, which was completed by his successor Fu Songmu in August 1911 (XT 3.6*) on the fields formerly owned by the monastery.⁴²

Zhao's policy of limiting the number of monks in each monastery to three hundred continued the controversial policy reintroduced by Feng Quan. However, noting that many monasteries already greatly exceeded this threshold and that fully implementing the order would certainly cause trouble, Zhao showed a degree of flexibility, ordering that each monastery instead submit a name register of their monks to the local magistrate. Those monasteries with over three hundred monks would no longer be allowed to accept new monks until their official registration numbers fell below that number. In so doing, Zhao argued, the monasteries would over time naturally comply with the new regulation. Indeed, it is likely that it was upon urging from Zhao that as early as June 1905 High Commissioner to Tibet You Tai had attempted to

⁴¹ Sichuan dang'an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 100.

⁴² *BTXZ*, 13.

convince the Ganden Tripa (Dga'ldan khripa)⁴³ to refuse any Batang monks from studying in Lhasa's monasteries. While we do not know the outcome of You Tai's petition, circumstantial evidence suggests religious ties between Batang and Lhasa remained strong.⁴⁴ Lakha Lama, the formal leader of Batang's Ba Chöde Monastery, had in fact been studying in Lhasa since before the Batang uprising, and he remained there until 1922. Accomplished monks at Ba Chöde Monastery also typically studied in one of Lhasa's major monasteries for up to three years.⁴⁵

Common portrayals of "Butcher Zhao" depict him as being bent on eliminating Tibetan Buddhism from the plateau.⁴⁶ Hoping to prevent Zhao from taking up the position of High Commissioner to Tibet in 1908 (GX 34), numerous religious leaders in Kham and Central Tibet asserted that Zhao and his soldiers had "gratuitously torched" Ba Chöde Monastery, melted down Buddhist statues for coins, "threw sutras into toilets, used silk clothing of Buddhas to wrap the feet of soldiers, and brutally murdered innocents."⁴⁷ While there is no doubt that Zhao and his soldiers committed numerous acts of violence against monks in Batang and other parts of Kham, not all death and destruction was under his order. As described in Chapter Four, Ba Chöde Monastery was in fact destroyed by Ma Weiqi, who also executed Batang's head and deputy native chieftains.⁴⁸ In contrast to common assumptions, in some limited ways, Zhao even encouraged the practice of Tibetan Buddhism and the monastic tradition. For example, following the destruction of Ba Chöde Monastery, its monks scattered around the region, but many

⁴³ The Ganden Tripa is the abbot of Ganden Monastery and spiritual leader of the Gelug tradition. In the absence of the Dalai Lama, who had fled to Mongolia and China, the Ganden Tripa exercised political and religious authority in Tibet.

⁴⁴ *QCBDS*, no. 0041, 57.

⁴⁵ Duncan, *Customs and Superstitions of Tibetans*, 178.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Smith, *Tibetan Nation*, 168-174.

⁴⁷ *QCBDS*, no. 0185, 208-09.

⁴⁸ *QCBDS*, no. 0311, 341.

eventually settled at nearby Ridö Monastery (Ristod, 日登寺), a smaller monastery originally under the administration of Ba Chöde Monastery located within Batang city proper. Despite the ban on monasteries rebuilding, monks quickly expanded Ridö's lodging facilities to accommodate the influx of monks from Chöde, a project that Zhao did not oppose. Until Ba Chöde Monastery was rebuilt in 1923, Ridö provided an alternative location for monks to carry out their public and private activities.⁴⁹ Similarly, although Zhao was certainly aware that Lakha Lama, Ba Chöde Monastery's formal leader, was residing in Lhasa, he did not seek his arrest or punishment. Lakha Lama would eventually return to Batang in 1922, at which time he immediately petitioned Republican authorities for permission to reconstruct his monastery.⁵⁰

In addition, Zhao allowed all the *trulku* in the monasteries that did not oppose him to retain their official titles granted by the emperor. He even announced that, "*trulku*...are permitted to receive annual stipends in silver *liang* for food and clothing so that they can vigorously promote Gelug Buddhism."⁵¹ Moreover, Zhao established a monastic academy (喇嘛学堂) in Batang. While little is known about this school, students as a rule had to let their hair grow and spent half their day studying and half their day learning a practical skill. In so doing, Zhao hoped to give young monks unique skills that they could later use to provide for themselves.⁵² Finally, several years after the uprising in Batang, Zhao agreed to restore some of the monasteries' economic foundations. On March 29, 1911 (XT 3.2.29), Zhao agreed to permit monasteries to retain forty percent of the harvests their tenants produced before submitting their

⁴⁹ KPDM, 423; and Zhou and Ran, *Zang Chuan Fojiao Siyuan Ziliao Xuanbian*, 326-27.

⁵⁰ Zhou and Ran, *Zang Chuan Fojiao Siyuan Ziliao Xuanbian*, 318.

⁵¹ He, "20 shiji chunian Chuanbian Zangqu zhengzhi jingji wenhua gaige shulun," 41.

⁵² Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shilüe*, 243; and He, "20 shiji chunian Chuanbian Zangqu zhengzhi jingji wenhua gaige shulun," 47.

taxes.⁵³ Such policies allowed monasteries to retain some of their power, albeit at much lower levels than before.

Rather than destroy Tibetan Buddhism, Zhao Erfeng appears to have intended to reduce the influence of monastic institutions so that the imperial state could more effectively cultivate a productive populace whose loyalty was to the Emperor. By weakening monasteries, in other words, Qing officials would increase the power of the imperial state and better govern the region. Zhao Erfeng's "Reconstruction Regulations" laid out a plan by which Zhao redirected Batang's existing power structure within a new bureaucratic system of governance with a Han magistrate at its center. To achieve these goals, he abolished the native chieftain system and its support network and severely restricted the influence of Batang's largest Tibetan monasteries. As a result, Zhao radically expanded imperial power and firmly established Qing sovereignty in the region.

Comprehensive Plans

Writing to his brother, Zhao Erxun, who would go on to become governor-general of Sichuan, Zhao Erfeng proclaimed, "Through the grace of the emperor...I will rid [Tibet] of its tyranny in order to relieve the distress of the people. By promoting education I will eradicate their stupidity. By reclaiming fields I will provide them a livelihood. By facilitating commerce I will give them an abundance of goods to use. By promoting trade I will enrich their industry. In addition I will open a railroad to connect [Tibet] with inland China."⁵⁴ In this passage, Zhao summarized his grand plan for comprehensive reform in Kham, a process that began in Batang.

⁵³ *QCBDS*, no. 0783, 885-86.

⁵⁴ Zhao Erfeng, "Zhao Erfeng handian xubian," *Zhi cishuai* (N.p.: n.p., n.d.), n.p., quoted in Li Shaoxian, "Zhao Erfeng yu jindai Chuan Zang bianjiang jiaoyu," *Deyang jiaoyu xueyuan xuebao* 17, no. 3 (2003): 14.

Immediately after laying the groundwork for political restructuring in Batang with his “Reconstruction Regulations” in October 1906, Zhao Erfeng returned to Chengdu to consult with Governor-General Xi Liang on how best to proceed in Kham. Away from the frontier, Zhao sought the advice of experts on a variety of subjects, but he was most interested in learning about colonization and economic development. After compiling his plans, Zhao outlined in a memorial to the court dated April 16, 1907 (GX 33.3.4), his comprehensive program for developing the frontier. Supported by Xi Liang and Yunnan Governor-General Ding Zhenduo (丁振鐸), Zhao’s plan included six pillars: military recruitment, bureaucratic restructuring, land reclamation, commercial development, mining, and education, and he requested an annual budget of three million silver *liang*. With Batang as Zhao’s base of operations in Kham, each of these pillars affected the lives of Batang people to varying degrees, as I will outline below. Zhao also suggested for the first time that the Sichuan-Yunnan border region, due to its expansiveness, be separated from its current administrative structure and reorganized as an independent province with its own specific responsibilities. Perhaps most important for Zhao, creating a province would keep him from having two superiors, one in Chengdu and one in Kunming. He could more easily manage affairs within his own independent administrative structure.⁵⁵ The court warmly approved Zhao’s proposed development plan, but it only authorized the Sichuan provincial treasury to disburse annually one million *liang* for Zhao’s endeavors, still a significant sum that

⁵⁵ Zhao’s proposal to create a new province out of western Sichuan and northern Yunnan is both traditional and innovative. Chinese empires grew over time by creating new provinces and incorporating them into the empire. In the late Qing dynasty, the province of Xinjiang was created in 1884 after a long period of indirect rule in the region. See James A. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). The following year, the empire formally established Taiwan as a province, although it had been ruling the region directly as part of Fujian Province since the seventeenth century. See Teng, *Taiwan’s Imagined Geography*. Similarly, in 1907, the same year that Zhao submitted his memorial, three new provinces (Heilongjiang (黑龍江), Jilin (吉林), and Fengtian (奉天, present-day Liaoning (遼寧)) were created in Manchuria, which had been ruled directly by Manchu officials since the founding of the dynasty. Mark C. Elliott, “The Limits of Tartary: Manchuria in Imperial and National Geographies,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 3 (2000): 603-46. What made Zhao’s proposal unique was his desire to carve out a region subject to centuries of indirect rule but under the nominal jurisdiction of an existing administrative structure, i.e., Sichuan Province.

represented as much as one-tenth of Sichuan's total revenue at the time. The court did not comment on his proposal to create a new province.⁵⁶

Zhao's plans were extremely ambitious, but his vision extended beyond merely carving out a new province from Sichuan and northern Yunnan. Even before he had reached Batang on his punitive mission in 1905, Zhao had argued for a new provincial structure in the southwest in which Batang would become the governor-generalship of a region that spanned from central Tibet in the west to Sichuan in the east. While Zhao may have tempered his dream after experiencing the challenges of life and governance on the plateau, he still proceeded with constructing a new yamen compound as the headquarters for the future leader of Xikang in Batang. His new offices were grand in scale. Remarking on the compound, American missionary Marion Duncan wrote, "With grounds beautifully laid out connecting the parallel sides and the spacious reception rooms, the whole resembles an Oriental palace. Enormous pillars support the heavy tiled roofs. The floors of the courts which adjoin the monastic grounds on the north are carved stone and tile."⁵⁷ Moreover, while protocol dictated he return to the provincial capital of Chengdu to participate in official ceremonies honoring the Emperor on the new year in 1910, Zhao, who had recently returned to Batang after almost two years in Kham, instead decided to remain there and hold the appropriate ceremonies himself in Batang's local Guandi Temple, yet another small indication of his intent to make Batang the capital of a new province.⁵⁸

Extending the empire's power in Batang, let alone Kham and all of central Tibet, however, was much easier said than done. Over the next several years, Zhao worked hard to

⁵⁶ *QCBDS*, no. 0108, 118-25; and Adshead, *Province and Politics in Late Imperial China*, 115.

⁵⁷ Duncan, *The Mountain of Silver Snow*, 76.

⁵⁸ Liu Dingyi, "Zhao Erfeng jingying Chuanbian wenjian yishu," in *Sichuan wenshi ziliao xuanji*, vol. 6, ed., Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Sichuan sheng weiyuanhui Sichuan sheng shengzhi bianji weiyuanhui (Chengdu: n.p., 1963), 24.

carry out political restructuring in Kham principality by principality. As described above, this process included removing secular native chieftains from power, curbing the influence of monasteries, and establishing a new bureaucratic structure led by Han magistrates appointed from Chengdu. A key prerequisite in this process was the military strength to implement political change in the region. This does not mean that Zhao necessarily used military violence to remove all indigenous leaders from power, restrict the influence of each and every monastery, and establish local Han magistrates, but Zhao was an experienced general, and after several months of fighting and reform in Kham he knew the importance of a well-trained and fully-staffed army in this expansive and often precarious region. To that end, Zhao's April 1907 six-point policy proposal to the emperor included a request for permission to recruit an additional three battalions (1,500 soldiers) that would be trained in infantry, heavy artillery, and cavalry techniques.⁵⁹ These new soldiers would complement Zhao's existing five battalions that were garrisoned around Kham, including one in Batang, and would eventually allow him not only to conquer all of Kham east of the Dri River but also to send a large expedition to Lhasa before the fall of the dynasty in 1911.

In addition to increasing his overall military strength, Zhao's purpose in recruiting new soldiers was to create a sustainable system of troop rotation on the frontier. Zhao noted just a few months later on December 18, 1907 (GX 33.11.14), for example, that he had received reports that soldiers stationed in Batang strongly desired to return home after being forwardly deployed for over two years. To ensure the military readiness of his army, Zhao informed Batang officials that he had already begun recruiting new soldiers in Chengdu and planned to lead several

⁵⁹ *QCBDS*, no. 0108, 123.

hundred replacements beyond the pass in the coming year.⁶⁰ Zhao did in fact lead a new army into Kham in 1908, but taking the northern route through Derge, they did not reach Batang until the winter of 1910.

As described above, Batang's political restructuring began in June 1905 soon after Zhao Erfeng restored order there. However, at that time Zhao's effective control was limited to the territory immediately surrounding Batang proper. It took longer, in some cases several years, before he was able to bring Batang's outlying areas, including Yanjing to the southwest, Sanyan to the northwest, Linkashi to the north, and Derong to the south, under direct control of imperial officials. Only then did the fruits of Zhao Erfeng's comprehensive plan to solidify Qing sovereignty in Kham, and thereby build a "fence" to protect the empire from foreign encroachment from the west, begin to mature. Before addressing Zhao Erfeng's efforts in these outlying areas of Batang's traditional territory, I will discuss other significant ways in which Zhao's reforms impacted the people of Batang.

Economic Reform

As outlined in his six-point memorial, Zhao Erfeng's plans in Kham were not limited to military dominance and political restructuring. To achieve his goals, Zhao argued that state-sponsored economic development and social reform were essential, and Batang would continue to play a vital role in these fields just as it did in Zhao's political state building discussed above. The success of Zhao's economic and social reforms, similar to his political reforms, shows the ability of the declining Qing state to implement fundamental and long-term changes along its southwest border.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 0137, 153-54.

Zhao Erfeng's economic reforms in Batang focused on three distinct areas: land reclamation and tax administration, corvée labor and transportation, and commercial development. He laid out his initial plan in his "Reconstruction Regulations" in October 1906 and then greatly expanded it approximately five months later in his lengthy six point memorial that outlined his comprehensive plan for developing Kham. Over the next several years, he diversified his programs as he attempted to achieve his goals of steady agricultural production, reliable tax revenue, and efficient commercial manufacturing. His results would be mixed at best.

Visions of Land Reclamation

Zhao's initial design for promoting economic growth and generating tax income in Batang concentrated exclusively on colonization and land reclamation. As generations of Qing officials before him had noted, Zhao observed that Batang's land was under-utilized, and bringing in settlers to reclaim and farm lands in Batang would increase production and generate additional tax income. Zhao could then reinvest this income into infrastructure, commerce, and education, which would lead to greater prosperity in the region. More Han settlers in Batang would also dilute the influence of the monasteries. As Younghusband explained Zhao's motivations in Kham, he noted, "The introduction of as large a Chinese element as possible into the district was, Chao Erh-Feng informed our Consul-General at Chengtu . . . , what he was anxious to bring about. He desired . . . by the inviting of Chinamen of the farming class to settle in Batang to check the Lamas."⁶¹ Such policies were far from innovative. As other scholars have shown, state-sponsored immigration into frontier areas had a long history in China.⁶²

⁶¹ Francis Younghusband, *India and Tibet* (London: John Murray, 1910), 374.

⁶² See, for example, Herold J. Wiens, *China's March toward the Tropics: a Discussion of the Southward Penetration of China's Culture, Peoples, and Political Control in Relation to the Non-Han-Chinese Peoples of*

Attempting to pick up agricultural development where Feng Quan had left off, Zhao outlined in his 1906 “Reconstruction Regulations” a three year plan in which local officials throughout Sichuan Province would invite settlers capable of farming to come to Batang. The state would provide willing volunteers room, board, and travel expenses during their journey, and upon arrival in Batang local officials would assign them land to reclaim and give them tools and seed to cultivate it. Settlers were given the option to accept board from the state or provide meals for themselves, with tax obligations changing depending on their decision. Those who accepted state-provided board would have a higher tax burden during their first two years as colonists and would only begin to submit taxes at the same rate as private landowners in their third year. In contrast, settlers who chose to prepare their own meals would be fully exempt from taxes their first year, and from the second year they would begin paying taxes at the same rate as private landowners in Batang. While ownership of assigned plots remained with the state, Zhao did stipulate that Han settlers in Batang would retain the right to pass on their fields to their descendants.⁶³ In this respect, at least, Zhao’s proposed land reclamation project differed significantly from his predecessors’ programs. As Madeleine Zelin and John Shepherd have pointed out, early Qing migrants to Sichuan and Taiwan were often subsidized by the state, but once they arrived on the frontier they were largely left to their own devices to secure a plot to reclaim and provide for their livelihood.⁶⁴

South China and in the Perspective of Historical and Cultural Geography (Hamden: Shoestring Press, 1954); Richard von Glahn, *The Country of Streams and Grottoes: Expansion, Settlement, and the Civilizing of the Sichuan Frontier in Song Times* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1988); Madeleine Zelin, *The Magistrate’s Tael: Rationalizing Fiscal Reform in Eighteenth Century Ch’ing China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); and Leo K. Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State: Ethnicity and Expansion on the Ming Borderlands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁶³ Sichuan dang’an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 96.

⁶⁴ Zelin, *The Magistrate’s Tael*; and Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier*, 137-238.

Zhao's initial economic development plan for Batang was clearly a work-in-progress. Its sole component was a land reclamation program that while specific in some details lacked important elements such as long-term financing and scope. It did not even clarify which lands were available for reclamation, although Zhao had unilaterally proclaimed any land currently uncultivated belonged to the state. It is also safe to assume that he continued to use the lands surveyed by Wu Xizhen as part of the experimental land reclamation project begun in 1904. Nevertheless, the importance of colonization in Batang was undoubted, and Zhao's efforts received at least nominal support in Chengdu and Beijing. Recounting Zhao's successes in Kham, a senior Sichuan official memorialized in March 1908 (GX 34.2.17), "The two provinces of Sichuan and Yunnan adjoin Tibet, where border affairs are extremely urgent. If we establish land reclamation colonies and broadly exploit the land in the border regions of these two provinces, then we can sufficiently strengthen the entrances to Sichuan and Yunnan while ensuring the barrier of Tibet. This is in fact the current matter on which we cannot delay."⁶⁵

Zhao's call for settlers to come to Batang met with some initial success, although numbers remained far below his expectations. As of January 26, 1907 (GX 32.12.13), ninety individuals with twenty-six family members had responded to official announcements throughout Sichuan Province and made their way to Batang since April 1904 (GX 30.3).⁶⁶ Unsatisfied, Zhao gave prominent place to the importance of colonization in Batang in his April 1907 comprehensive six-point memorial, arguing in his opening statement, "In managing border affairs, although the scale must be extensive and there are many matters we must implement, we cannot not decide what is urgent or casually determine priorities. I intend to request you issue an imperial order to recruit farmers from inland China to take advantage of the rich and fertile

⁶⁵ *QCBDS*, no. 0142, 163.

⁶⁶ Jin Fei, "Qingmo Xikang kenwu dang'an shican" *Bianzheng* 9 (1932): 12-15.

environment of Batang and Litang with officials supporting their relocation and providing them seeds.”⁶⁷ Upon learning that the majority of the individuals who had taken up his offer to come to Batang were very poor, Zhao strongly advocated for all-inclusive state support for new settlers for a period of up to three years in spite of strong calls from critics that his program was too expensive.

By June 1908 (GX 34.5.24), tepid interest led Zhao to expand his land reclamation project, which was originally limited to civilians in Sichuan Province, to include soldiers in his frontier army. Zhao’s expanded army included at least two battalions that were permanently based in Batang, and he decided to allow these soldiers to benefit from the land reclamation program. His hope was that participating soldiers would realize a profit from farming and, upon completing their military obligations, decide to send for their family members and settle permanently in Batang.⁶⁸ Later records indicate some soldiers did in fact remain in Batang, although specific numbers are unavailable. Some might have sent their family members to join them, but anecdotal evidence suggests most had already taken Tibetan wives.

Zhao issued a second public appeal for settlers in late 1908, this time requesting that the court call for talented individuals from throughout the empire, not only Sichuan, to work in Kham and central Tibet.⁶⁹ He also allowed settlers to engage in non-agricultural work if they had marketable skills and were able to continue farming their allotted land.⁷⁰ Still optimistic, Zhao expected as many as two hundred settlers to immigrate to Batang, but concerns about Kham’s harsh climate and the perceived power of monasteries and native chieftains deterred all but the

⁶⁷ *QCBDS*, no. 0108, 118.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 0167, 186-88.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 0151, 173-74.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 0259, 278-79. Unlike other state-sponsored land reclamation efforts in the early Qing, there is no evidence that the state allowed settlers to take possession of land and bring in their own tenants.

most destitute in Sichuan Province from travelling to Batang and attempting to settle there.⁷¹ Further deflating Zhao's hopes, those who did make the journey were not very capable. Writing in September 1909, newly arrived Batang Commissariat Officer Chen Lian (陈廉) bemoaned the poor quality of Han settlers in Batang. Reporting that not less than a few hundred people had settled in Batang since the project began several years ago, he noted that they had only cultivated several hundred *mu* of land, a far cry from Wu Xizhen's earlier estimate of 28,000 *mu* of cultivable land in Batang. Chen also conveyed his disgust upon finding that a recently arrived group of Sichuan settlers that was reported to have fifty individuals in fact consisted of only twenty-two old and weak persons with no knowledge of farming and little interest in working. Chen reported that he had gone out of his way to identify a suitably large plot of land for them to cultivate together, but they seemed disinterested in remaining in Batang and wanted to travel further south to Yanjing, where they had heard the climate was more temperate and the soil more fertile than Batang. Upon further investigation, Chen was surprised to learn that this disagreeable group had been led to Batang by Xie Qi (谢骐), a recent graduate of the Tibetan Language Academy in Chengdu, and that at least half the settlers were undependable vagrants who had fled to Batang to escape their creditors in Sichuan. It also turned out that their original numbers had never existed. Rather, they had inflated their group's size to collect additional rations and travel stipends along the way.⁷²

Around the same time, outgoing Batang Commissariat Officer Dong Tao (董涛) summarized the results of land reclamation efforts during his tenure in Batang. As of September 1909, two hundred new Han settlers had opened only 390 *mu* of land, although in total almost

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, no. 0258, 278.

⁷² *Ibid.*, no. 0356, 398-400. Xie was not the only Han graduate of the Tibetan Language Academy to lead his Sichuan compatriots beyond the pass. Jin Fei, who corroborates Commissariat Officer Chen's story, notes at least one other similar case from Pengzhou. Jin, "Qingmo Xikang kenwu dang'an shican," 20-21.

1,000 *mu*, irrigated by over five hundred *zhang* (丈) of irrigation canals, some of which were powered by locally developed waterwheel pumps, had been opened since the project began in 1904.⁷³ Explaining the reasons for such meager results after several years of effort, he noted that useful land in Batang was extremely rare, a point Ba Chöde monks had made to Wu Xizhen before the project had even begun. Dong also observed that all the Han settlers were “habitually lazy” and up to 80% of them were old, weak, or sick, an assessment fully consistent with his successor’s complaints.

Having led his army through southern Kham for two years, Zhao was well-aware of the challenges of the region’s harsh environment, but he persisted in his land reclamation efforts in Batang. He had long held that the tax and ownership benefits of reclaiming land were open to everyone, including Tibetans. While many officials noted that increased corvée demand following the arrival of Qing soldiers had absorbed any local labor surplus that might have been available, at least one official recommended that he and other local magistrates be allowed to recruit participants in land reclamation efforts from the nomad population in Kham. This official noted that doing so would both eliminate the costly expenses of relocating settlers from inland China and reduce crime by providing local people with a source of food so that they would not be forced to resort to theft in times of famine or disaster. The official concluded, “In less than ten years, the frontier will transform into inland China.” Zhao heartily praised this official for his ingenuity, but available records do not indicate any nomads joining, either voluntarily or involuntarily, land reclamation efforts in Batang.⁷⁴ This is not surprising given the drastic

⁷³ “Diaocha ziliao: Baan xian zhao min kaiken huangdi,” *Chuanbian jikan* 1, no. 2 (1935): 136; and Zeng, “Zhao Erfeng ji qi Batang jingying,” 25. One *zhang* is approximately twelve feet in length.

⁷⁴ *QCBDS*, no. 0669, 723-24.

difference in lifestyle sedentary farming would require. As we shall see, the idealistic dreams of an influx of Han settlers in Kham that Zhao Erfeng conjured were never realized.⁷⁵

Zhao Erfeng also took a personal interest in providing a smooth transition and hospitable environment for settlers. He frequently emphasized in his memorials the need to reduce as much as possible any burdens potential settlers might face upon volunteering to relocate to Batang. In addition to providing generous travel stipends, clothing, and supplies, Zhao also focused on daily foodstuffs for new Han residents.⁷⁶ Hoping to alleviate concerns among potential settlers about the lack of familiar grains and vegetables in Kham, for example, he established the Batang Experimental Agricultural Farm (巴塘農業試驗場), which attempted to cultivate paddy rice, corn, buckwheat, wheat, potatoes, sorghum, maize, soybeans, rapeseed, asparagus, spinach, and other vegetables imported from Sichuan. Bringing in farmers from as far away as Dengke (鄧科) in northern Kham to study their techniques, the farm successfully cultivated some vegetables, and as a result some later authors described Batang as being on the cusp of civilization, writing that Batang was a region where, “the hundred valleys are flourishing, and the embroidery is pure like the clouds. Moreover, the roads are peaceful, the merchants are converging together, and the uncultivated land is being reclaimed. As a result, immigrants are increasing daily.”⁷⁷ Despite such rosy portrayals, paddy rice, the crop Han Chinese most desired while living in Kham, largely failed, even after numerous experiments with planting techniques and rice varieties over

⁷⁵ In but one of many parallels between late Qing and contemporary Chinese policies in Tibetan areas, this official’s call for settling Tibetan nomads in agricultural compounds and recent policies to do the same across the Tibetan plateau is striking. Over a century after Zhao first attempted to develop Tibetan areas, the Chinese government is still failing to balance economic development and cultural sensitivity in Tibet.

⁷⁶ *QCBDS*, no. 0611, 666-67.

⁷⁷ Yang, *Xikang jiyao*, vol. 2, 345.

several growing seasons.⁷⁸ Regardless of Zhao's good intentions, Batang's climate and soil made growing non-native crops extremely difficult, and the experimental farm was unable to supplement local produce on a sustainable basis.

While the modest land reclamation project initiated by Wu Xizhen achieved respectable results soon after it began, as described above Zhao Erfeng's expanded land reclamation program had trouble from the outset. Estimates of land available for reclamation were inaccurate, the soil of the land that was available proved difficult to till and irrigate, and officials considered the new settlers recruited from Sichuan to be lazy and unknowledgeable of even basic farming techniques. Recruitment numbers remained paltry even after several calls for volunteers. Moreover, despite the threat of real punishment if apprehended, many Han settlers decided after one or two seasons of receiving meager rations, eating foreign grains, working hard in a harsh environment, and enduring unfamiliar local customs to give up their plots and return to Sichuan. Batang Commissariat Officer Dong complained of deserters, and Z.S. Loftis noted that he encountered a small group of Han settlers who were fleeing Batang on the road west of Litang in June 1909.⁷⁹ F.M. Bailey, who passed through Batang two years later in May 1911, also noted that there were only about thirty Chinese settlers there, and the remnants of failed reclamation efforts could be seen throughout Batang.⁸⁰ By the end of the Qing dynasty, land reclamation and an influx of Han settlers, fundamental pieces of Zhao's economic development plan for Kham that was to begin in Batang and spread across the plateau, had largely failed.

⁷⁸ *QCBDS*, no. 0611, 666-67; no. 0663, 714-17; Zeng, "Zhao Erfeng ji qi Batang jingying," 25; and He, "20 shiji chunian Chuanbian Zangqu zhengzhi jingji wenhua gaige shulun," 43.

⁷⁹ Zenes Stanford Loftis, *A Message from Batang: the Diary of Z.S. Loftis, M.D., Missionary to Tibetans* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1911), 105-06.

⁸⁰ F.M. Bailey, *China-Tibet-Assam: A Journey, 1911* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1945), 67.

A New Tax Administration

While Zhao Erfeng's land reclamation project never produced viable results, other economic reforms were somewhat more successful in generating reliable income. Most notable was his standardization of tax collection in Batang. Before Ma Weiqi and Zhao Erfeng arrived in Batang, the ways in which power holders extracted commodities, income, and services from the local population varied widely. As discussed in Chapter Two, Ba Chöde Monastery collected not only rents but also a variety of commodities, including livestock and butter, from the people, both tenants and non-tenants alike. Batang's native chieftains collected similar taxes and also managed the region's corvée transportation system. In principle, corvée laborers were exempt from submitting grain taxes on any harvest they produced on the land granted to them by the native chieftains in exchange for providing transportation on demand, itself a *de facto* form of taxation, but as I will explain below, this was not always the case.

To bring order to Batang's confusing state of revenue extraction, Zhao introduced a uniform system of tax collection in his 1906 "Reconstruction Regulations." Reminding Batang residents that "all the land within the borders of Batang belongs to the Emperor," Zhao declared that anyone who cultivated the land, regardless of whether he was Han or Tibetan, monk or lay person, must submit taxes without exception. Zhao introduced a simple system that taxed grain production at three rates: 40%, 30%, and 20% based on the quality of the land under cultivation, superior, average, or inferior, respectively. This tax rate is substantially higher than is commonly understood for inland China, where average land tax rates were only 2-4% of agricultural output. In Sichuan, average land taxes were even lower.⁸¹

⁸¹ Sichuan dang'an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 96-98. Yeh-Chien Wang, *Land Taxation in Imperial China, 1750-1911* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974). Tax rates in Batang before Zhao's arrival are unknown. Some scholars have studied the taxation system of traditional Tibet, but their focus has been on central Tibet and their results inconclusive on land tax rates. Nevertheless, it is likely that

Building on his initial tax system, Zhao promulgated a new set of regulations for grain tax collection in November 1909 (XT 1.10) that covered Batang, Litang, and Chatreng, all areas that had undergone political restructuring and were now governed by Han magistrates. Based largely on his simple tax system established for Batang three years earlier, Zhao's new regulations further clarified his standards for determining land quality, defined standard weights and measures to be used when submitting grain taxes, and included provisions for tax relief in the event of natural disasters. He also specifically forbade the cultivation of unregistered lands and grain smuggling. Most significant, Zhao stipulated that any Han or Tibetan who lawfully reclaimed land and submitted taxes on his crops for a period of three years would receive permanent ownership of his plot, yet another incentive to encourage Han migration to the region.⁸² As Qing efforts to govern Batang stabilized, the Commissariat Officer prepared to distribute official land deeds to all land owners in Batang beginning in the fall of 1910 reflecting this fact.⁸³ Pointing out the success of his financial management to date, Zhao memorialized stating that grain taxes had supported the salaries and expenses of local Han magistrates and Tibetan *baozheng* representatives in Batang, Litang, and Chatreng since 1906 (GX 32). In Batang alone, Zhao also noted there was an average annual surplus of over 10,000 *liang*, which he used to fund other frontier programs. As other Qing officials prior to Zhao had indicated, Batang provided ample tax revenues to support the empire's presence there, and by appropriating

Tibetan land tax rates were higher than inland China rates, and it is perhaps for this reason that Zhao set Batang's rates so high. See, for example, Melvyn C. Goldstein, "Taxation and the Structure of a Tibetan Village," *Central Asiatic Journal* 15, no. 1 (1971): 1-27; Surkhang Wangchen, "Tax Measurement and *Lag 'don* Tax," *Bulletin of Tibetology* 3, no. 1 (1966): 15-28; and Surkhang Wangchen Gelek, "Government, Monastic and Private Taxation in Tibet," *The Tibet Journal* 11, no. 1 (1986): 21-40.

⁸² *QCBDS*, no. 0411, 456-58; and no. 0551, 601.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, no. 0605, 662.

the vast majority of revenues formerly collected by Ba Chöde Monastery and Batang's native chieftains, Zhao ensured this situation continued to benefit the Qing state.⁸⁴

While grain taxes in Batang proved to be an important source of revenue for Zhao, they were not the only source. Yanjing, literally “salt well,” as its name implies was a producer of salt, and it supplied the southern half of Kham and the southeastern corner of central Tibet with this daily necessity. Gaining control of Yanjing's tax revenues was important for Zhao because it represented another substantial source of income to support his ambitious plans for the border regions. Soon after subduing Batang proper, Zhao therefore dispatched Wang Huitong (王會同) to set up a salt tax office (鹽厘局) in Yanjing. Wang opened his office on November 27, 1905 (GX 31.11.1), soon after his arrival, but his efforts quickly met with resistance from the monks of Lhaweng Monastery (臘翁寺), the largest monastery in the region, who had been managing the salt trade in Yanjing for many years, although precisely when they assumed this responsibility is not known.⁸⁵ After a year of negotiations, including a trip to Yanjing by Batang Commissariat Officer Wu Xizhen during which Wu meet with Lhaweng representatives to “explain the advantages and disadvantages and assist in making them surrender,” Zhao Erfeng dispatched a larger contingent of troops to reinforce Wang's authority and assert Qing power in the region. The details of this campaign are discussed later in this chapter. What is significant in terms of Zhao's economic policies in Yanjing is that the violence caused by the Qing suppression of monastic power in Yanjing forced almost all local salt producers to abandon their wells and drying beds for over a year. To facilitate the revival of the salt trade and collection of taxes on it, Wang constructed buildings at state expense for producers and merchants to use.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 0417, 465-66; no. 447, 494; and no. 1097, 1121.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 0528, 573-74. This monastery is known today in Chinese as Lagong Monastery (拉貢寺).

When the producers did return, salt merchants followed, and production soon reached earlier levels.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, because the illegal trade in salt prevented Wang from collecting as much tax revenue as Zhao thought he could, Zhao revised local revenue collection procedures.

Instituting a *lijin* (厘金) system for salt transit duties in November 1909 that reflected more common commercial tax systems in Sichuan and other parts of inland China, Zhao dispatched another Han official, Duan Pengrui (段鵬瑞), to oversee its management. In his first year, Duan collected 11,300 silver *liang* in taxes on Yanjing's salt trade.⁸⁷ However, this system was also short-lived and lasted only three months. On February 9, 1910, Zhao determined the official costs for maintaining the *lijin* system were too burdensome, so he authorized a system of tax farming and privatized salt tax collection in Yanjing under the management of local merchant Li Chunde (李纯德), who had pooled resources from other investors in the region to assume this responsibility.⁸⁸ It is unclear how Zhao Erfeng reached this conclusion, but the following year he reported to the emperor that salt tax revenues from Yanjing yielded a profit of almost 10,000 silver *liang* after deducting the costs of managing its collection.⁸⁹

In addition to revenue from salt taxes, local officials in Yanjing focused on increasing revenues through grain taxes, and the actions of the French Catholic mission in Yanjing attracted their attention. Soon after Wang Huitong arrived in Yanjing, he noticed the extensive land holdings the Yankalong (鹽卡隴) Catholic Church had acquired through various purchasing and lease arrangements with local land owners over the last fifty years. He also learned that the

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 0107, 117-18; and no. 0399, 446.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 0397, 442-43; Zhu Xia and Li Xiaocen, "Xizang zizhiqiu Mangkang xian Yanjing zhen de jingyan shengchan," *Zhongguo Zangxue* 79, no. 3 (2007): 62; and Duan Pengrui, *Yanjing xiangtu zhi*, in *Zhongguo difang zhi jicheng Xizang fuxian zhi ji*, eds. Huang Yunsheng and Huang Xiaoshi (Chengdu: Bashu chubanshe, 1995), 408.

⁸⁸ *QCBDs*, no. 0465, 512-15; no. 0467, 516-17; and no. 0528, 573-74.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 0704, 767.

French had refused to recognize their obligations to pay grain taxes on their leased lands. Wang saw their lands as an unrealized source of revenue, but he was initially reluctant to investigate further. Not only did local people resent his presence in Yanjing, but the simple fact that this issue involved foreigners complicated the situation enough for him to defer action.

As Wang's authority stabilized in Yanjing after the destruction of Lhaweng Monastery by Qing forces, he became more bold, noting that the church's action were like someone "loudly snoring on the bed beside you" and could no longer be ignored. Writing to Zhao using language that reflected the budding nationalism of the era, Wang continued, "Every inch of this land is our sovereign national territory. If we do not clearly struggle for it from the beginning, then we will have no right to lay claim to it. When we formally begin to take action, we must carefully make arrangements and thoroughly investigate matters. Only then can we stand on our own two feet."⁹⁰ With this in mind, Wang quietly began investigating the extent of the church's land holdings, discovering that the vast majority of the church's one hundred fourteen plots were under lease terms that ranged from twenty-five to fifty years. He soon obtained written agreements from 80-90% of the local landholders to revoke their leases and buy back their lands from the church at the original prices. Zhao Erfeng was extremely pleased with Wang's plan, although he did caution him to be careful in completing the transactions with the local landlords so as not to give them an opportunity to create trouble.⁹¹

Unfortunately, further materials in Chinese on Wang's plan are not available, and extant materials from the M.E.P. archives do not mention this incident, so we do not know if he successfully reduced the land holdings of the French Catholic church in Yanjing and thus increased his grain tax income. We do know, however, that his willingness to curb the privileges

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 0468, 518.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, no. 0468, 521.

of the French missionaries in Yanjing represented an anti-foreign assertiveness among Qing officials previously unseen in the Batang region. In the past, local Qing officials worked diligently on behalf of foreigners to provide protection and ensure their treaty rights to reside and proselytize. As described in Chapters Three and Four, these actions inadvertently increased Qing power in the region vis-à-vis Batang's native chieftains and the religious establishment while also presenting an image to local people that imperial officials valued the rights of foreign missionaries greater than their own welfare, a perception that directly contributed to Feng Quan's murder in 1905. With most local headmen either killed or stripped of their authority and the power of local monasteries greatly reduced, it seems that some Qing officials like Wang Huitong took advantage of their increased power to confront what they saw to be the excessive privileges of foreigners in the region.

By November 1909 (XT 1.10.1), Zhao was fully engaged in a plethora of projects in Batang and throughout Kham that both generated and required revenue. To manage his increasingly complex affairs in Kham, Zhao memorialized that he wanted to establish a Border Finance Office (邊務收支報銷總局), which he located in Batang after securing permission, a small step toward financial independence from Sichuan Province.⁹² In September 1911 (XT 3.7) while serving as Sichuan governor-general, Zhao went even further in this direction by transferring budget operations for border affairs from his former Jianchang Circuit Intendancy to the High Commissioner for Border Affairs, which was now managed by Zhao's former deputy, Fu Songmu.⁹³ Administrative actions such as these that separated the financial management of border affairs from Sichuan Province represent important steps in establishing the autonomy of

⁹² *Ibid.*, no. 0396, 441-42.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, no. 0972, 1073-74.

the office of the High Commissioner for Border Affairs and undoubtedly bolstered Zhao's argument for the creation of an independent Xikang Province.

Reforming Corvée, Transportation, and Communication Systems

Land reclamation and standardizing tax collection were not the only items on Zhao Erfeng's economic agenda. He also focused on improving infrastructure in Kham and Batang, and this included reforming long-standing corvée labor practices in the region along with improvements to roads, bridges, official transit stations, and rest stops.

As discussed earlier, Zhao's "Reconstruction Regulations" were designed to remove power from the native chieftains and place it in the hands of Qing officials. This was no easy task, and he needed support from the local people to achieve success. One way he cultivated public support was by attempting to relieve corvée duties and standardize their implementation. For centuries, local *mag pon* headmen had overseen a corvée system in which laborers received plots of land in exchange for providing transportation services on demand and without compensation from their clients. In theory, the land corvée laborers received, and the tax free produce from it, was their compensation. In practice, however, local headmen often collected in kind payments from corvée laborers to supplement their own income. Knowing the long-standing complaints among Batang people about the burdens of corvée, Zhao directly addressed this issue in the fourth item of his "Reconstruction Regulations," stating, "Although *mag pon* and other [headmen] positions have been dissolved, supporting official business still requires human labor. In principle, officials will provide travelling expenses, and they [former headmen] are forbidden from bothering the people in even the slightest manner. If there still are those

demanding corvée, then the people are permitted to file suit against them, and local officials will investigate and punish them.”⁹⁴

Later in the same regulations, Zhao noted that in the past, those who paid taxes did not provide corvée and those who provided corvée did not pay taxes. However, “Now everything falls under the jurisdiction of the local magistrate...and henceforth corvée taxes will be collected by the local official. At the same time, land taxes must be submitted at the same level.... Whenever a family encounters a long corvée responsibility, the local magistrate will order the responsible *baozheng* to inform everyone in advance how many people will be required. When the people arrive at the station to work, then the official will pay their travel expenses. We will still use the old system to determine transit stations and types of corvée...and we will not permit abuse.”⁹⁵

As Zhao’s armies moved around the region, corvée burdens for local people increased, as did opportunities for headmen to exploit the people, as Zhao’s “Reconstruction Regulations” hint. To combat corruption and alleviate inequalities in this system, Zhao promulgated a series of reforms between 1909 and 1911, the most significant of which were stripping the *mag pon* of their power over the corvée system and decreeing that laborers would henceforth be paid for their services, the rate for which was set at 0.5 Tibetan silver *liang* for each leg of a journey between transit stations. In addition, Zhao reformed the underlying structure of the corvée system in Kham by formally separating it from the Green Garrison (綠營) military organization operated by the Sichuan governor-general. Tibetan outpost stations located along the main roads throughout Kham had long functioned as transaction points for corvée services. It was at these outposts that travelers with appropriate permits, usually Tibetan officials, native chieftains, or

⁹⁴ Sichuan dang’an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 96.

⁹⁵ Sichuan dang’an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 96-97.

headmen, but also imperial officials and sometimes foreign travelers, requisitioned local labor to transport their goods and possessions via pack animal to the next station. Overlapping with the Tibetan outpost stations for corvée labor was an imperial system of transit stations (驛站 or 塘兵) set up during the Qing's first incursion into Kham in the eighteenth century under Yue Zhongqi. Including seven stations in the Batang area, these posts were manned by Green Garrison Qing soldiers, who were responsible for protecting supply lines, ensuring smooth transport along the road, and maintaining public safety in the region.⁹⁶ It is likely that these Qing transit stations were co-located with the Tibetan corvée outpost stations, but historical sources do not definitely confirm this assumption. Nevertheless, as the Qing military presence in Kham weakened in the nineteenth century, these two systems did in fact merge as local Tibetans began staffing the Qing stations. Maintaining a semblance of authority, one or two Qing soldiers remained at each station, but the majority of the remaining Qing soldiers were garrisoned in Batang proper. The combined influence of the *mag pon* corvée managers and local Tibetan soldiers ensured that the Qing soldiers had little actual power. Reflecting this fact, over time Qing "transit stations" became known as "barbarian outposts" (蠻塘) in official parlance. Verifying this merger, Zhao Erfeng confirmed that Batang's head native chieftain had been responsible for the "barbarian outposts" in the region, which included both corvée services and ensuring peace and stability in the region. The native chieftain had delegated corvée management to his *mag pon*, who ensured that each station had sufficient resources, human and animal, to meet the needs of travelers in Batang. They did this by distributing farm land to local peasants, who agreed to provide human and pack animal support on demand without compensation. Confirming that local headmen had abandoned

⁹⁶ These seven transit stations were located in Little Bachong, Batang proper, Numshing Crossing (Snum zhing, 牛古渡), Drubanang, Gongla (工拉), Mangli, and Nandun (南墩). Zeng Guoqing, "Qingdai Zangqu yichuan zhidu lice," in *Qingdai Zangshi yanjiu*, ed. Zeng Guoqing (Lhasa: Xizang renmin chubanshe, 1999), 176; and Batang xian diming lingdao xiaozu, *Sichuan sheng Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou Batang xian diminglu*, 34.

the traditional arrangement of exchanging tax free land for corvée service, Batang's *mag pon* also collected grain taxes from these corvée peasants to maintain adequate supplies for the pack animals and manage the system.

Although Zhao stripped *mag pon* of their authority in late 1905, it was not until July 1910 (XT 2.5.30), that he ordered Batang Commissariat Officer Chen Lian to dismantle the transit station system in the region. Zhao's primary motivation was to redistribute the grain taxes corvée peasants formerly submitted to the native chieftain's *mag pon* to state coffers.⁹⁷ Therefore, while Zhao institutionalized a system of payment for corvée services in Batang, he also formalized the practice of these peasants submitting grain taxes on their harvests. In less than two weeks, Chen reported he had successfully relieved the *mag pon* of their former authority. In their place, Batang's newly appointed Tibetan and Han *baozheng* representatives assumed responsibility for assessing and collecting taxes on these formerly tax exempt lands. This transfer of authority from *mag pon* selected by Batang's head native chieftain to *baozheng* appointed by the Batang Commissariat represents yet another step towards direct rule and greater Qing power in the region.

Soon after *baozheng* assumed their expanded responsibilities for corvée in Batang, Sichuan Governor-General Zhao Erxun, citing continued provincial budget shortfalls, informed Zhao Erfeng that the province would no longer provide salaries for its Green Garrison soldiers stationed in Kham beginning January 30, 1911 (XT 2.12.30). This meant that Zhao would not be able to post Qing soldiers in Kham's transit stations on a rotating basis or maintain the small contingent of Green Garrison troops still in Batang. However, the loss of these military resources did not concern Zhao. His own army was over 2,500 strong, and the initial success of his transfer of authority for transit station corvée services from *mag pon* to *baozheng* encouraged him to

⁹⁷ QCBDS, no. 0618, 674.

replicate this process throughout Kham. Zhao therefore immediately abolished the former transit station system between Dartsedo and Batang and replaced it with a system managed by local Han magistrates.⁹⁸ Approximately one year later, the emperor approved Zhao's plan to expand his new system for managing corvée and public safety west beyond Batang to Chamdo. Zhao's soldiers would ensure stability at each station, while local magistrates would appoint one Han Chinese secretary (汉號書) and hire three local Tibetans as runners at each station to transmit official correspondence until a postal system was formally established.⁹⁹

In October 1911 (XT 3.9.1), Zhao's successor as Border Affairs Commissioner, Fu Songmu, again revised the corvée system in Kham. Recognizing the heavy burdens of corvée laborers to support the imperial army and expanded Qing presence in the region, Fu reinstated the traditional practice of exempting providers of corvée from submitting grain taxes. Hoping to curb long-standing abuses of this system, Fu also standardized rates for animal corvée, set limits on load weights, and established maximum distances between corvée stations. In an effort to cut costs, Fu also reduced the total number of official corvée stations. In Batang, the number of official stations went from seven to two.¹⁰⁰ Despite his efforts and those of Zhao Erfeng before him, Han officials would continue to monitor and reform the traditional corvée system of transportation in Kham well into the Republican period.¹⁰¹

Understanding the importance of smooth transportation and communication for maintaining stability in Batang, Zhao also approved funds to improve the roads and facilities

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 0744, 826-27.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 0841, 956-58.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 0885, 990-92. These stations were located in Batang proper and Xisonggong (喜松工) in Sanyan.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, no. 0043, 59; no. 0959, 1057-61; Sichuan dang'an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 98: c92 [N.d.]; and He, "20 shiji chunian Chuanbian Zangqu zhengzhi jingji wenhua gaige shulun," 45.

between Dartsedo and Batang. In perhaps his most often cited passage, Zhao wrote in his six point memorial on developing Kham, “Examining each country’s opening up of their distant lands, such as England in Australia, France in Madagascar, America in the Philippines, and Japan in Hokkaido, all of them first established inns and enticed settlers with benefits. They [settlers] then rushed there as if going to market, and within a few years they obtained profit.” Zhao went on to state, “If these distant lands were inconvenient for the people, then they would not have gone there. Therefore, when utilizing people, we must prioritize their convenience, and only later consider how they can work for us.”¹⁰² In addition, given the harsh conditions of travel in Kham, Zhao ordered the construction of eleven rest stops and fifteen hostels along the southern road through Kham between Dartsedo and Batang. Stocking them with food and supplies, he thought such efforts would both support the numerous settlers he envisioned immigrating to Batang and facilitate commercial development in the region. Ever the general, Zhao also remained aware of the military value of such stations should conflict re-arise.¹⁰³

Zhao’s quote comparing his efforts in Kham to England, France, America, and Japan is very revealing. Imperial expansion through land colonization and state-sponsored migration had a long history in China, including the Qing dynasty, and as I’ve demonstrated above Zhao frequently drew on these traditions as he attempted to expand imperial power in Batang. However, by drawing on Western precedent to support his frontier development, he is clearly differentiating himself from his predecessors. Successful development in Batang and Kham in general depended on new settlers immigrating to the region, and the state had a responsibility to facilitate their travel. Zhao’s land reclamation project discussed above makes this clear. But Zhao was also obviously aware of larger global historical processes of empire building that were

¹⁰² *QCBDS*, no. 0108, 120.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, no. 0133, 151; and no. 0299, 325-26.

impacting China. To protect China from foreign threats on its southwest border, Zhao worked to emulate the examples of modern imperial powers. As we shall see, time was not on his side.

Even before Zhao's rise to prominence, when he was providing logistical support for Ma Weiqi's punitive expedition to Batang in 1905, Zhao grasped the importance of rapid communication with senior officials in Chengdu. Marching west behind Ma, Zhao began work to extend the telegraph line between Chengdu and Dartsedo all the way to Batang, completing it in 1907 (GX 33).¹⁰⁴ Once settled in Batang, Zhao intended to make the town a communications hub of sorts with lines branching north to Chamdo via Derge; west all the way to British India via Lhasa, Shigatse (Gzhis ka rtse), and Gyantse (Rgyal rtse); and south to Adunzi in Yunnan.¹⁰⁵ However, a host of problems beset this project from the beginning. Unfamiliar and not trusting the technology, Tibetans were unwilling to assist in the construction of the lines, and thus Zhao had to depend on largely on Han labor, which was always scarce. In addition, poor construction, frequent sabotage, and simple bad weather caused the line between Batang and Dartsedo to break so often that officials could rarely use the system.

Although Zhao's attempts to use the latest technology to improve communications between Kham and Sichuan failed, he did successfully reform other fundamental elements of communication in the region. Again focusing on Batang, he ordered the Commissariat Officer Zhang Shengkai (张盛楷) to expand the road between Batang and Derge to facilitate commerce and travel between Kham's northern and southern regions in 1909.¹⁰⁶ In the same year, he also laid the groundwork for a postal system so that officials, soldiers, and settlers, who sometimes

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 0040, 56-57; and no. 0163, 182.

¹⁰⁵ By 1909, only the Batang-Chamdo line was completed. *QCBDS*, no. 0279, 303; Zeng, "Zhao Erfeng ji qi Batang jingying," 26-27; and He, "20 shiji chunian Chuanbian Zangqu zhengzhi jingji wenhua gaige shulun," 45.

¹⁰⁶ *QCBDS*, no. 0287, 312; and 0339, 380.

waited more than a year for word from home, could remain better connected to their families in inland China.¹⁰⁷ In 1911, Fu Songmu also improved the road between Batang and Litang to facilitate the transport of military supplies and equipment, in addition to commercial activity, into Batang.¹⁰⁸

Commercial Development

The purpose of Zhao Erfeng's infrastructure reforms was to tie Kham closer to inland China. These changes were designed to assist Han migrants in settling in Batang as farmers on newly appropriated state lands, to facilitate transportation along the major roads in Kham, and to promote commercial activity in the region. To assist in these endeavors, Zhao sent experts to major trading centers in China, including Shanghai, Tianjin, and Hankou, and abroad to India and Japan to investigate how to develop grassroots industry. He also employed a number of experts, including Belgian industrial engineers, Japanese artisans, and Chinese mining engineers who had studied in the United States, to oversee various projects throughout the region. Such endeavors further demonstrate Zhao's break from traditional methods of frontier development in Chinese history.¹⁰⁹ As with land reclamation and transportation, Batang was the center of Zhao's commercial development activities.

While Zhao hoped that private merchants from inland China would invest in development projects throughout Kham, he clearly overestimated Sichuan merchants' willingness to take on risk. As a result, Zhao decided it was necessary to dedicate public funds to establish commercial ventures that he hoped would create jobs, improve the local economy, and raise standards of

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 0279, 303.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 0776, 881-82.

¹⁰⁹ He, "20 shiji chunian Chuanbian Zangqu zhengzhi jingji wenhua gaige shulun," 45.

living for the people of Kham. He also hoped that initial state investment would create a sufficiently attractive market that would then entice private merchants to invest and grow the economy.¹¹⁰ While he invested in several small projects in other parts of Kham, the most notable being continued mining activities in Taining, Zhao concentrated his commercial development projects in Batang, where he established a leather tannery, a pottery school and tile factory, and a printing office. Zhao also authorized two mining projects in the Batang area, and in nearby Yanjing he privatized the collection of salt taxes, all modest efforts to stimulate economic growth. Although Zhao does not speak of these commercial projects in terms of China's self-strengthening, it is clear that he was strongly influenced by the thinking of inland reformers trying to take advantage of western methods to improve China's military and economic strength like Li Hongzhang (李鴻章) and Zhang Zhidong.

Zhao carefully planned the leather tannery in Batang, which he designed with two purposes in mind. First, Zhao recognized both the plentiful supply of untreated hides in Kham and the demand for finished leather products among Tibetans. When he arrived in Batang in 1905, he noted that all hides were shipped to Sichuan and other areas for processing, after which they returned to Batang finished and sold at significantly higher prices. Harvesting and processing the hides locally, he thought, would both create jobs and greatly reduce prices for local people. At the same time, Zhao recognized the military benefits of locally produced equipment for his garrisons deployed throughout Kham. With this in mind, he began making plans to send skilled tradesmen from a tannery in Chengdu to Batang to teach local young people tanning skills, after which he would construct a factory.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ *QCBDS*, no. 0108, 119-20, 124-25.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, no. 0108, 124-25; and Wu Fengpei, ed. *Zhao Erfeng Chuanbian zoudu* (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1984), 95.

Like most of his efforts in Kham, Zhao overestimated the ease of initiating this new project and had to make adjustments from the beginning. When he was unable to recruit any trainers willing to make the journey to Batang, he decided instead to send young Khampas at state expense to Chengdu. In a memorial dated January 11, 1909 (GX 34.12.20), Zhao requested permission to disburse 24,000 *liang* from his budget to begin construction of the tannery in Batang and to send thirty bright students to apprentice in Chengdu. Zhao argued, “To develop the region we must begin with promoting practical industries. There are many local products produced beyond the pass, and hides are especially abundant. These are goods purchased by the common people, and they also are necessary items for the military.”¹¹² The emperor approved his proposal, and work on the tannery began soon thereafter. Commissariat Officer Wu Yu (吳侯) selected a site along the river that covered twenty *mu* on the grounds of the now abandoned Ba Chöde Monastery and ordered machinery from Japan and additional equipment and supplies from inland China.¹¹³ Construction was completed in the middle of 1909.

At the same time Zhao authorized the construction of the tannery in Batang in early 1908, he ordered Wu to select thirty young Khampas around 17-18 years old from Batang and the surrounding regions to come to Chengdu, where they would apprentice in a local tannery to learn leather making at the state’s expense.¹¹⁴ Working together with Batang’s Han and Tibetan *baozheng*, Wu Yu announced the opportunity and distributed written notices about it throughout the region, proclaiming the multiple benefits of local industry and skilled tradesmen repeatedly. Despite his efforts, long-standing knowledge among Tibetans that life in Chengdu could lead to fever and death made recruitment challenging. After Wu threatened Batang’s *baozheng* with

¹¹² *QCBDS*, no. 0248, 268-69.

¹¹³ *BTXZ*, 158. Min 201: Mishuchu: juan 042: c01, undated, includes a blueprint for the tannery facility.

¹¹⁴ *QCBDS*, no. 0140, 158.

punishment, they eventually identified twelve young people and two alternates between the ages of sixteen and twenty, almost all of whom came from poor families or were orphans. Most were also Han, but according to Wu they were no different in appearance from Tibetan youth. The few Tibetans among the twelve would be given Han surnames to facilitate registration upon arrival in Chengdu. Wu sent off Batang's young apprentices with new clothes, travel allowances, and promises of future wealth if they studied hard. In Litang they joined other apprentices and made the journey to Chengdu in May 1908.

Wu's recruitment was quite strategic. He had heard from others familiar with the Chengdu tannery that the work was hard, illness common, and sanitary conditions poor. As a result, he expected only 10-20% of the apprentices to complete their studies. However, given the difficulty in attracting volunteers, Wu knowingly withheld this information in his recruitment announcements. He explained to Zhao Erfeng that this deception was necessary to prevent those who were selected to participate from feeling regretful and for those who were not from feeling lucky. But he expressed no remorse, arguing that he was acting in the best interests of the Batang people. As a result, he urged Zhao to ensure that the students studied hard and successfully returned to Batang. On the one hand, he feared that if he did not live up to his promises, Batang people would lose their trust in him and implementing any new projects would be even more difficult. On the other hand, he hoped that returning students would achieve both fame and wealth through their new trade, thereby sparking envy among others in Batang who would then choose to initiate their own practical commercial ventures that would further enrich and strengthen the region.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 0143, 164-65.

In total, forty-eight young people from Kham enrolled as apprentices at the tannery in Chengdu. Their progress was slow. The manager of the program, Cui Zhiyuan (崔志遠), noted that the language barrier made teaching at the level of detail necessary to become a skilled tanner quite difficult. He also pointed out that the Tibetan apprentices were “stubborn and indolent, thus very hard to manage.” Just as local Tibetans feared, illness was a problem. Within the first six months of their training, nine apprentices had already died and many more were ill. This situation weakened the morale of the remaining apprentices, who stopped studying after a while. Rather than give up, Cui proposed to dismiss the majority of apprentices while continuing to train ten who showed talent and interest in the trade. Expressing regret at the difficulties these young people faced, Zhao agreed to pay the expenses for the twenty-nine apprentices to return home without completing their studies in late October 1908 (GX 34.10.17).¹¹⁶ Approximately six months later, Cui reported that the remaining ten apprentices had completed their studies. He had hoped to train them longer in Chengdu, but still haunted by the deaths of their former classmates, they all expressed to Cui their strong desire to return to Kham that summer, and he agreed.¹¹⁷

In February 1909, Zhao Erfeng submitted the regulations for the Batang tannery to the provincial finance department for their approval, emphasizing that the purpose of the tannery was “to open up Tibetan customs, initiate practical frontier industries, take in financial profits, and prepare for military applications.”¹¹⁸ Offering a glimpse into his broader thinking about the role of commercial ventures in Batang and Kham, Zhao pointed out that although the state was building the tannery, it was to be run like a private business. Salaries and all material costs after the state’s initial investment were to come from sales profits, and operating at a loss would not

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 0214, 244-45.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 0305, 333.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 0281, 304.

be accepted. Each skilled tanner who studied in Chengdu would train four to five additional workers, and together with nine administrative staff, the tannery would employ between fifty and sixty people in Batang. The tannery would have four departments in charge of raw hide processing, boots and shoes, bags and pouches, and copper goods.¹¹⁹

Cui and his ten trained tanners returned to Batang in the fall of 1909 and began producing finished goods. Early indications suggest the quality of their initial products was quite high. At the Nanyang Industrial Promotion Exhibition, an international fair held in Nanjing in 1910, Batang's leather products even received an "outstanding" prize, and the factory's military boots won a silver medal.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, Zhao's dream of creating a viable local market for leather goods in Batang proved unfounded. In March 1911 (XT 3.3.2), Cui Zhiyuan reported that the tannery's total sales amounted to only a little over 490 silver *liang*, while their remaining inventory exceeded 2,840 *liang* in value.¹²¹ The following month he said that sales had ceased and workers had begun to abandon their jobs at the tannery. He had already borrowed over 1,000 *liang* from local merchants to pay expenses, and he begged Zhao for a cash infusion to continue operations, a request Zhao honored despite his earlier assertion that the tannery must be self-sufficient.¹²² In a final bid to maintain morale among his workers, Cui requested in April 1911 that provincial authorities transfer as soon as possible the award certificates and prizes their products had received the previous year.¹²³ Passing through Batang the next month, Bailey's observations of the new tannery confirm its already poor condition: "The boots made were worse

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 0281, 304-06.

¹²⁰ Zeng, "Zhao Erfeng ji qi Batang jingying," 26; and He, "20 shiji chunian Chuanbian Zangqu zhengzhi jingji wenhua gaige shulun," 44.

¹²¹ *QCBDS*, no. 0791, 893.

¹²² *Ibid.*, no. 0818, 932.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, no. 0823, 938.

and more expensive than those imported from China; only six Chinese and thirteen Tibetans were employed. I was told that out of 15,000 taels allotted to start this industry, 10,000 had been embezzled by the officials in charge.”¹²⁴ Despite the efforts of Zhao and Cui, Batang’s tannery closed its doors sometime soon after the fall of the dynasty in late 1911. It would be over a decade before leather making was revived in Batang.¹²⁵

In addition to the tannery, Zhao worked to foster other industries in Batang. For example, hoping to develop a broader skilled workforce, he invested state funds in the tile and pottery business. In 1909 (XT 1) Zhao established a tile factory on Gyapangdeng, the small hill on the outskirts of Batang proper, effectively taking over two kilns that recently-arrived American missionary Albert Shelton had built to produce bricks for missionary homes being constructed on Gyapangdeng.¹²⁶ The two kilns employed twenty people and supplied building materials to support the numerous construction projects in the region, from the new Batang yamen for the High Commissioner to the new transit stations housing locally-hired Tibetans.¹²⁷ Closely related to the tile factory, Zhao invited two expert potters from Japan to assist in launching a pottery school in Batang.¹²⁸ Following up on their visit, Batang Commissariat Officer Zhang Shengkai invited Tsering Dargye (Tshe ring Dar rgyas, 澤日大吉), a well-known potter from central Tibet, to Batang to inspect the quality of the town’s soil, construct another kiln, and recruit students in 1909. Tsering Dargye was pleased with the mineral content of the soil, so he accepted Zhang’s

¹²⁴ Bailey, 66.

¹²⁵ *BTXZ*, 159.

¹²⁶ Albert Shelton, *Pioneering in Tibet: A Personal Record of Life and Experience in Mission Fields* (New York: Fleming H. Revel Company, 1921), 66.

¹²⁷ *BTXZ*, 156.

¹²⁸ You Zhen, “Qingdai zhi Minguo shiqi Hanzu yimin zai Batang huodong zhi mianmianju,” *Xizang yanjiu* 1 (2010): 12.

offer to remain in Batang and got to work producing samples and laying the ground work for a training program in early 1910.¹²⁹ As with the tanning apprentices, recruitment of willing students proved difficult for local officials, so Zhang consulted with the head of the Frontier Education Bureau in Batang, Wu Jiamo (吴嘉谟). Together, they decided to focus on training poor students already attending local mandarin schools. Their logic, as Zhao Erfeng noted, was such that “If we can do this, it is not only the pottery industry that can be launched. The public will not suffer the slightest loss, and poor children can obtain a skill with which they can make a living.”¹³⁰ Zhang and Wu selected thirteen students and relocated them to the Number Two Mandarin School housed in Batang’s City God Temple close to Tsering Dargye’s new kiln. While continuing their regular studies, these students learned how to produce various pieces of pottery, including oil lamps, food bowls, ink stones, dishes, flower vases, tea pots, and jugs in a six month course of study. After completing their training, they undertook a two-month practicum with a more skilled craftsman. As with all Tibetan students in Batang, the Commissariat provided them with room and board during their course of study. Initial sales figures of Tsering Dargye’s products in Batang impressed Zhang, who intended to train up to forty skilled potters over the next two years, concluding, “If we do this, not only can the pottery industry greatly develop, but we will also not have to spend a cent of public funds. Poor orphan children will obtain a skill with which they can make a living, so they won’t wander about unemployed. In this way we intend to benefit the common people.”¹³¹

Beyond tanning and pottery production, Zhao chose Batang to host a variety of other offices and industries. For example, in 1910, he established the Batang Printing Bureau, pointing

¹²⁹ *QCBDS*, no. 0515, 558-59.

¹³⁰ He, “20 shiji chunian Chuanbian Zangqu zhengzhi jingji wenhua gaige shulun,” 44.

¹³¹ *QCBDS*, no. 540, 584-86; Liu, *Baan xian tuzhi*, 69-74; and Zeng, “Zhao Erfeng ji qi Batang jingying,” 26.

out that, “At present all the students in the schools in every area speak Chinese and understand Chinese characters. There are none who are not happy to buy Chinese books.” With moveable type machines purchased from Shanghai, the bureau printed bilingual textbooks for Tibetan school children at cost, thereby eliminating the former heavy expense of transporting texts from Sichuan. The Printing Bureau’s staff of five also printed a variety of stationery used by Zhao’s growing bureaucracy in the region. Never designed to make a profit, Zhao instead justified it as just one of many state institutions that all provinces in inland China already had. In his mind, Batang, which he hoped would eventually become the capital of a province itself, should not be denied such an office. Initially housed in rented space, Zhao intended to relocate the bureau into the new yamen complex upon its completion.¹³²

Consistent with the economic trend of state-sponsored mining ventures across much of inland China, Zhao Erfeng and Fu Songmu also offered some support for the development of mining interests in Batang and the surrounding region. In January 1910, Zhao received a detailed proposal from Cui Zhiyuan, manager of the tannery in Batang, requesting official assistance in establishing a coal mine in the Qicungou region northeast of Batang proper. Cui informed Zhao that the tannery needed better fuel to melt iron and copper, and upon learning of a possible source of coal in the Mutor (Mu gtor, 毛多山) region of Qicungou, he invited one of Zhao’s mining experts in Derge to evaluate the mountain’s resources.¹³³ Initial reports indicated the coal was good and plentiful, so Cui requested Zhao send additional experts and mining instructors to Batang to open the mine. For reasons unknown, Zhao was pessimistic about Cui’s plan. While

¹³² *QCBDS*, no. 0659, 708-10.

¹³³ Batang xian diming lingdao xiaozu, *Sichuan sheng Ganzhi Zangzu zizhizhou Batang xian diminglu*, 67.

giving his approval to start work, he refused to provide experts or funds.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, Cui went ahead, and Batang's first coal mine began operation sometime that year.¹³⁵ However, the general disorder following the collapse of the dynasty and the inability of the mine to produce steady profits led to its closure soon thereafter.¹³⁶ In addition to the mine in Qicungou, in November 1911, the local magistrate in neighboring Derong requested Fu Songmu approve an application from a private Shaanxi merchant with many years of mining experience, Pan Shuheng (潘書恆), to open a mine in southern Derong.¹³⁷ Pan, who had already raised private capital and hired a few workers to conduct experimental excavation, would go on to open up at least forty shafts in search of gold and operated his facility until 1917, when violence between central Tibetans and local residents forced him to close the mine and flee.¹³⁸

While Ma Weiqi's military conquest and Zhao Erfeng's political restructuring of Batang achieved tangible results, the impact of Zhao's economic reforms and commercial developments, inspired by a hybrid mixture of long-standing practices of Chinese frontier administration, modern Western precedents, and New Policy ideology, was much less pronounced. His overly idealistic plan to entice Han settlers to colonize Batang and wider Kham attracted only marginal interest, but he did succeed in standardizing the collection of grain and salt taxes in the region, thereby creating a stable, albeit much smaller than originally anticipated, source of income to further his administration of the frontier. Similarly, he and his successor Fu Songmu reformed

¹³⁴ *QCBDS*, no. 0445, 493-94.

¹³⁵ Liu, *Baan xian tuzhi*, 68-69; He Derun, "Qingmo Xikang kaicai kuangye biao," *Bianzheng* 9 (1932): 2; and *BTXZ*, 157.

¹³⁶ He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 30a.

¹³⁷ *QCBDS*, no. 1113, 1129.

¹³⁸ Sichuan dang'an guan, ed., *Jindai Kangqu dang'an ziliao xuanbian* (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chubanshe, 1990), 312.

Kham's longstanding system of *corvée* labor and in so doing increased state revenues while alleviating some of the burdens for those people impressed into providing *corvée* on demand. Zhao also improved transportation and communication in Batang and Kham by installing a telegraph line to Batang and upgrading the roads and transit stations in the region. However, local Tibetans frequently cut the telegraph line, and the harsh conditions of Kham's climate made road maintenance a constant and expensive burden. Like his economic reforms, Zhao's commercial ventures in Batang produced meager results. His largest project, the Batang tannery, operated at a loss after less than a year in operation and shut its doors soon after the fall of the dynasty in 1911. Production at the pottery kiln, while initially successful, remained small in scale. The profitability of the two mining ventures established late in the final years of the empire is unclear, suggesting their contributions to local economic growth were minimal at best.

However, we should not dismiss the late Qing efforts in Batang as complete failures. At a bare minimum, the work of Ma Weiqi, Zhao Erfeng, Fu Songmu, and a host of lower level officials significantly expanded the presence of Han people in Batang beyond the Qing garrison and the small community of merchants whose families had been in Batang since the eighteenth century. They also revealed to the people of Batang the full power of the Qing Empire. Ma Weiqi's armies marched into Batang in 1905 and annihilated Ba Chöde Monastery, Batang's most important religious institution, in a matter of days, and soon thereafter Ma eradicated Batang's traditional secular leadership by executing the head and deputy native chieftains. Zhao Erfeng subsequently developed a comprehensive six-point plan to develop Kham, and Batang was a key part of it. Zhao's new local bureaucratic structure in Batang with a Commissariat Officer at its center and local *baozheng* representatives supporting him on the ground successfully reoriented the former system jointly managed by the native chieftains, their

headmen, and Ba Chöde Monastery. Significantly, Zhao's administrative system lasted throughout the Republican period. Zhao's new taxation system, moreover, attempted to introduce objective standards of revenue collection and in theory represented a more equitable way to distribute the tax burden on the local people. Finally, while the majority of Zhao's commercial ventures collapsed soon after the fall of the dynasty, it is presumptuous to assume they were doomed from the start. Additional state support and socio-political stability, both of which were lacking in the first decades of the Republic, might very well have fostered long-lasting commercial and economic growth in Batang. As I will discuss below, some of Zhao's other investments in Batang in fact achieved remarkable results despite receiving only a few years of imperial support before the empire's collapse.

Social Transformation

Reform efforts in Batang during the last decade of the Qing were comprehensive in nature, encompassing more than just the bureaucratic restructuring, monastic reform, economic development, and commercial investment, each of which was designed to increase the authority of the Qing Empire on the ground. Beginning as early as 1904 and accelerating rapidly after Zhao Erfeng's arrival in Batang, Qing officials also emphasized transforming local people into imperial subjects loyal to the emperor.¹³⁹ Classroom education for Batang's children played a fundamental role in the Qing's civilizing project. In addition, Qing officials focused on altering various social practices of Batang people. Both efforts further increased imperial power in Batang.

¹³⁹ See Harrell, "Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them," 3-36, for an insightful discussion of different types of civilizing projects in nineteenth and twentieth century China.

Education

Qing officials had two primary motives in promoting education in Batang. First, they wanted to transform local Tibetans into loyal imperial subjects. Learning to speak Chinese was a fundamental step in that process. Second, Qing officials wanted to ensure fair governance. On the one hand, this meant giving local people the Chinese language skills necessary to bring their concerns and grievances directly to local magistrates for investigation and adjudication. On the other, it meant encouraging Qing officials to learn Tibetan so that they could more effectively communicate with local people and reduce their reliance on what the state thought were wily local interpreters.

Formal Confucian-style education began in Batang as early as 1719 (KX 58), when Qing officials and the local Han community of merchants from Sichuan, Shaanxi, and Yunnan joined together to establish a school in the local Guandi Temple. While some Tibetan students did attend this school, its primary purpose was to provide children of local Han merchants and garrisoned soldiers a basic education in spoken and written Chinese. The school operated on-and-off through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, most likely opening only when a sufficient number of children whose parents wanted them to study resided in Batang. Learning materials included the same elementary education standard texts used in inland China at the time, such as *The Book of Family Names* (百家姓) and *The Three Character Classic* (三字经).¹⁴⁰ Apart from this single school, educational opportunities for children were extremely limited in Batang. Tibetan male children who became monks might be trained in classical written Tibetan if they showed academic aptitude, but the majority of monks received only rudimentary

¹⁴⁰ Li, “Zhao Erfeng yu jindai Chuan Zang bianjiang jiaoyu,” 14; and You, “Qingdai zhi Minguo shiqi Hanzu yimin zai Batang huodong zhi mianmianju,” 12.

intellectual training.¹⁴¹ Local Tibetan elites might also hire private tutors to teach their children. However, the vast majority of children in Batang had no opportunity to receive formal education until the early twentieth century.

Batang's modern educational reform began in 1904 with the arrival of new Commissariat Officer Wu Xizhen, the same official who launched Batang's land reclamation project. At this time, Wu Xizhen observed that a number of private academies in Batang only accepted Han students.¹⁴² Wanting to expand educational opportunities for all children in Batang, he established a mandarin school (官話學堂) to teach Chinese and Tibetan children Chinese language in Batang's City God Temple. Wu's school, open to all students free of charge, offered a two year program of Chinese language study.¹⁴³ The chaos surrounding Feng Quan's murder and the punitive expedition of Ma Weiqi and Zhao Erfeng in 1905 forced Wu to close his mandarin school temporarily. However, Wu Jieren (吳傑仁), who had accompanied Zhao to Batang, quickly organized the local Han merchants and set up another private academy at about the same time. Located in the home of Heng Jianzhong (恆建忠), this private venture taught the children of merchants, officials, and local Tibetan elite how to recite *The Book of Family Names*, *The Three Character Classic*, and *The Analects* (論語) of Confucius. Wu's school gave Batang parents a second school to which to send their children. However, most Tibetan parents still

¹⁴¹ Lack of historical data makes it difficult to ascertain the educational training of the majority of monks in traditional Tibetan monasteries. Melvyn Goldstein argues that before 1950 the overwhelming majority of monks at Drepung Monastery outside Lhasa had at best basic literary training that allowed them to read only a few prayer books. Goldstein also estimates that only 10-15% of Drepung's monks studied a formal curriculum of Buddhist theology and philosophy. Melvyn C. Goldstein, "The Revival of Monastic Life in Drepung Monastery," in *Buddhism in Contemporary Tibet: Religious Revival and Cultural Identity*, eds. Melvyn C. Goldstein and Matthew T. Kapstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 21.

¹⁴² Liu Jiaju, "Xikang jiaoyu jinbu qingxing zhiyu jianglai zhi danghua," *Meng Zang zhoubao* 15 (1930): 1.

¹⁴³ Yuan Xiaowen and Li Jin, "Jiaoliu yu ronghe—guanyu Batang Hanzu de ge an fenxi," *Heilongjiang minzu congkan* 1 (2001): 94; and You, "Qingdai zhi Minguo shiqi Hanzu yimin zai Batang huodong zhi mianmianju," 12.

chose not send their children to formal schools, so the majority of students remained Han or Hui.¹⁴⁴

Following the suppression of Batang's uprising and restoration of peace, Qing officials expanded their educational reforms. For example, as part of his effort to strengthen imperial defenses along Sichuan's western border, Governor-General Xi Liang established the Sichuan Tibetan Language Academy (四川藏文學堂) in Chengdu in the winter of 1906. While there is no doubt that Xi Liang's ultimate goal was to civilize Tibetans and transform them into loyal imperial subjects, Xi Liang exhibited a rare cultural sensitivity among Qing officials, emphasizing that Qing officials and teachers posted in Tibetan areas must learn Tibetan and understand the region. Explaining his rationale for establishing the school to the Emperor, Xi Liang memorialized in March 1907 (GX 33.1.20): "The importance of delimiting the border regions rests in thoroughly understanding the sentiments of Tibetans. But in wanting to thoroughly understand Tibetan sentiments, we must begin with communicating in their language."¹⁴⁵ Zhao similarly emphasized the importance of training capable officials to promote local education. In a memorial dated September 24, 1907 (GX33.8.17), he argued, "Because the natives are uncouth and fierce in nature, we must have the knowledge to guide them, or else we will not be able to transform their ignorant stubbornness. Under these circumstances, the court should resolutely promote education. It is especially valuable to broaden education with the intention of rewarding and rectifying [the Tibetans]. This matter of promoting educational affairs on the frontier in fact cannot be delayed.... Without officers who thoroughly understand

¹⁴⁴ *BTXZ*, 357.

¹⁴⁵ *QCBDS*, no. 0085, 107.

educational affairs and who are able to conquer great difficulties to undertake these affairs, it will not be easy to handle properly.”¹⁴⁶

The first class at Xi Liang’s academy included one hundred twenty future “border talents” recruited from schools in the Chengdu area. Their two year program consisted of thirty classroom hours per week for forty weeks each year. Students learned basic subjects like math and calisthenics in addition to rudimentary English to communicate with foreigners, but the primary focus of their studies was to facilitate the Qing civilizing project in Tibet, and this began through language. Students therefore studied spoken and written Tibetan for two hours every day, the most time allotted for any subject. Most of their curriculum in fact focused on Tibet and included classes on the history of central Tibet, India, the Sino-Tibetan borderlands, and local geography. Students also improved their knowledge of Chinese language and culture so that they could “instill civilization” and transform the uncouth customs on the border.¹⁴⁷ The first class graduated on October 27, 1908 (GX 34.11.20), and sixty-three of Xi Liang’s newly-trained officials were dispatched to Batang, where most worked as teachers in newly established schools.¹⁴⁸ Soon thereafter, the Sichuan Tibetan Language Academy was absorbed by the Sichuan Academy of Higher Education (四川高等學堂), a predecessor of present-day Sichuan University.

Xi Liang and Zhao Erfeng were also both concerned about the negative influence of interpreters on local governance. For example, further explaining the value of the Sichuan Tibetan Language Academy, Xi Liang wrote:

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 0129, 145.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 0080, 93-94.

¹⁴⁸ Zhang Jingxi, *Sanshi nian lai zhi Xikang jiaoyu* (Changsha: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1939), 49-50; and Zeng, “Zhao Erfeng ji qi Batang jingying,” 27.

The territories of Sichuan and Tibet border each other, and Sichuan and Yunnan have various Tibetan peoples in them that all are used to using Tibetan. Since previous times officials have used minor Tibetan officials as interpreters, but those who were knowledgeable of management were extremely rare. Some transmitted mistakes that caused erroneous problems. There were even some who intentionally turned things around and took advantage of circumstances to create trouble. Whenever Tibetans were not in agreement, they abused their position, and there was nothing we could do about it. Now at this time when we are operating in central Tibet and putting our border affairs in order, we must recruit people from inland China to practice [Tibetan] themselves. Only then can we prepare for our responsibilities sufficiently and avoid errors.¹⁴⁹

Echoing Xi Liang's concerns, Zhao similarly linked poor governance to Qing officials' reliance on interpreters. He wrote in 1907:

In my humble opinion, the regions of Batang and Litang are located far to the west. Over the centuries we have neglected interacting with them and controlled them loosely. Our dynasty's might is known in central Tibet (衛藏)...[but] for the lands west of the Dartsedo border, they are still only required to submit tribute periodically and are thus considered foreign barbarians. In the beginning, because we did not provide benefits for their land, the Tibetans behaved capriciously. Every day their oppression worsened, until they went so far as to kill a high official [Feng Quan] and resisted our military expedition. The fortunate grace of the Emperor shook them with fear, and we began to achieve peace. We seized this opportunity to welcome their improvement, and offering all the civilization of our region, we sincerely and vigorously acted.

As for that which is difficult, their writing is unfamiliar and we have not studied their spoken language, so we rely on interpreters (通人) to govern. These interpreters are often poor. When only the impoverished take care of border matters, we will unexpectedly have difficulty being in harmony. If we want to get rid of this pattern, if we do not start from language and writing, then it will not be easy to succeed! As a result, the matter of promoting education cannot be relaxed...I always hope that we will not betray our country's practice of embracing visitors from afar. Transforming the people and developing their morality is our sincere intention.¹⁵⁰

In addition to training Han Chinese to learn Tibetan in Chengdu, Zhao Erfeng began building on the efforts of Wu Xizhen in Batang to educate local Tibetans. In a biting critique of what he saw as Tibetans' backwardness, a common trope used by Qing officials to describe Tibetans, Zhao argued in his "Reconstruction Regulations":

¹⁴⁹ *QCBDS*, no. 0085, 107.

¹⁵⁰ *QCBDS*, no. 0127, 144; and Wu, *Zhao Erfeng Chuanbian zoudu*, 96-97. See also Li, "Zhao Erfeng yu jindai Chuan Zang bianjiang jiaoyu," 14.

Barbarians do not understand reason and cannot distinguish what is important in taking care of matters. If they could have understood reason and determined what was important and not murdered High Commissioner Feng and the French priests, then would they have not encountered such a large military force this time? Those heavily involved harmed the lives of their own family members. Those less involved lost their property and food. All of this happened because they are not educated. In the future when we have additional funds, the local magistrate will establish elementary schools. All children who have reached the age of five or six, regardless of whether they are Han or barbarian, will be sent to enroll in schools to study. Not only will they learn reason, but in the future they might serve as officials, bring honor to their parents, and protect their own wife and children. Is this not splendid?¹⁵¹

Zhao's strongest endorsement of the power of education is contained in his widely cited 1907 six-point memorial submitted soon after implementing bureaucratic restructuring in Batang. As explained earlier, Zhao's comprehensive plan for development in Kham included education, military training, commercial development, land reclamation, opening mines, and establishing a new bureaucratic structure. Of these six major items, Zhao placed the greatest emphasis on education, arguing:

As for the matter of promoting education, I cannot urgently expect that we make useful citizens through education. It is not only that the character of the barbarians is muddled, they are also naïve. At this time as they begin their transformation, everyone takes first impressions as the strongest, and we can know who is talented and who is evil. If we establish ourselves there but do not teach them, then we are using heresy and fallacy as our guide, and in the future it will be difficult to remedy. In addition, our military has only just pacified the region, but missionaries from various countries are already travelling one after the other [in the region]. People from other countries do not fear danger or distance and are rapidly working to set up missions. How can we abandon our territory and not teach our young people?

As for what we call "education promotion," it is also initially seeking mutual communication in writing and speaking. Only later will we explain the famous teachings of the Three Principles and Five Virtues (三綱五常).¹⁵² With this purpose, we will make other people to understand fully the central plains [of China] and transform.... They will

¹⁵¹ Sichuan dang'an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and QCBDS, no. 0081, 100.

¹⁵² A reference to the three Confucian principles of a ruler guiding his subjects, a father guiding his sons, and a husband guiding his wife and the five virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and fidelity (仁義禮智信).

not be misled along perilous paths and in fact will be people who want to manage the frontier. This is our first task.¹⁵³

In the same memorial, Zhao later wrote:

In promoting frontier education, after we raise productive individuals, then our priority will be to open up and transform their customs. I intend to establish one elementary school each in Batang, Litang, and Chatreng.... All the Han and barbarian children living near these areas who are over the age of seven will be ordered to enroll in a school. In the first year, they will be taught to use common Chinese characters in Chinese or Tibetan. In the second year, they will be taught how to string together common Chinese characters to make complete sentences so that they will be able to reach the level of being able to compose correspondence in common Chinese. They will learn the principles of how to count beads, how to write numbers, how to work for their parents and respect their elders, as well as how they should treat their fellow classmates with propriety, how they should do their utmost to respect one's everyday life at home, and how to implement their own sense of propriety.

At the beginning of every week, when classes begin [the teacher] will widely proclaim the imperial edicts together with famous words from the wise. The purpose of all of this is to be sincere and reasonable.... As for those fantastic things or the gods and spirits, we will without exception put them aside and not discuss them so that all the Han and barbarians on the frontier will come and listen.

The students will graduate after three years, after which each one will go his own way, and then new students will continue to be added each term. There are few people in the barbarian areas, so it [education] is easy to disseminate among them. Barbarians are stupid, and they do not seek profound things. If there is someone who is outstandingly talented, and their fathers and brothers are also willing for him to advance, then they can select the best to enroll in an elementary school. After ten years, their child will blossom into a talented individual. Then we will expand and establish middle schools and high schools. We will also set up regulations like schools in inland China. After they graduate, they will be sent as a group to Beijing Normal University to be examined for employment in order to broaden their utility. As time passes I will establish an imperial school in each village in the hopes of spreading education and avoiding any missed opportunities.¹⁵⁴

Underlying Zhao's emphasis on education was his Confucian worldview in which civilization was characterized by a unique culture in which individuals are trained in the philosophical, moral, and ritual principles of virtue. Culture, moreover, was learned, and thus degrees of civilization inevitable. For example, those people with the deepest understanding of the relevant literary

¹⁵³ *QCBDS*, no. 0108, 119.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 124.

works that informed culture such as the scholar-officials were the most civilized, while others with more basic understandings such as peasants were less civilized. What is also important in the Confucian worldview is that acculturation was always possible and, according to adherents of this worldview, eminently desirable by people who are outside the Confucian cultural sphere. As a result, people like Zhao Erfeng, who were steeped in the Confucian tradition and firmly believed in the moral rightness of their worldview, saw the Qing empire's relationship with the people of Batang and all of Tibet as a process of making them more cultured, of transforming them into an image of his own likeness. That Zhao saw Tibetans as backward and ignorant, therefore, should come as no surprise. However, what is interesting about Zhao's Han chauvinism is that it seems limited to his official correspondence. Based on available evidence, he seemed not to display it publically. In fact, he was known to particularly enjoy interacting with Tibetan school children. An American missionary, moreover, once commented that Batang Tibetans had a begrudging respect for Zhao. Writing about the violence that befell Batang in the years after the collapse of the dynasty, Flora Shelton noted, "Today, the Tibetans say that if Chao Er Feng [Zhao Erfeng] were here, this late trouble would not have happened.... He was just as severe with his own men as with the Tibetans, and when he said, 'Don't loot,' and looting was done, he lined the guilty ones up, and off came their heads. Sometimes his badly needed soldiers were slain wholesale for disobedience ...but he governed."¹⁵⁵ For Zhao Erfeng and others like him, transforming Tibetans was a moral imperative.

With this plan in mind, Zhao's first concrete move on the education front was to establish the Frontier Education Bureau (關外學務局) on September 9, 1907 (GX 33.8.2), which he

¹⁵⁵ Flora Beal Shelton, *Shelton of Tibet* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1923), 171-72.

intended to oversee all aspects of educational development in Kham.¹⁵⁶ Initially headquartered in Dartsedo, Zhao recruited Wu Jiamo as the bureau's first director and gave him an annual budget of 30,000 *liang*. One of Wu's first decisions was to relocate the bureau to Batang, which he formally opened on November 23, 1907 (GX 33.10.18), just three days after he arrived there.¹⁵⁷ Writing about his initial impressions in Batang, Wu noted that the majority of young people spoke rough Chinese and had a rudimentary knowledge of written Chinese. Soon thereafter, Wu opened his first school in Batang, the Batang Entry Level Primary School (巴安初級小學), in the City God Temple by combining the twenty-five students already studying in Wu Xizhen's mandarin school located in the same temple with the thirty-five students from Wu Jieren's private academy.¹⁵⁸

Wu Jiamo's education plan, which he started in Batang and slowly expanded into other parts of Kham in the wake of Zhao Erfeng's step-by-step political restructuring, involved two distinct phases. In the first phase, students were to learn written and spoken Chinese. In the second, they were ideally instilled with Confucian-inspired Chinese civilization and transformed into loyal imperial subjects. Zhao explained this approach to the court in September 1907:

The barbarian children on the border are wild and at the beginning of their learning. Apart from emphasizing broad education, there are only two schools for studying mandarin or handicrafts, so we cannot suddenly say we are going to specialize. We must first train many people in mandarin, after which we can enjoin our sentiments and communicate. We must educate many people to read Chinese, after which our culture can be universalized. As for how we plan to disseminate education, we must broadly establish schools. If we want to establish schools, we must hire many teachers. Chinese language

¹⁵⁶ For a discussion of developments in education in inland China during the late Qing, see David D. Buck, "Educational modernization in Tsinan, 1899-1937," in *The Chinese City Between Two Worlds*, eds., Mark Elvin and George William Skinner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 171-212.

¹⁵⁷ *QCBDS*, no. 0127; and Zhang, *Sanshi nian lai zhi Xikang jiaoyu*, 18.

¹⁵⁸ You, "Qingdai zhi Mingguo shiqi Hanzu yimin zai Batang huodong zhi mianmianju," 12.

teachers from inland China cannot directly teach [on the frontier]. An interpreter must assist them, only then can they be understood.¹⁵⁹

Wu's Frontier Education Bureau therefore focused on establishing two types of schools: mandarin schools and primary schools. Mandarin schools were designed to teach Tibetan children Chinese language and basic Confucian morality in a two year curriculum. Teachers in every mandarin school taught four basic subjects: Confucian moral cultivation, written Chinese, spoken Chinese, and calisthenics. Each school also had the option to teach additional classes in Chinese character practice, mathematics, speech, Chinese classics, singing, or drawing, depending on their resources and local needs. Mandarin school graduates would then transfer to a local primary school for additional studies.¹⁶⁰ Primary schools in Batang taught a more robust, modern curriculum than the mandarin schools that was designed to give students general knowledge while transforming them into loyal imperial subjects. Subjects included Confucian moral cultivation, Chinese speaking and writing, Chinese literature, Buddhism, history, natural sciences, geography, mathematics, calisthenics, singing, and drawing. While national standards adopted as part of the New Policy reforms and the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905 mandated five years of primary school education, Wu felt that a shorter period of three years was more suited to Batang's circumstances, and he therefore began this way.¹⁶¹ In addition to local schools, Wu established a public library in Batang, which he stocked with over 37,000 books donated from across China. He also took advantage of the Batang Printing Bureau to

¹⁵⁹ *QCBDS*, no. 0129, 146.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 0661, 711-12; and Zhang, *Sanshi nian lai zhi Xikang jiaoyu*, 84.

¹⁶¹ Zhang, *Sanshi nian lai zhi Xikang jiaoyu*, 83-84. Buck also shows that the curriculum for new primary schools established in Shandong Province after 1898 were largely similar to Wu Jiamo's schools in Batang. The only noticeable difference is the inclusion of calisthenics in Wu's curriculum. Buck, "Educational modernization in Tsinan, 1899-1937," 175.

produce Chinese language textbooks that were distributed in other areas of Kham with new schools.¹⁶²

In his capacity as leader of the Frontier Education Bureau, Wu Jiamo ordered all children between the ages of seven and twelve to enroll in a school. However, most Tibetans in Batang were in fact suspicious of Wu's new schools and considered their children's attendance just another form of *corvée*. Their reluctance stemmed from many reasons. For example, as Zhao Erfeng would note a few years later, Wu began opening schools for Tibetans soon after they had been subjugated by an outside army, so "their minds were not yet opened, and as soon as they heard we were establishing new schools, they were collectively suspicious and obstructed us. They also said we were making their children perform *corvée* labor and that they were not willing to have them study."¹⁶³ In addition to general suspicion of Wu's motives, many other families were simply reluctant to lose an able bodied worker capable of farming or pasturing. Finally, it is very likely that local monasteries, to the extent that they still had influence in Batang, saw public schools as a competitor for young boys.¹⁶⁴ As a result, the majority of early students in Batang schools were either the children of Han or Hui merchants and garrisoned soldiers in the region, or the children of local Tibetan headmen with close ties to the Qing bureaucracy.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² You, "Qingdai zhi Minguo shiqi Hanzu yimin zai Batang huodong zhi mianmianju," 12; Yuan and Li, "Jiaoliu yu ronghe—guanyu Batang Hanzu de ge an fenxi," 96; Zeng, "Zhao Erfeng ji qi Batang jingying," 27-28; and He, "20 shiji chunian Chuanbian Zangqu zhengzhi jingji wenhua gaige shulun," 46.

¹⁶³ *QCBDS*, no. 0660, 710.

¹⁶⁴ Qu Yachuan, "Jiefang qian Xikang Zangzu diqu de 'xue chai'," in *Sichuan wenshi ziliao xuanji*, vol. 16, eds. Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi, *et al.* (Chengdu: Sichuan sheng shengzhi bianjiwei, 1965), 169-173.

¹⁶⁵ *QCBDS*, no. 0346, 385.

With these local concerns in mind, Wu adopted a number of incentives to encourage parents to send their children to school. A “Notice Encouraging the Study of Chinese,” for example, included four benefits of enrolling in school:

1. Studying does not require any money, so poor students can study;
2. The entire family of every child who enrolls in a school will be exempt from corvée duties;
3. Local officials must show respect for all the families of students;
4. If any family of a student has a problem, then Zhao Erfeng will take care of it. They will not suffer any loss. The majority of students who study well can become officials and prosper.¹⁶⁶

While most of these benefits were abstract, the exemption from corvée labor spoke directly to local concerns and likely encouraged some parents to enroll their children in schools. Other incentives, such as meals, clothing, books, and supplies for students, as well as specific material awards for best students every semester, also increased enrollments. As suggested above, tuition was not charged, but parents who did not send their children to school could be fined.¹⁶⁷ Writing about his early work in the area, Wu commented, “In Batang and Litang, where there are Han people, we first established several schools, and we had the children of the local people, the merchants, and the barbarian headmen to enroll at the schools. We gave them clothing, and their manners were excellent and they became connected through their friendly feelings. The barbarian people saw this and were moved, and everyone admired it deeply.”¹⁶⁸ Demographics largely determined that Tibetan and Han children studied in separated schools, but in at least one

¹⁶⁶ Xiao Yamei and Zhang Yulin, “Gaoyuan Jiangnan Hetaoyuan—ji jianxiao 80 nian de Batang renmin xiaoxue,” *Batang wenyuan* 3 (1984): 2, quoted in Liu, *Batang Zangzu fanjiao weiguo douzheng shilüe*, 254.

¹⁶⁷ “Diao cha ziliao: Chuankangjun junzheng jingfei qiongjiong zhi shikuang,” *Chuanbian jikan* 1, no. 1 (1935): 131; Zeng, “Zhao Erfeng ji qi Batang jingying,” 27; and He, “20 shiji chunian Chuanbian Zangqu zhengzhi jingji wenhua gaige shulun,” 46.

¹⁶⁸ He, “20 shiji chunian Chuanbian Zangqu zhengzhi jingji wenhua gaige shulun,” 46.

village, Zhongdu (中渡), Zhao specifically instructed Wu to establish a school that enrolled approximately equal numbers of Tibetan and Han students, which would allow students from different backgrounds to “transform and become one.”¹⁶⁹ Zhao himself also noted that, “Without spending a penny, children can learn Chinese and speak directly with Han officials when problems arise.”¹⁷⁰

Table 5.1: Late Qing Educational Institutions in Batang and Yanjing¹⁷¹

| Year | Batang | | | | | Yanjing | | |
|------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | Primary Schools | Mandarin Schools | Kindergartens | Total Schools | Students Enrolled | Primary Schools | Mandarin Schools | Students Enrolled |
| 1907 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 60 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1908 | 2 | 7(2)* | 0 | 9 | 283 | 0 | 5 | 142 |
| 1909 | 2 | 14(3) | 0 | 16 | 496 | 0 | 10(4) | 324 |
| 1910 | 9(2) | 21(4) | 4(2) | 34(8) | n/a | 1 | 12 | n/a |

**Numbers in parenthesis indicate schools for girls.*

The Frontier Education Bureau worked quickly and efficiently in setting up new schools in and around Batang. As exhibited in Table 5.1 above, Batang and Yanjing together had forty-six schools, including eight specifically for girls, by the end of 1910. While precise figures are not available, these schools enrolled as many as one thousand students.¹⁷² In 1911, Wu Jiamo also opened Baan Lower Middle School (巴安初級中學), the first middle school on the Tibetan plateau.¹⁷³ Clearly, Zhao’s prediction that seeing children conversing directly with local Han officials in Chinese would convince Tibetan parents to send their children to the new schools had,

¹⁶⁹ *QCBDS*, no. 0145, 166.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 0346, 384.

¹⁷¹ Zhang, *Sanshi nian lai zhi Xikang jiaoyu*, 18-37.

¹⁷² Zhang, *Sanshi nian lai zhi Xikang jiaoyu*, 18-37; You, “Qingdai zhi Minguo shiqi Hanzu yimin zai Batang huodong zhi mianmianju,” 12; and He, “20 shiji chunian Chuanbian Zangqu zhengzhi jingji wenhua gaige shulun,” 46.

¹⁷³ You, “Qingdai zhi Minguo shiqi Hanzu yimin zai Batang huodong zhi mianmianju,” 12.

on some level, proven to be true and initial views of mandatory school attendance as “education corvée” among parents in Batang had diminished.¹⁷⁴

Finding qualified teachers for the rapidly expanding number of schools in Batang and other parts of Kham was a constant problem for the Frontier Education Bureau. In its first years, Wu Jiamo relied on his own contacts to recruit people from Sichuan to come to Batang to teach in his new schools, but he remained disappointed with the teaching skills of his new teachers. Complaining of their lack of experience and motivation in a letter dated December 6, 1908 (GX 34.11.13), Wu requested Zhao authorize him to offer the teachers financial incentives for better performance. Zhao agreed, although he cautioned Wu to keep the incentives low so that they would not significantly impact his budget and prove difficult to maintain.¹⁷⁵

In February 1909 (XT 1.1), the first coterie of graduates of the Tibetan Language Academy in Chengdu arrived in Batang. Rather than send them out immediately to begin teaching, Wu had them undergo additional Tibetan language training for three to six months at the Frontier Education Bureau so that they could better understand the myriad of dialects they would encounter upon starting work, a lesson he had learned from the teachers he had recruited himself.¹⁷⁶ Approximately six months later on August 17, 1909 (XT 1.7.2), Zhao memorialized on his recent adjustments to his education program in Kham, specifically focusing on teaching quality. Noting that teaching on the frontier is “one hundred times more arduous than inland China,” Zhao emphasized:

Implementing education beyond the pass is different from inland China. Opening up the primitive and bringing in civilization from the beginning is not an easy task. Those [teachers] who are not enthusiastic and do not shrink from hardship are unable to succeed

¹⁷⁴ *QCBDS*, no. 0660, 710-11.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 0233, 257-58.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 0346, 384-85; and no. 0550, 600.

in this work. Moreover, the barbarian lands are barren and desolate, food and drink are not conveniently available, it is freezing, and the snow forms caves. The cold and ice is difficult to bear. In addition, our funds are low, so salaries are not generous. Those who have not come are not looking forward to it. Those who have come often ask how they can leave.¹⁷⁷

Hoping to encourage better teaching and retain the graduates of the Tibetan Language Academy in whom the state had invested, Zhao modified teachers' contracts to a period of three years.

Those teachers who completed their contract would receive a financial award, and those who agreed to renew their contract would receive additional incentives.¹⁷⁸ In 1911, Wu also opened a teacher training institute (關學師範傳習所) in Dartsedo that accepted both Tibetan and Han applicants to increase the number of qualified teachers in Kham.¹⁷⁹

So what did Tibetan students actually learn in their new schools? How did young teachers from Sichuan work to transform Tibetans into loyal imperial subjects beyond dressing some of them in Confucian gowns and caps?¹⁸⁰ Sufficient answers to such questions are difficult to obtain, but some historical evidence is very revealing. For example, passing through Batang in June 1911, Bailey recorded his observations at a school built by Zhao Erfeng just west of the Dri River on the road between Batang and Yanjing:

In this school twenty-two girls of ages between four and twenty, and nineteen boys between four and nineteen, were all doing the same work; boys and girls were in separate classrooms. Some of the girls were quite grown up and were wearing jewellery, which signified that they were no longer children. The lesson I happened to see was geography, but there was no map; one boy read a sentence from a book which the others all repeated as a kind of song. I should think very little geography was learnt. Edgar translated for me the notices posted outside the school. Five hours' work a day for six days was prescribed and the subjects taught were geography, history, literature, reading, Chinese, recitation, mental arithmetic, hygiene, drawing, singing, drill, and science. There was also a list of

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 0345, 383.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 0660, 710-11; and no. 0749, 837-38.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 0842, 958-60; no. 0853, 967; and no. 0946, 1047-48. Note that Relyea mis-locates this institute in Batang. Relyea, *Gazing at the Tibetan Plateau*, 418. Primary sources demonstrate it was established in Dartsedo.

¹⁸⁰ *QCBDS*, no. 0346, 384; and no. 0907, 1010.

“don’ts” for the scholars which would seem to show that schoolchildren are much the same the world over: “Don’t whisper – don’t eat – don’t fight – don’t speak Tibetan – don’t recite ‘Om mani padme hum’ or other prayers – don’t be dirty – don’t carry knives – don’t dirty the desks.” At another school which we passed later in the day at Jengbani, we found science being taught, the particular branch being natural history. With Edgar’s help I learned the purport of the lesson; animals are divided into four classes: quadrupeds, birds, fishes and insects; of these the latter are the most useless, but even among insects the worm gives silk and the bee honey. The dog guards the house and the cock knows when it is morning. Man is the head of all animals. If you do not work at your lessons you will make yourselves lower than the animals, all of whom do some work. A Chinese woman was teaching the girls at this school.¹⁸¹

Zhao Erfeng himself also provides two succinct summaries of his civilizing educational project.

The first is a list of “five important matters” as outlined in his “Notice Encouraging the Study of Chinese,” which was disseminated sometime around 1907:

1. You must obey the Emperor of China;
2. You must believe in Confucianism. Every family will be provided a statue of Confucius for worship;
3. You must be filial to your parents and ancestors. Sky and water burial, as well as cremation, is inhumane. When the parent of a student dies, he is permitted an absence from class for one hundred days to fulfill his filial piety;
4. Your marriage must be upright. Men are not permitted to take another wife casually, and women are not permitted to casually remarry. Everyone who marries must go to the Marriage Bureau and register;
5. Everyone must take a surname from Chinese surnames. You will be given title deeds for the plots of land you are currently farming, and your descendants will forever hold the right to farm it.¹⁸²

Second, looking back on almost four years of educational growth in Batang, Zhao memorialized about his educational achievements to date: “Over an area of several thousand square *li*, we have enlightened the uncivilized and contributed our culture. All the barbarian children fully understand revering the imperial court and are quietly transforming. On the first and fifteenth

¹⁸¹ Bailey, 74-75.

¹⁸² Xiao and Zhang, 2.

day of every month, we arrange all of the classes, and they kowtow facing toward the Emperor. When explaining loyalty and filial piety to them, they are all elated!”¹⁸³ Needing to show results for the Court’s expenditures, it is not unlikely that Zhao Erfeng overstated the success of his educational programs. Nevertheless, later events will show that late Qing schools in Batang significantly affected the trajectory of Batang’s history during the Republican period.

Beyond Zhao’s own words, analysis of passages from extant texts used in Batang schools provides telling insight into the designs of key officials like Zhao Erfeng and Wu Jiamo regarding the purpose of the late Qing civilizing project in Batang and Kham. While it promoted basic knowledge of modern subjects like natural sciences and mathematics, the curriculum in Batang’s primary schools focused more on instilling identification with Chinese culture and undermining traditional Tibetan culture. Identification with Chinese culture revolved around the two principles of “loyalty to the sovereign” (忠君) and “honoring Confucius” (尊孔). For example, lesson thirteen of the *Frontier Mandarin Primer* (關外官話課本), a common textbook of the time, reads, “The great Emperor is the sovereign of our China. What we eat, what we wear, where we live, where we farm, all belong to him. The grace of the great Emperor is larger than heaven!”¹⁸⁴ In *Promoting Learning* (興學歌), another common text, students recited, “In the Western Heavens there are Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Confucianism, which also comes from the west, is greater than heaven. Practice loyalty and filial piety, open up yourself to culture. Even if you are a barbarian baby (蠻娃), monks and everyday people all should enroll in school and

¹⁸³ QCBDS, no. 0660, 711.

¹⁸⁴ Zhang, *Sanshi nian lai zhi Xikang jiaoyu*, 74-75.

study Chinese. We should grow out our hair and practice propriety.¹⁸⁵ Everyone that we see from around the world should become like our family, and we will never have to do corvée again!”¹⁸⁶

Apart from short passages such as those mentioned above, the only surviving complete textbook from this time period is a brief and widely circulated book penned by Wu Jiamo himself, entitled *Western Frontier Three Character Rhymes* (西陲三字韵语).¹⁸⁷ Illustrating important themes of the Qing Confucian civilizing project, its content is worthy of close consideration. Meant for young students to recite aloud, Wu began his textbook with the following lines:

Between Sichuan and Tibet there is the no-man’s land of Dartsedo, Litang, and Batang.
The territory is vast and desolate.
The land is full of dangers. The name of this remote place is Kham (喀木). It is also called Kang (康).
The descendants of Yan Di (炎帝) and Bo Yi (伯夷) moved here. They were your early ancestors.
The son of the Yellow Emperor (黄帝) was called Chang Yi (昌意), and he lived in Ruoshui (若水), which is also in this land.
In previous times they proclaimed civilization and said that the different races are all brothers.¹⁸⁸

By invoking mythical founders of Chinese civilization Yan Di and Bo Yi, Zhao hoped to instill a sense of identity and brotherhood among Tibetan children towards China. After highlighting the mythical connection between Han and Tibetans, he described the close relationship between these two peoples across the dynasties, noting, for example, how during the Ming dynasty trade

¹⁸⁵ The contrast in cultural norms in this sentence is stark. To “grow out our hair” is a reference to the tonsuring ceremony for new monks to join a monastery. To “practice propriety” is a reference to cultivating Confucian values.

¹⁸⁶ Zhang, *Sanshi nian lai zhi Xikang jiaoyu*, 75-76.

¹⁸⁷ This text is quoted in whole or in part in at least three sources: Zhao Xinyu and Qin Heping, eds. *Qingji Minguo Kangqu Zangzu wenxian jiyao* (Sichuan: Sichuan minzu chubanshe, 2003), 154-55; Zhang, *Sanshi nian lai zhi Xikang jiaoyu*, 76-77; and *QCBDS*, no. 0849, 963-64. The last source refers to this text, “Frontier Three Character Classic” (關外《三字經》). See also Ganzi Zhouzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, ed., *Ganzi Zhouzhi*, vol. 3 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1997), 2110-11.

¹⁸⁸ *QCBDS*, no. 0849, 963-64.

relations grew between China and Tibet and that the Emperor was recognized as a Dharma King (法王). Moreover, according to Wu's textbook, Hong Taiji (洪太極), the second emperor of the Qing dynasty, recognized that China had sages and thus "yearned to transform," implying that non-Han peoples understood and accepted the virtues of Chinese civilization just as Tibetans could and should.

Wu's text also included more overt political messages. For example, students learned that the border with central Tibet was set at Ningjing Mountain, a claim that Qing officials had been making since the border stone was established atop the peak in the early eighteenth century, but which local Tibetans seem to pay little heed. In addition, to reinforce the purported benefits of the new bureaucratic system of local administration, students were taught that native chieftains no longer had power, as exemplified in this passage: "In the past, native chieftains greatly oppressed and controlled us. Since prefectures and counties were established, they do not press you for advantages."¹⁸⁹ But the most illustrative example of Qing attempts to promote identification with Chinese culture and loyalty to the Emperor through education occurs in the concluding lines of Wu's textbook:

It is beneficial to us that Tibet not slip away. We are of the same race, there are no differences.
When different families intermarry, Tibetans will become Han, and they will earnestly respect their relatives.
When the people become enlightened, we will then establish a province, and Sichuan, Yunnan, and Tibet will have no impediments.
If you students each do your best, then this province will return to the fold for the next one billion years.¹⁹⁰

Notably, this passage also reminded students that their land would one day become an official province of the empire.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 964.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 0849, 965.

Late Qing education in Batang was also designed to uproot the influence of Tibetan traditions among the people. Not surprisingly, monastic power was a primary target. For example, in *Frontier Customs* (關俗歌), students learned to recite:

The Nyingma and Gelug sects are as confused as hemp cloth. It is obvious that weakening the species is their primary aim.
Not loving your country? Not caring for your parents? What are you mumbling about?
Are you covering yourself in woolen felt?
From now on I know not to pay attention to them, and I will no longer learn from them.¹⁹¹

Wu Jiamo's *Western Frontier Three Character Rhymes* contains similar passages, such as:

Tibetan monks proliferate, and they indulge in sutras and incantations. They revere *trulku*, and they are constrained by their customs....
Believing in lamas and enchanted with their religion, the number of monks increase daily, and it is difficult to preserve our progeny.
If they can return to secular life, we will increase our descendants. Seeking to be more practical, we will protect our kin.¹⁹²

Both passages reveal that Qing reprehension for monastic power rested not in Buddhism *per se* but in the perceived impropriety of becoming a monk. In other words, when one became a monk, not only were you unable to care for your parents, but you also were not capable of producing descendants to carry on the family name. For adherents to Confucian traditions, choosing to live such a life was morally unacceptable.

Despite their often overt and condescending intentions to cultivate subjects loyal to the Emperor and steeped in Confucian traditions, we must look critically at the long-term success of Zhao's schools in Batang. Although specific data is not available, funding to sustain the large number of schools that were established in a short period of time in Batang was a source of concern for Zhao, who resorted to atypical measures to maintain this key part of his grand design

¹⁹¹ Zhang, *Sanshi nian lai zhi Xikang jiaoyu*, 76. "Mumbling" here refers to religious chanting, and "woolen felt" refers to monks' robes.

¹⁹² QCBDS, no. 0849, 964; and Zhang, *Sanshi nian lai zhi Xikang jiaoyu*, 76.

to develop Kham. For example, he sold off all the property he had confiscated from Batang's native chieftains, Ba Chöde Monastery, and others who fought against him in the wake of Feng Quan's murder, and used the 10,000 silver *liang* profit to support Batang's schools.¹⁹³ He also accepted a donation of 2,000 silver *liang* for the construction of an independent school building in Batang from Trinle Tsomo (Phrin las Mtsho mo, 四郎错莫), the wife of the former native chieftain of Derge, Dorje Sengge (Rdo rje Sengge, 多吉僧格), who had relocated to Batang and moved in to the residence of the former head native chieftain. Both actions indicate sustainable funding for education was difficult.¹⁹⁴

Perhaps the most far-sighted approach to sustainable education in the region occurred in Yanjing. In 1910, two monks donated over three hundred silver *liang* and four plots of land that had belonged to a deceased *trulku* from Lhaweng Monastery to local magistrate Wang Huitong. They requested the land be used to support Yanjing's newly established primary school, so Wang worked with the students' families to set up a cooperative arrangement whereby parents of current students would farm the land and proceeds from annual harvests would be used to fund the school's expenses. After only a year, this landed endowment arrangement, which was not uncommon in inland China as well, provided more than sufficient income to cover the salary of the school's teacher and the costs of students' clothing and supplies.¹⁹⁵ Such examples suggest that the financial foundations of the Frontier Education Bureau were not solid. Moreover, the political chaos and social unrest in the wake of the collapse of the Qing dynasty in October 1911 severely disrupted local administration in Batang. While precise data is not available, sources do

¹⁹³ *QCBDS*, no. 0831, 945-46.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 0792, 893-94.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 0689, 753; no. 0793, 894; no. 0978, 1076; and Zhang, *Sanshi nian lai zhi Xikang jiaoyu*, 80-81.

indicate that most of the mandarin schools established in and around Batang in the last years of the dynasty closed after it collapsed.

Nevertheless, Zhao Erfeng's civilizing project through education was a fundamental part of his overall project to develop Kham, and the schools he established trained students who would go on to have significant long-term impact on Batang and the broader histories of Tibet and China. While it is questionable whether or not Qing schools in Batang achieved their intended purpose, the fact remains that several thousand Tibetan students received a basic education, became fluent in both spoken Chinese and spoken Tibetan, and learned to write in at least one of these language's written forms, if not both. As I will discuss in Chapter Six, the bilingual abilities of Batang young people afforded them unique opportunities to serve in the Republican government. Others became scholars and teachers; still others became revolutionaries. Finally, others became doctors, engineers, and pilots. Zhao himself painted a vivid picture of the power of education in a memorial penned soon after returning to Batang just three days before the beginning of the lunar New Year on January 28, 1911 (XT 2.12.28), after an absence of two years. Describing his experience visiting one of Batang's new schools, he wrote:

In the remote area of Batang, the male and female students first study spoken Chinese, and then continue their studies of written Chinese. After only three years, the primary school students surprisingly are able to write several hundred characters. Moreover, they all practice every day Chinese and can explain the meanings of characters. What was especially pleasing was seeing students of eight or nine years of age being refined and courteous upon meeting someone. When I asked them about their duties, all understood that being loyal to the Emperor and devoted to the country was most important. The female students were more superior because of their manners. They did not easily laugh at others.

As for enlightening the uncivilized and suddenly transforming wild barbarians, I did not initially anticipate getting this far. This is all thanks to the abilities of the educational administrators and teachers to instruct and guide. The modernization of the court's

policies and emphasis on education has also brought benefit to the barbarians through the classics. After ten years, there will certainly be learned people [among the Tibetans].¹⁹⁶

For Zhao, “learned” obviously meant able to speak and read Chinese and knowledgeable of Confucian culture. His prediction of the emergence of such a group of young people in Batang would prove to be true.

Daily Customs

Beyond classroom education, Zhao attempted to regulate and reform Tibetan social practices and customs. Like his political restructuring, Zhao’s social reforms had multiple objectives, but they were grounded in the notion of Chinese superiority. In other words, just as bureaucratic restructuring reshaped Batang’s political and administrative framework into a system that attempted to mirror inland China’s, Zhao employed both incentives and punishments to encourage Tibetans to become more like Han Chinese. Zhao’s attempts to reform Tibetan marriage customs, burial traditions, and sanitary practices in Batang best reveal his intentions.

Tibetan society allowed for a variety of marriage customs. While monogamous marriages between one man and one woman were the most common, fraternal polygamy was widespread and polygyny also occurred, albeit much less frequently than other forms of marriage.¹⁹⁷ To Zhao and his Confucian mindset, the Tibetan practice of fraternal polygamy was a “gross perversion of the moral order.”¹⁹⁸ Such non-traditional marriages, he argued, led to competitiveness, murders, and court cases in which local officials had to render decisions

¹⁹⁶ *QCBDS*, no. 0753, 841. See also Wu, *Zhao Erfeng Chuanbian zoudu*, 101, and Zeng, “Zhao Erfeng ji qi Batang jingying,” 28.

¹⁹⁷ For background on Tibetan marriage practices, see Geoff Childs, “Polyandry and Population Growth in a Historical Tibetan Society,” *The History of the Family* 8 (2003): 423-44; Melvyn Goldstein, “When Brothers Share a Wife,” *Natural History* 96, no. 3 (1987): 109-12; and Nancy Levine, “Fathers and Sons: Kinship Value and Validation in Tibetan Polyandry,” *Man New Series* 22, no. 2 (1987): 267-86.

¹⁹⁸ *QCBDS*, no. 0796, 898; and Wu, *Zhao Erfeng Chuanbian zoudu*, 206.

without clear evidence. Zhao therefore banned the practices of polygamy and polygyny in Batang and throughout Kham on April 12, 1911 (XT 3.3.14). Henceforth, marriage was to be between one man and one woman, and everyone who married was required to register with the local Han magistrate, who would issue a formal marriage certificate in Chinese and Tibetan. Hoping to ensure social stability, Zhao also ordained that all “all marriages among men and women must be trusted to a matchmaker so as to achieve harmony.”¹⁹⁹

In addition to regulating marriage practices among Batang Tibetans, Zhao also actively encouraged Qing soldiers stationed in the region to marry local women. Inter-marriage between Han and Tibetans in Batang in fact existed long before Zhao Erfeng arrived in Batang with Han merchants who had settled in Batang typically marrying local women. It was also not uncommon for Qing soldiers garrisoned in Batang to marry Tibetan women. Incidentally, prior to Zhao’s arrival, Han Chinese generally married commoner Tibetans. Bridging the socio-economic gap to marry women from the families of Batang’s upper class Tibetans, including native chieftains, headmen, and their senior staff, was not possible. However, Zhao’s political restructuring stripped Batang’s secular leaders of much of their power and social status, and inter-marriage between the daughters of former headmen and Han Chinese slowly became more widespread.²⁰⁰

As for the Qing soldiers who married local Tibetan women before the massive influx of Zhao’s soldiers into Batang after 1905, some did in fact settle in Batang after completing their service, but most simply abandoned their wives and children and returned to inland China. A popular poem recorded in the early twentieth century lamented this social problem:

When a Chinese returns to China,

¹⁹⁹ Wu, *Zhao Erfeng Chuanbian zoudu*, 205; *QCBDS*, no. 0796; and Yuan and Li, “Jiaoliu yu ronghe—guanyu Batang Hanzu de ge an fenxi,” 95.

²⁰⁰ You, “Qingdai zhi Minguo shiqi Hanzu yimin zai Batang huodong zhi mianmianju,” 12; and Yuan and Li, “Jiaoliu yu ronghe—guanyu Batang Hanzu de ge an fenxi,” 95.

By the order of the great Amban,
He deserts his offspring in Tibet,
Will the Tibetans please cherish them.²⁰¹

Knowing of this practice and expressing some concern for the fate of abandoned wives and children, Zhao announced his “Instructions on Han-Barbarian Marriages” (汉蠻联婚通飭) sometime after 1908. These regulations promoted intermarriage by providing soldiers with financial incentives. For example, Zhao agreed to subsidize each soldier who married a local woman with one *dou* (斗) of barley per month, and for each child they produced he would give them one additional *dou*. To prevent abandonment, the regulations required that soldiers wishing to marry Tibetan women must not already be married, and that their marriage be registered with local military officials, who would issue a marriage certificate. At the time of marriage, each soldier also had to produce a guarantor, who would ensure that the soldier was unmarried. Abandonment was forbidden, and soldiers were ordered to bring their wives and any children with them when they returned to inland China at the end of their tour of duty. Failure to do so would result in stiff punishment, both for the soldier and his guarantor.²⁰²

In addition to promoting Confucian marriage customs, Zhao also attempted to impose Chinese style surnames on Tibetans, a common way Han Chinese attempted to acculturate non-Han people. Explaining his rationale in his Batang “Reconstruction Regulations” Zhao stated, “Barbarians beyond the pass still do not have surnames. It is common that great grandsons do not know their great grandfathers, and clans are mixed up among male ancestors. This perverts the intention of classic differentiating among the clans.” He therefore had local officials order the common people to select from among one hundred characters that he provided in poetic form

²⁰¹ Marion H. Duncan, *Love Songs and Proverbs of Tibet* (London: The Mitre Press, 1961), 32.

²⁰² Yuan and Li, “Jiaoliu yu ronghe—guanyu Batang Hanzu de ge an fenxi,” 95.

one character to be used among all the known members of each family so as, “to show respect for ancestors over the generations. After one hundred generations, each family will have their own genealogy.”²⁰³ Issuing a similar set of regulations after bringing Sanyan firmly under Qing control in 1909, Zhao went on to inform local officials that it would be best for local Tibetans to adopt Han surnames, but in a show of some cultural tolerance he accepted that “it is not appropriate to force them.”²⁰⁴ In Batang proper, Commissariat Chen Lian also encouraged the adoption of Han surnames by issuing title deeds to land owners only in Han surnames in 1910. Writing to Zhao, Chen explained that this requirement would “demonstrate they [Batang Tibetans] had the same customs [as we do] and also are obedient.”²⁰⁵

Zhao’s intended purpose in ordering Tibetans to adopt surnames was to differentiate family clans and prevent intermarriage between relatives, but soon after promulgating this order, Zhao examined Batang’s grain tax registers and student rosters and noted a problem. Rather than focusing on individual family units when deciding on surnames, most Batang Tibetans had instead focused on village units, such that in general all the people from one village were adopting the same surname. To rectify this problem Zhao instructed local officials to order people of different lineages to adopt different surnames, even if they lived in the same village, and those people of the same lineage to adopt the same surname, even if they lived in different villages.²⁰⁶ The success of Zhao’s naming efforts is debatable. While Republican period land tax records verify that some landowning Tibetans had adopted Chinese surnames, recorded names were more often than not transliterations from Tibetan. Moreover, it was generally only a few of

²⁰³ Sichuan dang’an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and *QCBDS*, no. 0081, 102.

²⁰⁴ *QCBDS*, no. 0455, 501.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 0605, 662.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 0658, 708.

the Batang Tibetans who spent several years in inland China during the Republican period, such as Wang Tianhua,²⁰⁷ Jiang Anxi, Liu Jiaju, and others, who chose to adopt traditional Chinese names.

Closely related to his naming conventions, Zhao also strongly encouraged Tibetans to adopt Confucian practices of filial piety. For example, in the only direct comparison between Han and Tibetans in his Batang “Reconstruction Regulations,” Zhao highlighted funeral practices:

When the parent of a Han dies, he must be placed in a coffin and buried in the ground. Harming one’s parent’s body is not tolerated. However according to barbarian custom, some people allow their parent’s body to be eaten by dogs; others burn their body and call this “fire burial;” still others grind up their bones and scatter wine to feed birds and call this “sky burial.” These are depraved customs and extremely intolerable. All those who commit serious crimes may also be punished by smashing their bodies and filing down their bones.

Now your parents have committed no crime, yet as their children you still burn their bodies and grind up their bones to feed the dogs and birds. Why do you hate your parents so much and subject them to such extreme punishment? Consider when you were young and how much your parents loved and protected you. They only feared that you would be burned, that you would be bitten by dogs, or that you would collide with something and your bones would be bruised. Now when your parents die, you children still burn them, feed them to the dogs, and grind up their bones. This is completely opposite to the love parents have for their children. From now you barbarians must change this vile custom. When a relative dies, they will be buried according to customary [Han] traditions. In this way the common people will have different behavior from birds and beasts.²⁰⁸

Filial piety was expressed in various ways in Confucian culture. For example, Chinese believed that harming one’s own body was unfilial because your body was given to you by your parents. Similarly, when one’s parents died, you should give them an earthen burial and not desecrate or damage their bodies in any way. Traditional Tibet burial customs were extremely different. Sky burial, in which the deceased’s body was chopped up by specially-trained monks, mixed with

²⁰⁷ More commonly known by his Tibetan name, Kelzang Tsering.

²⁰⁸ Sichuan dang’an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and QCBDS, no. 0081, 100-01.

meal, and fed to vultures, was the most common form of Tibetan burial, but as Zhao noted burial by cremation and, in some cases, abandonment, were also found.

Zhao went on to designate the Gyapangdeng area of Batang, where Han had long been buried, as the burial place for all Tibetans and Han. In July 1910 (XT2.5.28), Zhao announced that all Tibetans were required to use earthen burials and he explicitly forbade water, fire, and sky burials. Claiming that the people of Batang and other areas that had already adopted earthen burials had expressed gratitude for his reform, he argued that extending it to all Tibetans would, “bring them into harmony with the system of the great Emperor.”²⁰⁹ To promote filial piety even further, the Batang Commissariat Officer printed blank ancestor tablets in Chinese and Tibetan that local officials would complete and distribute to all Batang residents when they submitted their annual grain tax payments. In so doing, he suggested, Batang Tibetans would be constantly reminded of their ancestors, and “this can serve as the initial foundation for instructing them filial piety.”²¹⁰

Finally, Zhao Erfeng attempted to reform a number of other daily customs among Batang Tibetans that he deemed improper. For example, just like the New Policy reformers in Chengdu who attempted to clean up Chengdu’s streets and reform public toilets, Zhao despised local sanitation practices.²¹¹ He therefore demanded that Tibetans bathe regularly and ordered that *baozheng* officials organize people to clean the streets of animal carcasses, which should be burned, and animal feces, which should be collected and used as fertilizer. Describing the common practice of public urination and defecation as the “worst habit,” he also ordered that people clean the streets, public toilets be constructed throughout the town, and violators severely

²⁰⁹ *QCBDS*, no. 0617, 673.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 0647, 697.

²¹¹ See Stapleton, *Civilizing Chengdu*, 136-38.

punished.²¹² Despite Zhao's intentions, it would still be several years before the streets of Batang were cleaned. Writing about her initial impressions of Batang in 1921, Gertrude Morris observed, "Most of the streets were from six to eight feet wide, with human and animal filth every few steps. Dead animals could often be seen along the paths. Flies, vultures, and vermin swarmed...."²¹³ To further promote public health, Zhao also opened a small clinic and dispensary in Batang staffed by a doctor from inland China and two assistants on May 30, 1908 (GX 34.5.1). Treatments were free, and patients were only required to pay for the cost of medicines.²¹⁴ While historical records describing the activities of these clinics are sparse, they do indicate that campaigns to vaccinate students against small pox were successful despite initial resistance in some areas.²¹⁵

Like his political restructuring and economic development projects, Zhao's educational and social reforms achieved mixed results in Batang. The majority of the schools the Frontier Education Bureau established closed following the collapse of the Qing dynasty, but those that did remain open continued to cultivate a coterie of young Tibetans with bilingual skills that matured into individuals who deeply impacted Batang society. In this sense, Zhao's educational reforms were successful. At the same time, Zhao's larger effort to cultivate Confucian values and loyalty to the sovereign achieved fewer positive results. Although Ba Chöde Monastery had been destroyed, Tibetan Buddhism remained the primary value system for Batang Tibetans and fundamental Confucian values such as filial piety were rarely practiced. Moreover, at least one

²¹² Sichuan dang'an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanlichu: juan 419: c407a [N.d.]; and QCBDS, no. 0081, 102-03.

²¹³ Gertrude Morris, *The Dogs May Bark but the Caravan Moves On*. Helen M. Morse, ed. (Joplin: College Press Publishing Company, 1998), 43.

²¹⁴ QCBDS, no. 0177, 201; and no. 0272, 293-94. See also Zeng, "Zhao Erfeng ji qi Batang jingying," 27; and He, "20 shiji chunian Chuanbian Zangqu zhengzhi jingji wenhua gaige shulun," 47.

²¹⁵ QCBDS, no. 0229, 255; no. 0249, 269; no. 0272, 293-94; no. 0752, 840-41; and no. 0764, 851.

Batang Tibetan educated in Zhao's schools would go on to lead an armed insurrection calling for a "Kham for the Khampas" during the Republican era, suggesting that Zhao's attempts to instill respect for authority were not terribly effective. However, before turning to the post-imperial era, it is necessary to examine one other aspect of the legacy of Zhao's efforts in Batang, *i.e.*, his ability to reproduce the policies he formulated in Batang proper in other parts of Batang's traditional territory.

Replicating Reform

In August 1908 (GX 34.7.8), approximately two years after he implemented political restructuring in Batang, Zhao Erfeng petitioned to establish Baan Prefecture (巴安府), which would encompass Batang proper, the counties of Yanjing and Chatreng, and the sub-prefecture of Sanba (三壩廳).²¹⁶ In the same memorial, Zhao stressed the importance of increasing imperial power in Kham, arguing, "Regarding the crisis in the Tibetan border regions, we must take Sichuan as our base. However, when we consider the strategy for managing Sichuan and Tibet, border affairs are key." Critiquing recent policies whereby the court dispatched Grand Councilors (參贊大臣) to oversee imperial affairs in Mongolia and adopted a new bureaucratic system in northeast China, Zhao proposed using the current administrative system of inland China in Kham, arguing that doing so would allow him to establish officials in each locality and ensure that the estrangement between imperial officials and the local people, which he identified

²¹⁶ Fu, *Xikang jiansheng ji*, 13. "Baan" would continue to exist as a toponym until 1951, when the newly established People's Republic of China reviewed geographic names suggesting ethnic discrimination and/or inequality. Between 1908 and 1951, "Baan" was used exclusively in official discourse and commonly in academic and popular literature. Despite the widespread use of "Baan," local residents in the late Qing and throughout the Republican period continued to refer to their native place as Batang, as did foreign residents and travelers in the region. To avoid confusion, I use Batang throughout this dissertation except in reference to organization, events, and literary works that use "Baan" in their titles.

as an important cause of problems on the frontier, was kept to a minimum.²¹⁷ Zhao had already succeeded in implementing this system in Batang proper following the suppression of the uprising there in 1905. Over the next several years, he would replicate his political, economic, and social reforms with varying degrees of success in many other parts of Kham. In this section, I examine briefly how Zhao Erfeng asserted Qing imperial power in Yanjing, Sanyan, and Derong, all territories that traditionally fell under the jurisdiction of the Batang native chieftains.

Yanjing

Soon after subjugating Batang proper, Zhao's attention turned to Batang's outlying areas. In late 1905, he dispatched Wang Huitong to Yanjing, a part of Batang known for its salt production. It was also home to a large French mission. As the first Qing official to be posted in Yanjing, Wang was to establish a salt tax office, which I discussed above, and to serve as administrator (委員) there. One company of soldiers accompanied him. Wang's attempts to assert imperial authority in the region by calling for salt taxes to be submitted to his office rather than Lhaweng Monastery naturally raised the ire of the monks, and he quickly realized he was in no position to seek concessions from the monastery. Wang therefore requested Batang officials send additional troops to assist his efforts. However, local officials refused Wang's request, pointing out that local garrisons were stretched thin because Zhao Erfeng was commanding most of them in the increasingly protracted and intense campaign in neighboring Chatreng.

Like Ba Chöde Monastery in Batang, Lhaweng Monastery was the largest monastery in the region and wielded significant power over the people of Yanjing. What distinguished Lhaweng from Ba Chöde, however, was the absence of strong secular authority to balance its

²¹⁷ *QCBDS*, no. 0182, 205-06.

power. Batang's head native chieftain had assigned one *xieao* headman to oversee salt tax collection, land rents, and corvée labor in Yanjing, but he lived in Chongyan (崇岩), several stations northeast of Yanjing proper, and only came to Yanjing during the coldest winter months.²¹⁸ Most of the year, a *gutsa* representative of the *xieao* attempted to carry out his responsibilities in Yanjing. Nevertheless, the actual authority of this low-ranking representative compared to the power of Lhaweng Monastery, which housed over 2,000 monks, was extremely limited, and the majority of taxes collected on the salt trade remained with the monastery. Further weakening the position of the *xieao*, there was no Qing official posted in the region to provide support for his efforts to collect taxes or oversee corvée.²¹⁹ As a result, Lhaweng Monastery alone exercised almost absolute power in the region and was able to reap profits from the local salt industry with minimal interference from Batang's native chieftains.

Despite his comparatively weak military force, Wang attempted to assert Qing authority over the Yanjing salt trade and curb illicit trading. In December 1906 (GX 32.11), a small group of soldiers under Wang's command intercepted a band of Tibetans smuggling salt and confiscated their salt and mules. The next day, more Tibetans arrived and confronted the soldiers, resulting in a fight that left three soldiers suffering knife wounds and one Tibetan dead from a gunshot. This violence incited Lhaweng monks to threaten to lay siege to Wang's salt tax office and the Catholic Church in Yanjing. Wang communicated this information to Zhao Erfeng, and the threat to the church immediately caught his attention. Knowing full well the difficulties missionaries had created in Batang previously, Zhao ordered five companies to Yanjing under

²¹⁸ Chongyan is in present-day Jiazhong Village, Xuzhong Township, Mangkang County (芒康縣徐中鄉甲仲村). Bao Luo and Juan Lamu, "Jindai Yanjing Lawengsi shijian yuanyin fenxi—jian lun qi xiangguan wenti," *Xizang yanjiu* 3 (2006): 13.

²¹⁹ Fang Jianchang, "Xizang yanye de xingqi, fazhan ji qi shuailuo," *Zhongguo jingji yanjiu* 1 (1995): 137; and *QCBDS*, no. 0397, 442.

the command of Cheng Fengxiang (程鳳翔), with the first two coming from Batang specifically to protect the French church.

Serious fighting broke out before all of Cheng's troops could arrive, but as more Qing reinforcements made their way to Yanjing, imperial soldiers slowly pushed the Tibetans west up the side of the mountain overlooking the town, where they took refuge in Lhaweng Monastery. Located atop a high peak west of the Za River (Rdza chu)²²⁰ that flows through Yanjing, Lhaweng Monastery occupied the strategic high-ground, but Cheng was not deterred. In mid-February 1907, Cheng's forces mounted an attack from three sides of the monastery, and after a fierce battle that saw over seventy Tibetans, including several monastic leaders, killed, Cheng took the monastery and drove the defiant monks out of the area. Only two individuals were captured alive. By defeating the monastery and driving out the monks, Cheng solidified Qing authority in Yanjing, restored relative peace to the area, and secured a stable source of income from salt trade taxes to support Zhao's frontier work.²²¹

Nevertheless, Cheng Fengxiang remained unsatisfied. Wanting to root out any further resistance in the region, in 1908 he twice led troops west of Yanjing deep into territory traditionally administered by central Tibetan authorities based in Gartok. He said he was pursuing two leaders from Lhaweng Monastery who had escaped and intended to bring them back to Yanjing to face justice, but central Tibet officials strongly protested what they saw as violations of their sovereignty to Zhao Erfeng and stated that they had no choice but to gather their forces to expel Cheng's soldiers from Yanjing. Zhao immediately instructed High Commissioner to Tibet Lian Yu (聯豫) to explain Cheng's intentions to Tibetan officials, a tactic

²²⁰ The Za River is known in Chinese as the Lancang River (瀾滄江), an upper tributary of the Mekong River (湄公河).

²²¹ *QCBDS*, no. 0082, 103-05; no. 0084, 106-07; no. 0115, 127; no. 0118, 128; and no. 0099, 114-15.

that he hoped would give him some time to prepare additional troops to repel a possible attack by central Tibetan soldiers. In the end, however, Zhao instead instructed Cheng to withdraw his troops from the central Tibetan territories and remain within the borders of Yanjing. Central Tibetan soldiers subsequently stood down. Zhao likely made this decision because he did not want to overextend his frontier forces by engaging them directly with an army directly supported by central Tibetan authorities.²²²

Central to this conflict was the ambiguity of Yanjing's northwest border and, by extension, the reach of the power of Batang's native chieftains and now the Qing officials who had replaced them. Central Tibetan officials went so far as to claim that Lhaweng Monastery itself was under the direct jurisdiction of the Dalai Lama, which monastery leaders also acknowledged. For Lhasa, all of Yanjing belonged to central Tibet. Cheng Fengxiang and other Qing officials, on the other hand, considered Lhaweng Monastery and all of Yanjing to belong to Batang and identified the Bitu River (碧土河), located over one hundred *li* west of Yanjing proper, as Yanjing's western border.²²³ Zhao Erfeng's representative in Batang perhaps summed up the controversy best when he wrote, "Because the lamas of Lhaweng Monastery... in Yanjing have been domineering over time, if you ask about the border region between Sichuan, Yunnan, and Tibet, then Tibet will say it [the area west of Yanjing] belongs to Sichuan, and Sichuan will say it belongs to Yunnan. They all avoid collecting taxes there and basically take it as being outside civilization."²²⁴

Following sporadic fighting in areas just west and north of Yanjing, continued threats by central Tibetan officials against Yanjing, and rumors that central Tibetan soldiers were planning

²²² *Ibid.*, no. 0144, 165-66; no. 0153, 175; no. 0154, 175-76; no. 0158, 178; and Bao and Juean, 14.

²²³ The Bitu River is located in present-day Bitu Township, Zuogong County (左貢縣碧土鄉) in central Tibet.

²²⁴ *QCBDS*, no. 0082, 103.

to raid Batang, Zhao Erfeng ordered Batang Commissariat Officer Dong Tao and Yanjing Magistrate Wang Huitong to conduct a border survey to clarify the situation. At the same time, he requested High Commissioner Lian Yu to urge central Tibetan officials to dispatch a representative familiar with the region to Batang to cooperate with Dong and Wang on the survey. Evinced his awareness of the complexities of completing a useful survey, Zhao noted that Qing officials should not acknowledge Ningjing Mountain as the border like most officials commonly claimed because that would mean Yanjing, which is located well west of the Ningjing range, would “I fear... fall into the hands of Tibet.”²²⁵ Lamenting the difficulties his officials faced, he went on to argue that “The reason for all this fighting is because the borders are unclear.”²²⁶ Despite Zhao’s attempt to clearly determine the extent of Qing sovereignty west of Yanjing, he reported to the Grand Council three months later on May 31, 1909 (XT 1.4.13), that the results of the survey were inconclusive and suspicions of action by central Tibetan soldiers against Yanjing and Batang remained high. Clear boundaries and the definitive sovereignty they demarcated could not yet be determined.²²⁷

Although the fear of invasion by central Tibetan soldiers occasionally reemerged, large-scale conflict in Yanjing and its western regions ceased by early 1909, thereby allowing Qing officials to move beyond simple tax extraction and to begin to establish a new political structure in the region. Following the example Zhao Erfeng set in Batang, Magistrate Zhang Shijie (張世傑) reported on August 28, 1911 (XT 3.7.5), that he had finally completed the selection of Yanjing’s six *baozheng* and the election of its sixteen village headmen. Zhang also promulgated a set of regulations governing Yanjing’s new administrators that focused on effective conflict

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 0269, 288.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 0270, 291.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 0307, 335-36.

resolution and fair governance, ensuring agricultural production and efficient collection of taxes, and promoting Confucian values such as filial piety, monogamy, and earthen burial. Not surprisingly, Zhang also encouraged these new administrators to promote the study and use of Chinese. Zhang's reforms in Yanjing closely mirrored those Zhao had taken just a few years earlier in Batang proper.²²⁸

Sanyan

With Batang now well under Qing administration and Yanjing having recently been brought under direct imperial control, Zhao Erfeng turned his attention to Sanyan in late 1910 on his way back to Batang after an absence of over two years. Despite three separate Qing military campaigns to subjugate Sanyan in as many decades, the region still remained largely independent of Qing influence. Deriding the previous handling of Sanyan by Lu Chuanlin and Gong Shou when describing continued troubles in the region in November 1910 (XT 2.10.6), Zhao Erfeng wrote, "Since [Lu Chuanlin's time] not only have there been numerous cases of robbery, but this [Cala] monastery and the [Sanyan] people of Zongba have themselves carried out robberies. There are no barbarians who do not laugh about this matter, and the people of Batang all hate the people of this separated territory and the bandits. However, in the past there were no Han officials or soldiers beyond the pass, so the situation naturally deteriorated. Han and barbarians had no one with whom to raise complaints, and they could only bear things patiently."²²⁹

Beginning in late 1908, Zhao began receiving reports from Batang about Tibetan troop movements in Chamdo and Gartok. Central Tibetan officials there claimed they were gathering soldiers to attack Sanyan so as to assert their power in the region, but Qing officials in Batang

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 0961, 1063-66.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 0719, 790-91; and Wang Chuan, 58.

suspected their purpose was to raid Batang. Minor skirmishes between Tibetan and Qing soldiers along the main road through Sanyan arose periodically, but officials in Batang were able to use the threat of greater force to contain the violence and no loss of life had yet been reported. In addition, when local Tibetans destroyed several official transit stations and refused to provide corvée to Qing messengers passing through the region, Zhao dispatched soldiers to the region, and the local headman quickly agreed to rebuild the stations.²³⁰

As in Yanjing, a dispute over taxation involving the local monastery in Sanyan compelled Zhao Erfeng to take decisive military action. In November 1909 (XT 1.9.30), Batang Commissariat Officer Dong Tao reported to Zhao that the people of Baijianggong²³¹ in Sanyan had sent representatives to him to discuss their tax burden. Preparing for the meeting, Dong learned that Zhao had instructed his predecessor, Wu Xizhen, to reestablish Batang's authority in the region and begin collecting grain taxes there. Evincing the continued ambiguity of Sanyan's sovereignty, Dong also learned from the representatives of Baijianggong that while they had submitted taxes to Batang officials in 1907 and 1908, Cala Monastery continued to demand taxes from them, often threatening the people with violence if they did not pay. The following year, for reasons unknown, Batang officials did not send anyone to Baijianggong to collect taxes, but the local monastery continued to demand payment. Fearful of possible continued double taxation, the people of Baijianggong petitioned Batang officials to determine once and for all the legitimate tax authority for the region. Zhao was incensed both at Cala Monastery's audacity to continue to demand taxes from the local people and at Dong for not fulfilling his official duties. In response, Zhao berated Dong and immediately ordered him to have Cala Monastery pay back

²³⁰ *QCBDS*, no. 0202, 230; no. 0207, 236; nos. 0215-0217, 245-46; no. 0220, 248; no. 0231, 256-57; no. 0237, 261; no. 0380, 426; and no. 0386, 432.

²³¹ Baijianggong is transliterated in Chinese as both 白降工 and 白獎工.

taxes to the Commissariat Office. If they refused, Dong was to threaten military action against them.²³²

While specific details on subsequent events in Baijiangong are not available, Zhao's communications beginning in spring 1910 and continuing through the summer indicate his increasing impatience with the people of Sanyan. For example, in May 1910 (XT 2.4.13), he wrote to the Grand Council, "The people of Sanyan are innately wild barbarians. Apart from the five villages of Lower Yan that have already surrendered [a reference to Baijiangong], they have never provided corvée. The other areas of Upper, Middle, and Lower Sanyan are even more self-deluded. They especially live by thievery, and therefore there are no Tibetans or frontier people who do not hate them." Hoping to end the problems of brigandry and violence in the region, Zhao proposed to send an official to Sanyan to "proclaim the beneficence of the court" and seek their acquiescence. If they accepted, that would best. If they resisted, he would have to punish them.²³³

On November 17, 1910 (XT 2.10.6), Zhao reported that his patience for the intransigence of Sanyan people had finally worn out: "I have been as tolerant as possible with the Tibetans, but for wild Tibetans who are savage like those in Sanyan, we cannot but strengthen our punishments so they will return to the Emperor." When Zhao dispatched an official to Sanyan to urge them to stop their brigandry, the people tore down his official notices and defaced them with humiliating graffiti. Challenging Zhao's authority, they even raided an official messenger from the High Commissioner to Tibet less than thirty *li* from Zhao's camp. During that raid the people of Sanyan destroyed a cache of official documents from Lhasa, and soon thereafter they claimed they were prepared to kill any Han, official or private citizen, who set foot in Sanyan.

²³² *QCBDS*, no. 0394, 439-40.

²³³ *Ibid.*, no. 0573, 627; no. 0609, 665; and no. 0663, 717.

Zhao immediately sent a small detachment from Derge into Sanyan, but the unfamiliar dense forest and deep valleys proved a serious disadvantage, and several of his soldiers were killed. Wanting to prevent this outbreak of violence from spreading to Chamdo in the north or Markham in the south, Zhao determined it was time to subdue Sanyan, so he ordered his deputy Fu Songmu to launch an attack from Batang.²³⁴

With an overwhelming force of five garrisons under Fu Songmu supported by local Tibetan guides familiar with the region from Gartok, actual fighting in Sanyan lasted only three days before Fu Songmu declared victory. Within just over a month of his order to attack, Zhao promulgated thirteen regulations formally bringing Sanyan under imperial sovereignty.²³⁵ Modeled after Batang's "Reconstruction Regulations" issued four years earlier, Sanyan's regulations similarly focused on establishing a new bureaucratic structure with a Han magistrate at its center, the importance of submitting taxes, and the need for personal hygiene. Where Sanyan's regulations differed from Batang's was in Zhao's emphasis on two closely related subjects: banditry and education. Given Sanyan's history of resistance to authority, it is not surprising that Zhao devoted nine of his thirteen regulations to some aspect of immorality or thievery in the region. Stressing that he had forgiven all past transgressions, Zhao encouraged the people of Sanyan to exercise their freewill to "drop their butcher knives and become Buddhas." At the same time, he did not hesitate to remind them that Qing officials would punish any future crime, stating, "if there are again *jagpa* in Sanyan, no matter if their actions are for the purposes

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 0719, 790-91.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 0727, 801; and no. 0755, 842.

of robbery or hatred, if they are a leader or a follower, if they are a repeat offender or a first-time criminal, they will be beheaded without question.”²³⁶

As for education, Zhao had already begun establishing schools in Batang and other parts of Kham, and he thought educating children in areas like Sanyan, which previously had not received any Qing oversight, was especially important. He wrote, “The wild barbarian children of Sanyan do not study, so their reasoning is muddled. They do not understand the way of the Emperor, they cannot distinguish right and wrong, and they do not know the difference between good and bad. . . . In every place I have been in these barbarian lands, we must first establish schools in hopes of promoting communication and benefitting the people.” With this in mind, Zhao ordered that an elementary school be established in each village in Sanyan and that all children between the ages of seven and fifteen attend school, with supplies and room provided by the state just like he had done in Batang. Interestingly, Zhao emphasized the special importance of girls attending school in Sanyan. Noting the low supply of female teachers willing to work on the frontier, Zhao wrote that after Sanyan girls attended school and grew up, then they themselves could become teachers, “and then throughout Yan there will be no girls who are not literate. Is this not beautiful?”²³⁷

Historical sources suggest resistance to Qing rule subsided following the promulgation of Zhao’s regulations for Sanyan, with only minor non-violent disputes involving corvée and education responsibilities cropping up from time to time. In February 1911 (XT 3.1.19), Zhao memorialized to the Emperor requesting a reward for his deputy Fu Songmu and that Sanyan

²³⁶ *QCBDS*, no. 0732, 805-09.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

undergo political restructuring “following Batang’s precedent.”²³⁸ Zhao had successfully replicated his Batang reforms and firmly established Qing sovereignty over yet another part of Kham.

Derong

By early 1911, Zhao Erfeng had succeeded in bringing almost all Tibetan territories in Sichuan east of the Ningjing Mountains under direct imperial sovereignty. Only Derong, a region that occupied Batang’s furthest southern territory bordering on Yunnan Province, was without a Qing magistrate. Less than a month after implementing bureaucratic restructuring in Sanyan, Zhao therefore shifted his focus to Derong, ordering Sichuan Border Patrol Defense Commander General Feng Shan (川邊巡防軍統領風山) to lead three companies south into the region. In a report dated April 27, 1911 (XT 3.2.29), Feng informed Zhao of his progress, noting that soon after arriving in Derong he had learned that bandits had taken refuge in the well-fortified Nangsang Monastery (Snang bzang dgon, 浪藏寺), the largest monastery in the region.²³⁹ While preparing his troops for a pincer attack on the monastery, Derong’s local headman approached Feng to mediate. He explained to Feng that the people of Derong did not want to engage in armed conflict, but last year they had all sworn an oath with the monks of Nangsang Monastery to refuse to submit to rule by Han officials. As a result, the people were unwilling to leave the monastery compound and surrender directly to Feng’s troops. According to Feng’s account, having witnessed the strength of the Qing forces, the people of Derong were now willing to accept a Han official in their territory, so Feng instructed the local headman to inform the

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 0755, 841-42. See also Liu Dingyi, “Zhao Erfeng jingying Chuanbian wenjian yishu,” 16-36.

²³⁹ This monastery is known today in Chinese as Longrong Monastery (龍絨寺). Derong xian diming lingdao xiaozu, ed., *Sichuan sheng Ganzhi Zangzu zizhizhou Derong xian diminglu* (N.p.: Xinan minzu xueyuan yinshuachang, 1986), 66.

Nangsang monks and local people to return to their homes and not resist his soldiers. Otherwise, untold hardship would come down on not only each individual who resisted but also his or her family. Feng's message got through. By the time he reached Nangsang Monastery, the people had dispersed and all but a few old monks had fled the monastery.

Feng Shan subsequently determined that the head of Nangsang Monastery, Yi Ke (宜可), had led the people in resisting his approaching army, while Derong's secular leaders, a group of *xieao*, *gutsa*, and local headmen formerly under the Batang native chieftains, fully cooperated with Feng and soon came to his camp to surrender. Within seven days, Feng had conquered Derong without firing a single shot, although four of his own soldiers died while crossing a raging river in a coracle.²⁴⁰ In the following month, many monks surrendered to Feng, some of whom he claimed even agreed to renounce their vows and return to secular life. For Feng Shan and Zhao Erfeng, Nangsang Monastery had been a source of regional instability since its monks supported the uprising of Sampel Monastery (Bsam 'phel gling, 桑披寺), located in neighboring Chatreng, against Zhao six years earlier. A case of usurious lending by the monastery that had recently come to light confirmed their distrust. Reporting to the Emperor on his easy success in Derong, Zhao wrote, "Without a scratch to a single soldier, we recovered several hundred *li* of territory...and in less than two months forever eradicated harm to two provinces [Sichuan and Yunnan]." ²⁴¹

Feng Shan's easy defeat of Nangsang Monastery rippled through Kham. Soon thereafter, an envoy from Linkashi met with Zhao Erfeng in Batang and requested their territory undergo bureaucratic restructuring just as Batang, Yanjing, and Sanyan had done in recent years. Located

²⁴⁰ *QCBDS*, no. 0784, 886-87.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, no. 0798, 901-05; and no. 0813, 928-30.

approximately three hundred *li* northeast of Batang proper, Linkashi had been under the jurisdiction of Batang's native chieftains since at least 1719 (KX 58), when the court appointed two *gya pon* (土百戶) local headmen to report to Batang's native chieftains. Linkashi's local headmen dutifully submitted periodic tax revenue to Batang's native chieftains until 1862 (TZ 1), when fear of reprisal from Gonpo Namgyal, who had just taken over neighboring Nyarong, led them to stop. Gonpo Namgyal's influence and the long-term ambiguity of sovereignty in Nyarong allowed Linkashi to remain beyond the reach of Batang's native chieftains throughout the final decades of the Qing Empire. However, perhaps seeing the writing on the wall, Linkashi headmen first approached Batang's Commissariat Officer Zhang Shengkai in May 1910 (XT 2.3), about returning their one thousand households to Batang's administration. Zhang enthusiastically recommended Zhao accept their offer, noting, "By following the hearts of the people we can solidify the border."²⁴² Zhao decided rather than returning Linkashi to Batang, it would be more appropriate to incorporate it into the recently established Sanba sub-prefecture to its southeast. In so doing, Zhao drew the final line that would constitute the border of today's Batang County.

Soon after conquering Derong and determining Linkashi's new administrative home, Zhao Erfeng appointed Li Keqian (李克谦) as Derong's local magistrate. Li worked quickly, and by July 1911 (XT 3.6.28), he had submitted a proposal to Zhao Erfeng for Derong's formal bureaucratic restructuring. Requesting Zhao to approve his draft regulations that would govern Derong's new *baozheng*, Li wrote:

Before they were pacified, all matters [in Derong] were monopolized by the *gya pon*, *xieao*, and *mag pon*. They acted in collusion with the monks, and the common people suffered keenly-felt pain. When our great army recovered [Derong]... we did not look into the past. Rather, we emphasized the future. Although the people have turned over a new leaf and are sincerely inclined to be civilized, it is urgent that the positions of *gya pon* and other headmen be forever abolished and replaced with a system of Han officials

²⁴² *Ibid.*, no. 0567, 614.

so as to avoid the ashes reigniting. As soon as I start bureaucratic restructuring many matters will await action, but it is especially important that I follow the regulations to elect the *baozheng* representatives. By planting the roots of self-governance we will obtain added benefits.²⁴³

Compared to previous regulations issued in Batang, Yanjing, and Sanyan, we can see a maturation of Zhao Erfeng's strategy for local governance in Li's proposal and indications that Zhao's power might in fact be over-extended. As in Zhao's earlier local regulations, issues such as dispute resolution, tax collection, and public health remained prominent in Derong. What stands out, however, is the shift in focus from the central role played by the Han magistrate to the enhanced responsibilities of local *baozheng* representatives. Previous regulations depicted local magistrates as both protectors and enforcers. They were to be available to hear complaints from local people on any sort of injustice, and after evaluating a complaint they were to render a fair decision and implement appropriate punishment. While earlier regulations called for *baozheng* representatives to be elected, they did not outline their specific responsibilities beyond protector and enforcer.

In contrast, Derong's regulations highlighted more specific and proactive roles for its five elected *baozheng* representatives, stating, "Each *baozheng* representative has the responsibility to serve as a model village headman when conducting business. Each one must be fair, diligent, and careful to meet the expectations of the people." In addition to providing oversight to Derong's eighty-seven village headmen, *baozheng* representatives were to police the region for cases of theft or robbery, violence, gambling, and excessive drinking and turn over suspects to the local magistrate. Aware of the continued influence of the monks in local society, Li also recommended that "each *baozheng* representative and village headman will work for the people. Regardless of whom, monk or lay person, requests them to determine right and wrong, they must make

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, no. 0904, 1006-07.

decisions peacefully and reasonably. They cannot ride roughshod over the people, confuse black with white, or falsely punish people.” Finally, Li Keqian proposed that Derong’s *baozheng* representatives and village headmen serve as models for people to emulate, urging local people to embrace Han customs such as adopting the queue, washing their faces, and wearing trousers. Zhao approved Li’s proposed regulations, and the last of Batang’s traditional territories was formally incorporated into the empire.²⁴⁴

Nevertheless, only five months later, the bureaucratic structure Zhao had erected in and around Batang began to show signs of weakness. Unrest following the collapse of the Qing Empire in October 1911 reverberated westward among Zhao’s soldiers. In early January 1912, Derong local magistrate Ding Chengxin (丁成信) reported that the two companies of soldiers stationed in Derong had recently demanded back pay from him. They had heard that soldiers in nearby Dapba (‘Dab pa, 稻城) had similarly demanded compensation from the local magistrate, so they decided to do the same. Lacking funds, Ding had no choice but to borrow money from monks at Nangsang Monastery. Although Ding paid his soldiers, they still looted the public granaries and Ding’s private property. Seeing an opportunity to reassert their authority in the region, Nangsang monks confronted Ding regarding the Qing army’s past actions in Derong and his present situation, arguing, “The local magistrate [Ding] is the Emperor’s magistrate, the soldiers are the Emperor’s soldiers, and [we] monks are also the Emperor’s common people. Since the soldiers are unable to protect the common people, and the magistrate also cannot suppress the low ranking officers and soldiers, then we request that you return all the property looted from the monastery to us.”²⁴⁵ The monks went on to convince Ding that the thirty soldiers

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 0904, 1006-09.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 1115, 1130.

causing trouble were no match for their thousand plus numbers. Not only could they defeat the local insurrection, they could also protect the Han magistrate and his staff from harm. While we do not know the outcome of the monks' request for their looted property, we do know that Ding agreed to accept "protection" from the monks, which may very well have been an abashed reference to his kidnapping. After Ding was taken to a safe location, the monks confronted the soldiers and quickly suppressed their insurrection. While both sides suffered minor injuries, only the insurrection's Han ringleader was killed. Nangsang Monastery had effectively used the soldier's insurrection to undercut the authority of the Han local magistrate and reassert their power in Derong.²⁴⁶

The same news of the collapse of the dynasty that sparked the insurrection in Derong unsettled Batang proper. Fu Songmu, who had traveled back to Chengdu with Zhao Erfeng in May 1911 (XT 3.4), when Zhao was appointed acting Sichuan governor-general, received reports saying that rumors of unrest moving west from Dartsedo and Litang along the southern road had shaken the confidence of Batang residents and compelled all the foreign missionaries to flee south into Yunnan. As a result, Fu ordered his divisions stationed west of Batang to return to protect the town from further unrest, measures that proved effective in maintaining local stability in the immediate aftermath of the empire's fall, but only for a short time.²⁴⁷

Conclusion: Zhao Erfeng's Legacy in Batang

Zhao Erfeng's ultimate goal in Kham was to protect the empire from foreign aggression, a concern he noted as early as 1903 when Xi Liang appointed him Jianchang Circuit Intendant in the opening passage of this chapter. The uprising against Qing authority in Batang in 1905

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 1115, 1130-33; and no. 1117, 1133-35.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 0989, 1079; no. 1049, 1104; no. 1054, 1105; no. 1082, 1117; and no. 1101, 1123.

presented him with an opportunity to take tangible steps towards strengthening the empire's power in the region and, he hoped, establishing the new province of Xikang. While his confidence in the viability of carving out a province in western Sichuan sometimes wavered,²⁴⁸ his commitment to strengthening the region as a “fence” protecting the empire was without rival. He willingly endured imperial rebuke for first declining his appointment as High Commissioner to Tibet in 1908 and then delaying his advance to Lhasa to assume his new position, which he held jointly with his position as Border Affairs Commissioner, because he wanted to focus on his unfinished work in Kham.²⁴⁹ Defending his decision, he argued it best “to take advantage of these [opportunities in Kham] to prepare a policy that will decisively determine Batang's future.”²⁵⁰

As discussed in Chapter Four, military dominance over Batang and Kham was a critical piece of Zhao's plan, but it was only the first step in his process of political restructuring. In April 1911 (XT 3.3), Zhao requested the court's opinion on establishing a province centered around Batang in the spirit of Cen Chunheng's (岑春煊) 1908 proposal to establish new provinces in the empire's northeast to solidify that border and protect the empire from further foreign influence, writing, “Since their own deposed Dalai Lama favors the Russians and hates the British, the gates are already open and powerful neighbors are lying in wait. If we give them an inch, they will take a mile.”²⁵¹ Two months after Zhao relinquished his position as Border Affairs Commissioner to his deputy Fu Songmu in May 1911 (XT 3.4), Fu formally memorialized requesting the establishment of Xikang Province. By creating a new province, Fu

²⁴⁸ See, for example, *QCBDS*, no. 0663, 714-17, in which Zhao argues that the Border Affairs Commissioner position be abolished and Kham be fully incorporated in Sichuan Province.

²⁴⁹ *QCBDS*, no. 0141, 159; and no. 0189, 210-11.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 0168, 188.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, no. 0808, 920.

argued that the empire could define its sovereignty over the region, better govern the vast territory, and “guard Xikang, protect Sichuan, and support Tibet” in the face of increasing foreign aggression, all important steps in Zhao’s plan to bring Kham administratively into the empire.²⁵² Zhao and Fu had the confidence to make such a proposal precisely because they had been able to replicate throughout all of Kham east of the Dri River the model of political restructuring they had erected in Batang. In this model, the positions of native chieftains and their traditional support networks of lesser headmen were formally abolished and replaced with a new bureaucratic structure that centered on a local Han magistrate and included appointed Han and Tibetan *baozheng* representatives and popularly elected headmen. Local monasteries also lost much of their power as part of Batang’s political restructuring under Zhao’s leadership. Ba Chöde Monastery, for example, no longer had judicial authority, which was now held exclusively by the Han magistrate. In addition, local monasteries were stripped of much of their economic income and restricted in size. Such reforms permanently altered Batang’s traditional power-sharing arrangements between the native chieftains, Ba Chöde Monastery, and local Qing officials.

But Zhao’s plans for Kham that he began in Batang were not limited to military dominance and political restructuring. To achieve his goals, Zhao also focused on state-sponsored economic development and broad social reforms. The efficacy of Zhao’s economic programs in Batang was mixed at best. Despite his grand visions of scores of Han Chinese immigrating to Batang to reclaim vast tracts of uncultivated land, no more than a few hundred people volunteered for his project, and many of them abandoned their plots after only a few seasons. Moreover, significant state investments in the tanning and pottery businesses produced meager results, and the ventures quickly folded. Nevertheless, Zhao was able to take advantage

²⁵² Fu, *Xikang jian sheng ji*; and Feng, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 69.

of newly-established Qing power in the region to affect some fundamental economic changes in Batang. He did, for example, standardize tax collection and confirm individual land ownership, wresting away its near monopolistic control from the native chieftains and monasteries. In the process, he proclaimed state ownership of all uncultivated land and thereby strengthened the state's economic foundation in Batang. He also reformed Kham's long-standing corvée labor system and improved transportation infrastructure in the region.

Zhao's greatest impact in Batang, however, rests in his educational reforms. In just five years, his Frontier Education Bureau established over thirty schools that enrolled as many as one thousand students in Batang proper alone. While many of these schools closed after the collapse of the dynasty in 1911, some remained open, particularly those in the center of Batang. Even though these schools may not have cultivated loyalty to the sovereign and Confucian values as Zhao had hoped, their long-term impact is unquestionable. Perhaps in no other place on the Tibetan plateau other than Dartsedo, Batang in the early twentieth century produced a large number of young people fluent in both Chinese and Tibetan with a basic understanding of the outside world. As I will demonstrate in Chapter Six, several of Batang's newly educated youth would go on to become influential leaders in the Republican government, scholars, and revolutionaries. While the Qing court's early twentieth century New Policy reforms could not prevent the fall of the dynasty, they were not without merit. At least in Batang, a strategically important corner of the empire, Zhao Erfeng and his officials successfully implemented a series of new policies that radically altered the course of Tibet's history.

Chapter Six: Batang in the Republican Period: Political Instability, Self-Rule, and State Integration

“Zhao Erfeng’s project to establish the province [of Xikang] was abandoned half-way. This caused Xikang to gradually fall into a terrible state of political crisis. The old system had already been destroyed, but the new system had not yet been established. In fact, this is the primary reason for the chaos and instability in Kham for the last thirty years.”

—Kelzang Tsering
Humble Words of a Frontiersman (邊人芻言), 1946¹

Introduction

Zhao Erfeng’s enforced peace in Batang did not survive long after the collapse of the Qing dynasty. The period between the end of the Qing Empire in 1911 and the consolidation of Liu Wenhui’s (劉文輝) power as governor of a newly-established Xikang Province in 1939 saw Batang suffer no fewer than five substantial armed conflicts and numerous other minor outbursts of violence. This chapter narrates this turbulence while analyzing the tension between two defining trends of this era: the reemergence of Tibetan agency following its suppression under Zhao Erfeng and the concurrent strengthening of Chinese state power in Batang.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section examines Batang in the first decade of the post-Qing era, a period bookended by a central Tibetan attack on Batang in 1912 and a failed attempt at an alliance between Sichuan authorities and local residents in 1920. Weakening governance and a declining local economy characterized this period. The next two sections discuss the maturation of a unique Batang voice in local and regional politics and its challenge to the increasing power of Sichuan warlord and eventual governor of Xikang Province Liu Wenhui. The second section addresses the early influence of Nationalist Party ideology in

¹ Gesang Zeren, *Bianren chuyan* (1946; reprint, Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1974), 101-102.

Batang and local movements calling for Khampa self-rule under the Nationalist government led by Batang native Kelzang Tsering. The third section covers a second attempt by Batang native Jiang Anxi to force Liu Wenhui out of Kham and establish local Khampa governance. Finally, the fourth section focuses on the growing power of Liu Wenhui's military-led government in Kham, Batang people's gradual acceptance of his authority, and a final challenge to Liu's new Xikang provincial government led by Batang native Liu Jiaju. Batang in the Republican period up to 1939 witnessed a more powerful central Tibetan presence bidding to assert its sovereignty over Batang, resurgent locals trying to carve out autonomous self-rule, and a Chinese state attempting to maintain its sovereignty over the region while improving local governance.

Careful examination of local events in this period reveals that although they were cut short by the fall of the Qing dynasty, Zhao Erfeng's reforms fostered an environment in which young Tibetans learned to give voice to their unique political perspectives vis-à-vis central Tibet and China. The political thinking of young intellectuals in Batang is best summarized as "Tibetan Chinese nationalism," a view that favored self-rule independent from central Tibetan political influence yet autonomous within the Chinese Nationalist state. How this thinking developed and how young Tibetans adapted their views as state power gradually increased in the early and mid-Republican periods in Batang is the subject of this chapter.

Eroding Political Authority and a Declining Economy (1912-1927)

"In all of Kham, only Batang has a temperate climate and produces a wealth of grains. As a location for building a town, it can hold several thousand households.... To the west there is the Dri River, to the east Dayin Mountain (大陰山), and to the north and south a series of peaks rising higher and higher, so we can say it has natural barriers.... If we determine residence [locations] and invite merchants to open up businesses there, within one year we can expect people to gather [in Batang]. Within two years it will become a

town, and within three years it will be a city.... In terms of long range planning, there is no other place for a provincial capital other than Batang.”

—Fu Songmu, *Records of the Establishment of Xikang Province, 1912*²

At the height of the Qing Empire’s power in Batang under Zhao Erfeng’s leadership, officials increasingly considered Batang to be the capital of the future Xikang Province as exemplified in Fu Songmu’s quote above. However, an attack by central Tibetan-led forces in 1912, widespread disarray in Sichuan that led to neglect of frontier army soldiers stationed in Batang and other areas of Kham, and spiraling economic degeneration directly impacted Batang’s viability as a provincial capital. The first half of this section addresses Batang’s declining fortunes, while the second half analyses important trends and a significant popular movement to reestablish civil governance in the region in the face of incompetent and corrupt Chinese officials.

Conflict with Central Tibet

As with most of China and Tibet, the collapse of the Qing dynasty and subsequent revolt throughout the empire was a watershed moment in Batang. Soon after Qing soldiers in Sichuan revolted and Yin Changheng killed acting Sichuan governor-general Zhao Erfeng, Fu Songmu, Zhao’s successor as the Sichuan-Yunnan Border Affairs Commissioner, recalled the majority of Zhao’s former border army officers and soldiers to Chengdu in an attempt to protect his own interests. Fu’s replacement as Frontier Army Defense Commander (邊軍巡防統領) in Batang, Gu Zhanwen (顧占文), was left with a reduced force of approximately four hundred soldiers

² Fu, *Xikang jian sheng ji*, 181-82.

who had not been paid for months.³ When news of the revolution reached Lhasa, imperial soldiers from Zhao Erfeng's army stationed there revolted against the Manchu High Commissioner to Tibet and attacked his residence in a display of violent anti-Manchuiism that was sweeping the country in the months immediately following the collapse of the dynasty. The central Tibetan government reacted swiftly, and by April 1912 its soldiers were escorting the High Commissioner to Tibet, his personal garrison, and the soldiers of Zhao's frontier army still in the region—approximately three thousand men in total—out of Tibet via India. In a matter of months, the number of former Qing soldiers stationed in Kham and central Tibet decreased dramatically.

Central Tibetan troops supplemented by local militia recruited by central Tibetan officials based in Gartok,⁴ not far to Batang's west across the Dri River, had been threatening to attack Batang for years, but especially since the arrival of Zhao Erfeng and his frontier army, they dared not provoke the residents in fear of a harsh response for which Zhao Erfeng was infamous. Encouraged by the expulsion of Qing troops from Lhasa and taking advantage of a reduction in the number of Qing soldiers in Batang, the Markham general finally decided to act. In late April 1912, a force of nearly ten thousand men, including both central Tibetan soldiers and local militiamen from Chatreng and Sanyan, gathered west of the Dri River to prepare their attack. Soon thereafter, they poured across the river. Upon arriving near Batang on May 13, they

³ He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 12a; and Feng Youzhi, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 72. Gu and his regiments nominally remained under Fu's command, although lines of authority and loyalty in the power vacuum left by the Qing collapse remain murky. Fu had returned to Chengdu to coordinate with the new Chengdu government, which effectively inherited the Qing provincial government in Sichuan. Robert A. Kapp, *Szechwan and the Chinese Republic: Provincial Militarism and Central Power, 1911-1938* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 7-14.

⁴ In addition to being the home of the Markham *teji* appointed by the Dalai Lama's government, Gartok was also headquarters for a Tibetan general appointed by Lhasa and a contingent of central Tibetan troops. While the Markham general's rank was below that of the Kalon Lama (Bka'blon Bla ma) stationed in Chamdo, who was also appointed by the central government in Lhasa, he frequently made decisions and took action without consulting the Kalon Lama. Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, 61.

attacked and successfully occupied Gyapangdeng, a hill overlooking the town from the southeast. Seriously outnumbered, Gu immediately requested reinforcements from his Frontier Army colleague Liu Zanting (劉贊廷), a senior officer who had remained stationed in Garze (Dkar mdzes, 甘孜) after most of Zhao Erfeng's army had been recalled. At the same time, Gu, who was well-versed in frontier battle as another of Zhao Erfeng's senior officers for many years, organized a company of experienced soldiers and counterattacked, retaking the hill and holding the town in anticipation of Liu's arrival. Central Tibetan soldiers initially repelled Liu Zanting's approach from the north. However, Liu successfully enlisted the aid of other local militia forces from Sanyan, who sent over two thousand fighters, including five hundred women, and they pushed the central Tibetan line back. Making their way to Batang, these Sanyan militia forces captured a Tibetan general (*dapön*, mda' dpon, 代本) and over two hundred prisoners en route. When Liu Zanting's forces arrived from Garze, together he and Gu drove the Tibetan forces back across the Dri River.

Hoping to strengthen Batang's defenses against the central Tibetans, Gu also requested assistance from Yin Changheng, who had recently been appointed General Commander of the Western Expeditionary Force (西征軍总司令) by Yuan Shikai's (袁世凱) Beiyang government.⁵ Yin had risen to power during Sichuan's Railroad Protection movement and took credit for beheading Zhao Erfeng. After Yin served a short stint as Sichuan military governor-general (四川軍政府都督), Yuan Shikai tapped him to lead an army to recapture those Tibetan areas lost in the chaos immediately following the collapse of the dynasty, especially Lhasa. By reasserting

⁵ Despite strong anti-Manchuism throughout the country, Yuan Shikai immediately claimed sovereignty over all the former Qing Empire's domains, including Kham and central Tibet, soon after assuming office in 1912 and worked with President Sun Yat-sen to promote a view of greater China that included Manchu, Han, Mongolians, Muslims, and Tibetans. See Esherick, "How the Qing Became China" and William C. Kirby, "When Did China Become China? Thoughts on the Twentieth Century," in *The Teleology of the Modern Nation-State: Japan and China*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 105-116.

Chinese control over Tibet's capital and eastern regions, Yuan intended both to assert the new Chinese Republic's sovereignty and to stem British influence on the plateau.

Yin had only just reached Dartsedo at the time of the central Tibetan attack on Batang, and he claimed he dispatched three hundred infantry soldiers and additional food supplies to assist Gu Zhanwen. Whether or not Yin's reinforcements made it to Batang in time to assist Gu in his defense of the town is unclear. Secondary reports of Gu's stand do not mention them, and the advance units of Yin's army did not arrive in Batang until November, at least two months after Gu had repelled the last central Tibetan assault. Nevertheless, Yin understood the strategic importance of Batang, which he remarked was "the vital heart of Xikang. If we lose it, my army is finished."⁶ This short comment demonstrates the importance Batang held for Sichuan authorities, who knew that the British had recently sold a large cache of modern weapons to the central Tibetan government. They were also likely familiar with British pressure on Yuan's new government for greater concessions in Tibet, and they thus wanted to deter central Tibetan influence in Batang and other areas east of the Dri River.⁷

Suspecting that the central Tibetan-led attack was just the beginning of a larger assault on Batang, Gu immediately began strengthening the town's defenses. Around the town itself, he erected barricades between individual homes to form a makeshift wall that encircled the city. In places the wall was low enough to be scaled with ladders, but its ramparts and four well-guarded gates provided a degree of security against outside aggression. At the same time, Gu constructed

⁶ Yin Changheng, "Xi zheng jishi," in *Kangqu Zangzu shehui zhenxi ziliao jiyao*, ed. Zhao Xinyu *et al.* (Chengdu: Sichuan chuban jituan Bashu shushe, 2006), 275; Feng, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 74-75; and Ganzi Zhouzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Ganzi Zhouzhi*, vol. 3, 2113.

⁷ In an attempt to draw Chinese representatives to the table to negotiate a more significant role for Great Britain in central Tibet, British officials threatened to withhold official recognition of the new Chinese Republic. Only after Yuan Shikai acknowledged central Tibetan autonomy, a decision that was ratified by neither the cabinet nor the Parliament, did Britain extend diplomatic recognition. Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, 11; and Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 279.

earthen watch towers on strategic overlooks along the road leading into Batang from the Dri River, manning them with lookouts twenty-four hours a day, thereby providing an additional degree of assurance to the frightened people in town.⁸

On June 12, three to four thousand Tibetan soldiers crossed the Dri River at Numshing Crossing. After initially failing to march beyond Cashu Mountain, which is located west of Gyapangdeng, they regrouped and drove Gu's soldiers back behind the city walls. Central Tibetan-led forces soon surrounded the town and began to lay siege, hoping that the town's supply of food would dwindle to the point that residents would be too weak to put up a defense.⁹ Gu rallied the people, reminding them that holding the town was vital for their own survival. After a month of fighting, however, ammunition was low and food practically exhausted. Just when Gu was about to give up hope, he remembered the advice Zhao Erfeng gave him as he departed Batang for Chengdu the year before. "If you encounter a crisis," Zhao said, "open the stores in the head native chieftain's residence." Inside the former native chieftain's warehouse, Gu found a stockpile of ammunition and sufficient grain to feed the local people for at least another month. Their morale boosted, Gu's soldiers and the local people regained their strength and gradually pushed the central Tibetan forces back across the Dri River.¹⁰ This would not be central Tibet's last offensive against Batang.

Non-Chinese historians have overlooked the significance of the 1912 central Tibetan incursion at Batang. Neither Shakabpa, Goldstein, nor Lamb even mentions this battle, which

⁸ Yang Lei, "Baan xiaozhi," *Chuanbian jikan* 1, no. 4 (1935): 47; Liu Zanting, *Baan xian tuzhi*, 17; and *BTXZ*, 13, 61, 345.

⁹ Yang, "Baan xiaozhi," 48.

¹⁰ *BTXZ*, 345. Zhao Erfeng had taken over the compound of Batang's former head native chieftain soon after he arrived in Batang in 1905. Evidently, he had either stored a cache of emergency supplies there or simply confiscated property of the native chieftain already extant.

lasted over three months.¹¹ Instead, such historians point to the 1917 conflict that began in Riwoche as the first Sino-Tibetan armed struggle in the post-Qing era.¹² Granted, the former conflict did not result in a change of sovereignty for either side, while the latter conflict did allow central Tibet to regain direct control over Chamdo, which China had held since Zhao Erfeng conquered the region in 1910, and Derge, where China had at least nominal influence much earlier through the native chieftain system. However, the significance of the 1912 Sino-Tibetan conflict in Batang lies precisely in the fact that central Tibetan actions in Batang mark the beginning of their determined effort to reestablish their sovereignty on the eastern side of the Dri River in southern Kham. Only six months later, in fact, the Dalai Lama would unequivocally declare his intention to rule all Tibetan areas without Chinese internal interference as far east as Dartsedo, and the first step in this process was expelling Chinese soldiers from the region.¹³ Although they failed to capture it, they made that first step in Batang.

Early Governance

The conflict with central Tibet drained the strength of Gu Zhanwen's forces, and the departure of Yin Changheng's troops just a few months later left Gu with few resources to maintain order, despite being the nominal representative of Chinese authority in Batang. Growing power struggles in Sichuan between competing warlords also meant he could not count

¹¹ Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*; Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*; and Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*.

¹² See, for example, Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, and Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Official in Eastern Tibet*. This conflict continues to be overlooked by scholars. Teichman published his account, in which he played a significant role as informal peacemaker, in 1922, soon after the conflict was resolved, and to date no other study has emerged.

¹³ Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, 60-62.

on assistance or reinforcements from Chengdu.¹⁴ As a result, Batang, a region touted only a year earlier as a future provincial capital, began a quick and steep decline. Plundering soldiers, ubiquitous banditry, and the abandonment of many of Zhao Erfeng's key reforms demonstrate the deteriorating ability of Sichuan military officers and civilian officials to govern Batang.

Yin Changheng's soldiers only stayed a few months in Batang before Yin was recalled to Chengdu by Yuan Shikai, who was under diplomatic pressure from Great Britain to curb the new republic's activities in Tibetan areas. Although their time in Batang and Kham was short, Yin's soldiers left their mark, distinguishing themselves from Zhao's frontier army with their lack of discipline and restraint. As Teichman described the first decade of the post-Qing era, "the Chinese Government were [*sic*] badly served at this critical juncture in their relations with Tibet..., [which] were unfortunately exemplified during the years following the revolution, as far as the Tibetans of Eastern Tibet were concerned, by the actions of a plundering soldiery and the oppressive and unjust rule of rapacious and inefficient officials, in comparison with which the regime of Chao Erh-feng [Zhao Erfeng] came to be regarded as a golden age."¹⁵ While Batang residents certainly disliked Yin's soldiers, they were very pleased to see the grandson of their former deputy native chieftain return to Batang with Yin. Kelzang Namgyal (Skal bzang Rnam rgyal, 郭承基) had been exiled with his mother to Chengdu following the execution of his father, Jampa Jetsun, in 1905. Upon arriving in Batang, Yin Changheng returned to Kelzang Namgyal some of the property Zhao had confiscated from Kelzang Namgyal's grandfather. He also arranged for Kelzang Namgyal to marry a daughter of a local headman in Batang to much local fanfare. Kelzang Namgyal remained in Batang for several years, but any hopes that local

¹⁴ Kapp remains the authoritative source on militarism and provincial politics in Sichuan in the early and mid-Republican periods. Kapp, *Szechwan and the Chinese Republic*.

¹⁵ Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Official in Eastern Tibet*, 41.

residents had for him to reassert his family's authority faded as he became addicted to opium, which soon spread throughout the region. Sometime in the mid-1920s, Kelzang Namgyal left Batang and settled in Lhasa with his mother.¹⁶

Yin Changheng and his soldiers departed Batang in early 1913, but their exploitative example was quickly studied by the locally garrisoned troops who remained. While Chinese and Tibetan sources on this period are rare, Western missionaries and diplomats resident in the region paint a grim picture of Chinese abuses at the time. For example, Teichman quotes a 1916 article by “an American missionary, a gentleman of long experience of life on the frontier,” who described Chinese rule on the frontier in the following terms:

There is no method of torture known that is not practiced in here on these Tibetans, slicing, skinning, boiling, tearing asunder, and all.... To sum up what China is doing here in Eastern Tibet, the main things are collecting taxes, robbing, oppressing, confiscating, and allowing her representatives to burn and loot and steal.

These are hard words. But lest they should be offensive to Chinese in China Proper, it must be emphasized that the state of affairs they represent is in no way due to any action of the Chinese Government in Peking or the Provincial Authorities in Szechuan, but is merely the result of the internal strife of recent years in China, which has prevented the Chinese Authorities from paying due attention to frontier affairs, and which has discouraged respectable Chinese officials from service in Chinese Tibet. The state of affairs on the frontier, under Chao Erh-feng's rule in the days of the Manchus, was very different.¹⁷

The abuses of Chinese soldiers emerged primarily out of hunger and desperation. They had not been properly paid for years and were nearly useless as a fighting force. Describing how food had become the all-important question for Chinese soldiers, American missionary Flora Shelton, living in Batang at the time, noted in 1917 how every harvest season since the fall of the dynasty

¹⁶ Yin, “Xi zheng jishi,” 276; Sichuan sheng Batang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, ed., *Batang xianzhi (xubian)* (Beijing: Fangzhi chubanshe, 2001), 384-85; Sichuan dang'an guan, ed. *Jindai Kangqu dang'an ziliao xuanbian* (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chubanshe, 1990), 364; and Marian L. Duncan, *A Flame of the Fire: The Batang Tibetan Mission of the Disciples of Christ Missions* (N.p.: N.p., 1999), 252. Kelzang Namgyal was cousins with Wangchen Geleg Surkhang (Dbang chen Dge legs Zur khang), a senior minister in the central Tibetan government in the 1940s and 1950s.

¹⁷ Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Official in Eastern Tibet*, 228.

starving Chinese soldiers would predictably threaten mutiny unless they got the grains they demanded.¹⁸ Moreover, in his 1922 work, Teichman states how the 1918 Sino-Tibetan conflict that began in Riwoche had resulted in an influx of refugees that further taxed Batang's fragile food supply. Without additional grain supplies to supplement their meager rations, soldiers resorted to extorting "taxes" from the local population almost at will.

Sometime after repelling the Tibetan attack on Batang, Gu Zhanwen was transferred out of Batang, and Liu Zanting became the head Chinese military commander of the region. Liu did what he could to raise money to feed his men, but he met with only minimal success. For example, in June 1914, he ordered Batang's *baozheng* representatives to construct local contract tax offices (契稅籌辦處). *Baozheng* representatives were to begin to require residents to register all private contracts with this office, for which representatives would collect a surcharge. While the *baozheng* representatives collected some fees soon after opening the offices, local people soon began to disregard this policy, and as late as 1936 observers noted that this order was no longer being implemented. Local officials likely abandoned these offices due to lack of resources and resistance from the people.¹⁹

Facing constant cash shortages, Liu Zanting also resorted to unorthodox methods of revenue collection. Flora Shelton described, for example, how Liu approached the missionaries for direct cash loans and, knowing that they had endeared themselves to the majority of Batang's population after living side-by-side with them for a decade, Liu more than once begged the missionaries to borrow grain directly from the people to feed his army in the weeks before

¹⁸ Americans Dr. Albert Shelton (史德文) and his wife Flora opened a new mission in Batang in 1908. Douglas A. Wissing, *Pioneer in Tibet: The Life and Perils of Dr. Albert Shelton* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 141.

¹⁹ Sichuan dang'an guan, *Jindai Kangqu dang'an ziliao xuanbian*, 118; and Yang, "Baan xiaozhi," 50. While the original order does not specify what types of contracts were subject to the new tax, we can assume land deeds constituted the majority.

harvest when supplies were lowest. The missionaries obliged every year, knowing that their fate was linked to Batang's and that a fed garrison meant a quiet garrison.²⁰ In fact, Liu had become so dependent on the goodwill of the missionaries that Teichman concluded in early 1919, "the soldiers are still living from day to day on what they can beg, borrow or steal from the local people. Had it not been for the exertions of Mr. Ogden, Dr. Shelton, and the other American and Canadian missionaries here, who have again and again assisted in various ways, even borrowing grain on their personal security, the soldiers would long since have looted the place and then been killed off by the local Tibetans."²¹ Liu Zanting also raised money by selling land Zhao Erfeng had claimed for the state in 1905. He leased some plots to private individuals, including to the American missionaries on Gyapangdeng, but the majority of his profits came from forcing Ba Chöde Monastery and Kelzang Namgyal, the grandson of Batang's last deputy native chieftain, to buy back what had been their property before 1905.²²

Yet Batang's troubles were not limited to exploitative Chinese officials. Lamenting the sad state of affairs in his adopted home town, Dr. Albert Shelton, a long-term American missionary in Batang, also wrote:

Not only was there war by the Chinese and Tibetans, but the Tibetans were often at war among themselves, one district fighting another. Reports were constantly coming into Batang, and merchants coming said that they had been attacked by robbers and asked protection.

In the effort to pacify the country the officials took the attitude that they should act in a conciliatory way toward the robbers. It thus came about that in negotiations with them, they would be given not only good terms but considerable presents, in the effort to get them to behave themselves. This tended to enrage the law-abiding people, who were taxed unmercifully for the support of the army. They reasoned that it would be far better

²⁰ Shelton, *Shelton of Tibet*, 129; and Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Official in Eastern Tibet*, 137-38.

²¹ Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Official in Eastern Tibet*, 200.

²² Sichuan dang'an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanli chu: juan 419: c407b [Oct. 28, 1941]; and Sichuan dang'an guan, *Jindai Kangqu dang'an ziliao xuanbian*, 363.

for themselves to turn robbers, as they would be able thus to obtain better conditions than they, as law-abiding citizens, could.²³

Rampant banditry did not escape the small foreign missionary community in Batang. American missionaries often complained of minor theft in town, and travel outside of Batang proper was done only when absolutely necessary. Despite their precautions, foreigners still became victims. Returning to Batang after a trip to Litang, French Catholic priest Jean Theodore Monbeig (彭培) and his traveling party of six others were attacked and killed by Tibetan bandits just a day outside of Litang in June 1914, less than a year after he became only the second French priest to be stationed in Batang following the killing of Catholic missionaries in 1905 in the violence surrounding the uprising against Feng Quan.²⁴ In addition, despite being greatly respected by Tibetans and Chinese and traveling with his friend Kelzang Namgyal, the grandson of the former deputy native chieftain, Dr. Shelton was ambushed by local bandits just a few hours outside Batang on his way to Markham in 1922. He survived the attack, but he was seriously wounded. Friends moved him back to Batang within hours, only to stand over him as he died that evening in the hospital he helped construct on Gyapangdeng.²⁵

²³ Shelton, *Pioneering in Tibet*, 123-24.

²⁴ The first French Catholic priest to return to Batang after the 1905 violence was Father Lü Sibō (呂思伯), whose original French name I was unable to determine. Occupying the residence of the former deputy native chieftain in February 1909, Father Lü remained in Batang for over twenty years until his public drunkenness became such a nuisance that in 1929 he was driven out of town to Yanjing, where local residents killed him three years later. With his departure, the French missionary presence in Batang ended. Like the Americans, French missionaries had little success in converting local residents. At the time Lü departed Batang, his church had no more than fifty registered members. “Monbeig, Jean Théodore: Biographical Notes.” (M.E.P. Archives, N.d.); Robert Loup, *Martyr in Tibet: the Heroic Life and Death of Fr. Maurice Tornay, St. Bernard Missionary to Tibet*, trans. Charles Davenport (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1956), 147; Yang Jianwu, “Jidujiao zai Sichuan Zangzu diqu de chuanbo,” *Zongjiaoxue yanjiu* 3 (2004): 115; Marion H. Duncan, *The Mountain of Silver Snow* (Cincinnati: Powell & White, 1929), 74; He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 10b; *Diguozhuyi zai Kangshu de huodong*, vol. 12 of *Jiu Xikang sheng Kangshu gaikuang chugao*, unpublished manuscript, Sichuan dang’an guan, 11:121-32/1 (1953), n.p.; Sichuan dang’an guan, *Jindai Kangqu dang’an ziliao xuanbian*, 41; and *BTXZ*, 449.

²⁵ Kangding minzu shizhuan bianxiezu, *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi*, 176-77; and *BTXZ*, 450. Note that Zeng Guoqing misinterprets Shelton’s death. Zeng claims Shelton was murdered in 1926 while attempting to flee Batang with valuables he had obtained from wealthy Batang residents. Zeng Guoqing, “Jindai waiguo chuanjiaoshi

Not surprisingly, Batang's weak garrison made the town itself a target for outside aggressors. Flora Shelton mentions numerous minor attacks on Batang by bandits who the soldiers were easily able to repel.²⁶ In 1918, Dr. Shelton had also played a key role in negotiating a temporary agreement to avoid hostilities between Liu Zanting and the governor of Markham, who had been threatening to attack Batang in coordination with central Tibetan advances into northern Kham following the outbreak of violence at Riwoche.²⁷ Bandits from neighboring Chatreng, who successfully disarmed a detachment of Chinese soldiers stationed in Batang's southeastern district of Zongtsa (Rdzong rtsa, 中咱), also frequently threatened Batang proper but never launched an attack.²⁸

Undisciplined soldiers, shrinking food supplies, and the constant threat of robbery had so eroded the legitimacy of Sichuan officials stationed in Batang that by 1918 local residents began to refuse to submit taxes or provide corvée labor services.²⁹ Soon after conquering Batang, Zhao Erfeng had mandated local residents annually submit 2,900 *shi* of grain, even though local officials had never been able to collect this much grain. In 1917 their annual income only reached 1,300 *shi*, and in the following year it dropped to a mere three to four hundred *shi*, with forty *shi* being submitted by the American missionary community. This paltry amount was collected only from residents in Batang proper and the two river crossings of Numshing and

Batang huodong mianmianguan,” in *Qingdai Zangshi yanjiu*, ed. Zeng Guoqing (Lhasa: Xizang renmin chubanshe, 1999), 142. Shelton had purchased a number of valuables from notable lamas and the grandson of the former deputy native chieftain, but he had transported these back to the United States several years earlier. He sold his collection of Batang artifacts to the Newark Museum, where many remain on display. See Valrae Reynolds, *From the Sacred Realm: Treasures of Tibetan Art from The Newark Museum* (New York: Prestel Publishing, 1999).

²⁶ Shelton, *Shelton of Tibet*, 203.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 129-38.

²⁸ Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Official in Eastern Tibet*, 197-99; and Batang xian diming lingdao xiaozu, *Sichuan sheng Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou Batang xian diminglu*, 55.

²⁹ Xu Wenchao, “Ruhe jie jue Baan chaifei ji chengqu zhichai wenti?” *Zhongguo bianjiang* 1, no. 5 (1941): 15.

Drubanang, all of which had a sizeable military presence and thus were able to enforce some degree of tax collection. Residents in other areas of Batang, in contrast, successfully boycotted tax collection.³⁰

Batang's post-Qing disorder also meant the abandonment of Zhao Erfeng's signature reforms in the region. For example, although most settlers had already abandoned the plots given to them as part of Zhao's land reclamation program, the murder of several Han settlers by local Tibetans from Qicungou in 1912 stifled any remaining interest among inland Chinese in migrating to Batang.³¹ By 1917, only a handful of settlers brought in under Zhao's program remained in Batang, but not for want of Chinese officials trying to evict them. When the American missionaries decided to build their compound on unreclaimed land on Gyapangdeng, they first constructed a stone aqueduct across Hutou Mountain over a mile in length to irrigate their fields. The irrigation canal allowed for over fifty *mu* of land to be cultivated on Gyapangdeng, and over twenty Han families soon settled there just outside the missionary compound walls, tapping into the canal to irrigate fields of their own.³² Liu Zanting quickly realized these plots had increased in value and, hoping to profit from the sale of this land, Liu attempted to force the settlers out. Only the intervention of American missionary James Ogden (浩格登) allowed them to stay. Ogden struck a deal whereby Liu granted him a long-term lease on the land in question and additional property on Gyapangdeng in exchange for money he had given Liu to pay local soldiers when they had threatened mutiny in the past. As a result, at least a

³⁰ Sichuan dang'an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanli chu: juan 419: c407b, dated Oct. 28, 1941; Yang, "Baan xiaozhi," 50; and Yang, *Xikang jiyao*, 139.

³¹ "Xikang kenzi wenti," *Chuanbian jikan* 2, no. 2 (1936): 161.

³² Shelton, *Pioneering in Tibet*, 95-97; Duncan, *The Mountain of Silver Snow*, 92; and BTXZ, 13.

few of Zhao's original settlers were able to remain in Batang, albeit as tenant farmers to American missionaries.³³

In addition to abandoned fields around Batang, empty school houses also stood as reminders of Zhao Erfeng's failed reforms. As discussed in Chapter Five, Wu Jiamo, the director of Zhao's Frontier Education Bureau, successfully opened nearly forty schools in Batang alone that educated as many as one thousand students before the collapse of the Qing dynasty. With Sichuan officials unable to pay soldiers garrisoned on the frontier, management and funding for public education in Batang fell to local officials who, as described above, were simply incapable of supporting any sort of public education.³⁴ As a result, Wu's Frontier Education Bureau relocated to Dartsedo, which, due to its proximity to Chengdu, was quickly becoming the new military and administrative center for the Xikang frontier.³⁵ Without provincial or local support, almost all of Batang's schools closed.³⁶ In 1912, only five schools remained open in Batang, all in areas with detachments of Chinese soldiers, including the town center, Zongtsa, Mangli, Xisonggong, and Drubanang, but it is likely that these schools soon closed as governance deteriorated throughout the region.³⁷ Some students traveled with their Chinese teachers to inland China to continue their education, and others enrolled in private academies in Batang, but the majority of students outside Batang proper simply stopped studying.³⁸

³³ James C. Ogden, "James C. Ogden of Batang, Eastern Tibet," *The Chinese Recorder* 52 (1921): 583; Marion Duncan, *The Mountain of Silver Snow*, 92-93; and Marian Duncan, *A Flame of the Fire*, 46.

³⁴ Jiang and Lai, "Batang xian jiefang qianhou wenjiao gaishu," 140.

³⁵ *BTXZ*, 374.

³⁶ Yang, "Baan xiaozhi," 55; and He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 24b.

³⁷ Liu, *Baan xian tuzhi*, 78.

³⁸ *BTXZ*, 357.

For youth living in and near the town center, another educational opportunity remained in the form of West China Elementary School (華西小學) run by the Tibet Christian Mission, a community of American missionaries that settled in Batang in 1908 under the leadership of Dr. Albert Shelton, a medical doctor from Indiana.³⁹ Shelton and the other missionary families that followed him over the next three decades, at one point reaching close to thirty, were sponsored by the Disciples of Christ, and their goal was to preach to Tibetans in Lhasa. Just like the French, the Americans were unable to travel directly to Lhasa, so they decided to establish a permanent base in Batang after opening their first mission in Dartsedo. From the time they arrived in Batang, the American missionaries intended to do more than mere preaching. In fact, their attempts to convert Batang residents to Christianity were never very successful. Their local community of believers peaked at around one hundred members, most of whom were employees of the mission, in the mid-1920s. However, the missionaries' influence on Batang's history is unmistakable. As mentioned above, Dr. Shelton played an important role in negotiating a truce between Liu Zanting and the governor of Markham in 1918. As noted above, James Ogden, who founded the mission together with Shelton, and other missionaries also became important sources of credit for Liu Zanting, who would call on them for cash and in-kind assistance to pay his soldiers.

American missionaries also impacted the people of Batang in more subtle ways. Within months of arriving in 1908, Shelton began treating the sick and wounded, both Chinese and Tibetan, and with the ubiquitous violence on the frontier, he always had patients. He and Ogden quickly leased thirty *mu* of uncultivated land from Batang Commissariat Officer Wang Huitong on Gyapangdeng just south of the town center, and Shelton made plans to open a hospital there. Multiple delays, including a year-long evacuation following the collapse of the Qing dynasty,

³⁹ Flora Shelton, *Sunshine and Shadow on the Tibetan Border* (Cincinnati: Foreign Christian Missionary Society, 1912), 19. See Wissing, *Pioneer in Tibet* for a balanced biography of Albert Shelton.

slowed his hospital project, but the missionaries eventually completed the building, which included an operating room, dispensary, and beds for up to fifty patients, in 1917. With almost constant fighting in and around Batang and poor public sanitation, the hospital averaged as many as thirty patients a day.⁴⁰ Two years later, the missionaries began taking in local orphans on their compound, which was quickly expanding in size, and they soon were caring for as many as forty children, most of whom were offspring of Tibetan women who had been abandoned by Chinese soldiers when they transferred out of Batang.⁴¹

Shelton and Ogden also opened a small school around 1909. Drawing on the prestige of Batang's headmen, they initially rented space for the school in the home of Jetsun (Lce btsun, 吉村), a former *xieao* of the Batang head native chieftain. Jetsun, like many headmen who had not been killed or driven into hiding by Ma Weiqi and Zhao Erfeng, was still deeply respected by the people of Batang. Shelton and Ogden's school began with only their own children and the children of the Chinese craftsmen that they had brought with them from inland China, but after the first year they began accepting outside students. The school's popularity grew so much that they had to move to a larger location their second year, so they rented property from Kelsang Wangdu (Skal bzang Dbang 'dus, 格桑旺堆), Shelton's Tibetan language tutor and also a former *xieao*. This school, which they named "Baan Protestant Elementary School," included two classes that met eight hours a day. Six hours of instruction were in Chinese, and two hours were in Tibetan. They also erected a small chapel beside the school.⁴²

⁴⁰ Harold A. Baker, "Tibetan Border News," *The Chinese Recorder* 49 (1918): 621 as quoted from his letter dated June 17, 1918; Yang, "Jidujiao zai Sichuan Zangzu diqu de chuanbo," 111; Zeng, "Jindai waiguo chuanjiaoshi Batang huodong mianmianguan," 144; Duncan, *The Mountain of Silver Snow*, 84; Wissing, *Pioneer in Tibet*, 147; and *BTXZ*, 450.

⁴¹ *Diguozhuyi zai Kangshu de huodong*, n.p.

⁴² *BTXZ*, 357-58, 450; and Wissing, *Pioneer in Tibet*, 100.

By 1911, enrollments had increased, so they constructed an entirely new school house on their leased land on Gyapangdeng. Renaming the school West China Elementary School, the new building's three-stories and seventeen rooms comfortably accommodated the school's six classes and 120 students. In contrast to Wu Jiamo's public schools, which only offered instruction in Chinese, West China Elementary employed wealthy, well-respected, and learned Tibetans in the Batang community to serve as instructors together with American and Chinese teachers. The school also offered instruction in both Chinese and Tibetan, as well as some English lessons. Apart from their Tibetan textbooks, which were produced locally, texts for Chinese, history, geography, mathematics, and health were all purchased in Chengdu, Chongqing, and Yunnan and brought in to the school. Students were required to study the Bible in Tibetan, as well as English. In addition, they had daily classes on practical skills like tanning, soap production, printing, masonry, horticulture, gardening, medicine, sewing, and carpet weaving, all skills the missionaries hoped would allow their students to make a living upon graduation. The school also organized sporting events, including track and field, gymnastics, baseball, soccer, and wrestling, that became so popular that the monks of Ba Chöde Monastery even fielded teams to compete.⁴³

Although the missionaries temporarily closed the school when they evacuated Batang immediately following the collapse of the Qing dynasty, they reopened it soon after they were allowed to return in 1913, this time bringing with them two additional families to help manage their growing activities. With almost all of the public schools now closed in Batang, many students transferred to West China Elementary, easily attracted by its large facilities and diverse curriculum that emphasized bilingual education. In many ways, the school represented a beacon

⁴³ *BTXZ*, 358; Yang, "Jidujiao zai Sichuan Zangzu diqu de chuanbo," 115; Zeng, "Jindai waiguo chuanjiaoshi Batang huodong mianmianguan," 143; and Li Shaoxian, "Zhao Erfeng yu jindai Chuan Zang bianjiang jiaoyu," *Deyang jiaoyu xueyuan xuebao* 17, no. 3 (2003): 14.

of hope for Batang residents in an otherwise troubling time in Batang's history. All students learned a trade that could be used to earn a living, and many students were hired by the missionaries to work on the compound. Its best students, moreover, were offered opportunities to continue their education at Mingde Christian School in Yaan (雅安民德中學) or West China University (華西大學) in Chengdu, both of which were run by American missionaries. Within just a few years, several dozen graduates of West China Elementary went on to study in Chengdu, Nanjing, and other major cities in inland China.⁴⁴ Three of West China Elementary School's graduates that went on to study in Nanjing, Kelzang Tsering, Jiang Anxi, and Liu Jiaju, were among the first Tibetans to join the Nationalist Party. They would also go on to become strong advocates for autonomous self-rule under the Nationalist Party umbrella that threatened to undermine the growing power of Sichuan warlord Liu Wenhui in Kham. I will discuss their experiences later in this chapter.

The "1920 Incident"

Although missionary education offered opportunities for some Batang young people to improve themselves, Batang's local governance remained in a miserable state. Compounding the problems created by underpaid soldiers, pervasive banditry, general hunger, and tax boycotts was the simple fact that no respectable Chinese civil official was willing to serve on the frontier under such difficult conditions. As a result, county magistrate and other civil bureaucratic

⁴⁴ Although contemporary Chinese sources without fail point out the "imperialist" intentions of American missionaries in Batang, they also praise the numerous contributions they made to local society in the form of free medical care at their hospital, free education at their school, and free child services at their orphanage. They also point out the missionaries' roles as mediators between Chinese and Tibetans and credit them for greatly expanding cultivable land in Batang by constructing the aqueduct that watered Gyapangdeng and introducing new fruits and vegetables to the local diet. Batang apples, produced by trees grown from American apple seeds, were famous throughout southwestern China through the Cultural Revolution. In Batang's sole Tibetan language history, Lobsang Gyaltzen similarly praises the American missionaries in Batang, noting that the majority of Batang's Republican era intellectuals attended their school. Lobsang Gyaltzen, *Ba' kyi lo rgyus*, 112.

positions went unfilled, leaving local military officers with the responsibility to provide basic public services, usually with poor results. As Teichman described the situation, by 1917, “the administration of the frontier districts thus lapsed into the hands of a number of ex-brigands and military adventurers, who mis-governed and oppressed the natives until rebellion was rife from end to end of the border.”⁴⁵ In fact, Batang was not alone in suffering from poor governance in the early years of the new republic. As Ronald Kapp describes Sichuan in this time period: “Military forces proliferated, and with them a pattern of decentralized military control emerged. Even when a high-ranking commander claimed control of wide territories, individual units of his armies drew their sustenance from the lands they occupied.”⁴⁶

As I’ve described above, Batang was no different. Moreover, as early as 1915, when Liu Zanting was appointed Frontier Army Detachment Commander (邊軍分統領) stationed in Batang, he also received a civil title and served as Batang County Magistrate (縣知事). The prominent role of military officers in civilian governance was, in fact, quite familiar to Batang residents. As demonstrated in Chapters Three and Four, Batang’s Commissariat Officers, all military personnel, gradually increased their civilian authority vis-à-vis Batang’s native chieftains and Ba Chöde Monastery’s senior monks in response to pressure from Chengdu and Beijing to handle missionary cases in the region. Zhao Erfeng also designated the Commissariat Officer as his representative in Batang and delegated to him the responsibility to implement his reforms, the vast majority of which were civil in nature. Two things made military governance in the early Republican period different from the Qing period. First, government resources were much more limited. Zhao Erfeng and his representatives collected local taxes to fund reform

⁴⁵ Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Official in Eastern Tibet*, 51.

⁴⁶ Kapp, *Szechwan and the Chinese Republic*, 10.

programs in Batang and Kham, but they also primarily depended on an annual budget of one million silver *liang* from the Sichuan provincial budget to fund their operations. With the fall of the Qing, that provincial support disappeared and local officials in Batang could only rely on what they could extract from the people and sporadic support from warlord patrons in Sichuan. During the first decade of the new republic, Sichuan was served by as many as a half a dozen military commanders, each with a network of subordinates in different parts of the province who were always threatening to usurp their power. More concerned about fighting against Yuan Shikai and “guest armies” led by warlords from neighboring provinces, Sichuan’s military commanders paid little heed to the Sino-Tibetan frontier in the early years of the Republic.⁴⁷

The second significant difference in Batang’s local governance between the Qing and Republican periods was the reemergence of central Tibetan influence. As described above, central Tibetan forces mounted a large offensive against Batang in 1912 that seriously disrupted the town for several months. Although it would be two more decades before central Tibetan soldiers again crossed the Dri River and attacked Batang, rumors of impending attacks from the west were ever-present in Batang during this time period. When the central Tibetan army successfully occupied Derge to Batang’s north after defeating Chinese soldiers in Riwoche and Chamdo in 1918, fears of another attack from central Tibetan forces against Batang only heightened.

Apart from some details about Detachment Commander Liu Zanting, information on most of the senior military officers stationed in early Republican Batang is lacking. However, we do know that in 1919 the frontier army’s new Detachment Commander stationed in Batang, Yang Yu (杨煜), jointly held the position of county magistrate. Having faced over a decade of

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 11-21.

instability on the frontier, increased bandit activity in and around Batang, as well as rumors of another attack from central Tibet, Yang decided to appeal to local residents for assistance in improving public safety. Specifically hoping to prevent further bandit attacks, Yang established the Batang Regimental Affairs Bureau (巴安團務局), a local militia to strengthen local defenses and promote better cooperation between the local government and the people, and invited local residents to join it.⁴⁸ People in Batang proper quickly organized 250 men, who they divided into five teams. They then expanded beyond the town center, requesting each household send one able-bodied man between 18 and 60 to join the militia. The men were organized into ten-member groups, each with a single leader. It is likely that local residents used the *baozheng* bureaucratic system, one of Zhao Erfeng's long-lasting reforms, to organize themselves, although no available source mentions this. By early 1920, Batang's militia nominally under the leadership of County Magistrate Yang Yu had organized over 1,000 men. The militia participated in some joint exercises with locally garrisoned soldiers from Sichuan and then began to patrol the region. To fund their activities, Yang authorized the militia to levy taxes on alcohol production, pack animals, and animal slaughtering. As a show of good faith, he also gave the militia seventy matchlock rifles Zhao Erfeng had confiscated from Batang's native chieftains and lent them forty semi-automatic rifles, as well as ammunition and gun powder. Soon after beginning their patrols, banditry in the region noticeably decreased, and local residents began to relax.⁴⁹

In late 1919, Yang Dexi (楊得錫), most recently stationed in Yanjing as a battalion commander (營長), was promoted to Frontier Army Detachment Commander by Sichuan

⁴⁸ *BTXZ*, 12, 339. Chinese language sources indicate Yang Yu created this organization, but it is possible that Batang residents had already organized themselves into mutual self-defense units, which Yang subsequently coopted. I will discuss this possible scenario further below.

⁴⁹ *BTXZ*, 13, 315, 339.

Frontier Provincial Garrison Commander (川邊鎮守使) Chen Xialing (陳遐齡) and returned to Batang with his battalion.⁵⁰ Yang Yu retained his position as Batang County Magistrate, but the detachment commander had always held greater power than the county magistrate. Together, Yang Dexi and Yang Yu began to grow suspicious of Batang's armed militia, suspecting that "they took the law into their own hands to resolve disputes, carried out their own punishments, and bullied the people."⁵¹ Hoping to stop the militia before it grew too large for them to control, Yang and Yang approached the militia's two leaders, Xiang Deling (向德鈴) and Atsok (A tshogs, 阿錯), requesting that in exchange for returning the rifles they had been given, all members of the militia would be granted amnesty for any abuses they had committed while serving in the militia. However, Xiang and Atsok felt the local community still supported their activities, so they initially refused the two Yangs' offer to demobilize. When the Yangs subsequently learned about a meeting of the militia's leadership, they dispatched soldiers to arrest them, but intervention by a senior Ba Chöde monk and American missionary James Ogden allowed Xiang and Atsok to escape.⁵²

Now wanted men, Xiang and Atsok organized as many as one thousand militia members from Qicungou and neighboring Linkashi and gathered at Shikhatang to the northeast of Batang

⁵⁰ Chen Xialing represented the Beiyang government as Provincial Garrison Commander, the effective successor to Zhao Erfeng's High Commissioner for Border Affairs, from 1918 until 1925, at which time he was forced out of power by Sichuan warlord Liu Xiang (劉湘), who was rapidly expanding his power throughout the province. Although Chen nominally represented the Beiyang government, he knew that he could not count on its support and therefore largely ruled the region like the many other provincial warlords in Sichuan at the time. Liu Zanting, *Bian Zang chuyan* (n.p.: n.p., 1922), 11a-11b; and Kapp, *Szechwan and the Chinese Republic*, 24-33.

⁵¹ Yang, "Baan xiaozhi," 48.

⁵² Zeng Guoqing claims that Ogden was secretly fanning the flames of this dispute for his own benefit and purchased land confiscated by the two Yangs following the suppression of the local militia at very low prices. Zeng, "Jindai waiguo chuanjiaoshi Batang huodong mianmianguan," 137. While Tibetan Christian Mission records do suggest some controversy over the additional land Ogden obtained around 1920, the dispute seems to have been not about how Ogden obtained additional land on Gyapangdeng but about the fact that he was using it for personal, and not mission, gain.

proper. Calling on the expulsion of Yang Dexi and all Han from Batang, Xiang and Atsok divided their militia into four groups and attacked Yang Dexi's garrison, which symbolically occupied the residence of the former head native chieftain, and his detachments across the town on the evening of May 3, 1920. Despite having as many as three hundred troops under his command, Yang was initially caught off guard. Many of his soldiers, moreover, remained loyal to their immediate supervisors and were unwilling to help Yang fend off the militia. Left with only a few dozen loyal troops, Yang ordered his men to start burning the residences of suspected militia members. Slowly, the tide of battle turned in Yang's favor. As militia forces became more disorganized, garrison soldiers became more willing to fight for Yang. After three days of fighting, over seventy homes in Batang had burned to the ground, as well as the local mosque constructed just a few years earlier. Yang captured Xiang Deling and Atsok during the fighting, and after executing them he displayed their heads as a warning to others who might try to defy him.⁵³

The above narrative of the "1920 Incident" is based exclusively on Chinese language sources, all of which emphasize that Yang Dexi and Yang Yu attempted to disarm the militia Yang Yu had helped create when it became clear to them that Xiang Deling and Atsok were acting beyond their mandate by taking the law into their own hands and implementing extrajudicial punishments. Given the ubiquitous banditry on the frontier at the time, it is likely that the local militia abused their power just as Sichuan soldiers extracted "taxes" at will from Batang residents. However, clues contained in writings by Tibetan Christian Mission members suggest there might have been more to this conflict than simply a local militia overstepping its authority. For example, as the power of the local militia grew, local residents, many of whom were bilingual and of mixed heritage, began to self-identify more as Tibetan and less as Chinese

⁵³ Yang, "Baan xiaozhi," 49; *BTXZ*, 13; and Wissing, *Pioneer in Tibet*, 212.

by wearing Tibetan dress and speaking Tibetan more commonly in public. As Flora Shelton noted, “As they felt their power increase, the Tibetans began to bring out their good gowns and their silver and gold ornaments, which they had kept hidden from the Chinese soldiers, who had been in the habit of taking what they pleased. The lamas dug up their silver vessels, that they had had buried somewhere on the mountains, and sold them to buy back the land that had been taken away from them by the Chinese.”⁵⁴ This observation of ethnic overtones alone suggests that the “1920 Incident” was much more than just a local militia overstepping its authority. It may very well have been one of the first examples of modern Tibetan nationalism, a historical event that, if true, would prove inconvenient for contemporary’s China’s state narrative of ethnic harmony.

Flora Shelton goes on to suggest that certain people in Batang, sensing their growing strength, decided the time was right for them to restore the native chieftain to power. Knowing that the grandson of the deputy native chieftain currently resident in Batang was addicted to opium and thus unable to lead them, local residents made plans to bring the widow of the head native chieftain, who was living with family in Litang and known to have “a fierce and wonderful reputation,”⁵⁵ back to Batang. However, after a few months, to Flora Shelton’s dismay, their plan fell through and she returned to Litang. A letter from Tibetan Christian Mission member Roderick MacLeod to Albert Shelton dated August 11, 1920, just a few months after the incident, sheds more light on this plan. MacLeod stated that the conflict between the government and local militia in fact arose out of a dispute over the former head native chieftain’s residence, which was located in the center of town and had housed the Chinese garrisons since Zhao

⁵⁴ Shelton, *Shelton of Tibet*, 175.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 188-89.

Erfeng's time.⁵⁶ While serving as Frontier Army Detachment Commander and Batang County Magistrate from 1913 to 1914 and again from 1918 to 1919, Liu Zanting had become well-known to the missionary community as a corrupt local official who profited from the sale of public lands to whoever would purchase them. Liu had been forced to flee Batang in disgrace following his controversial agreement to a peace settlement with the Kalon Lama outside Chamdo in 1918.⁵⁷ However, MacLeod wrote that before Liu left, he had sold the garrison headquarters/former head native chieftain's residence back to the widow of its original owner. When the widow came to Batang to take possession of her property, the new Frontier Army Detachment Commander, Yang Dexi, refused to acknowledge the sale. The local militia gave Yang three days to vacate the residence, but he refused and instead sent a contingent of soldiers to arrest the militia leaders.⁵⁸

The actual events of Batang's "1920 Incident" may already be lost to history, but it is very likely that it was not merely a case of Sichuan military and civil officials checking the power of a local militia that had gone too far. Rather, English language primary source documents clearly suggest that this incident arose out of a failed attempt by local residents to restore the native chieftainship in Batang and drive out the Sichuan soldiers and their leadership, who over the last decade had consistently failed to maintain even the lowest standards of governance, and in contrast only continued to exploit the people. This interpretation suggests a powerful desire for autonomy, if not independence, existed among Batang's Tibetan residents, a

⁵⁶ Sichuan dang'an guan, *Jindai Kangqu dang'an ziliao xuanbian*, 363.

⁵⁷ See Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Official in Eastern Tibet*, for a detailed account of the 1917-1918 Sino-Tibetan conflict that began over pasture rights in Riwoche and Liu Zanting's role as unwilling negotiator in it.

⁵⁸ Letter from Roderick MacLeod to Albert Shelton, dated August 11, 1920, quoted in Wissing, *Pioneer in Tibet*, 211.

theme that will become increasingly evident over the subsequent two decades as Chinese officials attempted to increase their power in the region.

English language histories ignore Batang's "1920 Incident" just as they do Batang's earlier conflict with central Tibet in 1912. Chinese language histories, moreover, consign Batang's "1920 Incident" to the dustbin of early Republican disorder that characterized much of Kham until the late 1920s, when Liu Wenhui rose to power and began to offer a degree of centralized support for the dwindling number of Sichuan soldiers in Kham.⁵⁹ On the surface, this incident closely resembled the violence of bandits and robbers that had plagued Batang and other areas of Kham since the end of the Qing dynasty. However, this incident's more significant political and nationalistic undertones differentiate it from the attacks that preceded it and much of the unrest that followed it. One often overlooked result of this incident is its longer-term impact on local society. Although Zhao Erfeng had executed Batang's two native chieftains and formally abolished their support network of *gya pon*, *gutsa*, *xieao*, *mag pon*, and other positions, many of the men who held these titles retained their authority over local villages and districts and were commonly elected and/or appointed *baozheng* representatives or village heads by Sichuan officials. Not surprisingly, many of these local leaders actively participated in the 1920 attempt to restore their native chieftain to power. When their efforts failed, most of them fled their homes in fear of retaliation by Yang Dexi.⁶⁰ In the power vacuum their flight created in villages surrounding Batang proper and more outlying areas, tax collection became even more difficult, government authority became almost non-existent, and much of the region teetered on the verge of anarchy. As one American missionary wrote on February 4, 1921, "Things have been bad in

⁵⁹ He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 21b-22a; *Lidai fandong zhengfu dui Kangshu de tongzhi (er)*, vol. 3 of *Jiu Xikang sheng Kangshu gaikuang chugao*, unpublished manuscript, Sichuan dang'an guan, 11:121-33/1 (1953), 5b; *BTXZ*; and Ganzi Zhouzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Ganzi Zhouzhi*.

⁶⁰ He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 14a-b, 23a.

Batang, but never this bad since we have been here—since the trouble last summer no one seems to discern between right and wrong.”⁶¹

Continued Disorder and Batang's Luyul District

Trinle Lhorong (Phrin las Lhor rong, 次郎洛绒) was a *gya pon* of Batang's former native chieftain for the Luyul area of southern Batang bordering on Chatreng to the east and the Dri River to the west. Following Zhao Erfeng's late Qing reforms, he was appointed *baozheng* for the region.⁶² In the wake of the Qing's collapse, Trinle Lhorong gradually expanded his power, primarily by launching raids and plundering travelers through his territory, actions that frequently led him to clash violently with Chatreng brigands to his east. His willingness to share the spoils of his exploits with people in his district increased his popularity, and as early as 1918 he began boycotting tax requisitions issued by Sichuan officials in Batang like many other in the region.⁶³ Historical sources do not indicate Trinle Lhorong's involvement in the “1920 Incident,” but we do know that he remained in his district after the local militia was crushed. It is possible that he did not overtly participate. More likely, however, as a close associate of the former native chieftain, he did participate, but during Yang's subsequent crackdown he had safely ensconced himself in the deep valleys of his Luyul powerbase, where he knew he would be safe from any reprisal.

⁶¹ Letter from Nina Hardy to Flora Shelton, dated February 4, 1921, quoted in Wissing, *Pioneer in Tibet*, 212.

⁶² The Chinese name of this region, Liuyu Shiwu Village (六玉十五村), which approximates the Tibetan pronunciation, also derives from its six villages (Liuyu) in the northern part of the district and nine more villages in its southern district, for a total of fifteen (Shiwu) villages.

⁶³ *Kangshu Zangzu shangceng renwu jieshao*, vol. 14 of *Jiu Xikang sheng Kangshu gaikuang chugao*, unpublished manuscript, Sichuan dang'an guan, 11:121-33/1 (1953), 62b-63a.

Trinle Lhorong's power only grew after Batang's failed attempt at civil-military cooperation in 1920. In late 1923 or early 1924, he was confident enough to lead a raid on an emaciated battalion of Sichuan troops stationed in Ziwu (Rdzi 'u, 茨塢). Easily disarming them, he drove the battalion commander out of the village and back to Batang.⁶⁴ Increasing his arsenal by at least one hundred rifles, Trinle Lhorong effectively removed the last remnant of Sichuan authority in Batang's southern district and henceforth ruled the region independently. However, his power was not unlimited, and he was not without at least one formidable rival.

Trinle Lhorong's rise to prominence in southern Batang was due partially to his patronage of Ratna Lama (Ratna Bla ma, 然納喇嘛), a charismatic religious figure from northern Yunnan and student of Gongkar Lama (Gong dkar Bla ma, 貢噶喇嘛), another prominent religious leader whose influence reached from Markham to Adunzi from his base in Yanjing. In the early 1920s, Ratna and Gongkar had a falling out over Ratna's increasing popularity in Yanjing. It is also likely that Gongkar saw Ratna's recent appointment as local militia leader for southern Kham, Luyul, Derong, and Yanjing (六玉仁波喇嘛南康鹽得土兵團長) by Yang Dexi as a threat to his power.⁶⁵ After their falling out, Ratna returned to his hometown in Weixi in northwestern Yunnan, where he hoped to organize people to attack Gongkar. He was not able to gather sufficient men, however, so he reached out to Trinle

⁶⁴ Ziwu is located in present-day Ciwu Village (茨巫鄉). There are discrepancies among historical sources about when Trinle Lhorong attacked the battalion soldiers stationed in Ziwu. *Kangshu Zangzu shangceng renwu jieshao* states his attack occurred in 1921. *Kangshu Zangzu shangceng renwu jieshao*, 65a-65b; and *Batang xian diming lingdao xiaozu, Sichuan sheng Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou Batang xian diminglu*, 61. In contrast, American missionary correspondence suggests Trinle Lhorong attacked Chinese forces as early as 1922. Duncan, *The Mountain of Silver Snow*, 130. Yang Lei, in the earliest published source, claims Trinle Lhorong drove out the battalion commander in late 1923. Yang, "Baan xiaozhi," 49. Finally, archival material from 1941 and *BTXZ* indicate this attack occurred in 1924. *Sichuan dang'an guan: Min 223: Tianfu guanli chu: juan 39, c38*, dated Dec. 27, 1941; and *BTXZ*, 13-14, 475. Given the early dates of the archival documents and Yang Lei's article, it is likely Trinle Lhorong's attack occurred in late 1923/early 1924.

⁶⁵ Yang, "Baan xiaozhi," 49.

Lhorong and other local headmen in southern Batang, who arranged for him to relocate to the small Zize Monastery (孜則寺) in Luyul's Renbo Village (仁波村), where local people warmly welcomed him as a guest of Trinle Lhorong.⁶⁶ However, Ratna's ambitions soon got the better of him, and his machinations to establish himself as the abbot of Zize Monastery irritated a number of the local monks. They fled to neighboring Chatreng, where they incited the local people to attack Ratna in their home monastery.

Perhaps to prepare for renewed violence with Chatreng marauders, Ratna and Trinle Lhorong raided the Chinese battalion at Ziwu and increased their armaments. Given the ease of their success in Ziwu, they decided to continue toward Batang proper. Proceeding north from the western side of the Dri River, their militia forces made it as far as Drubanang, the larger and southernmost of the two river crossings in Batang. They successfully crossed the river, torching the ferry boats behind them, but there they met a combined force of Chinese soldiers and local militia from Qicungou that halted their advance. Although Drubanang hosted a small company of Chinese soldiers from the Batang garrison, they were not near enough to stop Ratna and Trinle Lhorong's militia, which numbered as many as one thousand. Well aware of long-standing animosity between the people of Luyul in Batang's south and the people of Qicungou in the northeast, Chinese officials had skillfully manipulated local hostility for their own ends and

⁶⁶ Bamei Cideng, Xirao Ere, and Lai Zuozhong, "Jiefang qian Batang dongnanqu yuanjia jiedou yu siyuan de guanxi," in *Sichuan sheng Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou wenshi ziliao*, vol. 1, ed. Zhengxie Sichuan sheng Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou weiyuanhui (N.p.: Ganzi baoshe yinshuachang, 1982), 89-91. Zize Monastery is likely known today as Ringbo Monastery (Ring 'bo dgon, 仁波寺). Note also that Renbo Village in Chinese in fact refers to three closely located villages: Ringme (Ring smad, 仁免), Bardronggang (Bar grong sgang, 八中貢), and Ringdo (Ring stod, 仁德). Batang xian diming lingdao xiaozu, *Sichuan sheng Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou Batang xian diminglu*, 56, 122.

recruited several hundred men from Qicungou to augment their Drubanang garrison. Halting the advance of Ratna and Trinle Lhorong, their militias quickly dispersed and returned to Luyul.⁶⁷

Trinle Lhorong continued to patronize Ratna and resist attempts by Chinese officials in Batang to levy taxes on Luyul well into the 1930s. He also continued to feud with Chatreng residents, with each side launching periodic raids on the other. The people of Chatreng became so fed up with Trinle Lhorong's aggression that they even approached Batang officials about borrowing rifles and cannons to eradicate his forces once and for all, but local officials did not assist them, preferring instead to allow the people of Luyul and Chatreng, both of which were far from major transit routes, to fight among themselves.⁶⁸ Around 1930, Chatreng marauders, incited by monks from Zize Monastery opposed to Ratna, attacked the monastery and burned it to the ground. Ratna escaped harm, and when he returned to Renbo Village he started rebuilding the monastery, hoping to reconcile with the rebellious monks hiding out in Chatreng. When some of those monks returned to Renbo, Ratna had them killed, thereby fanning the flames of the enmity between Luyul and Chatreng. Eventually, Zize monks would kill Ratna, further extending the violence in the region.

The unrest in Luyul is just one of many cases in the second decade of Republican era Batang that demonstrates the weak ability of Chinese officials to provide even a semblance of governance in areas outside the town center following the collapse of the cooperative effort between officials and local leaders in 1920. One major reason for Batang's declining governance in the 1920s was the absence of a strong military force. After Liu Zanting's departure from Batang in 1919, Sichuan officials were more reluctant to station senior officers deep into Kham.

⁶⁷ Yang, "Baan xiaozhi," 49; Duncan, *Customs and Superstitions of Tibetans*, 22; Duncan, *The Mountain of Silver Snow*, 130.

⁶⁸ Gertrude Morris, *The Dogs May Bark But the Caravan Moves On*, ed. Helen M. Morse (Joplin: College Press Publishing Company, 1998), 64.

Instead, they focused more military attention closer to the Sichuan border in Dartsedo. Reminding his colleagues of Batang's importance, Liu Zanting argued in 1922 that a senior officer be stationed in Batang, writing, "Batang has no soldiers to protect it.... Those who advocate a military commander be stationed in Yazhou are supporting Sichuan's power. Those who refuse to station him in Batang are enemies of the state.... If a military commander is stationed in Batang, by assuming personal command he can solidify our military strength, which will be more than sufficient to calm the banditry on the frontier. If the Sichuan frontier is calm, then the Tibetan frontier can remain for some time. When we unify the country, then we can make plans to develop it."⁶⁹ Although Batang would no longer host a senior Chinese military commander that could suppress banditry in the region, it was not without hope. As the young people educated in schools established by Zhao Erfeng and the missionaries reached maturity, several of them proved to be leaders capable of organizing large numbers of people to maintain order and improve local society.

The Nationalist Party in Batang (1927-1932)—Provincial Aspirations and the Baan Incident

Despite the failure of local residents to reinstall their native chieftain in 1920 and widespread instability following the incident as exemplified by conflicts in the Luyul district, Batang people continued to organize themselves in the hopes of fostering more effective governance and gaining greater autonomy from Chinese rule. Scholars generally cite Kelzang Tsering's 1932 abortive call for "Khampa self-rule" (康人治康) in Batang as a sudden and ill-

⁶⁹ Liu, *Bian Zang chuyan*, 11a-11b.

prepared attempt to assert Khampa autonomy, if not independence.⁷⁰ Without knowledge of local Batang politics, this is a natural conclusion. However, the “1932 Baan Incident” as led by Kelzang Tsering has a much richer background. I will demonstrate in this section that Kelzang Tsering and his circle of friends were actively involved in self-rule movements years before he returned to Batang as Xikang Provincial Special Commissioner for Party Affairs (西康省黨務特派員) in 1932. Moreover, I will show that their activities were heavily influenced, if not outright directed, by Nationalist Party ideology. In so doing, I will put to rest any doubt that Kelzang Tsering favored an independent Kham. Indeed, autonomous self-rule was his objective.

The Nationalist Party and Civil-Military Cooperation Redux

Kelzang Tsering’s personal history is critical to understanding the changes taking place in Batang society, and in many ways he embodies the ambition, sometimes naïve, of a new class emerging among Batang people. Kelzang Tsering was born in 1904 in Batang to Wang Xinghai (王興海), a former Han *baozheng* representative whose family emigrated to Batang from Yunnan several generations earlier, and a Tibetan mother, Drolma Lhamo (Sgrol ma Lha mo, 竹瑪娜姆). In addition to his Tibetan name, commonly transliterated as Gesang Zeren, he was also known by his Chinese names, Wang Tianhua and Wang Tianjie.⁷¹ Kelzang Tsering was among the first students to enroll in Batang’s public elementary school established by Wu Jiamo’s

⁷⁰ See, for example, Peng Wenbin, “Frontier Process, Provincial Politics and Movements for Khampa Autonomy during the Republican Period,” 64; Melvyn C. Goldstein, Dawei Sherap, and William R. Siebenschuh, *A Tibetan Revolutionary: The Political Life and Times of Bapa Phiüntso Wangye*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 10-14; and Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*, 149-50.

⁷¹ Xierao Yixi, “Jindai Kangqu zhuming zhengzhi huodong jia—Gesang Zeren,” *Kangding minzu shifan gaodeng zhuanke xuexiao xuebao* 14, no. 6 (2005): 8. Note that Alastair Lamb’s claim that Kelzang Tsering was the son of a Batang native chieftain is without basis. It is likely that Lamb confused the grandson of Batang’s deposed deputy native chieftain, Kelzang Namgyal, with Kelzang Tsering since they share the same first name. Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, 198, 215.

Frontier Education Bureau in the late Qing.⁷² When that school closed, he transferred to the Tibetan Christian Mission's West China Elementary School. The missionary education he received gave him sufficient Chinese skills to enter a middle school in Yunnan. After completing middle school, he enrolled in the Xikang Military Officer's Training Institute (西康軍官專習所), a school to train future military officers established by Liu Chengxun (劉成勳) in Yaan during his brief period of control over western Sichuan as Xikang Military Colony Commissioner (西康屯墾使), in 1924. However, as Liu Chengxun's power waned with the increasing power of rival warlord Liu Wenhui, the institute Kelzang Tsering was attending soon closed. Despite his short time at this school, it left a deep impression on him. In his memoirs, he proudly proclaims he joined the Nationalist Party (國民黨) as its first Tibetan member, an assertion no one disputes, while at this school.⁷³

Kelzang Tsering would eventually make it to Nanjing in late 1927, where he continued to absorb Nationalist ideological tenets such as Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People (三民主義) and Five Races in Harmony (五族共和) and strengthen his commitment to the Chinese Republic while agitating for Khampa autonomous self-rule. However, Kelzang Tsering's years between 1924 and 1927 are unclear. One scholar claims that he became a military officer and

⁷² Feng Youzhi claims that Kelzang Tsering studied at the Batang Police Academy, but that is highly unlikely given that the police academy did not open its doors until 1910, when Kelzang Tsering was only six years old. Feng, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 115.

⁷³ Gesang Zeren, *Bianren chuyan*, 3; Feng, *Xikang sheng shiyi shi*, 64; Chen Qiangli, "Gesang Zeren, Nuona, Liu Jiaju," in *Sichuan wenshi ziliao xuanji*, vol. 27, ed. Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Sichuan sheng weiyuanhui wenshi ziliao yanjiu weiyuanhui (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1982), 117-18; Deng Junkang and Li Kunbi, "Renwu chunqiu—Jiangyang Bomu, Xiake Daodeng, Liu Jiaju, Gesang Zeren zhuanlüe," in *Ganzi wenshi ziliao*, vol. 15, ed. Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou weiyuanhui (N.p.: Kangding xian yinshuachang, 1997), 139; Marion H. Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak: Adventurous Trails In and Out of Tibet* (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 1952), 141; and *BTXZ*, 473.

worked his way to Nanjing with the Panchen Lama's entourage.⁷⁴ Another suggests he worked as an interpreter for Gongkar Tashi (Gong dkar Bkra shis, 貢敦扎西), a representative of the Panchen Lama, and accompanied him to Nanjing.⁷⁵ Neither account misrepresents Kelzang Tsering's experiences in Nanjing in the late 1920s as a policy maker for the central government or in Batang in the early 1930s as an advocate for local autonomous self-rule, but both overlook important formative experiences for Kelzang Tsering that occurred in Batang after he joined the Nationalist Party and before he arrived in Nanjing. To better understand the significance of Kelzang Tsering's better-known exploits in Nanjing, it is necessary first to return to Batang, where Kelzang Tsering, now a Nationalist Party member, and his friends were already politically active.

Although the threats of bandit attacks and robberies were ever present in Batang in the 1920s, the town center remained relatively free from violence. As American missionary R.A. Peterson wrote late in the decade, "The power of the Chinese official in Batang is limited to its walls and a radius of less than a mile outside."⁷⁶ This stability, albeit very localized, was due largely to the appointment of Sichuan warlord Liu Chengxun as Xikang Military Colony Commissioner with joint responsibilities for civil affairs in 1925. Having been driven out of the Sichuan basin by rival militarists, Liu and his armies faced less organized resistance on the comparatively remote Kham frontier. These circumstances allowed him to provide additional support for soldiers garrisoned in the region, which in turn strengthened local governance.

⁷⁴ Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*, 147. The Panchen Lama had fled central Tibet in late 1923 following a protracted dispute with the Dalai Lama over government centralization, modernization, and taxation, and he remained in exile in China. See Goldstein for a discussion of the Dalai-Panchen dispute. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, 112-120.

⁷⁵ Peng, "Frontier Process, Provincial Politics and Movements for Khampa Autonomy during the Republican Period," 64.

⁷⁶ R.A. Peterson, "Life on China's Border," *The Chinese Recorder* 59 (1928): 241.

Writing in the nationally circulated *New Asia* (新亞細亞) journal a few years later, Batang native Liu Jiaju reported that until Liu Chengxun arrived on the border, Han officials in the region had extremely little influence. However, according to Liu Jiaju, Liu Chengxun took the matter of frontier governance seriously and believed “alleviating the suffering of the people” was his personal responsibility.⁷⁷

To foster better governance on the frontier Liu Chengxun ordered all county magistrates in Kham to establish a county office for the Nationalist Party in 1927. Liu’s motivations for promoting Nationalist ideology on the frontier might have been simply to curry favor with Jiang Jieshi (蔣介石), whose Northern Expedition to unify the country was on the verge of success, and thereby increase his power vis-à-vis other warlords in Sichuan. Whether or not Liu expected results is unclear, but his order was taken very seriously in Batang. Upon receiving Liu’s directive, County Magistrate Lei Zhenhua (雷振華) organized public meetings where he and others lectured about the Nationalist revolution, the Three Principles of the People, and the life and philosophy of China’s founding father, Sun Yat-sen. In just over a month, Lei had registered three hundred people to join the Nationalist Party, including monks, lay people, merchants, and students, and formally opened the Batang County Nationalist Party Office. Within six months, Lei and his supporters claimed to have a list of over one thousand names that they planned to send to the regional Party office in Chongqing.⁷⁸

How could a county magistrate with such limited power gain the support of so many people for such an abstract and unfamiliar cause in such a short amount of time? The answer lies with Kelzang Tsering and other like-minded youth in Batang. In the 1920s, likely in response to

⁷⁷ Liu Jiaju, “Kang Zang zhi guoqu ji jinhou zhi jianshe,” *Xin Yaxiya* 3, no. 5 (1932): 109.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

the harsh living conditions that defined the post-Qing era, mutual aid “friendship associations” (朋友會) based on common backgrounds and interests, began to appear with increasing frequency across the Han and Tibetan communities in Batang. Kelzang Tsering, Liu Jiaju, and Jiang Anxi, each of whom would be intimately involved in larger Khampa autonomy movements over the next decade, were all members of the Batang Youth Association (巴塘青年會), which consisted primarily of mixed race male youth from non-aristocratic Tibetan backgrounds. There were also friendship associations for male youth with more wealthy family backgrounds, Han women, and Tibetan women. Some groups were ethnically exclusive, but given Batang’s heterogeneous ethnic makeup, not all groups based membership on ethnicity.⁷⁹ Batang’s Tri-Provincial Native Place Association, which Batang’s first Han settlers had established in 1727, reflected this trend. In 1924, this association opened its doors to Tibetan members and changed its name to the Xikang Batang Nationalist Advancement Association (西康巴安國民協進會). As more Tibetans joined the association, its membership expanded dramatically.⁸⁰

Writing in 1932 about his earlier experiences in Batang, Liu Jiaju states that on February 2, 1927, Batang youth established the Xikang Nationalist Advancement Association (西康國民協進會, hereafter XNAA). Whether this organization existed independently of the Tri-Provincial Native Place Association, which adopted almost the exact same name and, if we are to believe the contemporary account of its history, was formed three years earlier, is impossible to

⁷⁹ Ganba, “Batang ‘Bashi jia Hanshang’ de youlai he yanbian,” in *Sichuan wenshi ziliao jicui*, vol. 5, ed. Sichuan sheng zhengxie wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1996), 371-72; Li Mingzhong, “Liu Jiaju zhuan,” in *Ganzi zhou wenshi ziliao*, vol. 11, ed. Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou weiyuanhui (N.p.: Ganzi baoshe yinshuachang, 1990), 73; and *BTXZ*, 486.

⁸⁰ *BTXZ*, 217, 433.

determine with extant records.⁸¹ What is significant here is the congruence in timing with Liu Chengxun's call to establish Nationalist Party offices at the county level and Lei's unexpected success in recruiting members so quickly. This new organization appears to have worked in concert with Lei to promote Nationalist ideology in Batang, and it is likely that only through the XNAA was Lei able to attract so many members so quickly.

Yang Chaozong (楊朝宗), a Batang native and West China Elementary classmate of Kelzang Tsering, was elected chairperson of the XNAA, and Liu Jiaju was elected deputy chairperson after the organization was established. Lei Zhenhua's close relationship with Yang further confirms the links between his efforts to recruit members of the Nationalist Party and the activities of the XNAA. Soon after Lei Zhenhua became county magistrate in 1924, he wanted to reopen the Batang tannery, which sat abandoned on the banks of the river, in hopes of creating employment for over forty trained tanners still living in Batang. However, because he had no funds, he could only recommend that interested parties pool their resources in a cooperative arrangement. Yang Chaozong, who was also a company commander (連長) in the local regiment, agreed to organize the cooperative, and he established the Batang Tanner's Association (巴安皮匠會) with over fifty leather workers soon thereafter with Lei's support. However, due to continued unrest, both the supply of raw materials and the demand for finished products was unreliable, and the organization dissolved after only a few years.⁸²

⁸¹ Li Mingzhong asserts that the Tri-Provincial Native Place Association changed its name to the "Batang Chinese Federation" (巴安華族聯合會) and elected Liu Jiaju as its deputy chairperson in 1924. I have been unable to determine which name best represents actual events, but Liu Jiaju's leadership role in the Tri-Provincial Native Place Association and the XNAA alone exemplifies the close relationship between the two organizations. Li, "Liu Jiaju zhuan," 73.

⁸² Yang, "Baan xiaozhi," 27-63; He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 30b; and *BTXZ*, 13, 159.

Under the leadership of Yang Chaozong and Liu Jiaju, the XNAA ostensibly had three purposes as outlined in its charter. Its first purpose was to encourage good relations between Chinese and Tibetans and promote unity in the spirit of Sun Yat-sen's Five Races in Harmony philosophy. The Nationalist ideology informing this tenet is unmistakable. Second, the association was to promote traditional Khampa and Tibetan cultures while accepting new ideas. Third, they were to help maintain local peace and stability and facilitate commerce.⁸³ Beyond the goals of its charter, Liu Jiaju explained that the young people of Batang had a number of other reasons for establishing the XNAA. Foremost, it was necessary to correct the years of declining discipline among Sichuan soldiers and the abuses local people had suffered at their hands. Second, they hoped to counter the increasingly aggressive interference of the British in central Tibet. Finally, incessant banditry and local hegemony that refused to submit taxes and/or colluded with central Tibet or other groups to attack and pillage needed to be stopped. With these objectives in mind, forward-thinking people in Batang, in a move reminiscent of the 1920 cooperative venture between Batang officials and local leaders, organized themselves to assist the soldiers stationed in Batang. Knowing that the frontier army simply had too few soldiers to govern the region effectively, the XNAA advocated for their own participation in local governance under the premise that "If the army survives, we survive. If the army dies, we die." In so doing, the XNAA hoped to curb the abuses of the frontier army and assist it in resisting foreign aggression. These were serious concerns for Batang residents. They vividly remembered being encircled by central Tibetan troops in 1912, remained in fear of bandit attacks when traveling outside the town, and continued to accept refugees fleeing from conflicts between central Tibetan and Chinese soldiers in Chamdo and northern Kham.

⁸³ "Xikang qingnian zuzhi guomin xiejinhui," *Zangmin shenglei yuekan* 1 (1928): 53-54.

While Liu Jiaju emphasized the cooperative nature of the association and the frontier army to defend the country, he focused even more on the banditry that plagued the lives of everyday people. Specifically chastising Trinle Lhorong, the marauders of Chatreng and Qicungou, and unnamed central Tibetan forces who had compelled the Khampas to expel the Han (most likely a reference to the 1920 Incident), Liu glowingly praised the contributions of the XNAA to maintaining local peace. He described, for example, how association members borrowed weapons and ammunition from the local garrison and successfully recovered a shipment of military grain from bandits who had hijacked it en route to Batang from Litang in April 1927, and then a few months later fought side-by-side with 24th Army soldiers against an attack on Batang led by Chatreng and Qicungou marauders.⁸⁴

The parallels between the XNAA's rise to prominence in local governance and the 1920 cooperative arrangement discussed earlier are striking, and the similarities persist through the XNAA's rapid demise. Ma Chenglong (馬成龍), as the leader of the Sichuan Frontier 1st Mixed Brigade (川邊第一混成旅) and Commander of the Batang, Yanjing, Chatreng, and Derong Army (巴監鄉得游擊司令), was the highest military officer in southern Kham.⁸⁵ While Liu Chengxun may have supported the Nationalist Party, Ma was suspicious of the XNAA and, in the words of one American missionary, "the rabid Kuomintang [Nationalist] 'criticizers,'" who were marching in the streets, singing Nationalist and anti-imperialist songs, and calling for the abolishment of unequal treaties.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Liu Jiaju, "Kang Zang zhi guoqu ji jinhou zhi jianshe," 112-13; and *BTXZ*, 330.

⁸⁵ Ma Chenglong arrived in Kham as a low-level officer in Zhao Erfeng's army, and by the late 1920s he had become extremely experienced in dealing with frontier politics and warfare. Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak*, 156.

⁸⁶ Duncan, *A Flame of the Fire*, 180; He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 12a; and Kangding minzu shizhuan bianxiezu, *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi*, 7, 177.

Ma's concerns about the XNAA were closely related to the organization's attitude toward the foreign missionaries. Many people had already accepted the contributions of the missionaries to improving life in Batang at the time. For example, Liu Manqing, an intimate associate of Kelzang Tsering, wrote in 1930, "Foreigners who come to Kham do not perform a small amount of work. At present, the majority of all the intellectuals in Xikang came out of missionary schools because apart from these there were no relatively good schools for them to enter. As a result, we cannot reject offhand the cultural contributions of foreigners."⁸⁷ However, certain events suggest a shifting attitude among Batang residents toward the missionaries. For example, Batang County Magistrate Lei Zhenhua opened a publically-funded elementary school in August 1927 that quickly rivaled the West China School in enrollment numbers, growing so fast that administrators had to refurbish the old schoolrooms in the Guandi Temple to accommodate the students after the second year.⁸⁸ The principal of Batang's first post-Qing public school was none other than Liu Jiaju, who had once worked as the principal of the West China School. In addition, Lei began monitoring the West China School's curriculum, and in 1928 he forced the school to drop Bible study as part of its core curriculum and accept centrally prepared achievement tests

⁸⁷ Liu Manqing, *Kang Zang zhaozheng* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1933), 44. The nature of the relationship between Kelzang Tsering and Liu Manqing is unclear. Some sources claim they were married, while other sources assert Kelzang Tsering married Liu Manqing's younger sister, Liu Manli (劉曼麗). Fabienne Jagou offers the most plausible explanation. Her informants say that Kelzang Tsering and Liu Manqing were married, but when the relationship produced no children, they separated, and he then married Liu Manli, who bore two children. Fabienne Jagou, "Liu Manqing: A Sino-Tibetan Adventurer and the Origin of a New Sino-Tibetan Dialogue in the 1930s," *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* 17 (October 2009): 10. See also the following sources that give conflicting accounts of this relationship: *Kangshu Zangzu shangceng renwu jieshao*, 101a; He Juefei, *Xikang jishi shiben shizhu* (Lhasa: Xizang renmin chubanshe, 1988), 124; Deng and Li, "Renwu chungiu," 143; and Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, 220.

⁸⁸ The missionaries added middle school classes to their curriculum around 1918 and changed the name of their school from West China Elementary to West China School (華西學校). *BTXZ*, 358.

for all its students. By the end of 1929, lack of funds and declining enrollments forced the missionaries to close the West China School.⁸⁹

Considered alone, the creation of a public school to rival the missionaries' West China School is insufficient to conclude anti-foreignism was one of the driving forces of the XNAA in Batang. However, their activism over missionary land use on Gyapangdeng indicates that distrust of foreigners was high among XNAA members. Since Albert Shelton and James Ogden first started building the West China Elementary schoolhouse on Gyapangdeng in 1913, their compound had expanded greatly. As Liu Manqing described it:

In the late Qing the American doctor Shelton was in Batang. He leased a large plot of land from Batang County for several hundred yuan. He guided the waters from the upper reaches of the Little Ba River and irrigated it. The soil was barren but became rich and it could grow grains. Later he constructed a perimeter wall to separate himself from the outside. Inside there were two three-story foreign buildings: a hospital, and the West China School. There were also several two-story foreign buildings, and over ten Khampa style buildings, where the westerners and the members of the congregation lived together. Outside there was a flower garden, grassy areas, vegetable patches, an exercise field, groves of trees, pools, a corral, and other areas. It was not different from an embryonic town. The lives of the foreigners were extremely luxurious.⁹⁰

Likely inspired by rhetoric against foreign concessions and extra-territoriality growing in inland China, members of the XNAA claimed in the spring of 1928 that the American missionaries had occupied fifty *mu* of public land outside the boundaries of the territory outlined in their original lease agreement, and they therefore began to call for the foreigners to leave Batang. What happened next is difficult to determine. Missionary sources suggest that James Ogden, at that time the head of the mission, knew the XNAA accusation not to be untrue, so in good faith he invited local officials and members of the XNAA to survey their land to determine the actual

⁸⁹ Liu, "Xikang jiaoyu jinbu qingxing zhiyu jianglai zhi danghua," *Meng Zang zhoubao* 15 (1930): 2; "Baan jiaoyu zhi shuguang," *Meng Zang zhoubao* 77 (1931): 21; He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 24b-25b; Jiang and Lai, "Batang xian jiefang qianhou wenjiao gaishu," 142; Sichuan dang'an guan, *Jindai Kangqu dang'an ziliao xuanbian*, 402; *BTXZ*, 355, 374-76; and Duncan, *A Flame of the Fire*, 186-88.

⁹⁰ Liu, *Kang Zang zhaozheng*, 43.

boundaries. Everyone jointly agreed that the missionaries' compound in fact had extended twenty *mu* beyond the original lease. Accepting that their original claim was inaccurate, the XNAA demanded county officials increase the missionaries' rent, and Ogden accepted their proposal. Missionary sources make no further mention of this issue.⁹¹

Recounting events a few years later, Liu Jiaju, still deputy chairperson of the XNAA, asserted that his association was acting only in the best interests of the people of Batang to ensure the foreigners were abiding by their lease terms. When they confronted Ogden, he did agree to a joint survey, but Liu Jiaju then claimed Ogden secretly bribed Ma Chenglong to take action against the XNAA, either by disbanding the organization or suppressing their activities. Lei Zhenhua, the chief official sponsor of the XNAA, had already transferred out of Batang, which gave Ma more flexibility to act. Using their harassment of the American missionaries as an excuse, Ma detained the Party chairperson in April 1928, ordered the new county magistrate to disband the organization, and destroyed the local office.⁹² While Liu Jiaju was clearly influenced by anti-imperialist ideology that was common in Nanjing and much of China at the time, it is doubtful that he fabricated Ogden's bribery because he had benefited from the missionaries' philanthropy. In 1918, Liu had enrolled in the missionaries' West China School as one of its first middle school students. A year later, while still a student, he began teaching written Chinese and art to elementary school students, and after graduating in 1920, he became the school's first non-American principal, a job he held for three years.⁹³ He was also a Chinese

⁹¹ Duncan, *A Flame of the Fire*, 180.

⁹² Liu, "Kang Zang zhi guoqu ji jinhou zhi jianshe," 109; Kangding minzu shizhuan bianxiezu, *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi*, 177; and Zeng, "Jindai waiguo chuanjiaoshi Batang huodong mianmianguan," 137.

⁹³ Li, "Liu Jiaju zhuan," 73; and *BTXZ*, 486.

and Tibetan language tutor for Marion Duncan, a long-term American missionary in Batang.⁹⁴ Given Liu Jiaju's close relationship with the American missionary community, it is likely that his accusation of Ogden's collusion with Ma Chenglong to suppress the activities of the Xikang Nationalist Advancement Association is accurate.

Two additional points regarding the rise and fall of Batang's second autonomous movement merit brief discussion. First, while it is likely at least one of the root causes of Yang Dexi's decision to sever the civil-military cooperative effort in 1920 was the attempt to restore the widow of Batang's last native chieftain to power, the XNAA clearly acted within the confines of Nationalist Party ideology. Perhaps because no other relative of Batang's two former native chieftains came forward, or perhaps because young people educated in the schools of Zhao Erfeng and the American missionaries simply accepted the sovereignty of the Chinese Republic in Batang, hints of Tibetan nationalist independence that characterized the 1920 Incident were absent from the XNAA's activities in Batang.

Second, I began this section by introducing Kelzang Tsering as the lead proponent of Nationalist ideology in Batang, yet he rarely appears in my subsequent discussion of the emergence of Nationalist Party ideology in Batang and its suppression by Ma Chenglong. The reason for Kelzang Tsering's absence from this narrative is because at the time the news of the Xikang Nationalist Advancement Association's activities was published in 1932, primarily by Kelzang Tsering's close friend Liu Jiaju, Kelzang Tsering was engaged in yet another movement for autonomous self-rule in Batang that, on the one hand, put him at odds with the Nationalist Party and, on the other, attracted interference from central Tibetan forces and almost careened out of control. The fate of Kelzang Tsering's movement was still unknown when Liu Jiaju's article on the XNAA went to press. To avoid tainting the XNAA's suppression with Kelzang

⁹⁴ Duncan, *Customs and Superstitions of Tibetans*, 12.

Tsering's participation if he were to fail in his own self-rule movement currently underway in Batang, it is likely that Liu Jiaju omitted mentioning Kelzang Tsering's involvement in earlier Nationalist Party activities all together.⁹⁵

Contrary to previous accounts of Kelzang Tsering's 1932 movement in Batang, this was not his first attempt to establish Khampa autonomy. He was certainly an influential member of the XNAA, which he and his colleagues had formed to curb abuses at the hands of Chinese soldiers and assist them in governing the region. No doubt the dissolution of the XNAA by Ma Chenglong, the leader of the very organization they were trying to aid, only increased their suspicion of, and disillusionment with, Chinese soldiers garrisoned in Batang and their ultimate leader, Liu Wenhui. I will now return to my discussion of Kelzang Tsering.

The Baan Incident (1932)

As mentioned above, Kelzang Tsering's experiences in the years before he arrived in Nanjing are muddled. Sources generally agree that before he returned to Batang and founded the Xikang Nationalist Advancement Association, Kelzang Tsering volunteered as a translator for Gongkar Tashi, the Panchen Lama's representative in Kham. While we do not know the specific purpose of Gongkar Tashi's travels through northern Kham, he was probably there to explore with Khampa leaders the possibility of the Panchen Lama visiting, and perhaps sojourning for an extended period, in Kham as a stop-gap solution to his struggle with the Dalai Lama. For Kelzang Tsering, traveling through northern Kham was an opportunity to meet with some of the most powerful individuals and families in the region. Gongkar Tashi was impressed with

⁹⁵ Only a few secondary Chinese language sources suggest Kelzang Tsering participated in the XNAA, but none of them offer a clear explanation or provide a historical source to support their claim. See Kangding minzu shizhuan bianxiezu, *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi*, 358; Li, "Liu Jiaju zhuan," 73; Deng and Li, "Renwu chunqiu," 141; *BTXZ*, 486; and Sichuan sheng Batang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Batang xianzhi (xubian)*, 400.

Kelzang Tsering's fluency in Tibetan and Chinese, and after completing his tour, he recommended Kelzang Tsering to Liu Wenhui's 24th Army.

Following the collapse of the Qing dynasty, Liu Wenhui gradually expanded his military strength and, by 1927, he had become one of the most powerful warlords in Sichuan, individually commanding a garrison area that included much of the province's southwestern territory. He shared control of governance in the provincial capital of Chengdu with rival and sometimes partner warlords Deng Xihou (鄧錫侯) and Liu Xiang.⁹⁶ Given the proximity of Liu Wenhui's garrison area to Kham, he began to extend his military influence and control westward, and in 1928 the new Nationalist government in Nanjing appointed him Commander-in-Chief of the Sichuan-Kham Border Defense Army (川康邊防總指揮) and head of the Provisional Political Affairs Committee of the Xikang Special Region (西康特區臨時政務委員會) in recognition of his growing power in the region.⁹⁷ Despite appointing Liu Wenhui to these new positions, Nationalist influence in Sichuan remained very weak. As Kapp notes, "In Szechwan [Sichuan]...the Nationalist victory opened a period of more complete provincial independence and isolation from outside affairs than Szechwan had previously known. Provincial independence...rested on the National Government's inability to intrude into Szechwan's internal affairs, and on the determination of Szechwanese provincial militarists to pursue their fortunes within their own province."⁹⁸ Liu Wenhui, Liu Xiang, and other Sichuan warlords remained wary of central government control in their province and continued to act

⁹⁶ Kapp, *Szechwan and the Chinese Republic*, 34-61.

⁹⁷ He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 21b-22a. This committee oversaw the newly established Xikang Special Administrative Region (西康特別政務區域), which replaced the Sichuan Border Special Region (川邊特別區域) created by Yuan Shikai in June 1913. *Lidai fandong zhengfu dui Kangshu de tongzhi (er)*, vol. 3 of *Jiu Xikang sheng Kangshu gaikuang chugao*, unpublished manuscript, Sichuan dang'an guan, 11:121-33/1 (1953), 5b; *BTXZ*; and Ganzi Zhouzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Ganzi Zhouzhi*.

⁹⁸ Kapp, *Szechwan and the Chinese Republic*, 63.

independently of the new government until 1937, when Jiang Jieshi relocated the government's headquarters from Nanjing to Chongqing in the face of approaching Japanese armies.

Back in Dartsedo, Kelzang Tsering's introduction to Liu Wenhui's 24th Army did not produce substantial opportunities for him. This is not surprising. A senior representative of the Panchen Lama had introduced Kelzang Tsering to the 24th Army officers. They did not personally know him, but they did know that Jiang Jieshi's Nationalist government was currying favor with the Panchen Lama's office.⁹⁹ Given that Liu Wenhui had not yet accepted the supremacy of Jiang's new government over all of China, they likely viewed Kelzang Tsering with suspicion and hesitated to embrace his skills. As a result, they simply offered him a position as a consultant in their Border Affairs Office (第二十四軍邊務處參議).¹⁰⁰ With just a nominal position and little real responsibility, Kelzang Tsering was free to return to Batang and begin his political activism with the Xikang Nationalist Advancement Association discussed above.

Sometime after Ma Chenglong suppressed the XNAA, Kelzang Tsering made his way to Nanjing, arriving in 1927. While his Batang activism on behalf of the Nationalist Party was not yet known in Nanjing, he certainly made a splash by penning a petition with Gongkar Tashi the same year calling on the central government to create Xikang Province in Kham.¹⁰¹ Soon thereafter, a chance encounter with Dai Jitao (戴季陶), head of the Examination Yuan and senior advisor on frontier affairs for the new Republican government, led Dai to recommend Kelzang Tsering to the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission (MTAC, 蒙藏委員會), a new bureau

⁹⁹ Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*, 130-135.

¹⁰⁰ Feng, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 64, 116; Kangding minzu shizhuan bianxiezu, *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi*, 358; and *BTXZ*, 473.

¹⁰¹ Zhou Kaiqing states that Kelzang Tsering and Gongkar Tashi called for the establishment of Xikang Province as early as August 1, 1928. However, Kelzang Tsering himself writes that he and Gongkar Tashi proposed the establishment of Xikang in 1927. Zhou Kaiqing, *Minguo Chuan shi jiyao1911-1936* (Taipei: Sichuan wenxian yanjiushe, 1974), 385; and Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao* (N.p.: n.p., n.d.), 12-13.

in the Republican government that managed relations with China's border peoples.¹⁰² The MTAC accepted Kelzang Tsering into their organization despite his lack of policy-making experience, and they even appointed him head of their Tibetan Affairs Office (藏事處). Kelzang Tsering also became deputy director of the official mouthpiece of the MTAC, *Mongolian and Tibetan Weekly* (蒙藏週報).¹⁰³

Kelzang Tsering's rapid integration into the heart of the policy-making bureaucracy of the Nationalist government was due to several factors. To be sure, Dai Jitao knew of Kelzang Tsering's relationship with the Panchen Lama's office, and because the Panchen Lama was the second most important lama in Tibet, Dai worked hard to cultivate goodwill with him. Dai no doubt had also read Kelzang Tsering's petition to create Xikang Province in Kham, so he thought he understood the depth of Kelzang Tsering's commitment to Nationalist ideology. While these ideological factors certainly influenced Kelzang Tsering's political advancement, we must also consider the influence of the simple fact that bilingual Tibetans like Kelzang Tsering were extremely rare in Nanjing at the time. Senior policy makers like Dai Jitao were eager to gain the trust and knowledge of ethnic minorities that lived in sensitive border regions to strengthen their claim that they represented the same China as their imperial Manchu predecessors, and Kelzang Tsering was just the kind of person they were looking for.

Following the success of the Nationalist's Army's Northern Expedition under Jiang Jieshi and the unification of China in 1928, the Nationalist Party announced its plans to create five new provinces along China's borders to solidify its sovereignty and fix the boundaries of its new state. Within the year, the Provisional Political Affairs Committee of the Xikang Special Region was

¹⁰² The Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission was established in February 1928. Kong Qingtai, ed., *Guomin zhengfu zhengzhi zhidu shi cidian* (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000), 24.

¹⁰³ Chen, "Gesang Zeren, Nuona, Liu Jiaju," 118; and *BTXZ*, 473.

created for Xikang Province under Liu Wenhui's leadership, and similar organizations were set up for Qinghai (青海), Rehe (熱河), Chahaer (察哈爾), and Suiyuan (綏遠), all of which were well on their way to becoming provinces.¹⁰⁴ The latter four regions all became provinces within two years, but the creation of Xikang Province was postponed until 1939.¹⁰⁵ The delay was not due to a lack of desire among young Khampas to join the republic. In the inaugural September 1929 edition of the *Mongolian and Tibetan Weekly*, exactly one year after the central government had announced their intention to create the five new provinces, Kelzang Tsering and thirty Khampas from Batang (including Liu Jiaju and Jiang Anxi discussed later in this chapter) and other parts of Kham formally called on the government to establish Xikang Province. Their reasoning was solid. In 1913, following the expulsion of Qing soldiers and the High Commissioner to Tibet from Lhasa, the Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa and effectively declared Tibet's independence. In 1917, central Tibetan armies captured eleven principalities in northern Kham, including Chamdo and Derge following the flare up in violence over pasture rights in Riwoche. But most disconcerting for Kelzang Tsering and other Khampas was central Tibet's increasing reliance on the British and Lhasa's recent sending of troops into Nyarong. Only by dispatching a "senior official" to the region to lead efforts to establish Xikang Province, Kelzang Tsering argued, could the central government halt and reverse central Tibet's growing influence in Kham.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 13; and Huang Tianhua, "Minguo Xikang Gesang Zeren shijian yanjiu," *Sichuan shifan daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 36, no. 5 (2009): 118.

¹⁰⁵ *Lidai fandong zhengfu dui Kangshu de tongzhi (er)*, 19a, 27b.

¹⁰⁶ Luosong Jicun, *et al.*, "Xikang minzhong yin Zangbin qinzhan Kangjing qingyuan Zhongyang paiyuan zuzhi shengfu." *Meng Zang zhoubao* 1, no. 1 (1929): 11-12. Note that Jiang Anxi, who had recently arrived in Nanjing from Batang, wrote his name as 蔣安西 in this article. At some point, he changed his Chinese surname to 江.

The delays in establishing Xikang Province, however, were complex. Jiang Jieshi, head of the new Nanjing government, had concerns about Liu Wenhui's wavering power in central Sichuan, including the provincial capital of Chengdu, and his growing influence in Kham.¹⁰⁷ Jiang had appointed Liu Wenhui chairman of Sichuan Province in 1929, yet Liu remained in competition with other warlords in the region and had not yet solidified his power in the province. While his armies were technically in command over Kham, in fact Liu Wenhui had few resources and little time to devote to frontier matters. Liu Wenhui, moreover, distrusted the motivations of the new central government, which had not yet achieved full legitimacy in Sichuan, in wanting to create a new province out of much of the western part of the province.¹⁰⁸ Despite mutual suspicions and distrust, the central government sought Liu's opinion about a new province first in 1929, perhaps in response to Kelzang Tsering's request. Liu replied that the timing was not yet ripe for such a massive undertaking.

Kelzang Tsering continued to lobby the MTAC to take action on their announced plan to establish a province. Following the release of the central government's inspection team report on the Sichuan border region around 1930, which recommended the establishment of Xikang Province to bring peace to the region, Liu reluctantly agreed to move forward. However, as suggested above, many factors prevented the prompt establishment of Xikang Province. Liu continued to struggle to maintain his position as Sichuan chairman, and his fragile provincial government, let alone the central government in Nanjing, had yet to demonstrate its ability to effectively administer Kham. Moreover, the Dalai Lama, whom the central government hoped to convince to embrace the new Nationalist government and distance himself from the British,

¹⁰⁷ Liu Wenhui drove Sichuan warlord Liu Chengxun (no relation) out of Kham in 1927 and assumed the position of Sichuan-Kham Border Defense General Commander (川康邊防總指揮). In 1928 he became Commander-in-Chief (總司令) of that army. *Lidai fandong zhengfu dui Kangshu de tongzhi (er)*, 28a; and *BTXZ*, 334.

¹⁰⁸ *Lidai fandong zhengfu dui Kangshu de tongzhi (er)*, 27b; and Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 44.

opposed the creation of Xikang Province for a variety of reasons. His disagreement with the Panchen Lama still unresolved, the Dalai Lama was suspicious of Kelzang Tsering and the Norlha Trulku (諾那活佛), a reincarnate lama from northwestern Kham, being appointed members of the MTAC because of their close connections with the Panchen Lama. He was also concerned about the Panchen Lama's 1930 request to establish Xikang and Qinghai Provinces in which the Panchen Lama explicitly stated that integrating these territories as new provinces of the Nationalist state would help to alleviate the burdens imposed on local people in those areas by central Tibetan forces. A similar request by Khampas in Nanjing to establish Xikang Province with the Panchen Lama as chairman likewise drew the Dalai Lama's opposition.¹⁰⁹

Despite these complexities, the central government did take a number of concrete steps toward the establishment of a province. Many, if not all, of its actions originated from Kelzang Tsering and his Batang compatriots working in Nanjing. For example, with the support of Dai Jitao, Kelzang Tsering invited many of his former classmates from Batang and Kham to come to Nanjing at the government's expense to continue their studies. The first group of ten students, including Liu Jiaju, Jiang Anxi, and other likely members of the Xikang Nationalist Advancement Association arrived in 1928. As many as forty more students, most of who came from either Batang or Dartsedo, followed over the next three years. These young people initially enrolled in the Central Political School (中央政治學校). Hoping to create a cadre of Khampa officials capable of ruling their own province, Kelzang Tsering organized the new students, including other Khampas he had convinced to transfer from Nationalist-run schools in northeastern and southern China, into a special "Xikang class," where they focused more specifically on issues related to their unique situation, including weak local governance, British

¹⁰⁹ *Lidai fandong zhengfu dui Kangshu de tongzhi (er)*, 28a; Huang, "Minguo Xikang Gesang Zeren shijian yanjiu," 118.

influence in central Tibet, corvée labor, equality among races, and the importance of education.¹¹⁰

Moving closer to the establishment of a province, the Central Political Committee of Nationalist Party (國民黨中央政治會) adopted a resolution on April 1, 1931, recommending the establishment of Xikang Province with its capital at Batang. Two days later, the central government dispatched Tang Kesan (唐柯三) to northern Kham to negotiate with central Tibetan forces following their occupation of Nyarong, which had recently expanded as far east as Garze. By the end of month, Jiang Jieshi and Dai Jitao also appointed Kelzang Tsering as Xikang Provincial Special Commissioner for Party Affairs and sent him to Kham to represent the central government and promote the Nationalist Party in the region.¹¹¹

Kelzang Tsering was an easy choice to represent the Nationalist Party in Kham. He was a natural leader who had brought together a coterie of young Khampas eager to establish a new provincial administration in Kham. He was well-known to the Nationalist leadership in Nanjing and local leaders in Kham. Lest we forget, he also had experience in advocating on behalf of the Nationalist Party as a founding member of the Xikang Nationalist Advancement Association. Kelzang Tsering published several articles in 1931-1932 that reveal his thinking about the importance of Xikang Province in Sino-Tibetan relations. Before departing for Batang, for example, he proposed in Dai Jitao's *New Asia* both peaceful and violent ways to resolve the Tibetan issue. Kelzang Tsering hoped that Nanjing would dispatch a high-level delegation to Lhasa to engage in direct talks with the Dalai Lama. He argued that the Dalai Lama would certainly be open to learning about the founding principles of the Nationalist government, its

¹¹⁰ Chen, "Gesang Zeren, Nuona, Liu Jiaju," 119-20.

¹¹¹ Liu Jiaju, *Kang Zang* (Shanghai: Xin Yaxiya yuekanshe, 1932), 109-10; and Huang, "Minguo Xikang Gesang Zeren shijian yanjiu," 119.

constitution, and the government's emphasis on equality among different ethnic groups. If such a delegation proved to be unworkable, however, Kelzang Tsering proposed the central government raise a "Constitution Protection Army" (護法軍) under the nominal leadership of the Panchen Lama, who would coordinate with Liu Wenhui's army in Sichuan and launch an attack on central Tibet to recover Kham's territories lost over the last two decades.¹¹² Such a prominent role for the Panchen Lama in resolving the Tibetan issue reveals Kelzang Tsering's close relationship with his office. The Panchen Lama's role also naturally heightened the Dalai Lama's concerns about Nationalist intentions in Kham.

In another article in the same issue of *New Asia*, Kelzang Tsering focused specifically on Kham, outlining two pillars of his plans for Xikang Province. First, he argued that successful governance in Kham required the participation of Khampas in its administration. Second, he stressed that the office of the Provincial Garrison Commander (西康鎮守使) had been ineffective in governing Kham and must be replaced. Kelzang Tsering's use of this position title is intriguing because it in fact had been dissolved six years earlier in 1925 when Liu Chengxun came to power as Xikang Military Colony Commissioner. Given his proximity to policy making in Nanjing and his intense interest in Xikang, it is doubtful that Kelzang Tsering was unaware of this fact. It is more likely that Kelzang Tsering was trying to soften his criticism of Liu Wenhui, who had effectively inherited the mantle of the now defunct Provincial Garrison Commander as Commander-in-Chief of the Sichuan-Kham Border Defense Army. Kelzang Tsering knew Liu Wenhui would resent any critique of the current bureaucracy in Kham. He also knew that Liu was suspicious of his activities promoting Khampa education and politicization in Nanjing. At the same time, Kelzang Tsering was aware that fully incorporating Liu Wenhui into the

¹¹² Gesang Zeren, "Jiejue Zangshi zhi yijian," *Xin Yaxiya* 2, no. 5 (1931): 36-37.

Nationalist government was important, so rather than single out Liu directly, he likely chose to use this archaic term to critique Liu's current administration in Kham in his public article.

Privately, Kelzang Tsering was more direct, pointing out that Liu Wenhui's 24th Army was the only organization that had any semblance of power in Kham and that its dysfunction was the primary reason why Xikang Province had not yet been established.¹¹³

Kelzang Tsering's criticism of the current administration of Kham was biting.

Emphasizing that Han chauvinism and Chinese oppression of Tibetans throughout the region demonstrated the true lack of equality between Han and Tibetans, he even went so far as to write, "the provincial garrison commander in Dartsedo doesn't try to govern all of Kham, so several thousand *li* of territory to the west [of Dartsedo] has fallen into a state of anarchy (無政府)."

Central Tibetans, he also pointed out, "take advantage of these circumstances and advance [into Kham] proclaiming independence for all of Tibet and that they will assist the people of Kham in self-governance. As a result, when the central Tibetan soldiers fight the Sichuan army, the people of Kham stand aside and do not concern themselves about it."¹¹⁴ To remedy this situation, Kelzang Tsering argued that Khampas must participate in Xikang's governance and that the capital must be fixed in Batang, which is closer to the center of the province. Centralizing provincial governance in Batang, which would be renamed Xiping (西平, literally "Western Peace"), he suggested Khampas could "get rid of the old and bring in the new, allow for the realization of the Three People's Principles in the three regions of Tibet, bring tranquility to the national defense of the border regions, and create equality among the races." Moreover, Kelzang Tsering stressed that if Khampas could truly achieve autonomous self-rule by holding at least

¹¹³ Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 13.

¹¹⁴ Gesang Zeren, "Xikang gaisheng zhi jihua," *Xin Yaxiya* 2, no. 5 (1932): 53.

half of Xikang's leadership positions, then "central Tibetans will observe us and believe that the central government sincerely treats us equally. They will become more aware, and if the territory they occupy in Kham can be returned to the people of Kham in accordance with what they have said in the past, then there will absolutely not be any conflict."¹¹⁵

His written rhetoric aside, Kelzang Tsering's imminent arrival in Kham as Xikang Provincial Special Commissioner for Party Affairs alone was enough to anger Liu Wenhui and make him question Jiang Jieshi's support of his authority in Sichuan. Anticipating a cold reception for Kelzang Tsering, the central government informed Liu Wenhui of the delegation's itinerary and mission and sought his support. Kelzang Tsering also decided to divide his delegation, which consisted primarily of individuals he had selected to join the "Xikang class" at the Central Political School in Nanjing in recent years, into two groups. He sent one group, made up primarily of Dartsedo natives, via Chengdu to Dartsedo with instructions to establish a local office of the Nationalist Party Special Commissioner. Passing through Chengdu, Yang Zhonghua (楊仲華) and other delegation members met with Liu Wenhui to request he inform his military commanders in Kham to assist and protect their delegation as they promoted the Nationalist Party in the region. Arriving in Chengdu just days soon after the Japanese invasion of northeast China in September 1931, Liu was perplexed by the fact that the central government was sending a delegation to work on the far western frontier when China was facing a national crisis in the east. At the same time, exhibiting the Han chauvinism that Kelzang Tsering so strongly condemned, Liu was convinced that the delegation members had ulterior motives and were not loyal to the Nationalist Party simply because they were all Khampas.¹¹⁶ Failing to win Liu Wenhui's endorsement, the group proceeded to Dartsedo, where they were met with student

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 53-55.

¹¹⁶ Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 17-18.

protests led by a hastily organized “Alliance Opposing Kelzang Tsering, the Pretender Plenipotentiary Representative for Kham and Tibet” (反对格桑泽仁冒充康藏全权代表大同盟) on Liu Wenhui’s orders.¹¹⁷

Meanwhile, Kelzang Tsering was leading the second group of primarily Batang natives south to Kunming. There the chairman of Yunnan Province, Long Yun (龍雲), gave Kelzang Tsering and his delegation a much warmer welcome, supplying Kelzang Tsering with one hundred locally manufactured rifles and the title of Yunnan Frontier Propaganda Commissioner (滇邊宣撫使). This was a ceremonial position, but it did not mask Long Yun’s desire to disrupt Liu Wenhui’s influence in western Sichuan, a strategic area Long coveted, albeit from a distance. Long’s patronage of the Nationalist delegation leader gave Liu Wenhui yet another reason to distrust Kelzang Tsering.¹¹⁸

After departing Kunming with his weapons and additional title, Kelzang Tsering proceeded to Zhongdian in northwestern Yunnan, where he met with local lamas and headmen. He learned about a long-running feud between Trinle Lhorong and Padme Tseten (Pad ma Tshen brtan, 巴美次登), their refusal to submit grain taxes, and the constant banditry that plagued southern Batang and much of the region. Hoping to use his authority to broker a settlement between the warring factions, Kelzang Tsering remained in northwestern Yunnan and sent a small group of men led by Huang Ziji (黃子冀) ahead with instructions to begin work by

¹¹⁷ Deng and Li, “Renwu chunqiu,” 141; and Xierao Yixi, “Jindai Kangqu zhuming zhengzhi huodong jia—Gesang Zeren,” 9.

¹¹⁸ Feng, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 64-65, 118; Chen, “Gesang Zeren, Nuona, Liu Jiaju,” 359; Deng and Li, “Renwu chunqiu,” 142; and *BTXZ*, 473.

establishing a Nationalist Party library for public use and education in Batang.¹¹⁹ Upon arriving in Batang, Huang connected with Yang Guangxi (楊光西), a fellow Central Political School classmate from Nanjing who had already returned to Batang in 1931 and was working with the still active Xikang Nationalist Advancement Association to open a new county-funded elementary school.¹²⁰ Remaining in Zhongdian, Kelzang Tsering negotiated a truce between Trinle Lhorong and Padme Tseten, convinced Trinle Lhorong to support his Party efforts, and obtained assurances from Gongkar Lama, the most powerful monk in Yanjing, that he would also back his own efforts to promote the Nationalist Party in Batang.

Having gained additional local support, Kelzang Tsering led the rest of his delegation, almost fifty people, north into Batang, arriving in January 1932, just in time to celebrate the Lunar New Year. Batang's native son had returned, and he marched into town mounted on a horse in full military uniform. He cut a strong profile, and his parades, ceremonies, and public speeches left a deep, positive impression on almost every Batang resident, including senior monks, common people, and even long-term Han sojourners.¹²¹ Kelzang Tsering and his delegation immediately got to work promoting the Nationalist Party by distributing pictures of Sun Yat-sen and leaflets explaining the Three Principles of the People and teaching people the Party's anthem. They soon realized their task was much more difficult than they had expected, and their warm reception had in fact belied local doubts about their mission. As Kelzang Tsering

¹¹⁹ Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 15. Huang turned over a large cache of Chinese language books and periodicals he had transported with him to Lobsang Jetsun (Blo bzang Lce btsun, 洛桑吉村), who quickly opened a library on Batang's main residential street, where Kelzang Wangdu, the former tutor and friend of Albert Shelton, taught free Chinese and Tibetan reading classes for Batang children. *BTXZ*, 409.

¹²⁰ "Baan jiaoyu zhi shuguang," 21.

¹²¹ For first-hand accounts of Kelzang Tsering's return to Batang, see Goldstein, Dawei Sherap, and Siebenschuh, *A Tibetan Revolutionary*, 10; Marion Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak*, 141; and Marian Duncan, *A Flame of the Fire*, 230-31. Lobsang Gyaltsen also discusses Kelzang Tsering's activities in Batang in positive terms, but it is unclear if he witnessed them himself. Lobsang Gyaltsen, *'Ba' kyi lo rgyus*, 85-87.

wrote in his report following his return to Nanjing in late 1932, language differences were difficult to manage, but what was even more challenging was the fact that most Tibetans simply had no concept of what the Nationalist Party was, not to mention its basic tenets. He explained in frustration that the only things local people knew about China was that an emperor ruled it, which in fact had not been true for two decades, and that the famous Buddhist pilgrimage site Wutai Mountain (五台山) was located there.¹²²

Moreover, despite the support of Lakha Lama, Ba Chöde Monastery's most senior leader, most monks were suspicious of Kelzang Tsering's Nationalist activities. In his memoirs, Kelzang Tsering wrote about how most people initially thought his propaganda work was erroneous teaching. They even went so far as to accuse the Nationalist Party of being "a kind of foreign religion," equating the Nationalist Party anthem with Christian hymns sung by the American missionary community. To counter such misconceptions, Kelzang Tsering and his colleagues met frequently with local monks to explain that the Three Principles of the People were merely political policy, not a religion. They also quoted from speeches given by the Panchen Lama to convince local monks that Nationalist policies were consistent with Shakyamuni Buddha's desire to save all sentient beings. Taking the advice of Lakha Lama, Party workers took to hanging pictures of the Buddha beside images of Sun Yat-sen at the front of their activity hall, which soon led to increased participation in their activities.¹²³ Describing a propaganda session she led in Ba Chöde Monastery, Kelzang Tsering's close associate Liu Manqing claimed that by the end of her two hour session, the monks "thought the premier [Sun Yat-sen] was a great person, and

¹²² Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 15-16.

¹²³ Gesang Zeren, *Bianren chuyan*, 4-5. Marion Duncan, who was a former teacher and now friend of Kelzang Tsering, also commented on this tactic, noting that his Christian religion would not allow him to bow before the Buddha. Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak*, 142.

they had already revealed their acceptance of him.”¹²⁴ Kelzang Tsering’s diligence paid off, and by mid-February he had garnered the support of as many as three thousand people in Batang proper and the surrounding areas of Linkashi, Qicungou, and Luyul. Evinced his Nationalist fervor, Kelzang Tsering even renamed public streets in Batang proper to reflect Nationalist values, including avenues named Sun Yat-sen (中山街), Universal Love (博愛街), Freedom (自由街), and Equality (平等街).¹²⁵

Liu Wenhui naturally felt threatened by the warm reception Kelzang Tsering received in Batang, his success in connecting with the people, and his constant reporting to central authorities via the wireless radio he had brought with him. However, while Liu Wenhui had successfully stymied the organizational efforts of Kelzang Tsering’s delegation in Dartsedo, he encountered more difficulty in Batang, which was deep in Kham and far from his powerbase. After ordering his local commanders to be vigilant toward Kelzang Tsering and his followers in Batang, including monitoring their mail, tensions between the garrison troops under Liu Wenhui and Kelzang Tsering’s followers began to mount.¹²⁶ Spreading rumors that Kelzang Tsering was organizing an army to overthrow Liu Wenhui, soldiers taunted him by calling him a “half-breed in office, a local monkey wanting to become a king” and “a barbarian stirring up opposition.”¹²⁷ Local soldiers were also not below beating Party workers as a show of their power. When news of three hundred Chinese soldiers rising up and killing their commanding officer, Ma Su (馬驃),

¹²⁴ Liu, *Kang Zang zhaozheng*, 42.

¹²⁵ *BTXZ*, 474.

¹²⁶ Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 18.

¹²⁷ Xierao Yixi, “Jindai Kangqu zhuming zhengzhi huodong jia—Gesang Zeren,” 9. A draft account of Xikang’s history prepared in 1953 also claims that Kelzang Tsering was raising an army to attack Liu Wenhui’s troops in Dartsedo, although other historical evidence does not substantiate this assertion. *Lidai fandong zhengfu dui Kangshu de tongzhi (er)*, 25a-26b.

in Dartsedo reached Batang, local soldiers became nervous. Facing agitation from Kelzang Tsering's workers and the possibility of their supplies from Dartsedo being cut off, they began to feel threatened. Claiming that one of Kelzang Tsering's propaganda workers, Dai Langxi (戴琅璠), had stolen military secrets from them, local soldiers shot and killed him.¹²⁸

In his report on his activities in Batang, Kelzang Tsering asserts that Dai's murder at the hands of soldiers under Liu Wenhui's command so angered local residents that they spontaneously rose up and surrounded the local garrison, quickly making the situation more complicated and much more difficult to control.¹²⁹ In fact, Kelzang Tsering, calling for "Khampa self-rule (康人治康)," led the uprising against the local garrison himself. He made his decision to disarm the local garrison when he judged a confluence of circumstances to be to his overwhelming advantage. In addition to his support from the Nationalist Party in Nanjing, he had the endorsement of Long Yun in Kunming, the approval of Gongkar Lama and Trinle Lhorong in the south, and the backing of almost all the people of Batang proper. He also knew that the majority of Liu Wenhui's troops were locked in battle with central Tibetan soldiers in Nyarong, making it difficult for Ma Chenglong, Liu's brigade commander stationed in Batang, to return.¹³⁰ Finally, the mutiny of Chinese troops in Dartsedo and the seemingly spontaneous uprising of people who surrounded the local garrison gave Kelzang Tsering sufficient incentive to act. However, rather than asserting Khampa independence as Goldstein, Dawei Sherap, and Siebenschuh claim, Kelzang Tsering was merely attempting to reject the ineffective and

¹²⁸ Huang, "Minguo Xikang Gesang Zeren shijian yanjiu," 120.

¹²⁹ Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 19; and *BTXZ*, 345.

¹³⁰ Feng, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 119.

oppressive governance of Han officials and military officers under Liu Wenhui.¹³¹ He was not seeking independence. Rather, he was trying to force the Nationalist government to grant Khampas autonomous self-rule in a soon-to-be created Xikang Province.

Kelzang Tsering's actual takeover of the garrison was anti-climactic. Following sporadic skirmishes during the night that resulted in only one death, Kelzang Tsering's followers disarmed the 1st and 3rd battalions of Ma Chenglong's Batang brigade and confiscated ammunition and several hundred rifles in the process. They did not work alone. Yang Chaozong, the elected head of the Xikang Nationalist Advancement Association in 1927 and a company commander in the local brigade, quickly supported his former classmate. Defecting from Ma Chenglong's brigade, Yang took to Kelzang Tsering's camp all the men under his command, who were among the best trained and most disciplined in the regiment.¹³² Gathering together his supporters in Ba Chöde Monastery, Kelzang Tsering announced the surrender of Ma's forces and Khampa autonomy to the cheers of the large crowd.¹³³

Having instigated a direct challenge to Liu Wenhui's authority as a representative of the Nationalist Party, Kelzang Tsering was now faced with maintaining order in Batang while justifying his actions to his superiors. He began by convening a meeting of 148 representatives from Batang and each of the principalities in Kham. During their discussions, these local leaders agreed to organize themselves into a provisional body known as the Xikang Provincial People's Autonomous Committee (西康省人民自治委員會) and elected Lakha Lama as the Committee's director. Focusing on defending their borders from outside interference, *e.g.*, an attack by central

¹³¹ See Goldstein, Dawei Sherap, and Siebenschuh, *A Tibetan Revolutionary*, 10. The draft account of Xikang's history compiled in 1953 also claims that Kelzang Tsering intended to "split off" Xikang from Liu Wenhui. *Lidai fandong zhengfu dui Kangshu de tongzhi (er)*, 25a-26b.

¹³² Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak*, 139-41.

¹³³ Goldstein, Dawei Sherap, and Siebenschuh, *A Tibetan Revolutionary*, 11.

Tibetan soldiers or retaliation by Liu Wenhui, while ensuring public security within Batang until more permanent administrative changes could be implemented, the committee made five other significant decisions in their initial meeting. First, because Liu Wenhui's soldiers had killed Dai Langxi, a Nationalist Party member, they no longer recognized Liu's authority over them. They also intended to report Dai's murder to the central government. Next, they requested the central government to dispatch a senior leader to Batang to organize a provincial government and implement the 1928 resolution to establish Xikang Province as soon as possible. Their provisional committee of 148 members would select a core group of fifteen to serve on a Xikang Provincial Preparatory Committee (西康建省委員會) to assist their leader with the formation of the new government. Third, to provide for their defense, the committee established the Xikang Provincial Defense Army Headquarters (西康省防軍司令部) by uniting local militias in the region. Fourth, the committee endorsed Kelzang Tsering as the chairman of the Xikang Provincial Preparatory Committee and Commander-in-Chief of the Xikang Provincial Defense Army Headquarters and requested the central government formally appoint Kelzang Tsering to these two important leadership positions. Finally, they delegated to Kelzang Tsering the responsibility to liaise with central Tibetan authorities in Markham. Knowing central Tibetans wanted to expand their influence in Batang, Kelzang Tsering immediately informed central Tibetan representatives that his actions in Batang were simply a result of an internal conflict between the Nationalist Party and the military, and thus they need not concern themselves with it.¹³⁴

After putting in place a provisional administration, Kelzang Tsering turned to governance. He first disbanded Ma Chenglong's brigade and expelled south into Yunnan the remaining

¹³⁴ Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 19-20; Gesang Zeren, *Bianren chuyan*, 5; and *BTXZ*, 339.

troops that had not come over to his side. He then appointed Huang Ziji as Batang's county magistrate and Wang Zefang (汪澤方) as Derong's county magistrate.¹³⁵ In addition to local participation in Xikang's administration, Kelzang Tsering proclaimed that Xikang's new government would be based on equality among the races, the abolition of corvée labor, improvement in agricultural and animal husbandry methods, and the development of Kham's educational system and culture.¹³⁶

Most accounts of Kelzang Tsering's 1932 activities in Batang highlight his independent actions and strong emphasis on Khampa self-rule. That Kelzang Tsering exceeded the simple mandate to "develop the Nationalist Party activities" in Kham that central government authorities gave him is without doubt. However, we must not read too much into his emphasis on Khampa self-rule. As he stated in his earlier publications, successful governance in Kham necessitated local *participation*, not domination, in a provincial administration that was subordinate to the central government. Due to continued delays in the establishment of Xikang Province, long-standing abuses of local people (including Nationalist Party members) at the hands of Liu Wenhui's troops, and the ever-present fear of strengthening central Tibetan forces just across the Dri River, Kelzang Tsering felt he had no choice but to take matters into his own hands in early 1932.

Just a few days after disarming Ma Chenglong's regiment in Batang, Kelzang Tsering informed Nanjing of the local uprising and sought official guidance on how to handle the conflict between the Party and Liu Wenhui's military forces. Around the same time, Lakha Lama, representing the Xikang Provincial People's Autonomous Committee, cabled the Mongolian and

¹³⁵ Kangding minzu shizhuan bianxiezu, *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi*, 359; and Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak*, 141.

¹³⁶ Feng, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 65; and Xierao Yixi, "Jindai Kangqu zhuming zhengzhi huodong jia—Gesang Zeren," 9.

Tibetan Affairs Commission in Nanjing saying, “The people of Kham have been oppressed on both sides by Sichuan and central Tibet, yet we have not had anyone with whom we can raise our case. Fortunately, MTAC member Kelzang Tsering returned to conduct Party affairs and awakened the people of Kham.... To preserve the orders of the central government and protect ourselves, the monks and people disarmed the soldiers garrisoned in Batang, established the Xikang Provincial Border Defense Army, and publically endorsed Kelzang Tsering as provisional commander. We calmly await [instructions from] the central government on how to handle this matter.”¹³⁷

When Liu Wenhui learned of Kelzang Tsering’s uprising, he immediately informed Nanjing and urged that he be recalled immediately. On April 25, Kelzang Tsering received a cable from his superior Shi Qing Yang (石青陽), Chairman of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission. In response to Kelzang Tsering’s request for guidance, Shi curtly ordered him to drop his titles of Chairman of the Xikang Provincial Preparatory Committee and Commander-in-Chief of the Xikang Provincial Defense Army and return to Nanjing to report on

¹³⁷ Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 21-22; and Sichuan dang’an guan, *Jindai Kangqu dang’an ziliao xuanbian*, 456. Kelzang Tsering quotes these cables in full in *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, the only extant primary source for these official communications. However, he provides specific dates only for a select number of the cables. The editors of *Jindai Kangqu dang’an ziliao xuanbian* reproduced most of the communications surrounding the 1932 Batang Incident and estimated dates for all of Kelzang Tsering’s cables. Unfortunately, their estimates do not always match the dates Kelzang Tsering provides in his topical narratives for each group of cables. The two cables mentioned above from Kelzang Tsering and Lakha Lama are undated in the original text, while *Jindai Kangqu dang’an ziliao xuanbian* states they were both sent on March 1, 1932. I have been unable to verify their actual dates of transmission.

The argument Lakha Lama uses to seek assistance from central authorities, *i.e.*, that local people have no representative with which they can raise complaints, is reminiscent of Batang’s recent past. Zhao Erfeng, for example, boasted about how political restructuring in Sanyan would give local people access to Han magistrates who would be responsible for addressing their grievances. Moreover, when explaining their actions that resulted in Feng Quan’s death in 1905, Batang’s two native chieftains and the leaders of Ba Chöde Monastery similarly asserted they only rose up when it became evident no official was available to hear their complaints and provide redress.

the situation in Batang. In the meantime, Shi stated that the MTAC would dispatch someone to investigate the murder of Dai Langxi.¹³⁸

The orders from Nanjing, which confirm that central government officials were unaware of Kelzang Tsering's plans, put him in an awkward position. Just one day before receiving this cable Kelzang Tsering had publically proclaimed the establishment of Xikang Province in an elaborate ceremony on the grounds of Ba Chöde Monastery. The event included a parade of the provincial army over which he was the self-proclaimed commander-in-chief, speeches, and pictures with Lakha Lama and other members of the Xikang Provincial Preparatory Committee.¹³⁹ Riding a wave of popular support, Kelzang Tsering was unwilling to abandon his opposition to Liu Wenhui, so he replied immediately to Nanjing, insisting that, "the revolution of the people of Kham in fact is a liberation they themselves requested."¹⁴⁰ Approximately a week later, on May 3, 1932, Kelzang Tsering followed up with a report stating that he had forwarded Nanjing's order to the Xikang Provincial People's Autonomous Committee for their consideration, but the committee had strongly recommended he remain in Batang "in the interest of national defense" and not depart until the central government dispatched someone to replace him. Accepting the committee's recommendation, Kelzang Tsering decided it was not the appropriate time for him to return to Nanjing.¹⁴¹

In the following two months, Kelzang Tsering and his colleagues in Batang exchanged several cables with central government authorities in Nanjing. Kelzang Tsering reiterated that the

¹³⁸ Kelzang Tsering dates the receipt of this cable as April 25, 1932, while the editors of *Jindai Kangqu dang'an ziliao xuanbian* mistakenly identify its date as March 28. Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 23-24; and Sichuan dang'an guan, *Jindai Kangqu dang'an ziliao xuanbian*, 456.

¹³⁹ Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak*, 143.

¹⁴⁰ Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 24.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 25-26; and Sichuan dang'an guan, *Jindai Kangqu dang'an ziliao xuanbian*, 457.

people of Batang wanted him to stay until a representative of the central government arrived so that he could ensure national defense and public safety.¹⁴² Lakha Lama was even blunter, reminding Nanjing of their unfulfilled promise to govern the region and establish a province in Kham. Requesting that the central government rescind its orders for Kelzang Tsering to relinquish his titles and return to Nanjing, Lakha Lama also wrote, “The Sichuan army’s suppression of the people has already reached an extreme degree. If they are still permitted to rule, then the central government’s decree to establish a province will be difficult to implement and the principle of equality among the nationalities will become empty talk. National defense along the western frontier will be without peace.”¹⁴³ Despite such pleas, central government authorities continued to demand Kelzang Tsering return to Nanjing so that they could better understand what was happening in Batang.

What Kelzang Tsering’s superiors in Nanjing did not know at the time was that references to “national defense” coming from Batang were neither rhetorical nor hypothetical. Just as Kelzang Tsering had feared, central Tibetan forces quickly involved themselves in what he still referred to as a “dispute” between the Nationalist Party and the local military garrison. At the same time that Kelzang Tsering was deflecting orders from Nanjing to return, he was also engaged in discussions with central Tibetan authorities in hopes of discouraging them from attacking Batang. He knew that the central Tibetan government opposed his actions in Batang. Explaining to his superiors in Nanjing, Kelzang Tsering quoted from a letter the Dalai Lama had sent Tibetan aristocrats and leaders across the plateau, in which he attributes the Dalai Lama to writing, “At present, the status of Tibet and your positions are extremely perilous. Looking afar

¹⁴² Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 23; and Sichuan dang’an guan, *Jindai Kangqu dang’an ziliao xuanbian*, 457.

¹⁴³ Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 25-26.

at the red scare in Outer Mongolia, its king and many of its aristocrats have been beaten and cruelly killed. Looking close to home, in the Xikang area there are people encouraging a kind of dangerous ideology and inflaming so-called revolution. They are even absurdly urging the monks and people of Xikang to oppose the central Tibetan army.”¹⁴⁴ Since arriving in Batang, Kelzang Tsering had been meeting with envoys from central Tibet who went to great lengths to convince him to cooperate in strengthening Tibet by appealing to their common ethnicity and religious heritage. However, steeped in Nationalist ideology first as a student in military academies and later as Nationalist Party policy maker, Kelzang Tsering rebuffed their overtures, saying, “I have been sent by the central authorities to Xikang to carry out Party affairs... On religious matters, I personally hold the same faith in the Dalai Lama, but on political matters our positions differ. The Lhasa government is unjustified in advancing their soldiers to invade the Kham borderlands, so I cannot cooperate with you.”¹⁴⁵ When the central Tibetans appealed directly to the monks in Batang, threatening that if they opposed central Tibet then they would no longer be permitted to study at the great monasteries in Lhasa, Kelzang Tsering and his colleagues responded by working even harder to strengthen local resolve to resist such threats. Their unwillingness to submit to central Tibetan rule should come as no surprise. As I have described in previous chapters, Batang had functioned since at least the early eighteenth century independent of direct central Tibetan political influence. More recently, Batang residents had suffered incessant attacks by brigands when traveling through central Tibetan territories, and in 1912 the central Tibetan army laid siege to their town. Only by supporting the remnants of Qing

¹⁴⁴ Gesang Zeren, *Bianren chuyan*, 7; and Feng, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 67.

¹⁴⁵ Gesang Zeren, *Bianren chuyan*, 6.

garrisons in Batang and the surrounding area were the people of Batang able to break the siege and force the central Tibetans to retreat.¹⁴⁶

Hoping to fend off another possible attack by central Tibetan forces, Kelzang Tsering concentrated on solidifying his military strength. Although he had already amassed a militia of over 7,800 men, 6,300 semi-automatic rifles, 2,500 matchlock rifles, and 4,700 horses in preparation for a confrontation with central Tibetan forces, he still called on Gongkar Lama, the most powerful monk in Yanjing, for assistance. Following the popular uprising in Batang, Gongkar Lama had disarmed two companies of Ma Chenglong's regiment that were stationed in Yanjing, and Kelzang Tsering asked Gongkar Lama to forward the weapons he had confiscated to Batang.¹⁴⁷ Sources generally agree that Gongkar Lama had previously agreed to support Kelzang Tsering's work in Batang, but sometime later he changed his mind. Why he changed his mind, however, remains a subject of debate. Kelzang Tsering claims that central Tibetan forces pressured Gongkar Lama, whose family lived in central Tibet, not to cooperate with him.¹⁴⁸ Another source asserts that Gongkar Lama wanted to maintain his monopoly over Yanjing's salt taxes and therefore rejected Kelzang Tsering's order to turn over the weapons cache.¹⁴⁹ Most Chinese sources, however, suggest that Gongkar Lama feared Kelzang Tsering's growing influence in Batang and subsequently sent a messenger to Liu Wenhui to seek his assistance in curbing Kelzang Tsering's power.¹⁵⁰ When Kelzang Tsering intercepted Gongkar Lama's

¹⁴⁶ Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 29-30.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁴⁹ Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak*, 143.

¹⁵⁰ Feng, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 66; and *BTXZ*, 340. He Juefei suggests that upon learning of Gongkar Lama's betrayal, Kelzang Tsering requested that leaders of the central Tibetan army "handle" Gongkar Lama, only to learn that the central Tibetan army and Gongkar Lama were already working together in preparation to attack him. This

messenger en route, he realized Gongkar Lama's betrayal. Gongkar Lama then turned to central Tibetan officials in Markham for help.

Even though Kelzang Tsering had to be aware that central Tibetan forces were gathering in Markham, he chose instead to take revenge on Gongkar Lama, dispatching his best troops south to attack Gongkar Lama and capture the weapons he had promised. Yang Chaozong, who previously had participated in special artillery training in Chengdu, led his company of well-trained soldiers across the Dri River on May 12, 1932, together with three hundred men from Qicungou, and made his way toward Yanjing.¹⁵¹ Arriving in Mangli, Yang encountered militia sent by Gongkar Lama and engaged. Gongkar Lama's militia drew Yang's forces into a valley, where they were ambushed by central Tibetan militia hiding over the crest of the mountain. Not expecting central Tibetan troops to attack, Yang's forces were quickly thrown into disarray and made a hasty retreat to Batang. The central Tibetan soldiers pursued them across the Dri River, and an advance force of two hundred militia men made its way to the outskirts of Batang. Hoping to capture the town quickly before Yang's forces could recover, they started attacking the edge of the town on May 22.¹⁵²

Kelzang Tsering and Yang Chaozong were able to repel the initial central Tibetan assault by using the thick-walled missionary compound on the town's outskirts for cover to halt their advance and then ambushing them from behind. As they were driven back toward the river, the retreating soldiers piled into single wooden ferry boat at Numshing Crossing. While crossing the

explanation does not seem plausible given the fact that Kelzang Tsering's forces were clearly surprised and unprepared for an attack by central Tibetan troops on their way to Yanjing to claim Gongkar Lama's weapons. See He, *Xikang jishi shiben shizhu*, 124; and Kangding minzu shizhuan bianxiezu, *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi*, 339.

¹⁵¹ "Xikang ge budui baosong renyuan fu Chuan xunlian," *Meng Zang zhoubao* 29 (1930): 15; and Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak*, 144.

¹⁵² Feng, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 66; *BTXZ*, 14, 340, 346; Marion Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak*, 144; and Marian Duncan, *A Flame of the Fire*, 239.

river, the overloaded ferry capsized, killing as many as eighty men, almost half the advance force, a loss that led their commander to commit suicide upon reaching the opposite bank. At the same time, militia from Luyul under the leadership of Trinle Lhorong also attacked the central Tibetan main force in Mangli, forcing them back to their home base near Markham.¹⁵³

The central Tibetan army in Markham was well-armed with British manufactured cannons, machine guns, and Lee-Enfield bolt-action rifles. Regrouping and preparing for a full assault on Batang, the size of their army also grew as they recruited 1,400 local militiamen to augment their force of 2,500 soldiers from Lhasa. The central Tibetan forces easily re-crossed the Dri River and occupied Cashu Mountain not far from Batang proper in late May.¹⁵⁴ Before launching their assault, the central Tibetan general sent a messenger to Kelzang Tsering on June 15 suggesting Lakha Lama and American missionary Marion Duncan, whom the general had hosted in his home a few years earlier, mediate the conflict to prevent further violence. However, with Kelzang Tsering demanding Batang retain control over Yanjing and territories west of the Dri River traditionally within Batang's jurisdiction and central Tibetan authorities only offering to forego their attack on Batang and retreat across the Dri, there was little chance of reaching a settlement.

Negotiations having failed, the central Tibetan forces began their assault in mid-June. Yang's Chinese soldiers and Kelzang Tsering's local militia engaged them at the base of Cashu Mountain, but the Tibetans' Lee-Enfield rifles had a longer range than their Chinese Mauser rifles, so they could only slow their advance. By June 16, Tibetan soldiers had occupied the mission compound's orphanage and private residences on Gyapangdeng. The Batang soldiers

¹⁵³ Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 31; *Kangshu dite huodong yu shaoshu minzu de guanxi*, vol. 13 of *Jiu Xikang sheng Kangshu gaikuang chugao*, unpublished manuscript, Sichuan dang'an guan, 11:121-33/1 (1953), n.p.; *BTXZ*, 347, 475, 490; and Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak*, 139-45.

¹⁵⁴ Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 28-31; and Gesang Zeren, *Bianren chuyan*, 6.

were able to hold the hospital, school, and garrison fort on top of the mountain, but the Tibetans had gotten within cannon range of the town. At the same time, additional Tibetan militia overran a small settlement just across the Ba River from Ba Chöde Monastery. Digging trenches, fortifying their positions, and blocking any roads into the town, the second central Tibetan siege of Batang had begun.

After a month of bombardment, skirmishes, and counterattacks, the conflict remained at a stalemate, but Kelzang Tsering knew the people of Batang could not hold out indefinitely. Food prices were rising, and ammunition was being used up so quickly that local blacksmiths resorted to refurbishing used bullet casings with match heads as gunpowder to create new bullets. As the siege wore on, local people risked their lives to harvest their summer grains, the majority of which were in fields in the no-man's-land outside the walls of the town center and within range of the Tibetan rifles. To minimize the threat to the Tibetan soldiers surrounding them, women and children typically were sent to work the fields, but Tibetan sharpshooters still killed one to two of them every day, further demoralizing local residents and preventing them from planting their second crops of buckwheat and millet.

In the midst of fighting against the central Tibetan troops, Kelzang Tsering continued to communicate with Nanjing, trying to help his superiors understand the reasons for his actions. Although he remained frustrated with the perfunctory performance of Chinese authorities in Kham, he realized that saving Batang would likely require the assistance of Liu Wenhui's 24th Army. As a result, he replaced his anti-Chinese rhetoric with more focused criticism on central Tibet. For example, not long after the siege began, Kelzang Tsering cabled Nanjing to highlight the extent of the Dalai Lama's collusion with the British. He pointed out that while the British were building vehicle and rail roads in central Tibet, the people of Kham still relied on pack

animals for transport. He also bemoaned the ubiquity of Tibetan-English textbooks in Kham, a fact that prevented the use of Chinese among Tibetans. And of course, he did not overlook the superior training and weaponry the British had given the Tibetan army, which continued to assault him daily. Reminding Nanjing that central Tibetan leaders, who were still engaged in fighting with Liu Wenhui's forces in Garze and Nyarong, had their eyes on Dartsedo and hoped to unite all Tibetans in a great nation across the plateau, Kelzang Tsering emphasized the strategic importance of his resistance in Batang and begged for assistance. Quite adept at framing his struggle in broader nationalist terms, he said that aid was necessary to prevent the Chinese nation's western regions from "falling into ruin like the Northeast," a direct reference to the 1931 Japanese invasion of China's Manchurian territories.¹⁵⁵

Facing an overwhelming Tibetan army with no reinforcements, Kelzang Tsering had no choice but to seek assistance from Liu Wenhui. After the arrival under the cover of darkness of the new Chinese magistrate sent by Liu Wenhui in late June, Kelzang Tsering dispatched a respected lama to Dartsedo to request reinforcements. However, Liu Wenhui's 24th Army was still fighting central Tibetan troops in Garze and Nyarong, so he was only able to send a small supply of munitions to Batang. At dawn on July 8, Tibetan forces relocated their cannon closer to town and began a fierce assault on Kelzang Tsering's troops holed up in the mission hospital. They did not take the hospital, but their attack put the Batang soldiers on the defensive. Approximately a week later, Liu Wenhui's ammunition and weapons arrived, allowing the soldiers to maintain their resistance a little longer. Around July 27, word came that Liu's soldiers had defeated the Tibetan soldiers in Nyarong and Ma Chenglong was leading his battalions back to Batang. Breathing new life into the resistance, Kelzang Tsering learned that Ma's light

¹⁵⁵ Sichuan dang'an guan, *Jindai Kangqu dang'an ziliao xuanbian*, 457-58.

infantry of two hundred fifty battle-hardened soldiers under the command of Fu Dequan (傅德銓) had already reached Litang, only days away from Batang.¹⁵⁶

Buoyed by news of the defeat of central Tibetan troops in Garze and Nyarong and the imminent arrival of reinforcements in Batang, Kelzang Tsering cabled the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission urging Nanjing to take advantage of Liu Wenhui's momentum by sending more troops into Kham and distancing themselves from the Dalai Lama's office in Nanjing. Only in this way, he argued, could China recover Derge and Chamdo, territories lost to central Tibet in 1918, and prevent China's western territories befalling the same fate as Outer Mongolia, which had been lost to Russian influence soon after the Republic of China was founded.¹⁵⁷ The central government responded a week later, expressing their appreciation for Kelzang Tsering's efforts to defend the nation and protect the people, both of which were goals consistent with the Nationalist Party. As for future political and/or military action in Kham, Nanjing stated in no uncertain terms that Kelzang Tsering was to cooperate with Liu Wenhui, effectively putting Kelzang Tsering in his proper place.¹⁵⁸

As if on cue, Ma Chenglong marched into Batang on the evening of July 30, exactly fifty days after the central Tibetan siege of Batang began. Duncan noted that Ma greeted Kelzang Tsering "with great cordiality. [But] none doubt...Ma Chen Lung [Ma Chenglong] has orders to

¹⁵⁶ Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak*, 148-54; and *BTXZ*, 346-48.

¹⁵⁷ Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 35-36; and Sichuan dang'an guan, *Jindai Kangqu dang'an ziliao xuanbian*, 45-59.

¹⁵⁸ Sichuan dang'an guan, *Jindai Kangqu dang'an ziliao xuanbian*, 458-59. The relationship between Liu Wenhui and Jiang Jieshi has not received the academic attention it deserves. Kapp's study of Sichuan militarism is excellent. However, while he does touch on other "militarists" in the province, the vast majority of his primary sources are related to Liu Xiang, Liu Wenhui's greatest rival. He provides limited information on Liu Wenhui's garrison area, and barely mentions Liu's involvement in Kham. Although it ultimately failed, Kelzang Tsering's movement in Batang as a representative of the Nationalist government suggests that Kapp's emphasis on Sichuan's independence from central authority should be qualified. Kapp, *Szechwan and the Chinese Republic*.

seize and execute Gezong Tsering [Kelzang Tsering] when the Tibetans are driven back.”¹⁵⁹ Despite Duncan’s prediction, Kelzang Tsering survived, likely because he immediately gave up command of the forces defending the town and prepared to depart Batang. Before leaving, he received a cable from Liu Wenhui inviting him to Chengdu to meet in person and discuss his plans for fighting against central Tibet and strengthening Chinese administration in Kham.¹⁶⁰ On August 4th, Kelzang Tsering led those still loyal to him, approximately two hundred in number, south out of Batang toward Luyul. Within days, central Tibetans soldiers learned of their army’s defeat in Garze. Facing refreshed resistance in Batang, they too decided to retreat and crossed the Dri River in the middle of the night on August 12.¹⁶¹

After confirming the retreat of central Tibetan soldiers across the Dri River, Ma Chenglong sought to punish the supporters of Kelzang Tsering who had remained in Batang. He quickly captured and executed several of Kelzang Tsering’s chief collaborators, including Yang Chaozong, Jetsun Chöpel (Lce btsun Chos ‘phel, 吉村曲批, Kelzang Tsering’s brother-in-law and personal assistant to Lakha Lama), Zhao Yuezhong (趙躍中), and Zeng Bolin (曾伯麟). Other supporters fled to the countryside, and only the intervention of Lakha Lama prevented more bloodshed.¹⁶² Kelzang Tsering, who had stopped at Sowanang (So ba nang, 蘇哇龍) in southern Batang in hopes of reorganizing his forces, reconciling with Ma Chenglong, and

¹⁵⁹ Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak*, 155.

¹⁶⁰ The editors of *Jindai Kangqu dang’an ziliao xuanbian* date this cable August 8, 1932, but Kelzang Tsering himself confirms he departed Batang on August 4, a date corroborated by Duncan. It is likely that Liu Wenhui invited Kelzang Tsering to Chengdu soon after Nanjing officials instructed Kelzang Tsering to cooperate with Liu in late July. Sichuan dang’an guan, *Jindai Kangqu dang’an ziliao xuanbian*, 460; Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 31; and Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak*, 155.

¹⁶¹ Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 31; *BTXZ*, 348; and Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak*, 155-56.

¹⁶² Deng and Li, “Renwu chungiu,” 143; and *BTXZ*, 340.

returning to Batang, quickly continued his departure into Yunnan.¹⁶³ On September 1, 1932, he finally accepted the central government's order to disband the Xikang Provincial Preparatory Committee and the Provincial Defense Army that he had created, ending any chance of establishing Xikang Province in the immediate future. On his return journey to Nanjing he did not stop in Chengdu to meet with Liu Wenhui.¹⁶⁴

Once the dust settled in the fall of 1932, over one thousand people had lost their lives in Batang's latest conflict.¹⁶⁵ Their compound in ruins, the American missionaries decided to accept the order they had received the previous year to close the Batang mission and prepared to return to America. By the end of August, they all had left.¹⁶⁶ Perhaps most significant, Chinese officials in Batang accepted central Tibetan sovereignty over Batang's territory west of the Dri River, including Yanjing, and central Tibetan officials no longer claimed sovereignty over territories in southern Kham east of the Dri.¹⁶⁷ With central Tibet's recent loss of Garze and Nyarong in northern Kham, both sides tacitly accepted the Dri River as the eastern boundary of central Tibetan control in Kham.

The multiple parties involved in the 1932 Batang Incident each characterized it in a different manner. For Liu Wenhui, Kelzang Tsering led a rebellion against him and the authority

¹⁶³ Batang xian diming lingdao xiaozu, *Sichuan sheng Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou Batang xian diminglu*, 44.

¹⁶⁴ Kelzang Tsering eventually regained Liu Wenhui's trust. In 1939, Liu appointed Kelzang Tsering to the Xikang Provisional Assembly (西康省臨時參議會). However, due to illness, he was not able to participate. Deng and Li, "Renwu chunqiu," 144; Kangding minzu shizhuan bianxiezhu, *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi*, 359; Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 40; and *BTXZ*, 348, 474.

¹⁶⁵ Kelzang Tsering claimed his forces lost approximately two hundred men, while central Tibetan forces lost over eight hundred. Gesang Zeren, *Kang Zang gaikuang baogao*, 32.

¹⁶⁶ Citing declining donations following the 1929 collapse of the U.S. stock market, the Disciples of Christ ordered the Americans in Batang to close the Tibetan Christian Mission in 1931, but the missionaries had decided to continue their work without U.S.-based support. Marion Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak*, 158; Marian Duncan, *A Flame of the Fire*, 240; and He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 38b.

¹⁶⁷ He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 4b; Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, 206.

of the national government. He was an unwelcome menace on Liu's western flank, and Liu immediately appealed to Nanjing to recall him as soon as possible. Not wanting to lose face themselves, the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission did not disavow Kelzang Tsering, opting instead to encourage him to cooperate with Liu. For central Tibetan officials, Kelzang Tsering propagated "dangerous ideology" that split the burgeoning Tibetan nation and threatened Tibet with a fate similar to Mongolia, which was split apart soon after the fall of the Qing dynasty. Kelzang Tsering's expulsion of Ma Chenglong's garrisons from Batang created a strategic weakness along the Tibetan-Kham border, and they did not hesitate to exploit this opportunity to assert their power east of the Dri River. As soon as Chinese soldiers made their way back to Batang, however, central Tibetan leaders lost their resolve and retreated across the Dri River. For Kelzang Tsering, his actions in Batang resulted from the confluence of multiple variables. On the one hand, his fervent and unique blend of Chinese nationalism and Khampa autonomy convinced him British influence in central Tibet had to be stopped. Central Tibetan forces were already threatening Dartsedo, and they could not be allowed to take Batang. On the other hand, Chinese rule in Batang up to that time had been characterized by inefficiency and oppression. In his mind, the only way to halt central Tibetan encroachment into southern Kham and improve local governance was to establish a provincial government led by the people of Kham. Neither the central government in Nanjing nor Liu Wenhui in Chengdu had taken sufficient concrete steps in that direction. With the support of the people in his hometown, Kelzang Tsering perhaps naïvely decided to force the issue by taking matters into his own hands. With little actual experience in governance, events quickly overwhelmed him, and he had no choice but to seek assistance from Liu Wenhui, the very person of whom he was most critical.

Kelzang Tsering's goal of a Khampa-led Xikang Province was lost, but two other "Batang Heroes" had not yet given up.¹⁶⁸

The Norlha Trulku Incident (1935-1936)

Not long after Liu Wenhui's troops rescued Kelzang Tsering and Batang from central Tibetan forces, Liu found himself embattled in a struggle for power in Sichuan proper with rival warlords. By 1935, Liu Xiang had driven Liu Wenhui further and further west, effectively removing his influence in Sichuan proper and allowing him only to operate in Dartsedo and areas west.¹⁶⁹ With Liu Wenhui's attention more focused on Kham, the middle years of the 1930s saw the people of Batang continuing to navigate increasing state power as they had been for decades. While most residents had resigned themselves to corrupt, inefficient, and oppressive Chinese rule, a handful of young intellectuals from Batang remained committed to Kelzang Tsering's Khampa self-rule in a province that would be fully integrated into the Chinese state. By the end of the decade, Liu Wenhui would consolidate his authority and finally create Xikang Province with some Khampa participation in that process. Although far from Kelzang Tsering's ideal administration in which Khampas would hold at least half of the provincial leadership positions, their inclusion in the administration of the last province to be created in the Chinese Republic reflects the influence of more militant actions advocating Khampa autonomy earlier in the decade that began with Kelzang Tsering.

Only three years after Kelzang Tsering's plans for Kham collapsed, the people of Batang found themselves embroiled in another movement to promote autonomous self-rule for Kham.

¹⁶⁸ Kelzang Tsering, Jiang Anxi, and Liu Jiaju are commonly referred to as "The Three Heroes of Batang" (巴塘三傑).

¹⁶⁹ Kapp, *Szechwan and the Chinese Republic*, 87-98.

This time, the movement extended far beyond Batang and included the regions of Derge and Tau to the north and east. The movement's nominal leader was the Norlha Trulku, a Nyingma reincarnate monk from Riwoche in northwestern Kham.¹⁷⁰ After being captured by central Tibetan soldiers during the Sino-Tibetan conflict there in 1917-1918, the Norlha Trulku was imprisoned in central Tibet for several years. He eventually escaped and made his way to Nanjing in late 1924. In inland China, he primarily gave religious teachings, but like Kelzang Tsering and many other Khampas, he hoped to regain control of territories lost to central Tibet in the 1917-1918 conflict. After moving to Sichuan in 1927, partially with the support of provincial warlord Liu Xiang, the Norlha Trulku gained a large following among local Chinese, and in 1929 he returned to Nanjing and accepted an appointment to the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission. With the support of the central government, the Norlha Trulku continued his religious teachings, and his popularity gradually expanded among Han Chinese in major cities across the country.¹⁷¹

Following his failed attempt to create autonomous self-rule in Kham, Kelzang Tsering returned to Nanjing. He continued to work on the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission and became increasingly involved in fundraising activities to support the Nationalist government's resistance against Japan. Internally, he continued to advocate for the establishment of Xikang Province, and in 1934 the central government finally took concrete action by establishing its own Xikang Provincial Preparatory Committee. This time, however, it was not Kelzang Tsering but Liu Wenhui, who had proposed the establishment of the committee to Jiang Jieshi, who was made chairman. Kelzang Tsering was not even appointed to the committee,

¹⁷⁰ The Norlha Trulku, born Sonam Raptan (Bsod nams Rab brtan), was also known as the Gara Lama (Mgar ra Bla ma). See Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*, 55-56, and notes 98 and 99.

¹⁷¹ See Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists and the Making of Modern China*, 93-97, 133-34, 165-66, and 181-83, for a detailed examination of the Norlha Trulku's years in China.

likely due to his earlier insubordination in Batang, but two prominent Khampas did join the committee: the Norlha Trulku and Liu Jiaju, Kelzang Tsering's friend, a founding member of the Xikang Nationalist Advancement Association, and a close associate of the Panchen Lama. In addition to the Provincial Preparatory Committee, the central government also granted the Norlha Trulku the title of Xikang Pacification Commissioner (西康宣慰使) in 1935.¹⁷²

Concerned about the influence of Communist forces making their way through Kham on their Long March toward Yan'an (延安), the central government dispatched the Norlha Trulku to Kham with orders to engage with local leaders, promote the Nationalist Party, and spread anti-Communist propaganda.¹⁷³ Batang native Jiang Anxi was appointed as the Norlha Trulku's Tibetan secretary, and through this position he strongly influenced the Norlha Trulku's activities in Kham.

Jiang Anxi was a close friend and classmate of Kelzang Tsering. Sharing a similar upbringing, they were both strongly committed to creating an autonomous Xikang as a part of China. Jiang Anxi was born Lobsang Thundrup in Batang in June 1906 to a Han father and Tibetan mother.¹⁷⁴ He enrolled in the missionaries' West China School in 1913 and completed his studies there as one of its first middle school graduates in 1921. He also worked at the school

¹⁷² Kangding minzu shizhuan bianxiezu, *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi*, 360.

¹⁷³ See Liu Xiaoyuan, *Frontier Passages: Ethnopolitics and the Rise of Chinese Communism, 1921-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), especially Chapter Four, for a fascinating account of the Communists' experience in Kham. While one branch of the Long March forces briefly traversed Batang's Luyul area, the majority of the Communists bypassed Batang as they made their way north through Kham.

¹⁷⁴ Jiang's original Chinese name was Chen Xinwu (陈新武), but when Kelzang Tsering introduced him to Dai Jitao in Nanjing in 1928, Dai gave him the new name of Jiang Anxi, literally "Jiang who secures the West," which he adopted for the rest of his life. *Kangshu dite huodong yu shaoshu minzu de guanxi*, n.p.; and *Kangshu Zangzu shangceng renwu jieshao*, 95a.

as a Chinese teacher and head printer after graduating until 1926.¹⁷⁵ When Kelzang Tsering, Liu Jiaju, and Yang Chaozong created the Xikang Nationalist Advancement Association, Jiang Anxi was with them. When Ma Chenglong suppressed that nascent self-rule movement, Jiang left Batang with several other local youth for Chengdu to enroll in Liu Wenhui's newly opened Frontier Administrator's Training Institute (邊政人員訓練所), where outgoing Batang County Magistrate Lei Zhenhua had secured seats for them. However, travel delays prevented Jiang from arriving on time, so he was transferred to Liu's 24th Army Political Military School, where he studied for five months. While in Chengdu, he was introduced to Gongkar Tashi, the Panchen Lama's representative who had just returned from a tour of Kham with Kelzang Tsering as his interpreter. No doubt Kelzang Tsering facilitated the introduction of his friend to Gongkar Tashi. Similarly impressed with Jiang Anxi's bilingual fluency, Gongkar Tashi gave him a letter of introduction to the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission and some travel money and recommended he go to Nanjing.

Jiang Anxi arrived in Nanjing in early 1928 and enrolled in the Central Political School's special "Xikang class" organized by Kelzang Tsering with Jiang Jieshi's support. Working closely with Kelzang Tsering to attract more Khampas to study in Nanjing, Jiang Anxi helped establish the Xikang Youth Support Society (西康青年勵志社). Like the XNAA in Batang, this organization both assisted members with financial aid and provided a forum for political discussion and activism. Together, Kelzang Tsering and Jiang attracted almost fifty students to study in Nanjing between 1928 and 1933, almost all of who returned to Batang with Kelzang Tsering in 1932.

¹⁷⁵ Chen, "Gesang Zeren, Nuona, Liu Jiaju," 125; and Sichuan sheng Batang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Batang xianzhi (xubian)*, 400.

Like Kelzang Tsering, Jiang joined the Nationalist Party while still a student, and his determination to create a province in Xikang was just as strong as his friend's. Publishing an article in the *Mongolian and Tibetan Weekly* in 1930, Jiang argued that Tibetans have long known of the foreign threat to their lands, but because in recent years inland Chinese were preoccupied with rebellions and internal disorder, they had been too busy to address the complex problems on their western frontier. Using a metaphor reminiscent of late Qing discussions of the Tibetan frontier, Jiang reminded his readers that the frontier and inland China share a common fate and are as mutually dependent as lips are to teeth (唇齒相依). Clearly explaining his preference for autonomy over independence, Jiang also wrote, "Inland China certainly cannot be safe if it is separated from the frontier regions, and the frontier regions even more so cannot diverge from the center and be independent. Deciding this path ourselves, we [Khampas] must obtain the sympathy and assistance of inland Chinese." In other words, only by the frontier and the center working together could they protect the Chinese state from foreign aggression. For Jiang, just like for Kelzang Tsering, creating a province in Kham, expanding local education, improving transportation and communication, and developing the economy were all essential steps in realizing that goal.¹⁷⁶

It is not clear whether Jiang Anxi accompanied Kelzang Tsering back to Batang in 1932. Given his close relationship with Kelzang Tsering and his future activism in support of an autonomous province in Kham, it is likely he did return like so many of his classmates, but neither Kelzang Tsering nor Jiang Anxi himself mention his participation in the 1932 Batang Incident, so we cannot be certain. We do know that after completing his studies, Jiang Anxi worked in various government positions in Nanjing, including the Mongolian and Tibetan

¹⁷⁶ Jiang Anxi, "Jianshe Xikang jihua," *Meng Zang zhoubao* 48 (1930): 20-21.

Affairs Commission, until he was appointed the Norlha Trulku's Tibetan secretary in 1935.¹⁷⁷ The Norlha Trulku's delegation departed Nanjing in 1935, and upon arriving in Chengdu Jiang Anxi received a military commission in the Chongqing branch of the Nationalist Army, a position that put him in command of a detachment of men working as the Norlha Trulku's personal security force. With a small company of approximately one hundred soldiers, the Norlha Trulku and Jiang Anxi continued west, arriving in Dartsedo in July 1935. There Jiang Anxi met up with Pangda Tobgye (Spom mda' Stobs rgyas), a son of the powerful and wealthy Pangda family who had taken refuge in Batang in 1934 after a failed uprising against central Tibetan authority in his home region of Markham, just west of Batang across the Dri River.¹⁷⁸ Given his own close connections to Batang and intense distrust of central Tibetan authorities, Pangda Tobgye agreed to use his personal militia and wealth to support the Norlha Trulku's activities in Kham.¹⁷⁹

Having presumably been outside of Kham for several years, Jiang Anxi took the opportunity to meet with a large number of Khampa headmen and monastic leaders from as far away as Nyarong and Litang who were gathered in Dartsedo to attend the Norlha Trulku's religious teachings. The abuses of Chinese administration, especially the soldiers in Liu Wenhui's 24th Army, remained of great concern to local leaders throughout Kham, and no doubt

¹⁷⁷ Sichuan sheng Batang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Batang xianzhi (xubian)*, 400.

¹⁷⁸ On the rise to prominence of the Pangda family in Kham, see Carole McGranahan, "Sa Spang Mda' Gnam Spang Mda': Murder, History, and Social Politics in 1920s Lhasa," in *Khams pa Histories: Visions of People, Place and Authority*, ed. Lawrence Epstein (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 103-125.

¹⁷⁹ Ganzi Zhouzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Ganzi Zhouzhi*, vol. 3, 2093; *Kangshu Zangzu shangceng renwu jieshao*, 69b-73a. See Carole McGranahan, "Arrested Histories: Between Empire and Exile in 20th Century Tibet," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2001), especially Chapter Four, for a rich account of the rise of the Pangda family. See also George Patterson, *Tibetan Journey* (London: Readers Book Club, 1956) and Geoffrey T. Bull, *When Iron Gates Yield* (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.) for firsthand accounts of Pangda Tobgye in the 1940s.

Jiang had heard plenty about them from Kelzang Tsering in Nanjing after his failed attempt to establish Xikang Province from Batang, if he had not experienced them himself.

In September 1935, the Norlha Trulku's delegation left Dartsedo for northern Kham. Outside of Tau, the monks of Garthar Monastery requested the Norlha Trulku's assistance in handling the ever-present bandits in the region, who the local garrison of Liu Wenhui's soldiers practically ignored. The Norlha Trulku sent Jiang Anxi and his detachment of soldiers, together with Pangda Tobgye and his personal militia of approximately two hundred men, forward to protect Tau from the bandits. Upon arriving in town, either on their own initiative or on the instructions from the Norlha Trulku, Jiang and Pangda Tobgye decided to disarm Liu Wenhui's local garrison in Tau, a tactic remarkably similar to Kelzang Tsering's uprising three years earlier. After Jiang and Pangda Tobgye falsely claimed that the central government had placed Liu's local garrisons under the command of the Norlha Trulku, Liu's soldiers quickly turned over their weapons with not a murmur of protest. A second attempt to usurp his authority in Kham by Khampas sent from Nanjing certainly angered Liu Wenhui, and he responded by dispatching soldiers from Dartsedo north to attack the Norlha Trulku's entourage. However, Liu underestimated the Norlha Trulku's influence among the Khampas. Working together with Jiang Anxi and Pangda Tobgye, the Norlha Trulku had already organized a militia of 1,500 men that repelled Liu's attack and forced his soldiers back to Dartsedo in a matter of days.¹⁸⁰

Although emboldened by the relative ease with which they had confiscated the weapons of Liu's garrison in Tau and repelled his attack from Dartsedo, the Norlha Trulku realized that he had crossed a line, and that there was no turning back in his relationship with Liu Wenhui. To

¹⁸⁰ Jiang Anxi, Lai Zuozhong, and Deng Junkang, "Nuona hutuketu zai Xikang," in *Sichuan wenshi ziliao xuanji*, vol. 29, Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Sichuan sheng weiyuanhui and wenshi ziliao yanjiu weiyuanhui, ed. (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1983): 66-68; Sichuan sheng Batang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Batang xianzhi (xubian)*, 400-01; and Ganzi Zhouzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Ganzi Zhouzhi*, vol. 3, 2093.

paraphrase the Norlha Trulku's own colorful expression, since they had already eaten a little garlic and now had bad breath, they should go ahead and finish the whole meal. With this in mind, the Norlha Trulku split his forces, ordering Pangda Tobgye and Jiang Anxi to head toward Batang while his remaining militia forces would proceed to Derge. Both towns hosted 24th Army garrisons, and only by disarming them could he solidify his control in the region.¹⁸¹

Pangda Tobgye immediately sent word to Bai Deng (白登), his top military commander in Batang, informing him of the Norlha Trulku's plans and his intention to return to Batang. He also ordered Bai Deng to prepare his local militia, which consisted mainly of men from Qicungou outside of Batang proper, to seize the arms of the local garrison, which was now under the command of Fu Dequan, who had succeeded Ma Chenglong in 1935.¹⁸² At the same time, Jiang Anxi hastily went ahead of Pangda Tobgye and returned to Batang. Jiang had hoped to coordinate with Lakha Lama and organize the townspeople to support their impending actions, but Fu stopped Jiang at a checkpoint outside the town. Nevertheless, Jiang was able to get word to Lakha Lama to prepare, and then he moved north to Derge to reconnect with the Norlha Trulku's militia.¹⁸³

Before Pangda Tobgye returned to Batang with his personal militia, Bai Deng learned that one company in Fu Dequan's battalions was far from Batang escorting grain to another detachment. Hoping to take advantage of Fu's garrison being below full strength, Bai and Lakha Lama decided to act. Lakha Lama invited Fu Dequan and his family for a meal at Ba Chöde Monastery, during which time monks under his command disarmed and detained Fu and his

¹⁸¹ Feng, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 149; Jiang, Lai, and Deng, "Nuona hutuketu zai Xikang," 68; and *BTXZ*, 334.

¹⁸² Sichuan sheng Batang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Batang xianzhi (xubian)*, 389.

¹⁸³ See Goldstein, Dawei Sherap, and Siebenschuh, *A Tibetan Revolutionary*, 15-21, for a slightly different narrative of Jiang Anxi's "coup" in Batang than what I describe here.

family. Lakha Lama and Bai Deng then demanded Fu hand over all the munitions in his garrison and immediately escort his battalions out of Batang. To Lakha Lama's surprise, Fu agreed to his demands, only requesting that he be released and given three days to make necessary preparations. As a show of good faith, he agreed that Bai Deng could hold his wife and stepson as collateral. Fu also swore an oath in front of a protector deity. Satisfied, Lakha Lama and Bai Deng let Fu Dequan return to his garrison.

After three days had passed, Fu sent a messenger to Lakha Lama saying that his subordinates could not decide the best way to leave Batang, so he would like Lakha Lama to come to the garrison to perform a divination ritual to break the deadlock. When Lakha Lama arrived at Fu's garrison, Fu detained him and held him out of sight. Fu then informed the monks and people of Batang that Lakha Lama would be killed if they supported Pangda Tobgye's militia. Given the deep reverence Lakha Lama commanded among the people of Batang, they agreed to fight alongside Fu's soldiers against Pangda Tobgye's militia, who they now saw as a threat to their senior religious leader. At the same time, Fu Dequan sent a secret message to recall his company outside of Batang. Sneaking into the garrison's munitions depot, Fu Dequan's soldiers also killed the watch standers and, in a warning to Bai Deng's militia guarding the exterior of the garrison, stuffed their bodies into a cannon and fired them over the perimeter wall. Fu Dequan then distributed rifles and ammunition to the monks of Ba Chöde Monastery and the people of Batang, and together they torched Pangda Tobgye's personal residence in the town. For the next month, they engaged in serious fighting with Pangda Tobgye's militia under the command of Bai Deng. While Bai Deng's losses are not known, over eighty of Fu's men were killed. Despite his losses, Fu's superior numbers began to overwhelm Bai Deng, and by the time Pangda Tobgye finally arrived with reinforcements, Bai had already retreated with Fu's wife and

stepson to Ride (日得), east of Batang proper. Hoping to regroup, Pangda Tobgye withdrew his entire militia to Qicungou, far enough away from Batang to avoid any fighting with Fu's forces.

Sensing that their attempt to take Batang would be impossible without the support of local residents, Pangda Tobgye requested the Norlha Trulku dispatch Jiang Anxi to Batang as soon as possible to help him mount a second assault on Fu's garrison. He also agreed to release Fu's family members, returning them to Batang unharmed. While Bai Deng, Pangda Tobgye's militia commander, botched their attempt to disarm Fu Dequan in Batang, the Norlha Trulku and Jiang Anxi were much more successful in northern Kham. With their militia growing daily, they elevated the status of native chieftains in Garze, Nyarong, and Derge, giving them control over military and many of the administrative functions held by the Chinese magistrates that Liu Wenhui had appointed to rule the region. What this meant on the ground is unclear, but it is significant that the Norlha Trulku and Jiang Anxi did not dismiss Liu's civil officials in northern Kham. Rather, they retained their positions and assisted the native chieftains in governing the area.¹⁸⁴ This suggests that common portrayals of the Norlha Trulku as determined to remove all traces of Chinese administration in Kham are inaccurate. In fact, the Norlha Trulku's emphasis was on self-rule in the same tradition as Kelzang Tsering.¹⁸⁵

Understanding the strategic importance of Batang, the Norlha Trulku sent Jiang Anxi back to his hometown in early 1936 with a cache of Chinese made rifles to coordinate a second assault on the local garrison. Accompanying him were thirty Batang men formerly under Fu

¹⁸⁴ Jiang, Lai, and Deng, "Nuona hutuketu zai Xikang," 68-72; Feng, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 149-154; Goldstein, Dawei Sherap, and Siebenschuh, *A Tibetan Revolutionary*, 17-21; *BTXZ*, 14; and Lobsang Gyaltzen, 'Ba' *kyi lo rgyus*, 91-96. Lobsang Gyaltzen adds that upon returning Lakha Lama safely to Ba Chöde Monastery, Fu publically praised Lakha Lama's contributions to Batang's security, apologized for threatening him, and offered donations to the monastery. The older monks, who had never witnessed such graciousness by a Chinese official, were dumbfounded by Fu's actions.

¹⁸⁵ For a typical example of this mischaracterization, see Hsiao-Ting Lin, *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier: Intrigues and Ethnopolitics, 1928-49* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 93-94.

Dequan's command who had recently been stationed in Pelyul (Dpal yul, 白玉)¹⁸⁶ until Jiang Anxi convinced them to desert their post and support his efforts, and not far behind were as many as four hundred local militia men he and the Norlha Trulku had recruited in northern Kham. Jiang's first order of business after meeting up with Pangda Tobgye in Qicungou was to repair the rift that Fu had orchestrated between Lakha Lama and Pangda Tobgye. After convincing Pangda Tobgye not to hold the monks of Ba Chöde Monastery responsible for the destruction of his Batang residence, Jiang, Pangda Tobgye, and Lakha Lama set up their headquarters in Ba Chöde Monastery. While Pangda Tobgye integrated the men from northern Kham with his militia made up of men from Qicungou and Linkashi, Jiang quietly reached out to his old friends in the Xikang Nationalist Advancement Association and other youth associations in town. After several clandestine meetings, he thought he had gained at least the neutrality, if not outright support, of these groups, but he later learned that some of his contacts informed on him to Fu Dequan. No longer trusting his former associates, Jiang gave up working with them all together.

With as many as nine hundred men gathered in Qicungou and an additional one hundred armed monks at Ba Chöde Monastery, the combined forces of Jiang Anxi, Pangda Tobgye, and Lakha Lama were comparable in size to Fu's two battalions. The three leaders decided to launch their attack from the northeast, the weakest point in Batang's defenses, near the Guandi Temple. Pangda Tobgye led the first frontal attack on an evening in early February 1936. His forces easily scaled the town wall, but someone had leaked their battle plans to Fu, and sharpshooters lying in wait on the upper floors of the Guandi Temple began picking off his men with semi-automatic weapons. Not prepared for such a quick defense by Fu's soldiers, Pangda Tobgye's militia fell into disarray and soon retreated. Rather than risk additional loss of life in another

¹⁸⁶ Present-day Baiyu County (白玉縣).

frontal assault, Jiang and Pangda Tobgye decided to force Fu to surrender by cutting off the supply of grains from inland China on which his battalions depended. They also again broke with Lakha Lama, whose senior staff had been feeding Fu Dequan with intelligence on their plans.¹⁸⁷ However, not long after planning their next steps to lay siege to the town, the Norlha Trulku's militia suffered a major defeat by the Communist army near Nyarong. The Norlha Trulku initially escaped, but he was later captured and, perhaps because of exhaustion, soon died in a Communist field hospital. When Jiang and Pangda Tobgye learned of the Norlha Trulku's defeat, capture, and death, they knew their cause was lost and they lifted their siege on Batang.

The second attempt by a Batang native to implement autonomous self-rule in Kham had again failed. Like Kelzang Tsering before him, Jiang Anxi escaped punishment, as did Pangda Tobgye. Jiang quietly left Batang and returned to Nanjing in July 1937, just in time to evacuate the city with the Nationalist government, fleeing first to Wuhan (武漢) and then Chongqing.¹⁸⁸ Pangda Tobgye remained in the Qicungou corner of Batang, his wealth, family name, and private militia protecting him from any retribution or interference by Fu Dequan or other forces under Liu Wenhui's command.¹⁸⁹ Beyond betrayals, poor planning, and lack of training, all of which Jiang Anxi acknowledged as causes for his failure, we must also recognize his inability to win

¹⁸⁷ The origin of the animosity between Lakha Lama and Pangda Tobgye is unclear, but Jiang Anxi obviously was unable to mend their relationship. Lakha Lama was also known to be easily swayed by his staff. Writing in 1941, long-time Han official in Kham He Juefei noted, "Baan's Bao Angwu, also known as Bao [Lakha] Lama, is the *khenpo* of Dingning [Ba Chöde] Monastery. His knowledge of sutras is sharp, but he lacks his own opinions in dealing with other matters and is often deceived and screened by his followers. He thinks that people live by incessantly reciting scriptures...." He, *Xikang jishi shiben shizhu*, 149.

¹⁸⁸ Jiang Anxi eventually returned to Batang and later became county magistrate at the time when Phuntsok Wangyal, Jiang's nephew, led local Communists to liberate Batang. Personal interview, Phuntsok Wangyal, Beijing, February 2003. Evincing the continued sensitivity of Phuntsok Wangyal in Chinese and Tibetan history as recently as 2001, not a single Chinese language biographical source on Jiang Anxi published before this time mentions his close relationship with his nephew. Even Goldstein, Dawei Sherap, and Siebensschuh only refer to Phuntsok Wangyal's uncle by his Tibetan name, Lobsang Thundrup, and merely hint at Jiang Anxi's more complicated past. Goldstein, Dawei Sherap, and Siebensschuh, *A Tibetan Revolutionary*.

¹⁸⁹ Jiang, Lai, and Deng, "Nuona hutuketu zai Xikang," 72-75; Feng, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 154-61; *BTXZ*, 14; and Sichuan sheng Batang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Batang xianzhi (xubian)*, 401.

the support of the people of Batang as a key factor in the collapse of his efforts to expel Liu Wenhui and establish self-rule. Not only had Lakha Lama's senior staff secretly supported Fu Dequan, but Jiang's former classmates that made up the Xikang Nationalist Advancement Association were reluctant to back him.

It is possible that local residents' reluctance to aid Jiang Anxi was related to their aversion to his ally, Pangda Tobgye, who had recently relocated to Batang. A more likely explanation is that local residents were coming to accept Chinese Nationalist rule. While inefficiencies and oppression still remained, in the years after Kelzang Tsering left Batang, there were some signs of improvement. For example, since the fall of the Qing, the restrictions Zhao Erfeng imposed on monasteries in Kham had completely lapsed. Due to their eroding political authority in the early Republican period, local officials simply lacked the resources to carry out Zhao's initiatives. This allowed monasteries to replenish their registers and grow in size. While Chinese observers at the time often lamented the fact that an increase in monks would over time lead to negative demographic growth in Kham, they did not call for a return to Zhao's restrictive policies and instead expressed toleration for local expressions of Tibetan Buddhist faith.¹⁹⁰ Chinese officials also directly supported the growth of Tibetan Buddhism in Kham and Batang. For example, in 1934, Tang Ying (唐英), a senior military official in Liu Wenhui's administration, granted Lakha Lama the title of Batang Militia Supervisor (巴安保衛團督察長). The following year, after lobbying Sichuan officials for thirteen years since returning to Batang, Lakha Lama finally received full compensation for the damage done to Ba Chöde Monastery in

¹⁹⁰ Yang, "Baan xiaozhi," 56; He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 36b; and Feng, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 282-83.

1905 and permission to rebuild the monastery, which allowed him to provide residences for the majority of the over nine hundred monks registered at his monastery.¹⁹¹

Banditry in the region had also been on the decline since Kelzang Tsering's departure. This was partially due to the changing relationship between Trinle Lhorong, the headman of Luyul, and the local government. As discussed previously, Trinle Lhorong had allied himself with Kelzang Tsering in 1932 and was actively involved in the fighting between Kelzang Tsering's militia and the combined forces of central Tibetan soldiers and Gongkar Lama's militia from Yanjing. When Ma Chenglong's return to Batang forced the central Tibetans to retreat and Kelzang Tsering to return to Nanjing, Trinle Lhorong attempted to reconcile with Ma Chenglong and the Batang local government. He began by submitting some grain taxes, albeit at levels far below the assessed values of the fields in Luyul, around 1933.¹⁹² Further disagreements between Ma and Trinle Lhorong resulted in some armed conflict, but by 1935 they had negotiated a truce, and Trinle Lhorong was given the title of Local Militia Commander (士兵大隊長) in exchange for his agreement to submit more taxes and ensure stability in Luyul.¹⁹³ With official patronage of Batang's religious leader and more stability in the region due to declining cases of banditry, the people of Batang simply had less interest in supporting another attempt at self-rule. Liu Wenhui was well on his way to eliminating independent calls for autonomous self-rule in Kham.

¹⁹¹ Lobsang Gyaltzen, *'Ba' kyi lo rgyus*, 5; *Kangshu Zangzu shangceng renwu jieshao*, 81b; *BTXZ*, 14, 437; He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 37a; and Zhou and Ran, *Zang chuan fojiao siyuan ziliao xuanbian*, 318.

¹⁹² Sichuan dang'an guan, Min 223: Tianfu guanli chu, juan 39, c38, dated Dec. 27, 1941; *BTXZ*, 490.

¹⁹³ *Kangshu dite huodong yu shaoshu minzu de guanxi*, n.p.; Bamei Cideng, Xirao Ere, and Lai, "Jiefang qian Batang dongnanqu yuanjia jiedou yu siyuan de guanxi," 99-102; and *BTXZ*, 475.

Accepting Nationalist Rule and Liu Jiaju's Challenge to Liu Wenhui in Kham (1936-1939)

As Liu Wenhui's power in Sichuan proper waned, he increasingly focused on consolidating his influence in Kham. In 1933, after failing to unite Sichuan under his leadership, he proposed to Jiang Jieshi to establish Xikang Province, an idea first put forth by Zhao Erfeng thirty years earlier. Jiang accepted Liu's proposal and approved the establishment of a formal Xikang Provincial Preparatory Committee in February 1934. The seven member committee headed by Liu Wenhui first convened the following year in Yaan (雅安).¹⁹⁴ The full story of Liu Wenhui's consolidation of power throughout Kham that resulted in the establishment of Xikang Province on January 1, 1939, has yet to be told in English scholarship, but an accurate account of this important process in Republican era state building is beyond the scope of this dissertation. In this final section, I will discuss the increasing influence of Liu Wenhui's representatives in Batang and one final challenge to his rule in Kham by Batang native Liu Jiaju.

In the years surrounding the Norlha Trulku and Jiang Anxi's failed attempt to usurp Liu Wenhui's power and promote Khampa self-rule, Chinese officials in Batang achieved a series of concrete gains that gradually confirmed Liu's political supremacy in the region. For example, one of the first acts of the new Xikang Provincial Preparatory Committee was to request local officials to institute a *baojia* (保甲) system for mutual community security in 1935. This system represented China's lowest level of governance and was being revitalized in Sichuan as part of a series of administrative reforms under Liu Xiang at the same time.¹⁹⁵ Only slightly different from Zhao Erfeng's 1908 *baozheng* system, Fu Dequan quickly reestablished this network of

¹⁹⁴ *Lidai fandong zhengfu dui Kangshu de tongzhi (er)*, 28a.

¹⁹⁵ Kapp, *Szechwan and the Chinese Republic*, 111-113.

community leaders in Batang in 1936.¹⁹⁶ Extant records are not available to determine if all former Qing *baozheng* representatives became Nationalist *baojia* agents, but it is likely that many of them did. We do know, for instance, that Fu Dequan appointed former *baozheng* Trinle Lhorong as Batang Khampa Special Security Captain (巴安康族特種保安大隊長), the head of the *baojia* system in Luyul.¹⁹⁷ Evincing his continued influence in northern Batang, Fu also appointed Pangda Tobgye as Commander of the Xikang Third District Public Security Office (西康省第三區保安司令部司令), another senior *baojia* position in Batang.¹⁹⁸ In exchange for such official recognition, Fu expected *baojia* representatives to collect taxes and ensure public safety in their districts on behalf of the local government. While Trinle Lhorong remained engaged in a long-standing feud with Padme Tseten that led to some property destruction and loss of life, the earlier days of ubiquitous banditry and insecurity in southern Batang had passed.¹⁹⁹ In northeastern Batang, Pangda Tobgye was similarly effective in controlling banditry in the region. Since the main road from Litang passed near Pangda Tobgye's district, less banditry meant smoother communication and improved transportation in and out of Batang, both of which gradually improved governance and the local economy.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ Zhao Erfeng's *baozheng* system consisted of five districts and forty-one village headmen. Fu Dequan's *baojia* system consisted of five districts, twenty-five security groups (保), and 256 security clusters (甲). In theory, each cluster had ten households, and each group had ten clusters. In practice, there was wide variation in the make up each cluster and group. *QCBDS*, no. 257, 278; Liu, *Baan xian tuzhi*, 29; and *BTXZ*, 15.

¹⁹⁷ *Lidai fandong zhengfu dui Kangshu de tongzhi (er)*, 42a; *Kangshu dite huodong yu shaoshu minzu de guanxi*, n.p.; and *BTXZ*, 491.

¹⁹⁸ *Kangshu dite huodong yu shaoshu minzu de guanxi*, n.p.; and Ganzi Zhouzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Ganzi Zhouzhi*, vol. 3, 2093.

¹⁹⁹ Bamei Cideng, Xirao Ere, and Lai, "Jiefang qian Batang dongnanqu yuanjia jiedou yu siyuan de guanxi," 96-102; Sichuan dang'an guan, Min 200: Jiansheng weiyuanhui: juan 5: c100, dated Feb. 26, 1938; and Sichuan dang'an guan, Min 200: Jiansheng weiyuanhui: juan 5: c103, dated Feb. 21, 1938.

²⁰⁰ Sichuan dang'an guan, Min 223: Tianfu guanli chu: juan 167: c246, [N.d.]; and Duncan, *The Yangtze and the Yak*, 163.

Chinese officials also adopted a series of measures focusing on tax restructuring, land reclamation, and corvée labor reform, all of which they designed to improve Batang's local economy. As discussed above, since the late 1910s, Batang officials were increasingly frustrated with their inability to collect grain taxes from the local populace. Even with the coercive power of military escorts in Batang proper, they were still only able to collect approximately three to four hundred *shi* annually through the 1920s and early 1930s, and this remained far below the 2,900 *shi* Zhao Erfeng had assessed for all lands in Batang.²⁰¹ Following Kelzang Tsering's failed uprising in 1932, Chinese officials also lost their sovereignty over Batang's territories west of the Dri River, further decreasing their annual tax revenue to less than three hundred *shi*.²⁰²

After the suppression of the Norlha Trulku's attempt to institute Khampa self-rule in 1936, tax collection began to improve in Batang.²⁰³ For example, in the late 1930s, Trinle Lhorong began submitting more taxes to the Batang government, although how far what he submitted was below his district's assessed values is unknown. In northeastern Batang, Pangda Tobgye similarly became more effective in collecting taxes, especially with the assistance of military escorts dispatched from Fu's garrison. In 1937, acting Batang County Magistrate Zhao Guotai (趙國泰) also prepared to institute new tax regulations. Writing to the Xikang Provincial Preparatory Committee, Zhao said that the current system, while improving, was still unstable and subject to abuse. Echoing similar concerns to those of Zhao Erfeng, Zhao complained that people still took advantage of local circumstances to create trouble, and whenever officials dunned for taxes, "people would seek lamas to represent them or allow *gutsa* to overstep their

²⁰¹ Yang Zhonghua reported Batang officials collected 1,300 *shi* in grain taxes in 1917, and over 3,625 *shi* in 1935. While the former figure may be realistic, archival records contradict the latter one, which cannot be accurate. Yang, *Xikang jiyao*, 1:139-141; and Sichuan dang'an guan, Min 223: Tianfu guanli chu: juan 419: c407b, dated Oct. 28, 1941.

²⁰² Li Zhongding, "Kangnan ba xian jiyao—Baan," *Bianjiang tongxun* 1, no. 4 (1944): 15.

²⁰³ Sichuan dang'an guan, Min 223: Tianfu guanli chu: juan 419: c407b, dated Oct. 28, 1941.

authority” with tax collectors, who after all remained more interested in personal profit than augmenting county coffers.²⁰⁴ In response, Zhao Guotai intended to dispatch garrison soldiers more frequently to assist *baojia* representatives collect taxes while monitoring their personal profit. These efforts at improving Batang’s tax structure more than doubled the county’s annual revenues to approximately 1,000 *shi* by the late 1930s.²⁰⁵ This was far below Zhao Erfeng’s assessment of 2,900 *shi*, but it still represents marked progress in the local government’s ability to extract resources and, in theory, provide basic services to the people, since the beginning of the Republican period.

Local officials also attempted to revitalize land reclamation efforts in Batang. Banditry in the post-Qing era had forced almost all of the Sichuan migrants who came to Batang in the late Qing to abandon their plots and return home.²⁰⁶ In 1934, new Batang County Magistrate Dai Anqin (戴安琴) called for new migrants to come to Batang, enticing them with the opportunity for full ownership of the land they reclaimed, low interest loans on seeds, and reduced taxes. Dai also began work on refurbishing irrigation canals to increase lands available for cultivation.²⁰⁷ Extant evidence suggests Dai’s plan achieved some positive results. By the end of 1935, Batang officials had established a county-sponsored experimental agricultural farm (巴安縣立農事試驗場) that covered seven to eight *mu* in front of Zhao Erfeng’s abandoned yamen office.²⁰⁸ In 1938, Fu Dequan also supervised the construction of an aqueduct across Hutou Mountain that

²⁰⁴ Sichuan dang’an guan, Min 200: Jiansheng weiyuanhui: juan 5: c115, dated July 20, 1938; also redacted in Sichuan dang’an guan, *Jindai Kangqu dang’an ziliao xuanbian*, 166-69.

²⁰⁵ Sichuan dang’an guan, Min 223: Tianfu guanli chu: juan 419: c407b, dated Oct. 28, 1941.

²⁰⁶ He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 27a.

²⁰⁷ “Baan xian zhao min kaiken huangdi,” *Chuanbian jikan* 1, no. 2 (1935): 136.

²⁰⁸ “Xikang xingzheng ducha zhuan yuan gongshuhui cheng Kangshu nongshi shiyan chang yilanbiao,” *Xikang jiansheng weiyuanhui gongbao* 2 (1937): 122.

expanded agricultural lands south of the town by over one thousand *mu* when it was finished two years later.²⁰⁹

Just as banditry had run off Batang's nascent migrant population, it also disrupted early Republican era attempts to enforce Zhao Erfeng's new corvée labor regulations. By the mid-1930s, grains and other supplies could only be transported to and from Batang's town center under heavy military escort.²¹⁰ Preoccupied with maintaining their tenuous hold on power and suppressing banditry in the region, it was not until late 1936 that Batang officials attempted to reform the county's corvée labor system. Like Zhao Erfeng, officials first addressed what they saw as the root of the system's problem, *i.e.*, the persistent practice of estate holders asserting ownership of people living on their lands. The labor of Batang's population tied to lands designated to support corvée in the region had maintained this traditional system of transportation in Batang, just as it did throughout Tibetan areas. Zhao had chastised Tibetans for considering themselves as belonging to someone else, banned such practices, and decreed that henceforth government officials and private merchants would pay for all labor services. Like most of his policies, however, Zhao's corvée reforms collapsed with the fall of the dynasty. Over thirty years later, in another attempt to reform long-standing corvée practices, local Chinese officials again officially outlawed slavery and servitude in the region. Making little immediate progress in eradicating the widespread practice of exploiting bounded people's labor to support corvée transportation, in 1937 local officials decided to adopt a gradual approach to solving this problem. They first proclaimed that all civil and military officials would pay for all corvée

²⁰⁹ Ba Ren, "Xikang de xin Baan," *Kang dao yuekan* 4, no. 4 (1943): 78, in *Kangqu Zangzu shehui lishi diaocha ziliao jiyao*, ed. Zhao *et al.*, 397; Sichuan sheng Batang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Batang xianzhi (xubian)*, 389-90; and You Zhen, "Qingdai zhi Minguo shiqi Hanzu yimin zai Batang huodong zhi mianmianguan," *Xizang yanjiu* 1 (2010): 10.

²¹⁰ He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 21b.

services at pre-established rates. Reflecting the Nationalist Party's emphasis on equality among different ethnic groups, local students in Batang would also be taught to respect human dignity, and all public activities sponsored by county officials would emphasize equality among different ethnicities. Finally, addressing local headmen and influential monks, Batang officials urged them to respect the law and treat everyone equally. If they failed to do so, officials would not hesitate to call on garrisoned soldiers to ensure equality and prevent further exploitation.²¹¹

While a stronger administrative system, more efficient tax collection, and other economic reforms may not have directly benefitted the local people in Batang, they did demonstrate that Liu Wenhui's officials were solidifying their power and legitimacy in the region. Reforms and programs in other areas similarly reflected this trend. For example, continuing their support of Tibetan Buddhist leaders in Batang, the Nationalist government invited Ju Lama ('Ju Bla ma, 巴角活佛), a senior *trulku* at Ba Chöde Monastery, to Chongqing in 1936, where he met with Jiang Jieshi and received an appointment as a military advisor in the Chengdu field office (成都行轅少將參議). Not long thereafter, Ju Lama also received training at the Nationalist Party's Central Military Academy (中央軍校).²¹² Similarly, Liu Wenhui supported Lakha Lama by granting him the title of "Sustaining Teacher of Religion" (輔教師) for the Batang region in 1937.²¹³ Such titles were ceremonial and included no tangible responsibilities, but they did continue a long tradition of Chinese patronage of Tibetan Buddhist leaders. At the same time, Lakha Lama and

²¹¹ Sichuan dang'an guan, *Jindai Kangqu dang'an ziliao xuanbian*, 385-86.

²¹² Zhou and Ran, *Zang chuan fojiao siyuan ziliao xuanbian*, 319; and *BTXZ*, 15.

²¹³ *Kangshu Zangzu shangceng renwu jieshao*, 81b; and *BTXZ*, 15. These two sources conflict on the date Liu Wenhui granted this title. The former source says 1939, while the later says 1937. I suspect Liu decided to grant Lakha Lama a title to raise his local profile soon after Jiang Jieshi gave Ju Lama his title, so I have accepted the earlier date.

Ju Lama's willingness to accept these titles and state-sponsored training suggests a growing recognition of Nationalist rule in Batang.

With slightly increased revenues following improved tax collection methods, Batang officials were also able to expand educational opportunities in the 1930s. By 1934, Batang's public elementary school had grown to three classes with approximately one hundred students and five teachers, and enrollments steadily increased to one hundred fifty over the next several years.²¹⁴ In 1936, County Magistrate Wu Wenyuan (吴文渊) established seven short-term schools to provide basic education for farming and pastoral communities outside Batang proper. The following year, Batang County Magistrate Zhao Guotai added three additional short-term schools in the region, including one exclusively Tibetan language school in Batang's public library. Two years later, Batang became the first town west of Dartsedo to host a provincial level elementary school, further evidence of increasing government revenues and a commitment to improving the quality of life for Batang residents.²¹⁵

Political restructuring, economic reforms, religious patronage, and improved educational opportunities all demonstrate the growing power of Chinese officials in Batang. Further evincing the growing wealth and power of the Nationalist state in Batang, Fu Dequan constructed a public square and stage honoring Sun Yat-sen in front of the former head native chieftain's compound, which now served as Fu's military barracks, in 1938. The tree-lined square, which doubled as a parade ground, included basketball and tennis courts, a sports field, and exercise equipment, and

²¹⁴ Sichuan dang'an guan, Min 228; Jiaoyuting: juan 213: c150, dated Oct. 1935; "Ershisi niandu Xikang ge xian xuexiao jiaoyu diaocha," *Chuanbian jikan* 1, no. 4 (1935): 281; Yang, "Baan xiaozhi," 55; and He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 24b-25b. See also "Xikang jiaoyu fang'an," *Kang Zang qianfeng* 3, no. 1 (1935): 32; and Zhang Hongkui, "Minguo ershisi niandu Xikang ge xian xuexiao jiaoyu yilan," *Kang Zang qianfeng* 3, no. 1 (1935): 38-39.

²¹⁵ Jiang and Lai, "Batang xian jiefang qianhou wenjiao gaishu," 140-41; Ba Ren, "Xikang de xin Baan," 77; and *BTXZ*, 376.

Fu often led public ceremonies in the space.²¹⁶ The location of Fu's square is significant.

Although Batang's two native chieftains had been executed and removed from power over thirty years earlier, they and other headmen still represented secular authority in the minds of most Batang residents. Housing his soldiers in the former head native chieftain's compound and constructing a public space just outside its walls was a clear attempt by Fu Dequan to coopt the symbolic power of the native chieftains for the Nationalist state.

On January 1, 1939, the Nationalist government in Chongqing formally established Xikang Province and appointed Liu Wenhui as its first and only governor. The integration of Kham into the Chinese state confirmed Liu Wenhui's ability to maintain relatively stable governance in the region. Although Xikang Province was an endorsement of Liu Wenhui's power, he was not without at least one significant challenger with strong ties to the Nationalist government. In the early 1930s, Khampas in Nanjing led by Kelzang Tsering proposed the creation of Xikang Province with the Panchen Lama at its head. In late 1939, the Panchen Lama attempted to realize this plan in Garze. Generally referred to as the "Garze Incident" (甘孜事變), the actions of the Panchen Lama and his senior staff had no discernible impact on the people of Batang, unlike Kelzang Tsering's uprising in 1932 and Jiang Anxi's insurrection under the leadership of the Norlha Trulku in 1935-1936. Nevertheless, like these two earlier events, a Batang native played a fundamental role in the last major attempt by Khampas to assert autonomous self-rule in the Republican era.

As mentioned previously, Liu Jiaju was an important figure in Republican-era Kham who was a member of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, the Chief Secretary of the Panchen Lama, and an early representative on Liu Wenhui's Xikang Provincial Preparatory

²¹⁶ He, *Chuan Kang bianzheng ziliao jiyao*, 14a; and Sichuan sheng Batang xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Batang xianzhi (xubian)*, 390.

Committee. Liu Jiaju's early life paralleled those of Kelzang Tsering and Jiang Anxi. Born in 1900, his father, Liu Guanyong (劉觀鏞), was a Han teacher at a local mandarin school, and his mother was Tibetan. He enrolled in a mandarin school at age five and entered Batang's elementary school in 1910, graduating in 1913. After studying Tibetan with a private tutor for a few years, he was accepted as a middle school student at the missionaries' West China School at age 18, where he continued to improve his Tibetan and study other subjects. His academic performance and maturity impressed the missionaries, who hired him as a Chinese language teacher for elementary school students. The next year, they appointed him the school's first local principal, a position he held until 1923. Liu Jiaju then became principal of Batang's first county level elementary school, and in that capacity he served as acting head of the County Education Department. The Xikang Nationalist Advancement Association also elected Liu Jiaju as their first deputy chairperson in 1927.²¹⁷ His leadership role in the XNAA no doubt strengthened his mistrust of the rule of local Han officials nominally under Liu Wenhui while simultaneously confirming his belief in the power of the central government to save Batang and Kham from Liu's corrupt rule, just as the XNAA had done for Kelzang Tsering and Jiang Anxi.

After the XNAA movement collapsed, Liu Jiaju followed Kelzang Tsering to Nanjing in 1928. Writing in 1932 about his motivations at the time, Liu claimed he went to Nanjing to promote the establishment of Xikang Province, but circumstances beyond his control prevented his success.²¹⁸ He would not give up this dream for many years. After arriving in Nanjing, Liu first worked at the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, where he was promoted from employee to commission member after joining the Nationalist Party in 1931. He also worked as an editor at the *Mongolian and Tibetan Weekly*, where he penned several articles on Batang and

²¹⁷ Li, "Liu Jiaju zhuan," 73; and *BTXZ*, 486.

²¹⁸ Liu, "Kang Zang zhi guoqu ji jinhou zhi jianshe," 113.

Kham, and at the Central Party School as a Tibetan language instructor. In 1932 he published his first book-length work, *Kham and Tibet* (康藏), with Dai Jitao's New Asia Press. In July of that year, Dai Jitao recommended Liu become the Panchen Lama's chief Tibetan secretary, a position that gave him direct access to Tibet's second most powerful leader after the Dalai Lama. Liu held this position until 1939, when the Nationalist government finally dissolved the Panchen Lama's field office (行轅), two full years after the religious leader's death in 1937.²¹⁹

Soon after being appointed to the Panchen Lama's office, Liu Jiaju began traveling with the Panchen Lama, first to Inner Mongolia, and later to Beijing, Shanghai, and other cities in inland China, where the Panchen Lama gave religious teachings and, to an extent, promoted Nationalist policies as a state-recognized envoy.²²⁰ In 1934, the Panchen Lama began his journey back to Tibet with Liu Jiaju at his side. Hoping to win the support of the very influential Panchen Lama, Liu Wenhui also appointed Liu Jiaju to the newly formed Xikang Provincial Preparatory Committee at the time. Despite the Panchen Lama's attempts to return to his home territory in central Tibet, the central Tibetan government remained concerned about the destabilizing effect of his return, especially with an escort of Nationalist soldiers, and prevented him from re-entering central Tibet. The Panchen Lama eventually died in exile in northern Kham's Yushu (Yul shul, 玉樹) region on December 1, 1937.²²¹ The Panchen Lama's field office, which oversaw their deceased leader's massive travelling estate, remained intact, and his office, directed now by Liu Jiaju, moved the Panchen Lama's body south toward Garze.

²¹⁹ *Kangshu dite huodong yu shaoshu minzu de guanxi*, n.p.; Li, "Liu Jiaju zhuan," 74-75; and *BTXZ*, 486-87.

²²⁰ See Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*, especially Chapters Five-Seven, for in-depth analysis of the Panchen Lama's activities in China, his increasingly close relationship with the Nationalist government, and his travels in China proper, Mongolia, and Kham as an official envoy of the Nationalist government.

²²¹ Yushu is located in present-day Qinghai Province's Yushu prefecture. Li, "Liu Jiaju zhuan," 75; and *BTXZ*, 487.

Liu Wenhui invited Liu Jiaju to bring the Panchen Lama's remains further south to Dartsedo, which he hoped would become a pilgrimage site for Chinese and Tibetans and thereby bring prestige to the town, which had become the center of his powerbase in Kham and the presumed capital of the future province. However, Liu Jiaju remained distrustful of Liu Wenhui, and the field office stopped in Garze, home of the Khangsar (Khang gsar, 孔撒) family, one of the most powerful lineages in northern Kham. From this location, Liu Jiaju and the Panchen Lama's field office, calling again for Khampa autonomous self-rule, attempted to push Liu Wenhui out of the region. Liu Jiaju initiated his movement in August 1938 by proposing to the central government the creation of a special administrative region in northern Kham, where the influence of the Panchen Lama was the strongest, under the management of his field office, essentially rejuvenating the same proposal the Panchen Lama had previously made in 1930.²²² Directly threatening his aspirations to establish Xikang Province, Liu Wenhui immediately dismissed Liu Jiaju from the Xikang Provincial Preparatory Committee.²²³ Seemingly not wanting to further complicate the Nationalist government's relationship with Liu Wenhui, which remained tenuous, Dai Jitao also initially refused Liu Jiaju's proposal.²²⁴ However, upon arriving in Garze to pay his respects to the deceased Panchen Lama around the same time as Liu Jiaju's proposal, Dai in fact directly interfered in Liu Wenhui's attempts to consolidate his power on the eve of the establishment of Xikang Province.

Knowing that the Khangsar family was extremely powerful in northern Kham, Liu Wenhui had previously adopted Dechen Wangmu (Bde chen dbang mo, 德欽汪姆), the female

²²² *Lidai fandong zhengfu dui Kangshu de tongzhi (er)*, 28a; Huang, "Minguo Xikang Gesang Zeren shijian yanjiu," 118.

²²³ *Lidai fandong zhengfu dui Kangshu de tongzhi (er)*, 33b.

²²⁴ Deng and Li, "Renwu chungiu," 135-36.

heir of the family, as his nominal daughter (幹女兒) and attempted to arrange a marriage between her and one of his Han military officers. To his frustration, however, both Dechen Wangmu and Liu's officer cited "differences of ethnicity and religious faith" and were unwilling to proceed with the marriage.²²⁵ Upon the suggestion of the Panchen Lama's field office leaders, *i.e.*, Liu Jiaju and others, Dai Jitao also adopted Dechen Wangmu as his nominal daughter when he was in Kham, perhaps in an attempt to lure her away from Liu Wenhui's influence. At the same time, she fell in love with Yeshe Dorje (Ye shes Rdo rje, 益西奪吉), a member of the Panchen Lama's field office, and they began to make plans to wed.

Dai Jitao supported this marriage, but Liu Wenhui was unwilling to accept an alliance by marriage between the Panchen Lama's field office and the powerful Khangsar family, so in the fall of 1938 he ordered his officers to detain Dechen Wangmu and pressure her to break off the engagement. Over the following year, Liu Jiaju and the field office attempted to negotiate Dechen Wangmu's release, but Liu Wenhui was adamant that she first recant her promise to marry Yeshe Dorje. Increasingly frustrated, Liu Jiaju arranged and led a meeting between his colleagues in the Panchen Lama's field office and the Khangsar family. Calling once again for autonomous self-rule in Kham, Liu Jiaju organized local militia backed by the Khangsar family to attack Liu Wenhui's forces. Liu Jiaju led an assault in late October, and his forces rescued Dechen Wangmu and overwhelmed Liu Wenhui's garrisons in Garze, Nyarong, and Drango in a matter of days. Proclaiming Khampa self-rule, Liu Jiaju also urged all local leaders to oppose Liu Wenhui's rule in Kham.²²⁶ Liu Wenhui's soldiers had been caught off guard, but by December 1939 his officers organized their armies, counterattacked, and easily recaptured Garze

²²⁵ Feng, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 337; and Kangding minzu shizhuan bianxiezu, *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi*, 361.

²²⁶ Kangding minzu shizhuan bianxiezu, *Ganzi Zangzu zizhizhou minzu zhi*, 361; Feng, *Xikang shi shiyi*, 339-350; and Ganzi Zhouzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Ganzi Zhouzhi*, vol. 3, 2095.

and their other garrisons from Liu Jiaju's militia forces. The Panchen Lama's field office and Dechen Wangmu and the Khangsar family fled north out of Kham into Qinghai. Before the end of the year, the Nationalist government officially dissolved the Panchen Lama's field office. Just like his Batang predecessors Kelzang Tsering and Jiang Anxi, Liu Jiaju quietly exited Kham and returned to inland China, where he continued to work with the Nationalist government before retiring in Batang not long thereafter.²²⁷ One year into his tenure as governor of Xikang Province, Liu Wenhui had successfully defended the last local to challenge his power in Kham. Nationalist rule in Batang would continue uninterrupted until the arrival of Communist forces in late 1949.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined Batang in the turbulent years of the Republican period between 1912 and 1939. While Zhao Erfeng had imposed political, economic, and social reforms that brought Batang officials increased tax revenues and local people a degree of socio-economic prosperity in the last years of the Qing dynasty, the chaos following the empire's collapse did not escape Batang. Within months, evidence of Zhao's policies vanished. For the next two decades, Batang residents lived in fear of attacks by central Tibetan forces, raids by local bandits, and exploitation by greedy soldiers under the command of corrupt Chinese military officials. At least twice in the first two decades of the Republican period, Batang residents banded together and attempted to work with local civil and military officials to strengthen public safety and improve local governance. In the first case, a likely attempt by local residents to reestablish their head native chieftain threatened the legitimacy of Sichuan officials in Batang, so they suppressed the movement in 1920. Approximately seven years later, Kelzang Tsering and his circle of friends established the Xikang Nationalist Advancement Association in Batang to promote Nationalist

²²⁷ Li, "Liu Jiaju zhuan," 76; and *BTXZ*, 487.

ideology in collaboration with Batang County Magistrate Lei Zhenhua. However, a distinct anti-foreign tone to the XNAA's activism raised the concern of Batang military officials. No doubt aware of previous violence against foreigners in Batang during the Qing era, these officials prevented the XNAA from taking their anti-imperialist/anti-foreign activism too far and disbanded the organization.

During the Republican period, Batang shared in the misery, corruption, banditry, and exploitation found throughout Kham, but one of the most significant things that distinguish Batang from other parts of Kham and Tibet is the disproportionate number of people from this area who were politically active during this period. Among the actions of Kelzang Tsering, Jiang Anxi, and Liu Jiaju (Batang's "Three Heroes"), Kelzang Tsering's easily misunderstood activities in Batang are the most well-known. Making famous the call for Khampa self-rule, Kelzang Tsering was in fact a Nationalist Party loyalist who rejected Tibetan independence in favor of ousting Liu Wenhui's ineffective administration and creating a new province led by Khampas. Strategically aligning himself with the Nationalist Party, his goal was to incorporate local autonomy within a provincial government under the Chinese state, and removing Liu Wenhui from Kham was the first step in that process. However, Kelzang Tsering's inability to keep central Tibetan forces from taking advantage of the forced departure of Chinese troops from Batang doomed his plans to failure. Believing that a Batang under Liu Wenhui's control was better than a Batang under central Tibetan control, Kelzang Tsering accepted his failure and called on Liu Wenhui for assistance. As soon as Liu Wenhui's general, Ma Chenglong, returned to Batang, the central Tibetans lifted their siege on the town, and Kelzang Tsering quietly retreated back to Nanjing.

Kelzang Tsering's classmates and friends Jiang Anxi and Liu Jiaju followed similar patterns, albeit working through more well-known religious figures. Jiang Anxi was the Norlha Trulku's Tibetan secretary, and he was instrumental in a movement that proclaimed Khampa self-rule in 1935-1936. After capturing Liu Wenhui's garrisons in Tau, Jiang Anxi attempted to disarm Liu's larger and more strategic garrison in Batang, just like Kelzang Tsering. However, poor coordination with local militia under the command of Pangda Tobgye allowed Liu's very experienced local military commander, Fu Dequan, to manipulate competing allegiances among the local people to his advantage. When the Norlha Trulku's militia suffered heavy losses at the hands of Communist forces, Jiang Anxi had no choice but to give up his plan to attack Fu Dequan's garrison. In so doing, he abandoned his call for Khampa self-rule.

In the mid-to-late 1930s, Liu Wenhui's officials in Batang slowly solidified their hold on power following Liu relocating his powerbase to Kham around 1935. More organized local administration under the *baojia* system helped curb banditry and improve public safety, tax revenues increased, corvée labor was reformed, and more schools were established. At the same time, Ba Chöde Monastery was finally rebuilt and the Nationalist government began patronizing local religious figures. Such changes brought relative stability and some improvements to local people, who were gradually coming to accept Nationalist rule. As a result, even when Batang native Liu Jiaju, acting as a representative of the Panchen Lama, called for Khampa self-rule from Garze in 1939, the people of Batang hardly noticed.

Nevertheless, the activities of these three Batang leaders reveal a more mature Chinese state. Zhao Erfeng's attempts to develop and modernize Kham were premised on the fact that no Tibetans would participate in formal governance and that the power of monasteries must be reduced. Nationalist officials inherited many of Zhao's reforms, including his *baozheng*

administrative system, his tax registers, and his emphasis on education. While the disorder of the first two decades of the Chinese Republic prevented local officials from effectively governing all of Kham, as political stability and social order slowly returned to Batang, local officials attempted to recreate many of Zhao's earlier Qing reforms. However, Nationalist policies differed in significant ways from late Qing imperial policies. Radically departing from late Qing attempts to curb the influence of Tibetan Buddhism in Batang, Nationalist Party officials not only tolerated but also actively patronized and strengthened Tibetan Buddhist institutions. In addition, Nationalist officials cultivated a coterie of Khampa policy-makers and, accepting them into their bureaucracy, entrusted them with responsibilities at the highest level of government. Such policies represent an important departure from Zhao Erfeng's legacy of Han domination over Tibetan areas. However, Nationalist policies only went so far in promoting ethnic equality. Between 1932 and 1939, Khampas made three calls for autonomous self-rule. Even though each call was made by a Batang political activist closely tied to the Nationalist government, Liu Wenhui, with the support of the Nationalists, suppressed all of them. By the end of 1939, Liu Wenhui had not only restored order after two decades of turbulence that defined much of Batang's history since the fall of the Qing dynasty, but he had also firmly established the narrow limits of local autonomy in Kham.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

“In China proper there is Suzhou (蘇州) and Hangzhou (杭州);
Beyond the pass there is Batang.”

—a Baba, 1943¹

In his 1999 study on leadership in post-1949 Tibet, Robert Barnett highlights the emergence of an elite class of “Babas,” the Tibetan term for people from Batang, who assumed senior leadership roles and, in certain circumstances, seem to have wielded actual power in the Tibet Autonomous Region, Kham, and other parts of China in the first fifty years of the People’s Republic of China.² How is it that over 150 self-identified Babas could rise through the ranks of the Chinese Communist system and, in some cases, hold recognizable power and policy influence far beyond the borders of their remote hometown on the Sino-Tibetan border? This dissertation sheds light on this and other questions through careful examination of Batang’s history from 1842 through 1939.

The preceding chapters analyze how state expansion unfolded in relation to local power in Batang, an ethnically Tibetan principality on the Sino-Tibetan frontier. Among the many issues informing this historical process, I have addressed three broad themes in this study: the nature of local power and governance on Tibet’s ethnographic frontier; the nature of Qing imperial rule in Batang; the initially gradual and subsequently violent expansion of state power

¹ Ba Ren, “Xikang de xin Batang,” 73.

² Robert Barnett, “*The Babas are Dead: Street Talk and Contemporary Views of Leadership in Tibet*,” in *Proceedings of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, ed. Elliot Sperling (Bloomington: University of Indiana, forthcoming), 1-14.

and authority; and the legacy of imperial rule as the new Republic of China attempted to recreate the Qing empire as a modern nation-state.

Studies of the Tibetan state and governance have too often focused on central Tibet and the workings of the Dalai Lama's government in Lhasa to the detriment of our understanding of alternate forms of state structure in historically Tibetan areas. Ethnographic Tibet encompasses a much wider territory and a richer variety of forms of governance. Chapter Two explores the roots of authority of Batang's power holders and the unique relationships between them. By the middle of the nineteenth century, four distinct groups monopolized local power in Batang: leaders of Ba Chöde Monastery, native chieftains, Qing imperial officials, and Han merchants. As the spiritual center and one of the largest land owners in Batang, Ba Chöde Monastery's power was extensive. In the nineteenth century, monastic leaders managed a monastic population of thousands, owned as much as fifty percent of the land, and commanded the religious faith of the vast majority of Batang's residents. In legal matters that involved the monastery or the monastic community, monastic leaders maintained almost exclusive authority.

Co-existing with monastic leaders were Batang's two native chieftains, who sat at the top of a hierarchy of secular elites throughout the region. Initially appointed by the Dalai Lama for a fixed-term with massive landed estates, the positions of native chieftain became hereditary over time, yet they still maintained the prestige of official appointments from Lhasa. As part of the early eighteenth century Qing advance into central Tibet, Batang's native chieftains and their successors also achieved imperial recognition in the form of seals and titles, thereby becoming a part of the Qing's "loose rein" (羈縻) system of indirect rule through local leaders. Monastic leaders and native chieftains exercised the greatest control over local society, working together to maintain order, resolve disputes, and collect taxes. While Ba Chöde Monastery maintained close

religious ties with Gelug religious leaders in Lhasa, extant historical evidence does not suggest Batang's secular leadership sought guidance or support from central Tibet after the early eighteenth century. In fact, later historical events reveal the deep opposition held by secular elites to attempts by central Tibetan authorities to impose their political will on Batang.

In the case of Batang's historical structures of power and authority, none of the models used to describe traditional Tibetan governance are adequate. Melvyn Goldstein's description of governance being "balanced" between centralization and decentralization does not account for Batang's *de facto* political independence from the Dalai Lama's government. Geoffrey Samuel's description of Tibet as a "stateless society" in which overlapping societies shared sovereignty in a contiguous social field may be valid, but without thorough examination of those societies and their interrelations, it has little explanatory value. Stanley Tambiah's "galactic polity" model suffers the same flaw. Theoretically, Tibet may have been organized around an exemplary center with concentric circles of regional authority that imitated the center with varying degrees of success, but careful scrutiny of those center-periphery relations are necessary to validate this conception. Finally, Georges Dreyfus's "semi-bureaucratic state," while acknowledging central Tibetan power did not extend equally across the plateau, is also based on the relationship between the Dalai Lama's government and those regions where he had tangible political influence. Batang, and for that matter most of Kham, fall outside the parameters of his model.

Batang's system of governance throughout most of the Qing dynasty further challenges long-held notions of traditional Tibetan governance and authority. Since the early eighteenth century, the Qing Empire maintained a Commissariat Office and garrison of as many as five hundred soldiers in Batang, a significant presence that initially disrupted the exclusive sovereignty shared by leaders of Ba Chöde Monastery and the native chieftains. No longer were

their decisions absolute. Qing officials, supported by their garrisons, wielded clear coercive power as soon as they arrived, but through the late nineteenth century they rarely exercised that power explicitly. Instead, they preferred to work through Batang's native chieftains and, when possible, with monastic officials. Finally, we must not forget the small but influential community of Han merchants in Batang who indirectly shaped Batang's society through their commercial activities, agricultural techniques, and charity work, especially in education. While political stability and social unrest no doubt occasionally emerged between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, Batang's quartet of power holders had developed a system of collective rule that maintained peace for most residents, a unique arrangement in which religious and secular, Tibetan and Han shared the responsibilities of governance in the region. Whether to avoid political inconvenience or for other reasons, scholarship on Tibetan history has heretofore ignored Batang's distinctive system of shared governance.

Chapters Three-Five take up the second major theme of this dissertation, *i.e.*, the nature of Qing imperial rule, the growth of imperial influence in Batang, and local agency in response to expanding imperial power. In Chapter Three, I discuss four "missionary cases" involving French priests resident in Batang. Following the 1858 Treaty of Tianjin, which guaranteed imperial protection for foreigners travelling, conducting trade, or engaging in mission work throughout the Qing Empire, French and other foreigners soon established mission stations at various locations in Kham, including Batang, in the hopes of someday reaching Lhasa. Batang's first four missionary cases highlight the changing role Qing officials played in maintaining order and resolving disputes on the frontier, and thereby increasing imperial power in the region willy-nilly. To the degree possible, imperial officials adopted a semi-*laissez-faire* approach to local governance. Bound by treaty obligations to protect foreigners and their property but well-aware

of local distrust of the missionaries, Qing Commissariat Officers worked closely with native chieftains and leaders of Ba Chöde Monastery to defuse tension, apprehend criminals, implement justice, and attempt to prevent future problems from occurring. Their behavior demonstrates two fundamental aspects of empire as put forth by theorists such as Karen Barkey, Jane Burbank, and Frederick Cooper. First, as with other empires around the world, indirect rule through local elites characterized the Qing Empire. Before the arrival of French missionaries, Qing officials in Batang found it unnecessary to exercise the power their military garrison offered them. Rarely delving into local affairs, imperial officials focused more on transporting supplies, delivering salaries, and keeping the official lines of communication open between Chengdu and Lhasa. They left local governance to Batang's traditional religious and secular elite. However, the arrival of French missionaries in the region precipitated gradual changes in Batang's relationships of power. With practically no guidance from their superiors, Qing officials fabricated *ad hoc* responses to unpredictable local circumstances in an attempt to allay local concerns and satisfy French demands for justice and compensation. Over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, Qing officials haphazardly inserted themselves deeper into the process of local governance through patient negotiation, itself another defining characteristic of empire. Their approach proved successful. By the early twentieth century, Batang's Commissariat Officer even negotiated an agreement with the native chieftains and Ba Chöde Monastery leadership to begin a modest land reclamation project in the region. Contrary to common portrayals of the late Qing as an empire in decline, imperial governance on the Sino-Tibetan frontier was, due to the resourcefulness and flexibility of local Qing officials, effective and increasingly strong. As local governance moved from indirect to direct rule, Batang slowly became more integrated into the Qing Empire. However, by serving as middlemen and

peacemakers among competing interests, imperial officials unwittingly became seen as favoring foreign interests over local needs and, in so doing, they drew themselves into an antagonistic relationship with leadership of Ba Chöde Monastery, an untenable situation destined to create conflict.

Beyond demonstrating the nature of the Qing Empire's indirect, negotiated rule on the Sino-Tibetan frontier, analysis of Batang's missionary cases reveals that the murder of Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet Feng Quan at the hands of the people of Batang, the assertive Qing military response, and the New Policy-inspired reforms implemented by Zhao Erfeng must be viewed historically. Feng Quan's murder was not a knee-jerk reaction to his harsh policy initiatives. Nor was Zhao Erfeng merely a Han chauvinist intent on subduing all of Tibet. Both men inherited a history of engagements between foreign missionaries and local Tibetans that had over time hardened boundaries and enhanced mutual distrust. Such circumstances removed much of the flexibility former Qing officials once possessed when participating in local governance, thereby leaving Feng Quan and Zhao Erfeng with fewer options to influence local power holders.

Chapter Four discusses how late Qing officials attempted to assert their authority in Batang within its increasingly rigid and complex socio-political framework. It begins by stepping back from Batang to consider broader debates between provincial leaders in Chengdu, the Qing High Commissioner to Tibet, and the imperial court in Beijing regarding the increasingly threatening activities of foreigners along the empire's southwest border, a threat that became real when Colonel Francis Younghusband invaded central Tibet from British India beginning in late 1903. In fact, as I have demonstrated, Qing officials had already been reevaluating their approach to frontier governance for many years in light of Batang's missionary cases and the occupation of Nyarong by central Tibetan soldiers and officials. Younghusband's invasion of

Tibet certainly heightened their concerns, but it was just one of many factors they considered regarding the empire's southwestern frontier.

Strengthening imperial power in Kham so that the empire would be better positioned to resist foreign aggression was a primary consideration of imperial officials, and they adopted a number of new policies toward that end. For example, to encourage economic development and increased local agricultural output, Sichuan Governor-General Xi Liang authorized a small land reclamation project to be initiated in Batang. Batang's Commissariat Officer, Wu Xizhen, launched this project in late 1903, skillfully employing his semi-*laissez faire* approach to frontier management to get the work started smoothly.

Imperial officials also decided a senior official was needed in Kham to oversee future efforts to enhance Qing control in the region, so they relocated the position of Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet from Lhasa to Chamdo. On his way from Chengdu to his new post as Assistant High Commissioner, Feng Quan stopped in Batang. Impressed with Wu Xizhen's land reclamation project, he immediately ordered it to be expanded. Distrustful of the large monasteries in the region, he also publically proclaimed strict limits on the number of monks that could be enrolled in individual monasteries, despite not having official approval to do so. As a show of power, Feng Quan also frequently drilled his personal retinue of soldiers, a contingent of fifty men trained in foreign military tactics and wearing foreign uniforms. Feng Quan's aggressive expansion of land reclamation efforts, limits on monasteries, and drilling of what were seen by locals as "foreign" troops, not to mention Feng's rude and condescending attitude to local religious leaders and native chieftains, were more than the people of Batang could handle. Unwilling to accept the direct rule that Feng Quan was attempting to impose on them, they rose up and killed him and his personal retinue.

The Qing response to the murder of Assistant High Commissioner to Tibet offered no quarter. Two thousand soldiers led by Ma Weiqi made their way to Batang, where Ma captured and executed the two native chieftains, drove off the remaining headmen, completely destroyed Ba Chöde Monastery, and killed or captured anyone who dared to resist. By the end of Ma Weiqi's military campaign, Batang's long-standing system of governance shared among native chieftains, religious leaders, and Qing officials had been obliterated, never to return. Direct imperial rule was here to stay.

Ma Weiqi's victory in Batang gave his successor, Zhao Erfeng, broad flexibility to rebuild a strategic region on the Sino-Tibetan frontier, and Zhao attempted to redefine local power and its relationship to the state as he saw fit. I explore Zhao's reform efforts in Batang in Chapter Five. Zhao Erfeng took a comprehensive approach to strengthening imperial rule in Batang and Kham in general so that the region would become a "fence" to protect the empire from foreign aggression on its southwestern frontier. His program involved three stages: military submission; political restructuring; and a series of reforms designed to promote economic development and social transformation. As the first region in Kham to suffer almost complete military subjugation in the twentieth century, Batang was Zhao's laboratory for frontier state-building. In Batang, he reconfigured local relationships of power by instituting direct rule by an imperially-appointed Han magistrate, creating a *baozheng* system of Han and Tibetan leaders to assist with local governance, and curbing the power of the monasteries. As he subjugated other principalities in Kham, Zhao replicated these and other reform programs across the region.

Zhao also adopted a number of economic reforms. For example, confiscating lands formerly owned by Ba Chöde Monastery and the native chieftains, he successfully standardized collection of land taxes, thereby creating a reliable, if not small, source of income for his

programs. He also focused on infrastructure, not only improving roads, bridges, and official transit stations, but also addressing what he saw as deeply-rooted problems in the traditional *corvée* transport system in Kham. Zhao's tax reforms and infrastructure projects achieved modest results, but many of his other economic reforms failed. Despite incentives and repeated calls for Han migrants to settle in Batang and join state-sponsored land reclamation efforts, few people responded. Even those who did come often found the living conditions too difficult and fled back to Sichuan proper after a short time. Other state-sponsored efforts in Batang, including a tannery, a small pottery enterprise, and local mines, similarly lasted only a brief time before collapsing.

While economic development in Batang proved elusive for Zhao, his social reforms achieved more significant results. In just a few years, Zhao's Frontier Education Bureau had constructed over forty schools throughout the region where specially-trained instructors taught upwards of one thousand Tibetan students Chinese, Confucian moral cultivation, and other basic subjects. As I have demonstrated, the purpose of Zhao's educational reforms was to instill young Tibetans with Confucian-inspired Chinese civilization and transform them into loyal imperial subjects. While a belief in Confucianism never took root in Batang, Zhao Erfeng's schools did imbue some young people with a steadfast sense of identity as a part of the Qing Empire, a loyalty they transferred to the empire's successor state, the Republic of China.

With a large army and substantial financial resources, Zhao Erfeng achieved many successes in his efforts to increase imperial power in Batang and Kham, particularly in terms of definitely settling Qing sovereignty in Batang and many other areas of Kham through the imposition of direct rule by Qing officials. Although he was unable to achieve his ultimate goal of creating a new province in western Sichuan, Zhao's programs, which were clearly inspired by

the New Policy reforms being implemented in Sichuan and other parts of the empire in its final decades, demonstrate that the late Qing was not without imagination and vitality. At least in Batang, a strategically important corner of the empire, many of Zhao's reforms achieved tangible and long-lasting results.

The fall of the Qing dynasty signaled the formal end of many Zhao Erfeng's reforms. As outlined in Chapter Six, schools closed and land reclamation and other state-sponsored economic ventures were abandoned. The power of Ba Chöde Monastery also slowly returned, and headmen formerly under Batang's now deceased native chieftains regained much of their authority on the local level. Nevertheless, the basic political structure that Zhao instituted in Batang and many other parts of Kham survived. Although Ba Chöde Monastery was growing and local headmen had returned, in terms of managing local governance the supremacy of the Han magistracy created by Zhao Erfeng and often filled by the Han military leader posted in Batang was recognized and undeniable.

The first two decades after the fall of the dynasty were extremely turbulent in Batang. Largely ignored by their warlord superiors in Sichuan, Han military leaders in Batang followed the common practice of the time to extract whatever resources they could from the local populace to maintain their operations and enforce a semblance of peace. They were hardly successful. Taking advantage of Batang's weakness, militia recruited by central Tibetan authorities attacked the city in 1912 in hopes of extending central Tibetan power east of the Dri River in southern Kham. Only the last minute arrival of reinforcements from Sichuan helped break the siege and prevent Batang from again being occupied by invading soldiers, this time from central Tibet.

In the early decades of the Republic, banditry had in fact become so rampant and economic decline so precipitous that Batang residents negotiated two separate agreements with local Han officials to cooperate on strengthening public safety and improving local governance. However, neither agreement lasted long. In the first case, the people of Batang took advantage of the Han magistrate's weak authority to attempt to reestablish the authority of the deceased head native chieftain by reinstalling his wife in their former compound in the center of Batang proper. When local officials learned of this plan, they immediately realized the threat to their power, called out the military, and suppressed the local militia that was behind it. Seven years later, Batang natives Kelzang Tsering, Jiang Anxi, Liu Jiaju, and others formed the Xikang Nationalist Advancement Association with the support of the Batang county magistrate to promote Nationalist ideology. However, the anti-foreign rhetoric of the association concerned Batang's military officials, who were well-aware of the long history of animosity between the people of Batang and foreigners. As a result, they forced the organization to disband, ending another attempt by Batang residents to reassert their power on the local level.

This setback did not deter Kelzang Tsering and his friends from advocating on behalf of the Nationalist Party on a larger scale. In 1932, Kelzang Tsering returned to Batang as a representative of the central government and envoy of the Nationalist Party after working for several years in Nanjing in various government and party offices. Unbeknownst to his superiors in Nanjing, Kelzang Tsering immediately called for Khampa self-rule, disarmed the local garrison, and announced plans to establish Xikang Province under his leadership in Batang. Significantly, Kelzang Tsering was not calling for Khampa independence. Rather, having endured for years the corrupt and ineffective governance of Sichuan warlords, Kelzang Tsering intended to force Liu Wenhui, Kham's most powerful warlord, from Kham and create a new

province under the Republic of China in which local Khampas like himself would play a substantial leadership role. Despite his idealism, Kelzang Tsering's plans were inadequately conceived. He severely underestimated the ambitions of central Tibetan forces, which soon took advantage of Batang's weakened defenses and again laid siege to the town. Unable to sustain its defense with his limited local resources, Kelzang Tsering was forced to call on his rival Liu Wenhui for military assistance. By relying on Liu Wenhui to rescue Batang, Kelzang Tsering doomed his attempt to create an autonomous, Khampa-led province under the Nationalist state to failure.

Over the next seven years, Kelzang Tsering's close associates would mount similar campaigns challenging the growing power of Liu Wenhui, even after he became governor of the newly created Xikang Province on January 1, 1939. Jiang Anxi was instrumental in the Norlha Trulku's attempt to institute Khampa self-rule in 1935-1936, including a failed attempt at taking over the Batang garrison just as Kelzang Tsering had done. Liu Jiaju, moreover, was the Panchen Lama's Tibetan secretary and played a leading role in a final challenge to Liu Wenhui's rule in Kham from Garze in 1939. While Zhao Erfeng's educational reforms only lasted a few years, these events suggest that his educational efforts in Batang fostered a coterie of young Tibetans with a unique political perspective, a way of thinking best summarized as "Tibetan Chinese nationalism," a view that favored self-rule independent from central Tibetan political influence yet autonomous within the Chinese Nationalist state. Had Nationalist governance continued to falter as it did in the first two decades of the Republic, it is likely that this political ideology would have garnered more widespread support in the region. However, as Liu Wenhui accepted the supremacy of rival warlord Liu Xiang in Sichuan proper, he increasingly focused his attention on governing western Sichuan, including Batang. While numerous problems remained,

Liu Wenhui's officials in Batang gradually increased their power and enhanced local governance. After 1935, local public safety improved under the *baojia* system, tax revenues increased, and new schools opened. The re-construction of Ba Chöde Monastery around the same time also contributed to local acknowledgement and acceptance of Nationalist rule.

But the self-rule movements of Kelzang Tsering, Jiang Anxi, and Liu Jiaju were not without influence. Zhao Erfeng envisioned a province led exclusively by imperially-appointed Han magistrates empowered to instill local Tibetans with Confucian-inspired Chinese culture and transform them into loyal subjects of the empire. The new Republic was very different. Nationalist Party officials actively cultivated a group of educated Tibetan policy-makers, most of who came from Batang and had first been educated in schools set up by Zhao Erfeng. Accepting them into their bureaucracy, they were entrusted with high-level responsibilities critical to ensuring Kham and central Tibet were integrated into the Republican nation-state. Even though their calls for Khampa self-rule were suppressed, the ability of Kelzang Tsering, Jiang Anxi, and Liu Jiaju to participate in and influence Nationalist government policy-making represents an important departure from the unilateral domination of Han rule as envisioned by Zhao Erfeng.

In this dissertation I have outlined the desultory nature of Qing and Republican state-building in Batang and the complex responses of local power holders to unfolding state power. In so doing, I have demonstrated the key roles and far-reaching influence of Batang in Chinese and Tibetan history despite its isolated geographic location on the Sino-Tibetan frontier.

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