

Chapter 2

Lhasa City's Formation and Multiple Historical Factors

As mentioned in the previous chapter, nature, religion and geology all played significant parts in Lhasa's development. Thanks to the favorable conditions, Lhasa eventually evolved into a regional center of comprehensive functions.

2.1 Influence of Natural Environment

Whether a place is suitable for city-building depends on how well criteria are met. This is especially true in the early human civilization, when natural conditions had more decisive impact on human survival and living standards. This is why many ancient cities were along major rivers, which allowed them easy access to fresh water and expansive view. They often have mild temperature, fertile soil and a wide range of crops. Mild terrain also facilitates construction of transportation and defense system. Overall, these conditions led to higher population-supporting capacity.

2.1.1 *Natural Conditions of Tibet and Implications to City Building*

Perched on top of Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, Tibet is known for being the “Roof of the World”. This is especially true in the early human civilization, when natural conditions had more decisive imponditions, the mountainous terrain and raging rivers presented a unique rugged beauty. Today some parts of Tibet are still inhabited. When looking at civilizations worldwide, most early human habitats were along major rivers. This is also true in Tibet, where population density is

higher along the middle and upper sections of Yarlung Tsangpo River as well as Nyang Qu Basin. This hasn't changed much today.

Geographically, Tibetan has two main characteristics: high altitude and large number of water bodies. On average, the altitude is 4000 m above sea level, however, this varied from area to area. Overall, the plateau is on a slope, higher northwest and lowersoutheast. Such high altitudes earned it a well-deserved name—"Roof of the World". This region is also home to some of the world's tallest mountains, such as Kunlun Mountains, Karakoram-Tanggula Mountains and Gangdise Mountains—Nianqing Tanggula Mountains, Hengduan Mountains and Pamir Mountains and, most famous of all, the Himalaya Mountains. Aside from mountains, this region had many rivers and lakes. 90% of the rivers entered Indian Ocean. The mountainous terrains posed as a natural barrier barring entry of potential intruders. The geographic isolation also contributed to Tibet's unique development trajectory.

The common perception of Tibet as being one whole block is a misconception as the region processes a wide spectra of geological types, ranging from tall mountains to deep valleys, from glaciers to riverbank plains. The region is often divided into four parts according to their terrain types—the Northern Plateau, the Southern Valley, the Eastern Mountain Gorges and Himalaya Mountains. Among them, the Northern Tibetan Plateau is between Kunlun—Tanggula Mountains and Gangdise and Nyenchen Tanglha Mountains. This expansive area is the main herding field in Tibet. The Southern Tibetan Valley region, situated between Gangdise Mountains and Himalaya Mountains, is where the Yarlung Tsangpo River and several minor rivers converge. These rivers formed several pluvial plains and lake basins, making it one of the most fertile farmland in the entire Tibet. The Eastern Mountain Gorges area, aka the Hengduan Mountain Area, was situated to the east of Nagchu. The area is made up by a group of east-west ridges that change their course 90° here. Between the ridges, raging rivers, including Nu River, Lancang River, and Jinsha River, have been served as the borderline between Tibet and the neighboring Yunnan and Sichuan provinces; Himalaya Mountains was situated in Southern Tibet, formed by a number of east-west ridges, all standing above 60,000 m above sea level.

Topographic and geomorphic conditions are closely related to the climatic patterns and atmospheric circulation. Overall, different parts of Tibet share some common climatic traits such as thinner air, low atmospheric pressure, low oxygen density, high sunlight intensity, strong radiation, low temperature, high diurnal temperature variation and low humidity. Meanwhile, there are also variances. For example, vertical variation of plantation is common in mountain areas. In general, the northwestern part is colder and drier, while the southeastern part is warmer and more humid.

Half of Tibet is uninhabitable due to hash conditions. Among a few inhabitable areas, there is the long strip between Gangdise Mountains and Himalaya Mountains, where some of the most populous cities, such as Lhasa, Lhokha and Shigatse were situated. This area is widely believed where the Tibetan civilization originated.

2.1.2 Natural Conditions of Lhasa

As vast and diverse as Tibet is, Lhasa is rare for its favorable natural conditions—The city snugs comfortably in the embrace of Lhasa River Valley, which is part of the Southern Valley area. The altitude is in the range between 3600 and 3900 m above sea level, relatively low by Tibetan standard. The city sits on a fertile alluvial plain. Typical of southeastern part of Tibet, the climate type is mild semi-arid. The average temperature, between 6 and 8 °C, is relatively mild and stable throughout the year. The average annual rainfall is around 400 mm. Rainfall mostly occurs in night. Annual solar radiation is 190 kcal/cm² and annual sunshine duration about 3000 h. Extreme weathers are rare. These conditions meant that Lhasa is capable of supporting a large population.

In 633 AD, in pursuit of a better habitat, Yarlung Tribe migrated from Yarlung Valley to the area surrounding Lhasa. Once they settled down, under the leadership of Songtsen Gampo, city building commenced—this city grew to be Tibet's largest. Starting mid-17th century on, Lhasa had outgrown any other cities in the region and became a regional center with complete urban functions.

2.2 Lhasa as a Political Center

Political function is the most significant differentiator between Lhasa and other cities. The status as a political center greatly promoted the city shine duration about 3000 h. Extreme weathers are rare. These conditions meant that Lhasa is barracks and other forms of public services.

2.2.1 Tupo Dynasty: Lhasa Became a Capital

In 633 AD, under Songtsen Gampo's leadership, the tribe left Meldrogongkar and settled down in Lhasa westwards—a new regime known as Tupo was established here. As the capital of this regime, Lhasa, during the subsequent two centuries, kept growing and saw large number of facilities having been built. However, despite relatively large population of Tupo in its heyday, the urban population remained small. This is mainly due to the general low density of population and vastness of Tibet, backward transportation means, low agricultural yield, etc., all imposing limits on the city's capacity to support a large population. Aside from Potala Palace (Red Castle), there were few administrative buildings in Lhasa, though the number of homes, shops, hotels, and monasteries had been growing, as population kept growing.

Some of the major buildings that came into being during the two decade-long Songtsen Gambo's reign include Red Palace, Jokhang, Ramoche and some

monasteries. Many still exist today, especially Jokhang and the circuit around it—Barkor. This laid the foundation for Lhasa city, and its status as administrative, cultural and commercial center. In its wake, the succeeding *Btsan-pos* continued to expand the building and add more buildings. In the 9th century during the reign of Tri Ralpachan, some monasteries were built to the east, south and north of the city, including Garu, Moru, Gawa, Gawae built to the east, south and north and etc. Together they formed the outer ring of the city.

After Tupo dynasty, Tibet's political center shifted from Lhasa to Sakya, Netong and later, Shigatse. However, although those places met some conditions necessary for city building, they were in general not as favorable as it was in Lhasa, thus it was no coincidence that in the mid-17th century, the Ganden Phodrang regime once again chose Lhasa as the capital. Such a decision was both political and religious in nature; it is also a pragmatic one taking account of the local conditions.

2.2.2 Ganden Phodrang Regime Established Capital in Lhasa

In 1642, Dalai Lama established Ganden Phodrang regime. Subsequently, Lhasa was selected as the capital city and regained its status as the center of Tibet.

2.2.2.1 Construction During the Reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama

The period between the 5th and 8th Dalai Lama is highly significant in Tibetan history because many Tibetan political and religious institutions were formed during this period. The relationship between Tibet, the Chinese and Mongols became stabilized. The 5th Dalai Lama's reign also saw a period of rapid urban development that lasted until the reign of the 8th Dalai Lama. Until the Peaceful Liberation, the Old City of Lhasa saw no major changes in terms of size and population.

The 5th Dalai Lama was widely acclaimed for his political acumen and skills—for this, he earned a revered title as the “Great Fifth.” Among his other accomplishments, the unification of Tibet is the most significant one. By striking a deal with Mongolian leader Güshi Khan, the Dalai Lama established religious Ganden Phodrang regime. After China entered the Qing dynasty, the Dalai Lama paid a visit to Qing emperor Shunzhi in Beijing in 1652. By such a visit, the Tibetan cleric attained support from the Manchu leadership. In a gesture of hospitality, the emperor ordered the construction of a Gelugpa-school Buddhist Monastery in Beijing to accommodate the visiting Dalai Lama. In 1654, on his way back to Tibet, the Dalai Lama received a golden album from the Qing government, a symbol indicating recognition of his religious leadership in Tibet.

The most significant construction during the reign of the 5th Dalai Lama is the expansion Potala Palace. In 1645, the Dalai Lama ordered the project with intention

to use it as his primary residence and office. The project partially concluded in 1653 and was named White Palace (Podrang Karpo) as opposed to the original Red Palace. After the 5th Dalai Lama died in 1682, under the stewardship of Sangye Gyatso, the regent of the 6th Dalai Lama, the project continued. For the entire life of the 5th Dalai Lama and a full decade afterward, the towering stately building assumed its final dimensions. It was a living symbol of the union of religious and political powers and a monument of the Tibetan architectural achievement. Today, it remains a highlight of Lhasa's cityscape.

Also during the reign of the 5th Dalai Lama, more aristocrats' residences emerged. One example is Samdrup Phodrang, which was ordered by the 5th Dalai Lama in honor of Güshi Khan. During this period of time, the vast majority of construction took place in an area surrounding Jokhang—including large numbers of civilian residences and shops; the density of buildings and population both increased.

2.2.2.2 Post-5th Dalai Lama Lhasa Development

Expansion continued after the 5th Dalai Lama. The city reached beyond its previous borders. Beyond Jokhang—Barkor area and Potala Palace area, there emerged a new area, where some Dalai Lama's private gardens were built. These include the 6th Dalai Lama's Dzonggyap Lukhang Garden and the 7th Dalai Lama's Norbulingka.

Starting the reign of 7th Dalai Lama, it had become a tradition that Dalai Lama's families moved to live in Lhasa. Their residences, referred to as "Yabshi", were built according to the same standard accorded to the highest-ranking aristocracy. The Yabshi, along with other noble, all concentrated in the vicinity of Barkor. By the time of the Peaceful Liberation, there are 48 nobles' courtyards in the Old City area.

The large numbers of Yabshi and other noble residences owed their existence to the city's status as a political center. However, these two are a numerical minority; the vast majority of buildings in the Old City are mostly ordinary civilians' residences and shops. Most shops also doubled as living space of the proprietors. In most circumstances, shops occupied the bottom floor, while warehouse and living rooms were on the second or the third. These buildings served the daily needs of local residents and played a vital role to the comprehensive urban functions of the Old City.

2.2.3 The Amban System: Establishment and Continuation

The 5th Dalai Lama's choosing Lhasa as the capital inaugurated a new era seeing the city recovering its lost status as a political, religion and business center. Before the 5th Dalai Lama's death in 1682, the city enjoyed four decades of peaceful development. Following Dalai Lama's death, Tibet fell into disarray, leaving a devastating impact on Lhasa's urban development. Tension arose between local cliques and the central government. The conflicts escalated, eventually propelled

the central government to intervene to strengthen its control. This led to the formalization of the relationship between the central government and Tibet region; it also had profound impact on the structure of Tibetan governance system.

First, conflicts arose among different cliques, mainly between Tibetan aristocracy and the Khoshuud princes.

The first such conflict was between Sanggye Gyatso, the Dalai Lama's regent, and Lha-bzang Khan, descendant of Güshi Khan and the de facto ruler. In 1705, 44th year of Emperor Kangxi's reign, Lha-bzang Khan had his rival Sanggye Gyatso executed. Subsequently, in a gesture to recognize the status quo, the Qing government granted Lha-bzang Khan the title "Yi Fa Geng Shun Han" (Translate: The Brilliant, Law-abiding, Respectful and Obedient Khan). The later subsequently accused the incumbent Dalai Lama—the 6th, of being an imposter and having conspired against the Qing government. Eventually, Qing government demanded the 6th Dalai Lama and Sanggye Gyatso's widow to be sent to Beijing for interrogation. In 1707 Lha-bzang Khan installed a new Dalai Lama named Ngawang Yeshe Gyatso. In the subsequent 11 years, power was in the hands of Lha-bzang Khan while the new Dalai Lama remained a puppet. Wary of the Mongolian monopoly, in 1709, the 48th year of Kangxi's reign, the Qing China sent a minister named Langheshou to Tibet to "assist" Lha-bzang Khan with his administration. The Amban system thus started.

Second, death of Lha-bzang Khan, enthronement of the 7th Dalai Lama, and Gelugpa Lama, and Lha-bzang

Turmoil resumed in 1717 after Lha-bzang Khan lost to Mongolian Junggar tribal leader Tsewang Rabtan in the later's attempt to take over Tibet and died. This turn of events compelled Qing Emperor Kangxi to militarily intervene. Eventually Junggar invaders were driven away and in 1720, the 7th Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa from his refuge in Qinghai. In 1721, Qing government announced a cabinet system where three (later grew to five) chairmen, called Kalon Tripa. Tripas were appointed to be in charge of the administrative matters; Kancennas, son-in-law of Lha-bzang Khan, was the first chief Kalon of the regime. His office was near the southern gate tower of Jokhang.

Third, Kancennas' death

The infighting among Kalon Tripas eventually culminated with the murder of Kancennas in 1727. Polhanai, a fellow Kalon and secretary of Lha-bzang Khan, commanded a force from Back Tibet to quench the riot. Polhanai's forces quickly put rest to the disturbance. In an effort to ensure stability, Qing government appointed Polhanai the Chief Kalon. In the 4th year of Qianlong (1739), Polhanai received the title of Junwang (Duke) from Qing government in recognition of his contribution to local stability. Until his death in 1747, two decades Polhanai and the general government maintained peaceful relationship; meanwhile, the local aristocracy's grip on power grew firmer.

Fourth, Amban and Kashag Systems

Starting the 18th century, the Qing government tightened its control of the political situation. This trend started from Kangxi Emperor implementing a series of New Tibet Policies, and climaxed in the 5th year of Yongzheng Reign (1727) after the conclusion of Ü-Tsang War, when Qing government eventually established the Tibetan Amban Institution.

Prior to the introduction of the Amban System, a two-level administration system was in place:

At the central level, *Lipanyuan* the top governing body responsible for handling government—ethnic group relationships, was also in charge of Tibet-related affairs. Underneath, there were six subordinate departments, including *Manchu Nationality Registration*, *Wanghei*, *Dianshu* Department, *Rouyuan*, *Laiyuan*, and *Lixing*. In addition, there were also supporting departments including *Tang Gu Te Xue*, *Nei Guan*, *Wai Guan*, *Mulan Weichang*, *Tuoqin Xue*, *Mongolian Xue*, *Lama Yinwuchu*, *Russian Bureau*, *Laws and Precedents*; among them, the *Lama Yinwuchu* was directly responsible for the administration of Tibet.

At a local level, originally the Khoshuud princes were the utmost secular authority, while Dalai Lamas were the supreme spiritual leaders. After the enthronement of the 7th Dalai Lama in 1720, the central government abolished the Khan and Desi systems, replacing them with Kashag, a cabinet-like institution. In 1727, after Kancennas' death, Polhanai received the title Junwang (Duke) conferring on him the highest secular authority in Tibet.

In spite of implementation of Amban System in 1727, Qing ambans took a hands-off approach initially. This lasted until the Gyurme Namgyel Incident in 1750. In the incident, Gyurme Namgyel, son of Polhanai, launched a coup to remove his rivals. Afterwards, the Qing government resolved to overhaul the existing institutions, resultant in abolition of *Junwang*—a title that traditionally reserved for the Khoshuud princes. With *Junwang* system thus ended, the power was redistributed between the ambans and the Dalai Lamas. The 7th Dalai Lamas ended, the power was redistributed between the ambans and the Dalai Lamas. The Kashag now reported to both Ambans and the Dalai Lamas. In 1751, Qing government approved the proposal submitted by the ambans and issued the *13-Article Imperial Ordinance for Better Governing Tibet*. The Ordinance defined the ranks, responsibility of the Ambans in the officialdom hierarchy and their relationship with the Dalai Lamas and the Kashag. It also clarified the relationship between the central government and the Tibetan regime. The Ordinance significantly bolstered the authority of the central government in Tibet and marked a change of its governance style.

Since the implementation of Amban System, until the establishment of Republic China, a total of 173 appointments were made for this post over a time span of 158 years; among them, 90 were Grand Minister Superintendents, aka Chief Ambans; among them, 83 actually arrived in Lhasa. In addition, 83 assistant Amban appointments were made; 68 arrived. In total, there were 136 Ambans, with some

having served more than one terms; 114 arrived in Lhasa.¹ The region is so remote and the journeys often lasted over two months; some died traveling; some arrived but never made it back.

The Amban System had great implications on Lhasa urban development in the following ways:

First, the system contributed to the general social stability, a vital condition for sustained urban development. Since the advent of the Amban System, the responsibility of the Ambans had gone through three major changes. Between 1727 and 1751, their role was relatively elusive. Polhanai was the ruler, while the Qing ambans rarely interfere with local matters. The period between 1751 and 1789 saw Ambans playing a more active role in local political scene. The trigger was the Gyurme Namgyel Rebellion. Afterwards, the Qing government promulgated *the 13-Article Ordinance*, granting the 7th Dalai Lama secular power. The Kashag was required to take orders from both the Qing Ambans and Dalai Lamas. Between 1789 and 1845, this trend continued. During the period between the two Gurkha Wars, some incompetent Ambans were dismissed. In 1792 after the second Gurkha War, another document, namely *The 29-Article Ordinance*, specified appointments concerning civilian, religious, military, judicial, diplomatic and tax collecting authorities. This Ordinance, with its systematic description of the role of Ambans, marked a new level of maturity of Qing government's Tibet policy.

Second, the system led to new construction activities and expansion of urban area. The construction of Tzashen Military Camp and Lubuk Yamen, were two examples.

2.2.3.1 Lhasa Northward Expansion as a Result of the Tzashen Military Camp

By the year 1720, when the campaign against Junggar invasion concluded, the Qing Chinese government had maintained a 3000 strong force (later grow to exceed 4000) in Tibet. They were mainly deployed at passes, postal routes and military supply depots. Since then it became the norm that Qing China maintained a military presence in Tibet. After a cut in the early years of Yongzheng's reign, the number of Qing Chinese troops was reduced to 1000, all having been deployed in Chamdo region. After Ü-Tsang War, 2000 troops were deployed in Tsang region and 1000 in Chamdo region. In 1733, after the Junggar Invasion, the number was reduced to 500, which would be replaced every three years. After Gyurme Namgyel Rebellion and two Gurkha Wars, the Qing strengthened the defense of main passes and postal routes. The Qing Chinese Tibetan garrisons were made up mainly by the Green Camp troops, who were also in charge of training and supervising local troops.²

¹Chen and Gao (ed.) (2003), p. 382.

²Chen and Gao (ed.) (2003), pp. 384–385.

Lhasa was the most heavily-defended city in Tibet. In 1727, amidst the Ü-Tsang War, the city was guarded by two Qing brigades, numbering 6500 troops. After the establishment of the Amban System, a Yamen was established here, with a military staff including officers and guards. In the late 18th century, Fukang'an's Amban Yamen was staffed by thirty individuals, most of them having military ranks.

Before the establishment of Tzashen Military Camp, military personnel often intermingled with the locals. This became increasingly a headache as disputes among them and locals arose frequently. For example, the Han Chinese was confronted for slaughtering animals near monasteries. In order to strengthen discipline among the military, in 1733, six years after the introduction of the Amban system, Emperor Yongzheng ordered a military base to be established in Tzashen.

Tzashen, situated on a flat area close to water source, was the place where the Khoshuud Khans reviewed their troops. In 1717, during the Junggar siege on Lhasa, the Junggar invaders also built their bases here. During the Kangxi reign, when the Qing troops arrived in Tibet to quench a local riot, they too chose this place to rest. After an inspection by Qingbao, the Qing Amban and Polhanai visited Tzashen, decision was made that the new military base should be built here and the project was overseen by the two until its completion.

Construction of Tzashen began in May of 1733, and took four months to complete. According to Qingbao's account, the compound was encircled by a ring of wall that measured 200-zhang long; it had gates on three sides: the south, east and west. The city wall was built on one zhang wide foundation and 1.3 zhang tall. It also had battlements built on top—adding an extra three chi to its height. All told, the walls formed a 1.6 zhang tall fortress made of solid rocks. On top, a five-chi wide pathway allows defenders to maneuver. Each gate had dedicated rooms to store supplies. In addition to the original 21-room design, as the building expanded, this number increased to a total of 341 rooms. Among all these rooms, there was the Ambans' Yamen.

2.2.3.2 Construction of Lubuk Yamen and the City's Expansion Towards Southwest

Originalled located in the Tromsikkhang Courtyard, the Amban's Yamen was relocated several times during its life cycle. First it was relocated to Ganden Khangsar, then to Tzashen Military Camp and finally to another site inside the Old City. In late 19th century, it was relocated to Lubuk area to the southwest of Jokhang and south of Yuthog Zampa. The new site included a multi-storey office building, the living quarters of the Amban and his guards. Later, as the number of buildings grew, the less-populated southwestern region was filled up. The compound was later expanded though it had little effect on the city's overall structure.

2.2.3.3 Evolution Into a Multiple-Cultural City

The Tibetan society began to interact with the Han Chinese civilization starting in ancient times. After the advent of the Amban System, with the new influx of Han Chinese population, including officials and soldiers, the Chinese culture became even more prevalent. This is especially evident in areas surrounding the Tzashen Military Camp.

For decades following its construction, the Tzashen Military Camp had evolved from pure barracks and for some time, the Ambans System, with the new influx of Han Chinese populace and Tibetan characteristics. The population, originally government officials and military personnel, evolved to include their family members, clerics, merchants, etc. In surrounding areas, facilities emerged to facilitate people's life—shops, temples and civilian residences etc. Many Qing soldiers hired local Tibetan women as household servants; some married locals thus became more assimilated into the local culture.

Gesar Temple is a product of cultural import. In the reign of Kangxi, the Qing military personnel in Lhasa raised fund for a Gesar Temple where their patron god—Guandi was worshipped. In the 57th year of Qianlong reign, Helin the Qing Amban, ordered the Temple to be rebuilt. In the same year, a new one was built in Bamari to commemorate the Qing military's successful campaign against the Gurkha. After the Pongwari Guandi Temple was completed, it attracted large number of Han Chinese officials, military personnel and merchants alike—today this temple remains intact. After the new Temple was built, the old one in Tzashen became neglected and was eventually reduced to rubble. On its site, Zhaji Monastery was built where the Protector Goddess was worshipped.

2.2.3.4 Mongolian Influence

The Mongols was a significant source of influence on Tibet. From Sakya dynasty to the reign of the 5th Dalai Lama, for a period about four centuries, the Mongols and Tibetans maintained close ties, especially during three periods: (1) The reigns of Godan and Kublai of Yuan dynasty, which coincided with Sakya dynasty in Tibet; (2) The reign of Altan Khan, which coincided with the 3rd Dalai Lama's; (3) The reign of Güshi Khan, which coincided with the 5th Dalai Lama's. During the Sakya period, Tibetan social and economic center shifted from Lhasa to Sakya, before shifted to Lhasa in the reign of the 3rd Dalai Lama, and to a lesser extent, Qinghai and Inner Mongolia. During the reign of Güshi Khan and the 5th Dalai Lama, Lhasa's status was further strengthened and became the sole political center. Meanwhile, its urban development reached its zenith during the subsequent three centuries. As the center of Tibet, Lhasa gradually acquired its functionality and size that matched its status.

In 1642, with the support of Güshi Khan, the leader of Mongolian Khoshut tribe, the 5th Dalai Lama established the religious Ganden Phodrang regime. Güshi Khan began to administrator Tibet while the 5th Dalai Lama retained his authority as the

supreme religious leader. It was until the assassination of Lha-bzang Khan, Güshi Khan's great grandson in 1717, that the family's seventy years of rule came to an end. During his lifetime, Güshi Khan first resided in Samdrup Phodrang, later moved to Ganden Khangsar. He finally settled down in Penjor Raptan Mansion. All three of them were high quality buildings with remarkable aesthetics. SamdrupPhobrang, in particular, is still in good condition today. Aside from the aforementioned ones, the Mongolian ruling class also left some buildings, including barracks and other supporting facilities. Most, however, didn't survive.

2.3 Lhasa as a Religious Center

Prior to the establishment of Tupo dynasty, Bon was the dominant religion in Tibet. This aboriginal religion played a significant role in local people's life. Historic archives indicate that by the 5th century AD—the time when the father of Songtsen Gampo came to power, Buddhism had already been introduced to countries neighboring Tibet. By the time when Songtsen Gampo established Tupo dynasty, the religion had already gained a firm foothold in Tibet.

During Tupo Dynasty and after the creation of Gelugpa, Lhasa began its ascent towards its status as a holy city. Prior to Gelugpa, Buddhism's dissemination experienced two phases of growth. This is referred to by historians as the First Stage and the Second Stage of Popularization of Buddhism in Tibet. The First took place in Tupo Dynasty, when the imported religion first gained a foot hold despite its local rivals, mainly the native Bon religion. Tension between the two lasted over a long time during which a number of anti-Buddhism purges occurred. The Second Period took place in the tenth century, when Buddhism thrived across Tibet but different schools of Buddhism fiercely competed with each other. As the secular regimes' relationship with the religious forces became increasingly interwoven the two eventually merged and a new form of governance emerged. Also during this period, the Tibetan Buddhism center was moved to Amdo (today's Qinghai) and Ngari region.

Much of Lhasa's status as a religious holy city was due to Jokhang. The monastery was built in early Tupo period. In its wake, the status of the city waxed and waned in the subsequent years—for a long period, it lost its religious status until the rise of Gelugpa. Construction of monasteries and religious activities played a decisive role in this process and greatly shaped the city's development.

2.3.1 *Importation of Buddhism*

2.3.1.1 Songtsen Gampo's Introduction of Buddhism

During the reign of Songtsen Gampo, the Tibetan ruler received a gift of an Avalokiteśvara statue presented by the Buddhist community from South Indian,

which suggests that Buddhism was already active in the region. Also during his reign, Tibet established diplomatic relationship with the culturally more advanced and devoutly Buddhist neighbor—Nepal; this relationship was cemented by the ruler's marriage with Nepalese Princess Bhrikuti Devi. The princess also brought with her a statue, which was supposedly a realistic portrait of the eight-year old founder of Buddhism—Sakyamuni. It had since then been placed in Jokhang. Six years later, when Tang Chinese Princess Wencheng arrived to Lhasa also to marry the Tibetan ruler, she brought along with her large numbers of books, herbal medicines, seeds, as well as Buddhist priests—the last having contributed to the popularization of Buddhism in Tibet. The Chinese princess also brought along a statue of Sakyamuni, said to be a portrait of the 12-year-old Sakyamuni. This one was placed in Ramoche. Eighty years later, the statue was relocated to Jokhang at the order of the Princess Jincheng. During the reign of Songtsen Gampo, members of the aristocracy such as Tunmi Sambodra, were sent to India for education. Inspired by the Indian languages, Tibetan scholars invented their own script, a giant leap forward for Tibet's cultural development. It promoted the codification of laws, translation of Buddhist literature, and the public education. During the reign of Tride Songtsen, the Tibetan King married Tang Chinese Princess Jincheng. In its wake, more Buddhist monasteries were built in Lhasa, including Zhama Zhensang, Zhama Gaqu, Qingpu, Renan, Masageng, etc. Large numbers of Buddhist literature were kept in these monasteries. Lhasa thus became the center of Tibetan Buddhism.

2.3.1.2 Monastery-Building During Tupo Dynasty

At the same time Buddhism was introduced to Tupo Tibet, monasteries began to be built, further promoted the integration of the religion into the Tibetan culture. Lhasa's cityscape became dotted by monasteries of various schools and different sizes. Usually surrounding these buildings, neighborhoods emerged, giving rise to commercial activities. Monasteries became a large category of architecture in the city. Among them, the most significant one is Jokhang, a building that greatly influenced the layout of the Old City.

Jokhang was built during the reign of Songtsen Gampo and became the city's gravity center. Surrounding Jokhang, civilian residences, hotels, shops and other supporting facilities emerged. Most Tibetan rulers treated Jokhang as a holy place, and dedicated great amount of efforts to its upkeep. After the 11th century AD, secular rulers, Dalai Lamas and other upperclass clerics oversaw several rounds of repairs and expansions and the monastery emerged taller with more stories and supporting buildings, ramparts, corridors, galleries', Lhadrang, fences, houses on the southern side and prayer circuits. In the 13th century, during the reign of Dalai Lama, the Monastery assumed its final scale; its structure had been stable since then. The last changes introduced to the building occurred in 1950, when Jokhang's northern part, the Dalai Lama's living quarters, was demolished and rebuilt.

The Khamsum Zilnon (Note: transliteration of a palace or a chapel in Jokhang) were also rebuilt. This is the Jokhang that we see today.³

Another building comparable to Jokhang is Ramoche. Ramoche was also built in the Tupo period. In the 10th century, during the *Hou Hong* period, Ramoche was built and subsequently expanded. In late 15th century, the head of Tselpa administration (an administration unit that includes Lhasa) financed the repair of Ramoche and the construction of Upper Tantric College. In late 17th century, 5th Dalai Lama ordered the construction of the patio on top of the roof; the originally pottery tiles were replaced with copper-plated ones, and later, replaced again, with gold-glided ones—this greatly enhanced the monastery's appearance.⁴ Like Jokhang, a booming community also formed surrounding Ramoche. As the community grew, it eventually filled up the space between Jokhang and Barkor.

By the end of Tupo, there had already been many monasteries. These include Garu, and Moru, to the east, Gawa and Gawa'o to the south and Trinkhang to the north—these collectively formed the outline of urban Lhasa. For two centuries, Buddhism became an integral part of local residents' daily life, and heavily influenced the city's structure.

2.3.2 Rise of Gelugpa

2.3.2.1 Monlam Chenmo and Dalai Lama Rebirth Institution

Three events that occurred in the reign of 5th Dalai Lama critically affected the development of Buddhism in Tibet: The first is the fast rise of Gelugpa, a school of Tibetan Buddhism that eventually became the dominant sect; the second is the Dalai Lama's meeting with Qing Emperor Shunzhi, resultant in central Chinese government's recognition of the Dalai's religious authority. The third is the implementation of the *13-Article Ordinance* in 1751, which marked Tibet's political institutions reaching a new level of maturity while Dalai Lama's authority reached beyond the ordained to the lay population as well.

Gelugpa was founded by Je Tsongkhapa around late 14th century and early 15th century. Its early success owed much to the support of two powerful political figures, namely regional leader Dragpa Gyentsen, the "Lord of Chan Hua"—a title he received from Ming dynasty, and Lhasa River basin region tribal leader the Kyishopa. As growth continued, this school eventually attained dominance in Tibet. In 1409, Je Tsongkhapa hosted a prayer gathering, known as the Monlam Chenmo. The event drew a large audience of Buddhists. In the same year, Ganden Monastery was built, serving as the primary venue of worship for Gelugpa followers.

³Local Chronicles Compilation Committee of Tibet Autonomous Region (chief ed.) and Local Chronicles Compilation Committee of Chengguan District, Lhasa, Tibet (ed.) (2010), p. 484.

⁴Charpa Tsiten Puntsog et al. (2008), p. 97.

This turned out to be a landmark event in the development of Gelugpa. By the time that Je Tsongkhapa died in 1419, the construction of three major Gelugpa monasteries, namely Ganden, Drepung and Sera, had already concluded. Among them, Drepung completed in 1416, and Sera in 1418. Monlam Chenmo became an annual event, which contributed to Gelugpa's popularity in Lhasa and prosperity of Jokhang and Barkor area.

Je Tsongkhapa was not recognized by the central Chinese government during his lifetime. Neither did he pick a successor. After he died, two of his disciples shared his mantle. Both were originally from Shigatse region. One, Gendün Druppa, came to be known as the 1st Dalai Lama. He was also the founder of Tashilhunpo Monastery in Shigatse; his successor Gendün Gyatso, originally resided in monastery of Tashilhunpo before moving to Lhasa, where he took up residence in Ganden Phodrang of Drepung Monastery. Starting the second reincarnation, Dalai Lamas began to live in Lhasa. The 5th, Dala Lamas moved his residence to the Old City area. Several buildings in the Old City, Larang Ningba, Samdrup Phobrang, Ganden Khangsar, were his old abodes.

Circa 1642, the 5th Dalai Lama took up residence in Ganden Phodrang of Drepung Monastery. Ganden Phodrang, literally meaning "God's Palace", is a three-story flat-roof building. It was the Seat of three generations of Dalai Lamas—the 3rd, the 4th and the 5th. The 5th Dalai Lama moved from Ganden Phobrang to Lhasa before Potala was completed, and taken up residence in Labdrang Nyingpa on the side of Barkor South. In 1653, after Potala project was completed, Dalai Lama moved to the Palace and had since then lived and worked there. According to the tradition, Dalai Lamas don't leave Potala even after they die—their tombs are built on top of the Palace.

The word Dalai Lama first came into popular use starting the 3rd generation. In 1578, the 3rd Dalai Lama, whose secular name is Sonam Gyatso, received the title "Shengshi Yiqie Waqier Dalai Lama" from the Mongolian Tümed leader Altan Khan. Later, he was invited by the Mongolian Khan to proselytize in Inner Mongolian region. As a result, Sonam gained popularity among the locals and became one of the most revered living Buddhas among the Mongols.

The 5th Dalai Lama's visit to Beijing and meeting with Emperor Shunzhi in Beijing was highly significant. It inaugurated a new era in which the Chinese government began to recognize the authority of Dalai Lamas. In 1652, the 5th Dalai Lama, accompanied with delegates sent by the 4th Panchan Lama and Güshi Khan, visited the Emperor in Beijing. When he returned in 1654, the Qing Emperor Shunzhi granted him the title of Dalai Lama, and thus established Dalai Lamas' religious authority in Tibet and Mongolia. The 1st to 4th Dalai Lamas were recognized retroactively.

2.3.2.2 Monastery Building After the 5th Dalai Lama

By 1409, three major Gelugpa monasteries had been completed, namely Ganden Monastery, Drepung Monastery and Sera Monastery. Given that these monasteries

were not located in Lhasa proper but suburbs, their influence on the city was through their subsidiaries inside the city.

Among the most remarkable monasteries post-the 5th Dalai Lama, there are Four Lins, which were private champels of the four most prominent Tulkus aka Rinpoches. In 1959 there were a total of 62 Gelugpa monasteries in Lhasa. In 2000, with the approval of Lhasa Chengguan District government, 38 Gelugpa monasteries were restored and reopened to the public. In addition, there were monasteries of other sects, namely Nyingmapa, Sakya and Kagyu. According to a 2000 survey, within the Old City of Lhasa there were two Nyingmapa monasteries, two Sakya ones, and one Kagyu one.⁵ In addition, there are two mosques, both built during Qing dynasty.

Some monasteries rent their own properties to lodgers, or to accommodate monks. During a long history, Gelugpa manasteires were restored and reopened to the public. In addition, there were quite unique about this city.

Among all the Lhasa monasteries, the crown indisputably rested with Jokhang. During the reign of the 5th Dalai Lama, the monastery attracted large crowds of pilgrims who were here to attend the Monlam Chenmo. Monlam Chenmo took place every year from the lunar calendar January 3rd to the 25th. During this period, monasteries were in charge for maintaining social order: The Martial Monks, equipped with iron rods, would be sent by Drepung and Loselling to portal the streets and maintain order. The event greatly contributed to the status of Jokhang as the highest religious institution and Lhasa as a regional religion center. It also led to the popularity of prostration praying and Kora-praying. The 5th Dalai Lama promulgated a set of rules concerning bureaucracy, protocol concerning appointment and dismissal of clerics, Buddhist scripture study and other areas with respect to monastery governance.⁶ All these have been observed there after in Gelugpa monasteries.

Aside from its architectural aesthetics and religious significance, Jokhang is also important for its location. It is the center of three Circuits, the backbones of the Old City. Along with Lingkor, Barkor, the three constituted the center block of the Old City. Lingkor, on the other hand, marked the outermost border of the city for a long time. As recent as 1940, the area between Lingkor and Barkor remained fairly undeveloped. According to Liu Shengqi, who worked at the Tibetan office of the KMT government and Tibetan Affairs Commission,⁷ “When I walked past this grassland (Norbulingka), the road became increasingly narrow. At some points, it got so narrow, even by local standards, that were hard to discern. Few could imagine that this is the holy prayer circuitLingkor. Inside this circuit lays Lhasa’s central area.”

⁵Local Chronicles Compilation Committee of Tibet Autonomous Region (chief ed.) and Local Chronicles Compilation Committee of Chengguan District, Lhasa, Tibet (ed.) (2010), pp. 579–581.

⁶Ya (2001), p. 38.

⁷Shen and Liu (2006), p. 203.

As tea and horse-trade often took place near Jokhang, a busy market was formed in this area. Prospects of money, along with religious appeal made the Jokhang area an attraction to the religiously and pecuniarily-motivated alike. Today, in addition to tea and horses, local specialties, such as Tibetan incense, metal tools and other handcraft products, are also traded in large quantities. Large numbers of specialty stores dealing jewelry pieces, Tibetan papers, knives, scabbards, bracelets, sniffing tobacco pots, and others also concentrated in this area.

2.4 Formation of the Transportation Network

Situated between China and South Asia, Tibet was on a passage connecting two subcontinents. In ancient times, transportation routes concentrated in the following types of areas: Areas close to major rivers, Lhasa for example; lowland areas on the edge of the Plateau; areas with suitable geomorphological conditions; and areas with some of the above-mentioned characteristics.

These early transportation routes enabled commerce and cultural exchange, which introduced outside influences to Tibet. One influence came from China originated in the Yellow River Basin region; another is India from South Asia. Mid-Asia and West Asia were also sources of influence. In Tibet, these influences clashed and reshaped. This reached a high point during the Tupo Period. In Tibet, starting in the pre-history period, exchanges mainly took place in Southern Tibetan Valley region as well as the northern plateau. The main routes concentrated in the eastern and northeast ends of Tibet. They include one that run past the Eastern Tibetan Three River Valley and the area where Yellow River and Yangtze River originated—in this area the terrain was relatively flat; another runs past the western Tibet, where several rivers originated. Internally, during the Tribal Era, different tribes, including three major ones, namely Zhang Zhung, Yarlung and Subi, waged wars against each other while also engaged in trading. Communication was thus established and strengthened. Although Lhasa had relatively favorable natural conditions, it only became the regional communication center much later after it became a city.

During Tupo dynasty, several new routes were opened and facilitated the communication between Tibet and neighboring countries and regions. In Yuan dynasty, at the central government level, the General Politics Yuan and Military Ministry were two top governing bodies responsible for transportation in this region. In Qing dynasty, this responsibility was shared by Lifan Yuan and Ministry of the Military. In Qing dynasty, communication between China Proper and Tibet was further strengthened. All these efforts promoted Lhasa's status as a center of administration, religion and commerce, accelerated its urban construction, and increased the city's population. In the following chapter, we will look closely into the effect of transportation to the development of Lhasa.

2.4.1 *Outbound Transportation During the Tupo Era*

During the Tupo period, four regimes heavily influenced Tibet, namely Tang China to the east, Arabia to the west, Tartar to the north and India to the south. Interaction between these powers took place on these routes, including Tang—Tupo Line, Tupo—Nanshao Line, Tupo—Sichuan Line, Tuobo—Northwest Line, as well as Tupo—Central/South Asia Line.

2.4.1.1 Tang-Tupo Line

Tang-Tupo Line is a main transportation line between Tupo and Tang China. It links up Tang capital Chang'an on one end and Lhasa on the other. Starting from Shaanxi, it enters Tibet through Qinghai. After reaching Lhasa, it continued southwards, extending further, reaching Nipal (called Tupo-Nipal Line). The Tupo-Nipal Line, the primary link between Tupo and South Asia, is often considered an extension of the Line.

The Tang-Tupo Line was a product of Tang China's effort to strengthen its control over the Hehuang Region and bolster its ties with Tupo Tibet. Its 4000 km length is traditionally divided into the Eastern Line and the Western Line.

The Eastern Line starts off Chang'an, Xi'an of today's Shaanxi province. Going westwards, it runs past Shancheng in Qinghai, Longzhou, Qinzhou, Weizhou, Wuzhou, Lanzhou and Hezhou. After Qinzhou and Weizhou, this line was furcated into two branches—one runs past Hezhou and ends in Shanzhou; the other runs past Lanzhou and ends in Shanzhou. Between the two, Hezhou-Shanzhou line has better conditions and sees more traffic. On the Tang Chinese side, along the line postal stations were established for military defense purposes as well as the communication between the capital and the Hehuang Region. Over time this line gained the status as the "Official Line" for being traveled by the government personnel. The collapse of Tupo reduced the military significance of the Eastern Line, however, its role as a commercial and trade line remained until near pre-modern era.⁸

The western section of the line starts from Shancheng and enters Tibet by way of Qinghai. This stretch is developed based on the ancient line linking Tibet with Hehuang Region dating back to Qin and Han Dynasties. It consists of five smaller sections—the first starts from Shancheng and ends in Chiling, i.e., from Qinghai developed based on the ancient linelinking Tibet with Hehuang Mountain. The second travels in parallel to Dafeichuang River and ends at the Northern Ferry Port of Yellow River. The third starts from Yellow River, running past Qinghai Bohai, aka Yueling Lake, and ends in Zhonglong Yi, aka Qingshui River; the fourth starts from Zhonglong Yi, running past Maoni River, aka Tongtian River, Jiezhi Chuan, and enters Tibet by way of Yushu, Qinghai—often referred to as the The Big Road

⁸Ran Guangrong's Tibetan Ancient Transportation Analysis, Tibetan Human Rights Online (<http://www.tibet328.cn>), 2012.6.2.

to Tibet according to contemporary literature; The fifth starts from Tanggula Pass passing through Suoqu River Valley, Northern Tibetan Plateau and arrives in Lhasa River Valley and eventually Lhasa City.

The Tang-Tupo Line was significant in the culture and personnel exchange between Tupo and Tang China. Agricultural products, handcraft items and art pieces were transported in large quantities between the two. Along the line there were some booming trade towns, such as Chiling (today Riyueshan in Qinghai) and Longzhou (today Longxian County in Shaanxi), both having become prosperous thanks to tea-horse trade, earning the line its name Tea and Horse Line.

2.4.1.2 Tupo—Nanshao Line

During Tang dynasty, Tupo maintained active communication with Nanshao kingdom (Note: in today's Yunnan province). There were main lines that connected Tibet and Nanshao Kingdom: The Eastern Line (aka Internal River Line) and Western Line (External River Line).

The Eastern Line situated on a strand of lowland including a number of river valleys between Jinsha River, Nujiang River and Lancangjiang River. This area is home to a group of tall mountains, collectively called Hengduan Mountains. This line starts from Lhasa and runs eastward past Gongbu Region, then Markam and Batang of the southeastern Tibet, finally reaching Southwestern Yunnan region downstream of Lancangjiang River and Jinshajiang River. Through its military campaigns against Nanshao, Tupo gained control of the southwestern part of Yunnan where they built the Shenchuan Iron Bridge across the Jinsha River. A Tibetan administrator was appointed, and this area became an important passage between Tupo and Nanshao. The western line passes through Gaoligeng Mountains and continues westwards before ending in Nanshao. The main effect is to ensure commercial communication between Tupo and Nanshao.⁹

2.4.1.3 Tupo—Shichuan Line

In Tang dynasty, the importance of Tupo—Sichuan Line is second only to Tang—Tupo Line. Many battles were won and lost by different regimes in their efforts to gain control of this important route.

This line includes two main routes:

One is Xishan Line, which runs along the Minjiang River in Western Sichuan; Guanxian being a strategic city on this path. It furcates into two branches—the first runs past Garze, Dege, and enters Eastern Tibet; the other going upstream in the

⁹Department of Transportation of Tibet Autonomous Region, and Tibet Academy of Social Sciences (2001), pp. 79–88.

Minjiang River Valley, passing Songzhou and turning northward, passing Songpan Grassland, before joining Tang-Tupo Line before entering Tibet.

The other is the Southern Line, which starts from Ya'an, Sichuan. The Line includes two separate lines, one being Lingguan Line, the other Hechuan Line. The Lingguan Line starts from Ya'an, passing Lushan, Lingguan, and ends in Yecheng, which is supposed to be part of Tupo but its specific location is no longer known. This line also includes a stretch, which ran along Qingyi River and joined Xishan Line in Weizhou. The Hechuan line starts from Ya'an, enters Tupo through the Dadu River.

2.4.1.4 Northwestern Lines

In history there were multiple passages connecting Tupo and Northwestern China and Mid-Asia. They facilitated the introduction of Buddhism to China as well as transportation of merchandise and personnel. According to Japanese scholar Takao Moriyasu, there were two lines that connected Tupo Tibet and Northwestern China and Mid-Asia. One starts from mid-Tibet and ends in Karakoram of Northwestern region and Pamir Plateau. This was the primary line of communication between Tupo and mid-Asia. The other one ran past Tibet northeastern and reached Qaidam Basin. In reality, aside the two lines, there were also two less-known ones. One reached westward, running past Bruzha, turning around Congling (the Chinese for the Pamir Mountains region) and arrived in Bruzha in northern Kashmir. In addition, there is also the one that ran past Zhang Zhung, Guojiashimiluo and arrived in Tianzhu (ancient India)—collectively, they are referred to as Five Tupo Lines.

There were two main passages between Mid-Tibet and Western Region, running past the Tarim Basin between Kela Kunlun and Pamir Plateau, before entering the Western Region. The other runs past Kunlun Mountain and Kela Kunkuan Ridge (Also referred to as Yudian Southern Mountains) before entering Western Region; the second passage is often referred to as the Tupo—Yudian Line, which is the primary line connecting Tibet and the Western Region. The two can be dated back to the time of Zhang Zhung regime. They reached as west as Karakoram and today's India, Pakistan and Kashmir, as north as Pamir Plateau and as west as Congling. Yutian was a regime established in the 2nd century. The kingdom remained the center of Buddhism for a long period and was a significant to the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet. As early as the second half of the seventh century, Tupo established diplomatic relationship with Yutian. During the reign of Tridu Songtsen, some Buddhist monks from Yutian were invited to go to Tibet to preach sermons.

The Five Passages of Tupo refers to various lines connecting Tibet with Mid-Asia by way of Kashmir. In the Neolithic age, sporadic communication existed between Tibet and Kashmir; however, it was until the conquest of Zhang Zhung by Tupo, that the two became closely connected. The war expanded Tupo's territory to border the Kasmira Kingdom of northern India. These passages also contributed greatly to the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet.

2.4.1.5 Tupo-Nepal Line

Buddhism was a major driving force behind the emergence of these passages. In Tupo era, Buddhism was introduced to Tibet by way of the South Asia and Mid-Asia. The Mid-Asia route runs past Yutian before entering Tibet. The South Asia one enters Tibet by way of Nipal. The later was also a main trade route where the majority of commodities was transported between India and Tibet and is believed to be an extension of the western Tang-Tupo route (some say the south one). The Eastern (some say the Northern) route reached Chang'an, the Tang Chinese capital. In history, two Tang Chinese princesses that married Tibetan rulers traveled to Tibet on these roads.

It is likely that diplomatic ties between Tupo Tibet and Nepal existed prior to Songtsen Gampo's marriage with Nepalese Princess Bhrikuti Devi. This is confirmed by an inscription in Gyirong where the princess supposedly sojourned on her way to Lhasa. The inscription, found at the Paba Monastery in Gyirong County—a monastery built to welcome the Nepalese Princess, indicates that Gyirong passage was a main line of the Tupo-Nepal Southern Passage, as well as an important line between Tang China and Nepal, India and other South Asian countries.¹⁰

2.4.2 Postal Service During the Yuan and Ming Dynasty

During Yuan dynasty, a transportation network centered on Sakya region (today's Shigatse) emerged. In 1260, the Mongolian Kublai appointed Drogön Chögyal Phagpa, the fifth leaders of the Sakya School as the state priest. At the emperor's behest, Yuan general Dashiman commanded an armed expedition to and subjugated Tibet. Subsequently, postal connection was established between the two regimes. In Ü-Tsang, seven postal towns were established, including Zhiyingsuo, Xiake, Ziba, Xiapo, Geng, Guansa, and Jiawa; in Tsang region, there were another four, namely Zhiyingda, Chundun, Daerlong and Zhongda. Between these postal towns, there were also checking points, usually within one day's horse ride from each other. Each was assigned a fief, which contributed evies and conscripts. For instance, Guansa was assigned Tselpa Myriarchy. In the year of 1251, during the military campaign to subjugate the Southwestern China, a route was built to allow Yuan troops to circumvent the heavily defended Sichuan to attack the soft underbelly of Yunnan, and eventually reaching Vietnam and Myanmar.¹¹

In Ming dynasty, multiple routes linking China proper to Lhasa were established; these routes fell into two categories: one by way of Sichuan and the other Qinghai. Starting Yuan dynasty, postal stations were established in large quantities. The Sichuan Line (aka the Southern Line), was the official tribute route—according

¹⁰Huo (1995).

¹¹Writing Groups of the original and revised versions (2009), p. 91.

to the government policy, the gifts for the Ming emperors from Ü-Tsang would be transported to Beijing on this route. It connects Chengdu on one end and runs past Yanto two categories: one by way of Sichuan and the other Qinghai. Starting Yuan dynas and joins the Qinghai Line in Dege before entering Tibet; the second runs past Lizhou, going westwards, past Dadu River, Yajiang River, Litang, Jinsha River, Markam, and reaching Tibet in Chamdo.¹² Likewise, the second route, namely the Qinghai Line, also includes multiple lines: the first starts off from Xining and goes westward along Huangshui River, running past Riyueshan mountain and finally arrives in Handong near Qinghai Lake,¹³ then running across Bayankela Mountain and entering Tibet from Yushu; The second starts off from Hezhou, subsequently going westwards, past Guide and across the Yellow River before reaching Bili, where it joins the Xining Line. The third starts off from Yaozhou, subsequently running in parallel to Yaoshui River westward and passing what is today's, past Guide lian Autonomous County, Zeku County before ending in Chuanzang (today's Qinghai Tongde County), joining Hezhou Line and entering Tibet—this route is referred to as Hequ Southern Line. The last starts from Yaozhou and enters Tibet in Songpan and Maozhou—By Ming Dynasty Chenghua Reign this was the route chosen by the China-bound tribute convoys from Ü-Tsang. On these routes, tea and horses were traded in large quantities; specialized government agencies in Tianshui, Hezhou, Hezhou and Yaozhou were established to administer trading activities. In addition to these, in Ming Dynasty, some new passages were established between China and South Asian countries.¹⁴

2.4.3 *Outbound Transportation from Lhasa in Qing Dynasty*

In Qing dynasty, some new routes were added. During this period, Lhasa continued to act as a communication hub and the city's status as Tibetan political and economic center was further reinforced. This, in turn, promoted its economic and cultural development.

During this period, a national postal service system covered much of the country. At the central government level, Lipan Yuan and Ministry of Military was the highest governing body of Tibetan postal service. At the local level, Tibetan Ambans were top administrators, except in Kham region, this role was doubled by Sichuan Governor, in Amdo region, the Xining Minister.

¹²Department of Transportation of Tibet Autonomous Region, and Tibet Academy of Social Sciences (2001), pp. 141–142.

¹³Department of Transportation of Tibet Autonomous Region, and Tibet Academy of Social Sciences (2001), pp. 146–160.

¹⁴Department of Transportation of Tibet Autonomous Region, and Tibet Academy of Social Sciences (2001), pp. 146–160.

In Qing dynasty, five major national postal routes were established with Jingshi Huanghua Postal Station in Beijing being the *ridius*. Once leaving Beijing, they branched off towards five directions. In 1719, the 58th year of the Kangxi Reign, postal stations began to emerge in Tibetan region. At that time, Kham-Tibet, Qinghai-Tibet, Yun'nan-Tibet were three major routes connecting Lhasa and China proper. Kham-Tibet Line starts from Huanghua Postal Station in Beijing. After leaving Beijing, this route crossed the Great Wall in Juyongguan Pass, before entering Shaanxi province, Gansu province and Sichuan province, finally joining the Chuan-Kham Line before entering Tibet. The Qinghai-Tibet Line starts from Beijing, running past Hebei, Henan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai before entering Tibet; Yun'nan-Tibet Line starts from Beijing, running past Henan, before finally entering Tibet from Zhongdian in today's Yunnan province. These three routes played a significant role in central government's control of Tibet.

Kham-Tibet Line starts from Dajianlu (today Kangding, Sichuan) in the Kham and stretched some 2490 km before reaching Lhasa, with 84 (later increased to 102) Tai-level postal stations and 13 Xun-level ones.¹⁵ Along the Kham-Tibet Line, six *Liangtai* were established, namely Dajianlu, Litang, Batang, Chamuduo, Lali, Lhasa, each governed by officials appointed by the central government.

Yunan-Tibet Line starts from Zhongdian, Yuannan, stretching some 1540 km before reaching Lhorong of Tibet. There it joins the Kham-Tibet Line, and eventually arrives in Lhasa. Due to the mountainous terrain along this route, the Kham-Tibet and Qinghai-Tibet Lines, which are on milder terrains, were traveled on more often.

Qinghai-Tibet Line starts in Xining, running past Qinghai and ends in Lhasa, stretching some 2060 km. Compared with Kham-Tibet and Yunan-Tibet Lines, Qinghai-Tibet Line to avoid the Mongolian-controlled territory, took a detour, resultant in 750 km extra length. In Qing dynasty, the Ambans were often opted for Kham-Tibet Line to travel between Lhasa and Beijing for the shortest distance.

Postal services in Tibetan region were divided into four classes, depending on priorities and urgency. The top class could reach a speed of 600 *li* per day, achieved by 24-hour non-stop horse relays. With that speed, a 13,000 *li* trip, which was the distance between Beijing and Lhasa, can be completed within 24 days, including 11 days between Dajianlu (Note: Kangding, Sichuan province) and Lhasa.

The postal system facilitates the communication between the central government and local ones, and shortened the time it took for information transmission, thus improved the local political stability and cultural ties, and promoted the economic development of the area where the routes passed through. Take Dian-Zang Route for instance, in Qing dynasty, the convoys traveling along the route, contributed greatly to the local business prosperity. At its peak, horse bands shuttling between

¹⁵ According to the Qing dynasty postal system, Zhan is a unit established for the purpose of relaying military intelligence. Tai, or alternatively Juntai, Liangtai, was an institution in charge of managing transportation and storing grains, silver, uniforms, arsenal, responsible for investigation of crimes with authorization of the amban and supervise the mint of coins.

Lijiang and Lhasa involved over 10,000 horses, carrying over 1000 tons of cargo in a two-way trip.

These postal routes also served as venue where trades and other forms of exchanges took place. In Qing dynasty, trade between Tibet and China Proper was mainly carried out on the Sichuan-Tibet, Yunnan-Tibet and Qinghai-Tibet Lines, and all ended in Lhasa. Towns along the routes such as Songpan, Dajianlu, Luding in Sichuan and Deqin, Zhongdian, Adunzi in Yunnan, Xining, Dange'er in Qinghai became prosperous due to commerce activities. Tea, textile, footwear, cotton, tobacco, silk from Sichuan, cloth, copper, sugar from Yunnan were transported to Tibet in large quantities; antlers, musk, gold, sheepskin, saffron, Tibetan incense, wool, fritillaries, cordyceps were shipped from Tibet to inland China.

Kham-Tibet Route was the most significant among all of them. Not only was it a main venue, where border tea trade was conducted, it was also of strategic military value as a route that most Qing Ambans used when traveling to and back from Tibet.

Tea, mostly having entered Tibet through the Sichuan-Tibet Route, would be further shipped to Bhutan, Nepal, and Kashmir.¹⁶ Thus Sichuan-Tibet route was also an important link connecting China and South Asia.

2.4.4 Republic of China Era—Lhasa as an Important Link Connecting China

2.4.4.1 Communication Between Lhasa and Neighboring Provinces

During the Republic of China period, three kinds of routes connecting Tibet and China Proper emerged: The first are routes traveled by Tibetan officials and Buddhists. These included Qinghai-Tibet Line, Sichuan-Tibet Line and Yunnan-Tibet line; the second are those traveled by the Chinese emissaries and neighboring provinces' officials, who often took the Sichuan-Tibet Line and Qinghai-Tibet Line; the third are trade routes between Tibet and neighboring provinces. The third category, more numerous in number, conducted most commerce.

During this period, communication between Tibet and Inland China centered around four groups of routes, namely the Sichuan-Tibet Line, Qinghai-Tibet Line, Yun'nan-Tibet Line and Xinjiang-Tibet Line. Meanwhile, the outbound routes all ended in provincial central cities, which further reinforced the status of Lhasa as the transportation hub of Tibet.

Among these routes:

Sichuan-Tibet Route, or Chuan-Zang Route, included three lines: The Northern, Southern, and the Chuan-Zang Commerce Route. The Northern started from Chengdu, running past Kangding, before entering Tibet in Chamdo, and finally

¹⁶Chen and Gao (ed.) (2003), p. 545.

arrived in Lhasa. The Kangding-Lhasa section ran past Daofu, Luhuo, Garze, Dege, Geli, Tuolang, Chamdo, Gyamda, Tsomola, Meldro Gongkar, and Dechin before entering Lhasa. The Southern line also started from Chengdu, then ran past Yarze, Dege, Geli, Tuolang, merce Route. The North Chamdo; the Chuan-Zang Commerce Line had two sub-lines. The major one started from Chamdo, running past En Commerce Line had two sub-lines. The major one started from past Yarze, Dege, Geli, Tuolang, Meldro Gongkar, Deqing and eventually Lhasa. The other one started in Chamdo, running past Uzi, Datang, Lagou, Jiangdangqiao, Lalibao, Hakacuoka, Sanba, Meldro Gongkar and eventually Lhasa.

Qinghai-Tibet Route includes three lines: The First started from Xining, running across Tarim River, then past the Yellow River Origin area, Danglaling, Pangduo, and eventually reaching Lhasa. The second started from Xining, running past Yushu, Leiwuqi, Dingqing, Suoxian, Nagchu, eventually Lhasa; the third was the Qing-Zang Commerce Route, which started from Linxia, running past Xunhua, Degui, Maduo, Yushu, Dingqing, Baqing, Nagchu and eventually Lhasa.

Yunnan-Tibet Route started from Kunming, running past Lijiang, Adunzi (aka Deqing), Yanjing, Ningjing and finally ending in Lhasa. This route also included three lines: One started from Lhasa in one end, running past Longmarong, Nakezang, Sali, Bakaer, Yutian, Hetian; the second started from Lhasa, running past Longmarong, Gongzhan, Wengbo, Yukaer, Guluke and the rest of Xinjiang; the third is Yun'an-Tibet Commerce Route, starting from Yutian, running past Shadong, Ga'er and eventually ends in Lhasa.

These routes reinforced Lhasa's status as a regional political and communication center and facilitated the commerce between Tibet and China Proper. The trading activities are responsible for some of the most prosperous trade cities such as Shigatse, Chamdo, Gyantse, Yadong, Karma Dake in Tibet, Xining, Huangyuan in Qinghai, Lapuleng Temple in Lhasa, Kangding in Kham region, Deqing and Zhongdian in Yun'an.¹⁷

2.4.4.2 Lhasa in International Transportation Route During the Second Sino-Japanese War

The unique geographic conditions played an important role in Tibet's grown importance in the Anti-Japanese War. Japan's blockade severed China's seaborne communication with the West, compelling it to seek alternatives including opening a land borne route to India and the Indian Ocean.

The Tibetan Pro-China upperclass at that time were generally of the opinion that the KMT government should upgrade the Sichuan-Tibet and Kham-Tibetlines. After Yun'an—Myanmar route was closed due to the war, KMT government attempted to reestablish a communication line between Chongqing, Chengdu and

¹⁷Department of Transportation of Tibet Autonomous Region, and Tibet Academy of Social Sciences (2001), p. 219.

Chamdo, Southern Tibet and Indian's Satya. Facing resistance from the Tibetan local political forces, the KMT government was forced to work with the US and open an international airway—the Hump. Limited by the meteorologist conditions, the aerial transportation line alone couldn't deliver all China's needs for war resources.

Towards the end of 1941, the British government proposed to the KMT government with a jointly built Sino-India Roadway. In 1942, the KMT government counter-proposed with a different route starting Sikkim, running past Lhasa, Chamdo, Garze, and Kangding and eventually reaching Sichuan. Transportation convoys were organized in India and war resources, such as fuel, medicine, cotton products, and communication equipment were shipped to China in large quantities. The KMT Ministry of Transportation also worked with the Kham-Tibet Trade Company in their launch of joint-venture called Kham-Tibet Transportation Limited Company, headquartered in Kangding. The company also operated in Lhasa and Kalimpong through its local branch offices. Eventually, a route was built starting from Kalimpong, India, running past Gyangze, Lhasa, Heihe, Leiwuqi, Yushu, Kangding and Ya'an and eventually reaching Chengdu. After the route was completed, the transportation was managed by the well-known Tibetan trader family Pomdatsang.¹⁸

The Sino-India Roadway not only helped ensure war supplies, but also contributed greatly to the economy of Lhasa, making the city the commercial center of not only Tibet, but Yun. The company also operated.

2.4.4.3 Communication Between Lhasa—Tibet and Neighboring Countries

The postal system and postal routes established in Qing dynasty remained in use during the Republican era with little change. Lhasa remained the radius of the system, with roads branching off towards Chamdo, Shigatse, Ngari, Lhokha, Nagchu, and the *Thirty-nine Ethnic Group Area*, etc.

During this period, passages connecting Lhasa and the neighboring countries concentrated in Shigatse and Ngari region; they included Lhasa—Yadong/Pali Line, Lhasa—Nyalam/Gyirong Line, Lhasa—Saga/Zhongba Line, Lhasa—Pulan/Zhada Line, Lhasa—Ritu/Gaer Line.¹⁹ Among these lines, Lhasa—Gyangze/Yadong Line was the business and the most significant one. Yadong opened as a trade portal in the late 19th century; the signing of the Lhasa Treaty in 1904 further reinforced its status as the most important India—China border trade town and home to a large population of traders. In terms of new development, during this

¹⁸Department of Transportation of Tibet Autonomous Region, and Tibet Academy of Social Sciences (2001), pp. 204–213.

¹⁹Department of Transportation of Tibet Autonomous Region, and Tibet Academy of Social Sciences (2001), pp. 219–229.

period, a seaborne route was established connecting Lhasa and coastal Chinese cities including Hong Kong and Shanghai by way of Gyangze, Yadong and India.

Thus from Tupo to Republic of China Era, Lhasa was the center of transportation in Tibet and beyond. This is largely due to its political, cultural and commercial significance, which in turn promoted and reinforced its status as the regional center, where population and resources concentrated.

References

- Charpa Tsiten Puntsog, Ugyen Nordrang, and Puntsog Tsiring. 2008. *Tibetan General History—Turquoise Prayer Beads*, 97. Tibet Academy of Social Sciences, China's Tibet Magazine, Tibetan Ancient Books Publishing House.
- Chen, Qingying, and Shufen Gao (eds.). 2003. *General History of Tibet*. Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Ancient Books Publishing House.
- Department of Transportation of Tibet Autonomous Region, and Tibet Academy of Social Sciences. 2001. *A History of Tibet Transportation System*. Beijing: China Communications Press.
- Huo, Wei. 1995. On Ancient Traffic of Tibet, Central Asia and Western Asia based on Archaeological Materials, and the Introdution of Buddhism to the Western Tibet. *China Tibetology* 1995 (4): 48–63.
- Local Chronicles Compilation Committee of Tibet Autonomous Region (chief ed.), and Local Chronicles Compilation Committee of Chengguan District, Lhasa, Tibet (ed.). 2010. *Lhasa Chengguan District Chronicle*. Beijing: China Tibetology Publishing House.
- Shen, Zonglian, and Shengqi Liu. 2006. *Tibet and Tibetans*. Translated by Liu Xiaoqing. Beijing: China Tibetology Publishing House.
- Writing Groups of the original and revised versions of A Brief History of Tibetan Ethnic Group. 2009. *A Brief History of Tibetan Ethnic Group*. Beijing: The Ethnic Publishing House.
- Ya, Hanzhang. 2001. *A Biography of Dalai Lamas*. Beijing: Sino-Culture Press.

The Evolution and Preservation of the Old City of Lhasa

Li, Q.

2018, VIII, 256 p. 77 illus., 70 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-981-10-6733-4