AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE TIBETAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

by

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We have carefully read the dissertation entitled An Anthropological Study of the Tibetan Political System

submitted by Melvyn C. Goldstein in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Anthropology and recommend its acceptance. In support of this recommendation we present the following joint statement of evaluation to be filed with the dissertation.

The study is based on original field research in socio-cultural anthropology carried out in the Tibetan refugee community of Bylekuppe, Mysore, India for sixteen months. In addition, several months further research was carried out with Tibetans in North India.

This is a description of the Central Tibetan political system in the twentieth century pre-Chinese period. It is the first broad attempt to characterize the form and operation of government from the anthropological point of view using field research.

The dissertation describes the various levels of Central Tibetan government. The lowest level, the village, is described in terms of a single case, Samada village, and then generalized to other villages. The provincial level is analyzed and the central government described, including the important relationship between the Regent and the Dalai Lama. The political role of the controllers of the manorial estates is explored and contrasted with the place of monks as religious leaders and as a separate political group.

The interrelationships of the Tibetan political system in terms of these levels is analyzed and summarized, with special attention to the role of the estate holders and the monks to the central government, of the Regent to the Dalai Lama, and of serfdom and village politics to the higher levels. The concluding section summarizes the main features of the political system and explores the question of its relationship to forms of feudalism found elsewhere.

In presenting new ethnographic materials and in their analysis the dissertation represents an original contribution to knowledge.

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In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of Washington I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by my major professor, or, in his absence, by the Director of Libraries. It is understood that any copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature Melvyn Goldstein

Date July 22, 1968

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PREFACE

One of the difficulties in a study such as this is the proliferations of foreign names and terms. In order to facilitate reading this study, I have tried to render standardized English glosses for as many of the terms as possible. On their first occurrence they will be cited along with the transcription of the written form according to the system cited in Wylie (1959). The reader should note, however, that the English gloss is only there to rid him of the onerous task of having to memorize a long list of difficult Tibetan names in order to read this work and does not directly shed light on the position or concept in question. The name is often arbitrary. For instance, District Commissioner (Rdzong dpon) refers to a position in the bureaucracy which is explained in the body of the work and can not be compared with other studies in which the term District Commissioner is used. Those Tibetan terms that do not readily gloss into English will be left in a makeshift phonetic transcription so that the reader will be able to easily pronounce them. I have opted for this less scientific method because, while a phonemic notation for Tibetan exists, it is unreadable without instruction.

CHAPTER ONE

METHODOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

This thesis will examine the political system that existed in Tibet from the return of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama from self imposed exile in India in 1913 to the signing of the Sino-Tibetan Agreement of 1951 whereby Tibet formally became a part of China albeit an autonomous region. Although quantitatively a great deal has been written about Tibet, qualitatively it leaves a great deal to be desired. No academician -- let alone a social scientist-- has ever made a study of Tibetan political institutions that was based on field work in Tibet or intensive interviewing among the refugees in India. What is known about the political system of Tibet has been gleaned from sections of works written by missionaries, government officials, adventurers, and even an occasional stray Asian Buddhist monk on the basis of reminiscences of their visit to Tibet. Although these works often contain interesting and accurate information, because they also contain completely erroneous or very misleading data, their utility is highly limited.

The two best works in this category are Das (1902) and Bell (1928), and an example from the latter will illustrate my above comments. Leaving aside the grossly erroneous

for the simply misleading let us examine the following quote from Bell (Ibid.: 84). In listing what one of the largest of the aristocratic families pays the government in taxes he included "9,999 measures (ke[1]) of grain." In the context of that section the reader would have to assume that was a typical tax, and since each "ke" according to Bell was about 33 lbs., conclude that aristocrats paid relatively large taxes to the government. In reality, however, the conclusion is erroneous and the data is misleading. The aristocratic family in question lost one of their largest estates via confiscation due to aid they rendered the first author mentioned above -- Das -- who it later turned out was in the pay of the British. However, the government did allow them to lease it back but charged them a very high lease fee: 9,999 khal (ke) units of grain. In other words, this large figure was actually an exception to the rule, and cannot be considered as shedding any light on the tax relationship between the aristocratic lords and the central government. This, of course, was a subtle error, but one does not have to search far to find blatant mistakes in facts as well as crucial omissions. It would serve no purpose here, or in the body of this study, to repeatedly mention erroneous data which has been cited in these naive works. Carrasco's (1959) study of land and polity in Tibet vividly demonstrates the shortcomings of the literature. It is hard to criticize Carrasco's effort for the book is really very fine. It is the basis of the study

rather than the execution that diminishes the utility of the work. What Carrasco did was to methodically go through all the books on Tibet and extract from them any data concerning land and polity. However, since Carrasco knew no Tibetan and had no contact with any live Tibetans he was in no position to evaluate the corpus of data he extracted. In the end then, although a number of his conclusions are interesting, the same shortcomings present in Das and Bell and the even less accurate books have been carried over into his study. Thus Bell's highly misleading statement concerning the 9,999 khal (ke) is quoted on page 103 of Carrasco. Before leaving this subject one more author should be commented on. Rahul (1962 a and b) has written two articles on the government of Tibet, but these leave a lot to be desired. At best they give a general structural picture of the government and some historical data concerning the incumbents, but on the one hand there is virtually no discussion of the political processes and on the other, considerable erroneous data. For example, in 1962a, p. 291 Rahul gives an inaccurate description of the Tibetan military. Rather than ennumerate the errors I shall simply refer the reader to the section in Chapter Three which discusses the military tax.

Whatever possibility existed for carrying out a scientific field study of the Tibetan social and political system ended in 1959. In October of 1950 armies of the People's Republic of China invaded eastern Tibet and in short order

captured the Governor-General of that area and his soldiers. In May of 1951 an agreement was signed between Tibet and the People's Republic which, among other things, guarantied internal autonomy for Tibet under the People's Republic. Leaving aside the events that led to 1959, suffice to note that in that year the situation had deteriorated to such an extent that in March the Dalai Lama and his highest officials fled from Tibet in disguise to seek refuge in India. This act marks the final end to the traditional society of Tibet which will be examined in this study.

From 1959 to 1965, the year I arrived in India to carry out the research for this study, approximately 60,000 Tibetans had sought refuge in India. Within these 60,000 all of the major social strata and almost all the geographical and linguistic areas are represented. Furthermore, since the majority of the peasants came to India in 1960, 1961 and 1962, I felt that an accurate reconstruction of Tibetan political behavior could be made if certain factors were carefully controlled.

Perhaps the greatest danger in reconstruction studies, especially in highly complex societies, is the tendency to generalize from the statements of a small number of informants who describe what life was like. Furthermore, it is very tempting to use and "available" rather than a "selected" sample.[1] Because of this, I attempted to reconstruct socio-cultural life in Tibet during my fieldwork in India as if I were making

a field study in Tibet as regards the types of data collected and the categories of people interviewed. In accordance with this, I considered it essential that a part of the study dealt with a particular village in detail.

In choosing the group of refugees with whom I would work, the following considerations were foremost: (1) I wanted a group that was living in an atmosphere as similar as possible to that in Tibet so that there would be a greater frame of reference for interviewing about life in Tibet. Since the predominate subsistence mode in political Tibet, i.e., the territory ruled by the Tibetan government, was agriculture with some animal husbandry, I sought out a group that was farming in India. (2) Since the heartland of political Tibet traditionally was central Tibet, I particularly wanted to focus the study on part of that area. (3) I considered it necessary to have a relatively large sample from which to interview from the village complex I selected to study in depth. I also considered it important to have a reasonable number of informants from neighboring villages. That sample had to comprise persons who were playing adult roles in Tibet when they left and represent all of the social strata, including the "unclean" stratum. (4) Because of some sensitivity concerning the more oppressive aspects of traditional Tibetan society on the part of many of the refugees, rapport was a vital factor in eliciting accurate data. Therefore I felt it important to have a wide representative sample of all of political Tibet in the

same group as the village-complex unit I planned to study in depth. This proximity would allow me to forego having to repeatedly establish entree and rapport when attempting to corroborate the in-depth data by-means of a survey of other areas in Tibet.

The field trip upon which this study is based was carried out in India over a period of twenty months, from December 1965 to August 1967, on a Junior Fellowship from the American Institute of Indian Studies. Most of that period was spent in the Tibetan refugee agricultural resettlement camp at Bylekuppe, Mysore, about fifty five miles northeast of Mysore City, Mysore State, India. The Bylekuppe camp contained approximately three thousand Tibetans who cultivated a little over three thousand acres. The settlement was divided into six camps of roughly five hundred persons per camp. These camps were begun at different times, the first camp having been started in the summer of 1961. Since the Bylekuppe camp was the first of a series of like settlements, the Tibetan officials in India attempted to send former peasants to that camp so as to alleviate in the beginning complicated adjustment problems that nomads and merchants would have had. During the period my family and I were there, the Tibetans were for the most part self sufficient.

As anticipated, I was able to find there a number of groups that satisfied all the requirements I had set up as minimal for accurate reconstruction. The group I finally

decided to focus on was the village complex of Samada (Sa mda') in Gyantse (Rgyal rtse) district (rdzong), Tsang (Gtsang) province, central Tibet. There were almost a hundred persons from that village complex in the camp in addition to a number of people from neighboring villages in the same district and province. There were also former officials of both the central government and the local political units. Furthermore, since there was also a cross-section of persons from other areas in Tibet available in the camp I was able to compare the data from Samada with that from other areas. During the period of my stay there, my family and I first lived in quarters attached to the nursery between Camps One and Two, and then, during the second year of our stay, in a vacant house in Camp One.

The basic methodological technique used in this study was the depth interview. This type of interview can further be divided into formal and informal sessions. The formal sessions consisted of interviews with single informants over a long period of time with the anthropologist attempting to draw the informant into loosely structured conversations concerning life in his village. Although these interviews were unstructured in the sense that a series of standardized questions were not asked, an attempt was made to guide the conversation toward particular types of information, e.g., law. These sessions usually went on for two or three hours and almost always took place in our home. This form of interview was the most important for eliciting new information. Although I was

conversant with the standard, bureaucratic Lhasa Tibetan dialect before going to India, I found that since the dialect spoken by the peasants from Samada was somewhat different and since this type of interview was not possible when the informant was forced to repeat his statements several times, I used my wife -- a western educated bilingual native born Tibetan -- to act as my interpreter. Even in the beginning I was able to understand and therefore control the questions she put to the informant and follow the general drift of the informant's answers. After about eight months I was able to understand that dialect sufficiently well to work alone. Nevertheless, in the course of those eight months my wife had become extremely adept at making the informants feel at ease, and even after I could understand their answers I still usually included my wife in the conversations. The fact that I had a large number of people from the same village afforded me the opportunity to check the statements of one informant with others. As a further control, I periodically asked the informants whether erroneous conclusions were correct and, as I had already ascertained through working with some of the Tibetans in Seattle before going to India, these were almost always caught.

The informal interviews varied considerably. They usually consisted of several informants together, but generally were in a social setting rather than a work setting. That is to say they included such situations as conversations over meals, Mah jong games, and occasions when two or more informants

would stop by at the same time.

After ascertaining the basic structural features of the main area of focus -- Samada -- a number of depth interviews were carried out with representative individuals from a number of other areas in central Tibet. On the basis of these, I then attempted to carry out a polling type interview where the same questions were asked of all the respondents (see Goode, 1952: 185). This technique unexpectedly afforded me important insight since when the concept behind a question was not clear, the respondent was usually unable to answer without qualifying the statement and these qualificatory statements yielded important information. Aside from this, this method also permitted me to check the degree of scope of the various structural features elicited in the Samada area depth work.

Finally, observation played a limited, albeit important role in this study. Although it was obviously not possible to extrapolate from the situation in the camp to life in Tibet, certain aspects of the interactional patterns undoubtedly were representative of life in Tibet. I particularly refer to aspects relating to the political culture. Since the camps were organized in a manner not unsimilar structurally to estates in Tibet (although the serf status was eliminated and formal elections were held), information concerning knowledge and perception of political behavior could be checked in relation to knowledge and perception of the political process in the camps. Similarly, certain facets of differential interaction

between hierarchically arranged social strata, particularly with the 'unclean' stratum could be compared with data elicited from interviewing.

Working with refugees certainly poses enormous problems concerning the reliability of data. Nevertheless, I feel that by having been able to (1) interview a relatively large cross section of the population within a few years of their leaving their homeland and, (2) to interview a large number of informants from a single village area cross checking the statements of one with the other, along with the other techniques and controls cited above gives a high degree of reliability to the data.

Lastly, I should mention that both in Mysore and in two trips to north India (Calcutta, Kalimpong and Gangtok) I was fortunate to have been able to discuss the workings of the central government with a variety of former Tibetan government officials and clerks, and later in Seattle to consult with the former Council Minister (Bka' blon) W. G. Surkhang who is a Research Asscciate at the Far Eastern and Russian Institute of the University of Washington where he is presently writing a comprehensive history of modern Tibet.

I shall be somewhat conservative in delimiting the territorial boundaries that the generalizations made in this study will have by limiting the scope to central Tibet. By central Tibet I include the following areas: Ü (Dbus), Tsang (Gtsang), Lhoga (Lho ka), Thago (Dwags po), Gong go (Kong po)

and the eastern portion of Tö (Stod). The major areas omitted therefore are northern Tibet (Byang), western Tibet (Stod mgna' ris) and eastern Tibet (Khams dang a mdo). The complexity of the latter and the lack of adequate data from the two former ones have compelled this.

In this thesis I propose to describe and analyze the Tibetan central government and the political sub-systems which comprised the political system. The patterns emerging from this will then be examined in terms of theories of political systems such as feudalism.

The major concepts employed in this study (excepting persuation) generally follow the usage of R. Dahl, Modern Political Analysis, New Delhi: Prentice Hall, 1965. The most general concept is influence. It refers to a relationship between actors wherein one actor acts so as to cause another actor or actors to act in a manner they would not have otherwise. This also includes influencing a person to maintain a given policy instead of changing it.

The concept influence is differentiated into three aspects. The first is authority. This refers to a relationship wherein a person or persons comply with the decision or command of another because they perceive it as being "proper," that is to say, as falling within the culturally delimited role norms of that position. This, of course, is distinct from the manner an actual incumbent of an authority position acts out his role. It is very possible for a situation to

arise where a position and role are accepted as "proper," but the incumbent and/or his interpretation of that role is rejected as improper. In any case, the term does not imply that the compliers necessarily eagerly comply. It simply indicates that the persons accept the existence of the position and the associated rights and obligations of the role as being a valid part of their way of life (in our terminology, their socio-cultural system). Furthermore, it should be mentioned that there is usually variation, especially in pluralistic societies, in the manner in which various segments or persons view the proper limits of the normative content of any given role.

The second aspect is power. Power is an influence relationship where a decision or command is complied with as a result of the threat of coercion. This coercion need not be solely negative, nor need it be physical. Positive coercion such as promotions, gifts and so forth all fall within this category when they are used as political resources by an actor to acheive political influence. Political influence refers to influence over the decision making and implementing processes of the government.

The final aspect is persuasion. Persuasion is an influence relationship where compliance results from neither coercion nor belief in the command's properness, but rather from intellectual or emotional motives. Intellectual motivation refers to a relationship where X does Z as a result of

Y's convincing him of the correctness of the policy Z in a given situation. Emotional influence refers to relationships wherein X does Z as a result of a close affective relationship such as friendship. While this latter type of behavior might be subsumed in the concept power, I find it more efficacious to treat it separately.

Footnotes

1. In relation to these serious pitfalls let me briefly comment on the artices of Downs, Henderson, and Cassinnelli in the "Tibetan Symposium" in American Anthropologist (Vol.66), and in particular to the more detailed paper of Rohn (1964) which they cite and which derived from the same common corpus of data on the Sakya political sub-unit. Although Downs (1097) was aware of and indicates the danger of making a whole range of detailed studies from the comments of a few refugee informants (for Sakya, basically two), he feels that they have succeeded in overcoming that. While it is too early to say for certain what the ultimate value of their work will be in terms of both theory and descriptive analysis, I must indicate that I have grave reservations concerning the accuracy of their data. Rohn (1964) disclaims any responsibilty for the accuracy of the data which was supplied to him by the "Tibetan Seminar" via Mr. Ekvall. But in that paper there were drastic factual errors which rendered his analysis of Sakya's international status completely useless. For example, he (or his data) claimed that Sakya had passports, visas, border control, and its own military. All of these are blatantly erroneous. Their own two main informants rejected such rights in interviews with me and among the Sakya serfs and officials in India I was able to reconfirm this.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATION

The Tibetan political system was characterized by a centralized, bureaucratic government and a large number of political sub-sustems possessing considerable autonomy. Though these features may seem incompatable or potentially conflict producing, they in fact produced a highly viable system of government that ruled a large territorial area for centuries without any large scale disturbances. In this and the following chapters this centralized-feudal type state will be described and analyzed.

Coulborn (1956: 364) states that "Feudalism has been found to be a mode of revival of a society whose polity has gone into extreme disintegration. The disintegrating polity was in every known case a great empire ..." The origins of the Tibetan polity fit that hypothesis adequately. Toward the end of the ninth century A.D. the great Tibetan kingdom which had ruled a large portion of Central Asia disintegrated. What followed in the wake of that empire was a system probably very similar to the early period of Western European feudalism described by Strayer (1965). Shakabpa (1967: 54) characterized this period as follows:

The dates 842 and 1247 therefore mark the period of decentralized control in central Tibet, during which time the country consisted of many small hegemonies, which were constantly warring against, or allying with, each other as conditions warranted.

The investiture of supreme political power over central Tibet to the head of the Sakyapa sect, Phagpa, in 1254 by the great Mongol Prince Kublai Khan, marked the reappearance of a degree of centralization into Tibetan political life. It also ushered in the period of religious sectarian competition which really came to a close only with the flight of the Dalai Lama in 1959. The hegemony of the Sakyapa sect lasted until approximately 1358 when another religious lineage, the Phagmodru, seized power and soon after obtained confirmation from the Ming Emperor. In turn, by about 1434 the reign of that house had come to an end.

In the meantime, a new religious sect had come into being. The Gelugpa (Dge lugs pa), as this sect was called, dominated secular affairs during the period with which this study is concerned. It was the last of the major Tibetan Buddhist sects to appear and originated as a reform movement in the late fourteenth century. Its founder, Tsongkapa (Tsong kha pa), went to the Ü area of central Tibet in 1372 from his home region of Amdo (A mdo), and by 1409 had founded the Ganden (Dga' ldan) monastery, the first Gelugpa monastery in Tibet, at a site close to Lhasa (Lha sa) in Ü.

One of Tsongkapa's principal disciples was a monk called Gendun Truppa (Dge 'dun grub pa). After Gendun Truppa died

a monk called Gendun Gyatso (Dge 'dun rgya mtsho) was established to be his incarnation. These two are today posthumously known as the first and second Dalai Lamas. The third incarnation in this line of succession was Sonam Gyatso (Bsod nams-rgya mtsho). In the late sixteenth century the Mongol Khan of the Tumut Mongols, Altan Khan, invited him to visit Mongolia to teach Buddhism. During that visit the Khan bestowed upon him the title of "Dalai Lama" or Lama whose knowledge is as deep as the ocean, the word dalai meaning ocean in the Mongol language. Although he was actually the First Dalai Lama, Tibetans, as mentioned above, traditionally refer to the first two incarnations of that line as the First and Second Dalai Lamas and Sonam Gyatso as the Third. The Fourth Dalai Lama was none other than a great-grandson of the Mongol chief Altan Khan. In 1601, Yönten Gyatso (Yon tan rgya mtsho), the Fourth Dalai Lama, was brought to Tibet from Mongolia at the age of twelve.

While all this was going on Tibet was beset by internecine struggle between the areas of Ü and Tsang whose leaders respectively supported the Gelugpa and Karmapa sects. Throughout this period, first under the Rinpung (Rin spungs) Princes and then under the Tsang Depa (Gtsang Sde pa), the leaders of Tsang dominated those of Ü. It is in the context of this religious oriented strife that the Gelugpa sect rose to supreme power. Since the Tsang forces were dominant during this era, it was the Gelugpa who were more often than not persecuted by

the followers of the red hat Karmapa sect. In the middle of the seventeenth century the situation became so difficult that representatives of the Gelugpa hierarchy went to various supporters of the Gelugpa sect among the Mongols to secure military aid. They succeeded in obtaining the backing of Gushri Khan, chief of the Qoshot Mongols. By 1642 the armies of Gushri Khan had defeated those of the Tsang rulers and the Fifth Dalai Lama was presented by that Khan with political control of Tibet. However, except for a brief interlude during the life of and immediately after the death of the the Fifth Dalai Lama, it was not until 1751 that the Dalai Lama (the seventh) assumed temporal powers under the auspices of the Manchu Emperor of China whose troops for the second time in that century entered Lhasa and deposed the ruler. It is from this point that the political system to be described in the following chapters takes on its characteristic appearance. The importance of this origin for understanding the Tibetan political system will be discussed in a later section of this study.

Let us now examine the major organizational units into which Tibet was divided and the types of political positions which were attached to them. The basic administrative unit of the Tibetan government was the district (rdzong and gzhis sdod). Political Tibet was divided into a series of these districts each of which was headed by a District Commissioner (rdzong dpon) appointed by the Central Government in Lhasa.

Traditionally Tibetans say that there were seventy six districts in Tibet, but even cursory enumeration clearly indicates that there were more than that. From the list I have compiled, a more accurate figure would be approximately one hundred and twenty.[1]

In accordance with formal specifications, one or two government officials were posted to each district. Since the bureaucracy was divided into monk and lay officials this meant that some districts had one lay official, others two lay officials, and still others one lay official and one monk official.[2] Dual appointments were usually required for the more important districts since it obviously served as a restraint on the behavior of the appointed officials. The districts were furthermore differentiated by requiring officials of different ranks, e.g., the large, strategically located district of Gyantse (Rgyal rtse) was staffed by two lay officials of the fifth rank but the small inconspicuous Wangden (Dbang ldan) district was headed by a single official of the lowest rank (the seventh). The normal term for a District Commissioner was three years, but on rare occasions the Central Government extended the term of office an extra year or two. Some districts, however, were permanently given to aristocrats and monastic units as a type of prebendal grant. Although in theory appointments were made in Lhasa after the vacant positions had been compared with the officials needing positions, in reality the districts with high income procuring potential were actively sought out via a process

that usually included large scale gift giving to influential officials.

One of the important features of the Tibetan political system was the existence of aristocratic and religious feudal type estates with attached serfs. Except for three such units which will be discussed later, all other estates were administratively under one or another district. The relations between the district and the estates will be examined in detail in the following chapters.

The District Commissioner was the main representative of the Central Government at work in the provinces. Although he had a number of minor officials working under him, he was generally the only permanently based member of the Lhasa bureaucracy in his area. The principal functions of a District Commissioner were: (1) to collect taxes; (2) to act as a clearing house for all commands and orders descending from the centre and for all petitions and the like coming up from the residents of the district; (3) to adjudicate disputes and try and punish criminals.

As we shall see, the District Commissioner had a number of officials under him who were mainly concerned with collecting taxes. The basic recurrent taxes for each village and estate sub-unit were fixed in amount and recorded in record books maintained in the district as well as in Lhasa. Because of this, the collection of taxes in kind was relatively cut and dried. Nevertheless, a major portion of the taxes paid to

the government were corvée taxes and the organization and collection of these entailed considerable work. Furthermore, there were often non-recurrent, special taxes to be collected. Although the District Commissioner was nominally the head of these operations, during the months when the taxes (in kind) were actually collected the Central Government sent officials called Yongdü (Yong bsdus) or tax collector. These officials together with the District Commissioner were responsible for the accounting and distribution of the taxes to the specified offices and institutions. Because of this joint responsibility concerning the collection of taxes, the District Commissioner could not grant temporary exemptions to peasants of taxes in kind, and all such requests had to be forwarded to Lhasa. He could, however, if the circumstances warranted, grant temporary concessions for corvée taxes. In any case, the bulk of the actual work of tax collection was carried out by the minor officials under the Commissioner.

The clearing house aspect of the Commissioner's role encompassed a number of different facets. On the one hand he had the responsibility for implementing all directives of the Central Government relevant to his district. This included special policies and recurrent duties such as checking the documents of all those using the government-maintained communication and transportation network. On the other hand, the position of District Commissioner was important for what Almond (1966) calls the "interest aggregation and articulation func-

tions" concerning the peasants in his district. The position of District Commissioner was basically concerned with administration and adjudication rather than with rule-making for his area. Although he could in a few very minor cases overtly make unilateral rulings, usually the rule or policy deciding functions rested with the Lhasa based bureaucratic offices. The Commissioner was important, however, for initiating demands for his district and his report was one of the most important factors in determining the outcome of the demand in Lhasa.

The adjudicative aspect of the position of District Commissioner was related to this. The overwhelming majority of cases brought before him were not concerned with rule adjudication, that is to say, breaches of rules, but rather with settlement of disputes. Cases concerning breaches of rules were rare and when they did occur generally were related to accusations of theft. But whatever the substance of a case, a crucial factor concerning the process of law adjudication was that the District Commissioner could not initiate action. He had no police force to search out and apprehend criminals, and in other types of disputes could only adjudicate if one or more of the disputants sought his aid. Because there was no organized police force, in criminal actions such as robbery, the victims themselves had the responsibility of apprehending the thief and bringing him before the District Commissioner for punishment. The Commissioner had considerable leeway in applying punishment. He could decree flogging, shackling with

irons, prison terms in the district's prison for as long as life, and fines. More serious punishments such as mutilations had to be sent to the Central Government for approval before enactment. Similarly, all murders had to be first reported to the Commissioner and then by him to Lhasa. A large percentage of the disputes that were brought before the Commissioner involved members of different political sub-units, e.g., serfs of two lords. While lords had very broad rights concerning their own serfs, they had none concerning other persons and it was one of the major functions of the District Commissioner to settle disputes of this nature. In the next two chapters a more detailed examination of aspects of the adjudicative process will be presented.

The position of District Commissioner was the fundamental link between the Central Government and the peasants and sub-units. It had broad authority content and was a potential source of non-legitimate power. Nevertheless, a number of factors acted to restrain the behavior of the District Commissioners. Firstly, important districts usually had dual appointments, and in such situations all decisions had to be by consensus. Secondly, the tenure of office was customarily limited to three years. Thirdly, any person had the right to appeal any decision or action of the District Commissioner to higher officials in the Central Government. Fourthly, when troops were stationed in the district they were completely under the jurisdiction of their General, who in any case would have

outranked the Commissioner.

In general, government officials perceived the position of District Commissioner as a source of income rather than as a source for increasing their power and influence and as a result of this in many instances did not bother to actually leave Lhasa, sending in their place a reliable household servant-official. Before 1954[3] the salaries that District Commissioners formally were paid were insignificant. Although the amount of tax collected from villagers was fixed and a District Commissioner could not unilaterally increase it, nevertheless he could do a number of things to augment his nominal salary income. One of these hinged on the fact that the District Commissioner (along with the Yongdü tax collector) had to send only specified amount of the collected taxes to Lhasa and specified monasteries. Whatever remainder there was went into the pockets of those two officials. Another way was through the manipulation of the quality of taxes paid. A District Commissioner might insist that taxes be paid in good quality meats and grains but then sell these and send poor quality goods to Lhasa, keeping the difference. Another method was by manipulating the weighing and measuring of taxes. One of the largest sources of income was gifts received from disputants involved in disputes pending adjudication. A less common, though effective method was for the District Commissioner to buy items from the villagers monopolistically at low prices and then resell them in other areas at a large profit. Other

means for the extraction of private income existed but the above enumeration suffices to illustrate the usual means the District Commissioner used to make his stay in the provinces lucrative. One should not however, conclude that peasants were helpless in the face of ruthless, avaricious officials since they could, as mentioned above, appeal to the government for aid.

At various times, for different reasons, the Central Government felt that larger provincial administrative units were needed. Motivation for establishing such super-district regions (hereafter called provinces) was either a result of need for higher ranking officials to deal with officials of other political units (either foreign or internal) or to lessen the amount of administrative items received in Lhasa.[4] Although the macro-units did not subsume all the territories under the control of the Central Government, where they existed they were important. As of 1954, the following provinces existed: Chang (Byang), Tö (Stod), Dome (Mdo smad), Gong-go (Kong po), Tsang (Gtsang) and Thromo (Gro mo). In keeping with their higher status, Governors (spyi khyab) were of higher rank than District Commissioners. Whereas the highest District Commissioners were of the fifth rank, Governors varied from fourth rank to Council Minister, the latter being limited to Governor of Eastern Tibet (Dome). The role of governor was relevant any time that administrative commands or disputes occurred between more than one district within his province.

In these cases it was his responsibility to organize or inform the District Commissioners of their duties or to settle the dispute. Even for disputes localized in a district, if the disputants did not accept the decision of the District Commissioner, they could, and often did, take the case to the Governor for settlement.

I indicated in the introductory chapter the importance of examining in depth at least one rural area. Therefore I now direct discussion to the district of Gyantse in the Province of Tsang. The seat of the Governor of Tsang was in Shigatse (Gzhis ka rtse). Under him were the following districts[5]: Gting sgyel, Srad rin rtse, Gzhis ka rtse, Rgyal rtse, Pa snam, Dbang ldan, Shang rnam gling, Shang rgya mtsho, Shang-lha bu, Rin spungs, Phag ri, 'U yug gling dkar, 'Dus byung, Shel dkar. The following districts in that area had been given to the Tashilhunpo (Bkra shis lhun po) monastery to administer permanently: Gam pa, Ngam ring, Lha rtse, Phun tshogs gling, Rta nag rin rtse, Bzhad mthong smon, Lhan lhun rab, 'Dam bla.

Gyantse District, after Shigatse District (which was directly administered by the Governor) was the largest and most important in Tsang. It was headed by two District Commissioners who were lay officials of the fifth rank. In addition to these two there was also a seventh rank monk-official who was under the District Commissioners. His duties were to administer the Gyantse Market (its disputes and the like) and to act as the head (or abbot) of the sixteen parts of the famous

Pegön chöde (Dpal kun chos sde) monastery in Gyantse. His position was called Pechö kenpo (Dpal chos mkhan po).

The most important administrators under the District Commissioners were four secretaries called Ledrung (las drung). Since we shall discuss the Central Government in greater detail in later chapters, it will suffice to mention here that government officials were dichotomized into shung-shab (Gzhung zhabs) or government officials and an incomparably lower category of employees called nang-sen (nang gzan) or government clerks. Since these ledrung lacked the status of government officials (shung-shab) we shall refer to them as District Clerks. Their positions were hereditary, that is, passed from father to son unless a son was incompetent. Of the four District Clerks in Gyantse two (Chanyaa and Kangsho) were Shung-gyu-ba (Gzhung-rgyugs pa) government serfs and two (Nyishab and Nangpa) were serfs of aristocrats. Since their office, the Tsong lhengye-kang (Rdzong lhan rgyal khang) was in Gyantse they also resided there. As salary they received a small tax-free estate (phogs thob), a rent-free house, and, of course, all they could obtain by means of other less scrupulous devices. Because of their hereditary position and their origin in the district, they were among the most knowledgeable in it concerning local affairs and particularly concerning antecedent information. As a result, their advise and knowledge was often required by the District Commissioners and they had considerable potential influence over district affairs. Their actual duties included such things

as writing communiques for distribution in the district or submission to Lhasa, supervising the measurement of taxes, and making arrangements for religious leaders and government officials who officially visited the district. Furthermore, they were often recruited by disputants in legal cases to intervene on their behalf with the District Commissioner.

There were two other important positions in Gyantse districts: the Lang (Glang) and the Tshopön (Tsho dpon). The origin of the first dates only to 1847 when the Fire-sheep year Land Settlement (me lug zhibs gzhung) commenced.[6] That land settlement provided for the creation of the new position of the Lang. Initially this was only introduced to the three districts of Gyantse, Wangden and Nam (Rgyal rtse, Dbang ldan and Rnam) as a test to determine its efficacy. The raison d'etre of the innovation was summed up in the phrase glang ske be'u dogs or the calf is tied to the neck of the bull." The calf in this metaphor stands for the Shung-gyu-ba the bull for the aristocratic or monastic lords. The aim of the government was to make wealthy and prestigious holders of large estates in these districts look after, and if necessary intervene on behalf of, the heavily taxed, landed government serfs. At that time, as a result of heavy taxation and natural catastrophies, many government serfs were running away from their land because of inability to fulfill their tax responsibilities. It was to be the responsibility of the lord designated to appoint a Lang official to aggregate and articulate the interests of

the government serfs so that the causes of their disaffection would be eliminated. In Gyantse the large land holders required to do this were known as Chega (Che khag) or "the group of the large ones." They were appointed by the Council of Ministers on an hereditary basis. It should be noted, that although the intention was laudable, by at least the 1930's and probably earlier, serfs viewed the Lang as merely another potentially avaricious official above them. The five Lang in Gyantse were appointed by the following aristocratic and monastic units: Phala (Pha lha), Doring (Rdo ring), Phünkang (Phun khang), Serchog (Gser lcogs) and Pende (Phun bde). The actual incumbents to the position of Lang were recruited from the landed, household serf-servants of the lords designated by the government. They were always from that district and the positions were transmitted almost always hereditarily. This stratum of serfs will be discussed in greater detail in the chapter dealing with the estate.

The actual duties of the Lang concerned the taxes in kind that the Shung-gyu-ba had to pay. One of the important services he performed was to pay taxes for the Shung-gyu-ba in his area that came at odd times and then collect reimbursement from those peasants at the end of the fiscal year when the majority of the taxes fell due. He was generally responsible for seeing that these taxes in kind were paid. The Lang also performed an important adjudicative function. Although he had no formal authority to settle cases, this right falling

to the District Commissioner (or the lords on their estates), because of his higher, formal status and detailed knowledge of local affairs he was in fact usually the first extra-village official to whom disputes were taken. Not only was this true for Shung-gyu-ba but also for serfs of the Lang's lord who were dissatisfied with settlements made by say the estate steward.

Parallel to the position of Lang was the position of Tshopön (Tsho dpon). There were six Tshopön in Gyantse, five being appointed by the same estate holders as the Lang, and the sixth by the aristocratic lord called Kyibu (Skyid bu). The Tshopön was responsible for organizing and doing the accounting for the corvée animal transportation taxes (called da-wu ke-ma - rta'u khal ma), particularly those that transported goods between two districts (called Tsong gey - Rdzong bskyal). In districts without the Lang, the Tshopön (or some other functionally equivalent official) were very active in hearing and adjudicating disputes, but in Gyantse, although they on occasion did hear cases, the Lang generally dominated that function.

A similar, though anacronistic, position was the Genchen (Rgan chen) or District Headman. Before the institution of the Lang this was an important hereditarily transmitted position, but since that new position subsumed the duties of the Genchen, the latter position became devoid of function or responsibilities. There were four of these District Headmen,

who although they had no work, retained their land and title.

The last position we shall examine was the District Courier or Kangnyer (Khang gnyer) as he was called. There were a number of these persons who were supported and selected by government serfs as a tax responsibility and who, as their name implies, alternate carrying messages and communiques for the District Commisioner. They also had the responsibility of looking after the upkeep of the district offices, but this will be discussed in relation to the Samada serfs' taxes.

Using this as a framework, let us now examine political sub-units and political relationships in rural Tibet.

Footnotes

1. A list of the districts, the number of officials, the title and rank of officials follows:

District	No. of Officials	Rank	Type of Official	Area
Shel dkar	2	5th	1 monk, 1 lay	Tsang (Ts.)
Ding ri sdod mda'	1	0	servant of general	"
Gam pa	1	5th	Tashilhunpo	"
Gting skyes	2	5th	lay	"
Nag tsang 'go pa	2	6th	1 lay, 1 from Bsam blo dormitory, Drepung	Northern Tibet, (N.T.)
Gnam ru 'go pa	2	6th	1 lay, 1 monk	N.T.
'Dam bla ma	1	6th	Tashilhunpo	Ts.
Srad rin rtse	2	6th	1 lay, 1 from Rgyud stod college	"
Rta nag rin rtse	1	6th	Tashilhunpo	"
Bzhad mthong smon gzhis	1	7th	"	"
Lhan lhun rab gzhis	1	7th	"	"
Lha bu (Z)*	1	6th	monk	"
Rgya mtsho (Z)	1	6th	lay	"
Rnam gling	1	6th	lay	"
Gzhis rtse	2	4th	1 lay, 1 monk	"
Pa snam	2	6th	lay	"

* (Z) indicates that the unit is called Gzhis stod and not Rdzong

Rgyal rtse	2	5th	lay	Ts.
Dpal chos mkhan po	1	7th	monk	"
Dbang ldan (Z)	1	7th	lay	"
'Dus byung (Z)	1	7th	lay	"
Phag ri	2	5th	lay	"
In that District: Gro mo tshong spyi	1	4th	lay	"
Lcib lung (Z)	1	0	Tashilhunpo	"
Gling dkar (Z)	1	6th	lay	"
Rin spung	1	5th	lay	"
Gling (Z)	1	6th	Khe smad family	Lho ka (L.)
Sna rtse	2	6th	1 lay, 1 monk	Ts.
Yar stod (Z)	1	0	Lcang lo can	L.
Snye mo smon mkhar	1	(6th)	Lha klu family	Snye mo
Do bo	1	6th	lay	Lho brag (L.B.)
Bya yul (Z)	1	0	Stag lha family	L.
Sbyor ra (Z)	1	(6th)	"	"
Lhun rtse	2	5th	lay	"
Seng	1	6th	lay	"
Sku rnam	1	6th	lay	Dwags po (D.)
Gri gu (Z)	1	6th	monk	L.
Lha gsol (Z)	1	(6th)	a Gnang gzan of Rtse phyag Office	D.
Snag (Z)	1	(6th)	Glang mdun family	"

Lha khang (Z)	1	6th	monk	L.B.
Chos 'kor rgyal gnyer sdod	1	6th	lay	D.
'Phyong rgyas	2	5th	lay	L.
Sne gdong	2	5th	lay	"
'On (Z)	1	6th	monk	"
'Ol dga' (Z)	1	6th	lay	"
Zang ri (Z)	1	0	Bsam pho family	L.
Gra phyi (Z)	1	7th	lay	"
Gra nang (Z)	1	6th	Bsam pho family	"
Dar ma (Z)	1	6th	lay	L.B.
Mtsho sna	2	5th	1 lay, Dga' ldan Bla spyi	L.
Gong dkar	2	5th	lay	"
Zas (Z)	1	7th	lay	ZAS
Chu shur	1	6th	lay	Chu shur
Rgyal ston (Z)	1	0	Rtse phyag Office	
Lha ri Bla ma	1	5th	monk	Khams (K)
Sho mdo (Z)	1	6th	Kun bde gling monastery	"
Star	1	5th	lay	"
Lho	1	5th	lay	"
Rdzi tho	1	7th	monk	"
Spo stod	1	5th	monk	Spo
Spo smad	1	5th	lay	"
Spo bo chos	1	5th	lay	"

Sbra chen	2	6th	1 lay, 1 monk	K.
Ar rdza be sog 'go ba	1	6th	lay	"
Be ru	1	6th	monk	"
Steng chen	2	5th	monk	"
Ser tsha	2	6th	1 lay, 1 monk	"
Mal gung	1	6th	Bshad sgra family	Dbus (Ü)
Stag rtse	1	6th	lay	"
Za lha (Z)	1	7th	monk	"
Glang thang (Z)	1	7th	monk	"
Lhun grub	1	6th	monk	Ü
Mkhar rtse	1	7th	Kun bde gling monastery	"
'Dam spyi khyab pa	1	0	Se ra bla spyi	N.T.
Sbas tshang 'go ba	1	0	'Bras spungs bla spyi	"
Stod sgar dpon	2	5th	lay	Western Tibet (W.T.)
Ru thog	1	6th	monk	"
Spu hreng	1	5ht	lay	"
Rtsa hreng	1	5th	lay	"
Mda' mkhar	1	5th	lay	"
Gnya nang sho pa	1	5th	lay	"
Snyid grong	2	5th	lay	"
Rong shar sho pa	1	5th	lay	"
Rdzong dga'	2	5th	lay	"
Sa dga' 'go ba	2	6th	lay	"
'Brong pa spyi khyab	1	7th	monk	"

Lha rtse	1	6th	Tashilhunpo	W.T.
Ngam ring	1	6th	"	"
Nyin mkhar (Z)	1	7th	lay	"
Phun tshogs gling	1	6th	Tashilhunpo	"
Mal gro rnam gling	1	0	lay	Ü
Skya 'dam (Z)	1	0	lay	"
Gyang grong (Z)	1	0	monk	"
Gad hor (Z)	1	0	lay	"
Rtsed thang dga' chos	2	6th	1 lay, 1 monk	C.
Go 'jo	1	6th		K.
Sa ngan 'go pa	1	6th	lay	"
Ldan ma bla gnyer	1	5th	monk	"
Ri che bla gnyer	1	5th	monk	"
Mdzo sgang	1	6th	monk	"
Smar khams 'go pa	1	5th	lay	"
Phod mdo (Z)	1	7th	Se ra Bsam blo dormitory	N.T.
Sog (Z)	2	6th	'Bras spungs Hargdong dormitory	K.
Mdo smad spyi khyab	1	Rdza sag	monk or lay	"
Under the Zhol las khungs:				
Sbrag	1	0	Nang dkar	Ü.
Phreng 'go	1	0	Bsam pho	"
Lum pa	1	0	Drepung	"
Shel grong	1	0	"	"
Rnam rgyal sgong	1	0	Tshe smon gling	"

Skyar po	1	0	Drepung	Ü.
Sne'u	1	0	Stag rtse	"
Gra phyi	1	0	Skyid zur	"
'Bras gling	1	0	Rtse gnyer tshang	"
Glang ru	1	0	Phun khang	"
Tshal	1	(not fixed)	a lay official	"
Lho mos	1	0	Phur bu lcogs	"
Mnyes thang	1	0	'Gzim 'gag	"
Gdong dkar	1	0	Zhol las khungs	'secretary"
Chos lung	1	(not fixed)	a monk official	"
Bde chen	1	0	Ganden	"

2. There was no district where two monk officials were posted.

3. After 1954 the District Commissioner was given a fixed salary and required to forward all taxes collected to the central government.

4. For example: The Tsang Province was begun in 1914-15 as a result of troubles with the huge monastic political sub-unit of Tashilhunpo. Before that time the Shigatse District Commissioner had been a fifth rank lay official, but when friction with that unit occurred it was embarassing for the Central Government to have its officials outranked by a subordinate unit and therefore have to show deference. They therefore instituted the Tsang Province unit and filled it with a fourth

rank official. At this same time they also made that official responsible for all of Tsang in addition to Shigatse district.

5. Tibetans traditionally state that there were 18 districts in Tsang but I could not arrive at that figure.

6. See Surkhang (1966).

CHAPTER THREE

RURAL TIBET: THE SHUNG-GYU-BA VILLAGE OF SAMADA

It has already been indicated that there were two major administrative sub-units under the districts. One of these, the shung-gyu-ba (gzhung rgyugs pa) village or village of "landed government serfs" will be examined in this chapter. The other, the aristocratic and religious estates with serfs I shall examine in the following chapter.

Since this is not a study of the Tibetan stratification system, its subtleties and intricacies will not be exhaustively examined. Nevertheless, the main configurations of stratification, and its relation to political interaction in village Tibet must be discussed. Tibet was characterized by the hereditary dependency relationship referred to in late feudal societies as serfdom. Except for a small ascribed social stratum of about 200 families -- who were primary lords with no lords above them -- the rest of the population were serfs.[1] The classic lord-serf relationship is succinctly presented by Marc Block (1965, Vol.I: 261):

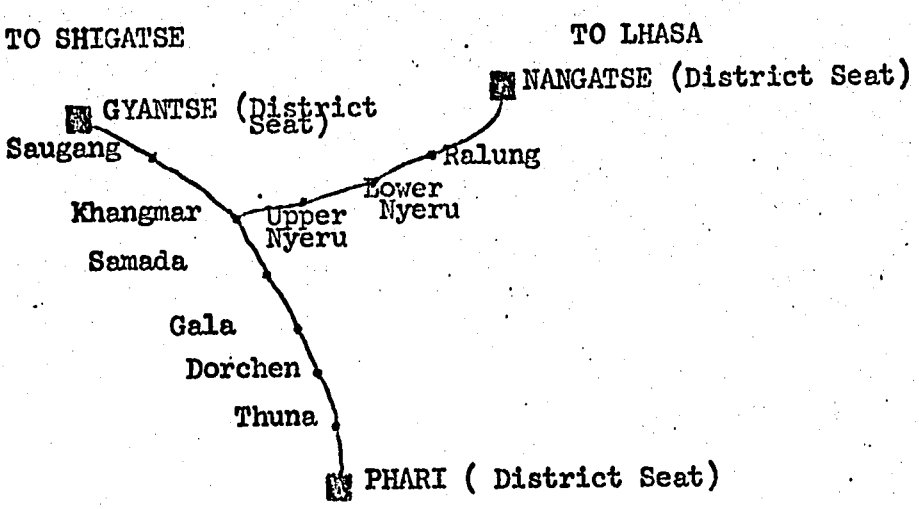
> To have a lord seemed in no way inconsistent with freedom. Who was without one? But the notion arose that freedom was lost when free choice could not be exercised at least once in a lifetime. In other words, every hereditary tie was regarded as being marked by a servile character. The inescapable bond that claimed the child 'while still in its mother's womb' had been one of the greatest hardships of

traditional slavery. The feeling of this almost physical compulsion is expressed to perfection in the phrase homme de corps, forged by common speech as a synonym for serf. The vassal whose homage was not ingerited was, as we have seen, essentially 'free.'

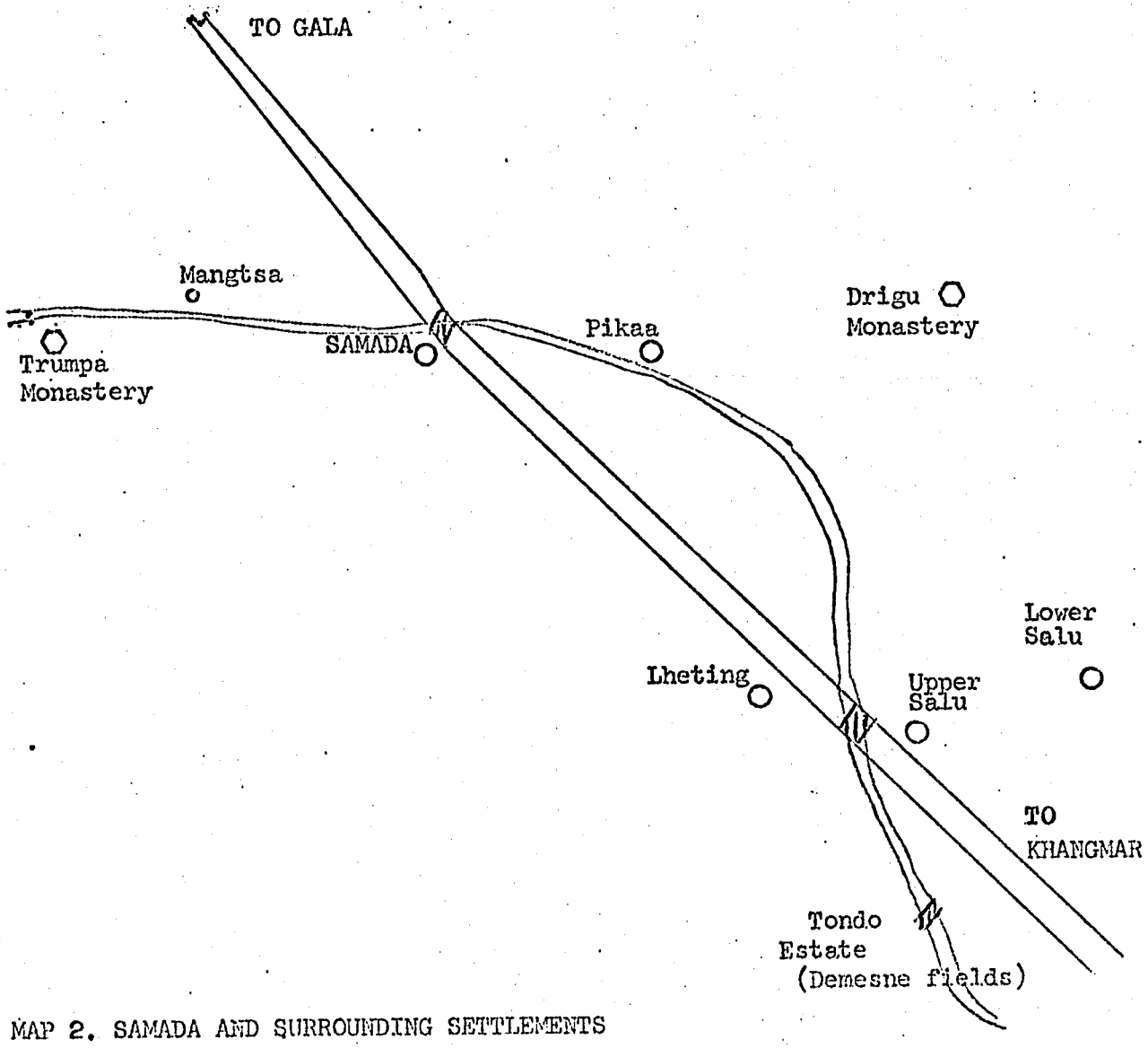
The standard Tibetan term for serf was mi-sey (mi ser), or literally, 'yellow person' although mi (mi), 'person or man' was often used in genitive construction to express the serf-lord relationship, e.g., nga phaley mi rey (nga pha lha'i mi red), 'I am the person (serf) of Phala.' Whenever or however such relationships began, once initiated they were hereditary, the serf status being transmitted via ascription at birth. In cases where the parents were serfs of different lords, female children belonged to their mother's lord and males to their father's lord.

As we shall see below, there were a number of important subdivisions of the serf status. Nevertheless, the term mi-sey or serf generally implied a hereditary, hierarchical, dependency relationship in which the lord had rights to command a variety of goods and services from the serf but reciprocally had only minimal obligations.

The village of Samada illustrates the type of political sub-units this chapter is concerned with. Samada was a village (grong gseb) of about 300 persons in Gyantse district, Tsang province, Central Tibet. It was approximately forty miles southeast of Gyantse city and was on the major trade route going from India-Sikkim-Bhutan to Lhasa and Shigatse (see maps 1 and 2). Its elevation was roughly 12,500 feet. The name



MAP 1. STATIONS ON CORVEE TRANSPORTATION ROUTE IN VICINITY OF SAMADA



MAP 2. SAMADA AND SURROUNDING SETTLEMENTS

Samada referred to two administrative units: (1) the actual village of Samada, and (2) a larger unit consisting of several villages called a tsho (tsho) relevant in terms of certain corvée transportation taxes to be discussed later.

Samada was characterized by an agro-pastural type of subsistence pattern known as 'neither nomad nor farmer' or sa-ma-dro (sa ma 'brog) which encompassed both agriculture and herding and which varied in different areas in terms of the relative importance of each of these. Samada exemplified the most typical form of this type of subsistence pattern in that its agricultural phase was the main source of economic wealth. The maintenance of animals, while important to a few and the richer families, was secondary or not relevant to the majority of the inhabitants, who either had a small number of animals or none. Situated at a high elevation, Samada nevertheless grew a variety of foods such as their staple crop barley (in five or six varieties), mustard seed, potatoes, radishes, lentils (in several varieties) and some other vegetables. Like the majority of the agricultural areas in Tibet, Samada was blessed with readily available sources of water power which they harnessed for irrigation purposes, sometimes tapping the water directly from the stream or river and sometimes first filling an irrigation pond and then drawing water from that. Furthermore, the use of manure was widespread and recognized as being a crucial factor in cultivation. In addition to using human feces and dung collected from one's own animals

annual winter forays were made into the upland nomad pasture areas to collect manure. The dung from different animals was categorized as to potency and the grades of manure joined with varying qualities of land often in rotation patterns. Yields varied, of course, due to many factors such as quality of soil, procurement of water at the precise moment needed, and so forth, but in general, for Samada the highest yields were about ten times the amount of seed sown and the lowest yields as little as one or two times the seed. In relation to the other areas of Central Tibet that I was able to sample, ten times the seed was a good yield.

The residents of the territorially delimited unit we call Samada (and rural Tibet in general) were divided into two broad hierarchically ranked social strata: (1) the tre-ba (khral pa) or literally, 'taxpayer' and (2) the dü-jung (dud chung) or 'small householder.' There were eight such tre-ba families (mi tshang) in Samada. These families were serfs of the government or shung-gyu-ba. The components of the term shung-gyu-ba are: 'shung' (government), 'gyu' which derives from the phrase 'yogo gyu' (the nonhonorific form of 'to act as a servant') and therefore implies 'servant,' and 'ba' which indicates 'the one who does a verbal action.' The phrase therefore means 'ones who are the servants of the government.' Shung-gyu-ba thus referred to government serfs who were tre-ba and was a sub-category of tre-ba. Of Samada's approximately 300 inhabitants, about forty were shung-gyu-ba tre-ba and the

rest dü-jung.

The status of tre-ba was characterized by (1) being hereditary serfs (2) possession of hereditary land from their lord (3) being tied to that land (4) being obligated to perform a variety of taxes both in corvée labor and in kind for their lord. There were two types of lords to whom tre-ba belonged: the government, and the aristocratic or religious lords, the latter including a variety of monastic institutions. In this chapter the discussion will focus on the former type.

Dü-jung, on the other hand, can broadly characterized by: (1) absence of hereditary land, yet (2) hereditary serf status with some service obligations to their lord. In turn, dü-jung can be differentiated into two sub-types by the degree and nature of control the lord had over the labor and movement of the dü-jung. These two types I shall refer to as: 'tied' or tre-ba like dü-jung, and mi-bo dü-jung.

The most characteristic feature of the status of mi-bo dü-jung was its possession of mi-bo (mi bogs) or literally, 'human lease.' The Tibetan term for 'lease,' as in 'to lease land,' was bo-ma (bogs ma). Tibetans perceived the leasing of land from its owner as roughly equivalent to the leasing of oneself from one's lord, and used the same term, i.e., bo in mi-bo When land was leased from its owner the leasee had rights of use but not of disposal. He also had an obligation to the owner. Similarly, when an individual obtained mi-bo from his lord, he was still the serf of the lord and had to

fulfill specified obligations (as seen in the mi-bo document below), but he was free to make use of himself as a human resource as he pleased. As the leasee of land could plant what and when he liked, the serf who had mi-bo -- with the exceptions of the stipulations in the formal mi-bo arrangement -- could work where and at what he liked and for wages rather than as corvée labor. Nonetheless, his serf status was transmitted to his same-sex offspring in the same way as any tre-ba serf's was.

The basic obligation of this type of dü-jung was the payment of a fixed annual monetary sum to his lord. This amount was specified in the formal mi-bo document the serf obtained from his lord. In addition to this annual sum, these serfs were also obligated to perform a limited number of generally intermittent or ad hoc services such as helping in construction work or being responsible for a few day's labor at harvest time. These obligations varied in amount and kind from lord to lord, some lords being well known for their leniency, others for their ruthlessness. However, in general, the annual amount was not exorbitant and the various labor services required were not overly oppressive. In actuality, even though some of the sub-types of mi-bo dü-jung serfs had restrictions placed on their movements by their lord, all of then had the general right to obtain the daily wage rate for their normal labor services. Because of this, even though the mi-bo dü-jung status was considered by all to be inferior to the tre-ba one in

terms of prestige, respect, and economic and political power, it was often sought after by tre-ba who preferred a simple, carefree existence to their own which was heavily burdened with responsibilities.

The other sub-type of dü-jung, the 'tied' or tre-ba like dü-jung, will be discussed at length in the next chapter since it was on monastic and aristocratic estates that it primarily occurred. However, in brief, the most salient features of this type of dü-jung was that they held no hereditary land and had minimal or no rights over their own labor and movement. Their lords had the right to extract services as corvée labor rather than as wage labor. Moreover, the lord's control over movement not only encompassed 'tying' serfs to an estate but also moving them back and forth between estates so as to make the most use of the labor supply.

Although the basic status of serf was ascribed, there was some mobility between the sub-types although the mobility was rarely upwards. The mi-bo dü-jung type of serf can be further subdivided into two types: those whose lord was a religious or monastic lord and those whose lord was a shung-gyu-ba village or later a government office. These serfs of the former lords derived from a number of sources. Numerically, the overwhelming majority obtained their status via ascription at birth, i.e., their same-sex parent held mi-bo from his aristocratic or monastic lord.

A second source was from serfs, mainly the 'tied' dü-jung,

who ran away from their lord and estate. This action on the part of the serf was illegal, that is to say, the lord, if he could catch the runaway serf, had the right to forcibly return him to the estate and punish him. However, since the administrative apparatus of the Central Government had no facilities for searching and apprehending criminals, the burden of responsibility for apprehension fell on the lord himself. Considering the size of Tibet and the critical manpower shortage with its concomitant high evaluation of potential labor, apprehension was hard and local assistance rare. However, the state of being without a lord was disadvantageous in several ways. Firstly, if the lord later found the runaway he could, as mentioned above, forcibly return him to the estate and punish him. Secondly, there was the threat that the lord would cause harm or discomfort to the runaway's remaining family and close relatives. Thirdly, it meant a complete break from one's family since visits were not possible. Fourthly, it placed one in a nether land where he had no powerful potential supporter to seek aid from if abused by others. The dü-jung with a lord had the right to seek that lord's support in disputes. Although, as will be seen later, the dü-jung always had the option of seeking settlement from the government officials, usually his lack of economic wealth precluded this unless he could do it via an intermediary, such as his lord. In order to avoid such disadvantages, the relatives of the runaway usually contacted and negotiated with the lord so that the runaway

would be granted mi-bo status. Since the runaway was already lost to the lord's labor pool, this was often granted, thereby legalizing the de facto situation (although usually back payment had to be made).

Another source of these serfs was through formally requesting one's status be changed to mi-bo dü-jung. The mi-bo document cited below is of that type. This document was the outcome of a protracted dispute concerned with debts and a stolen horse, and which also involved the distribution of substantial gifts by both sides. The holder of this document claimed that he received it after threatening to take the case to the Central Government in Lhasa. Regardless of the monastery's actual reasons for their generosity, it illustrates the form of mi-bo. In addition to the monetary sum to be paid every year, the holder was also subject to an open ended amount of special corvée levies.

tshe mchog gling bla brang gi mchod gzhis mi rtsa gzhis 'og khral khongs rdzing khag mi rtsa khyo nyi ma zer ba de sngon nas bla brang nang gzan khongs gsol thab zhabs zhu zhu mus de ltar yang/ de brjes bstan lcog dwags po bla gnyer du phebs skabs zhabs zhur bla brang du dgongs zhus don smin son te bla gnyer 'phos mtsham phu gzhis las 'khur du bzhag par da cha me khyi lo phu gzhis 'phos mtshams bla brang du zhabs zhur bcar dgos bka' khyab gnang bar don snying kho pa nyi mar rdo brag 'phreng do rdzong/ rang khongs nang pa sa nag pa sogs nas bun rdzob (sic) rigs pas ma 'dug pa byung te rgyu ngos phran bu yod pa rnams bun dag khag nas ri rdo klung bskyel gyi krang po rgyug 'khur rang la song 'dug na yang rang nyos rta po'i dpe ltar mi bogs gtong bde med yang/ rang khongs bla dpon mchod yon la dgongs mi ser skyongs 'os la brten nyam thag la dgongs bshes bla med kyi spyi 'brel mi bogs lo re srang bco lnga re lnga mchod mtshun 'bul lam gleng med zhu phyin slad khral 'gyel/ nang gzan sogs lags gtong 'os ma mchis pa dang/ 'di ga'i bla brang gi mdzad chen phyogs 'gro sogs la dgos gnas shar tshe 'de nas bka' khyab byung mtsham bka' mthun

byung phyin mdzod las rims 'byor sus khang bsnyad gtser mi chog pa'i lag khyer du tshe mchog gling phyag khang lhan sdeng nas me phag dza tshes la

This man named Nyi ma, from the tax paying family of Rdzing khag, a serf of one of Tshe mchog gling Bla brang's estates, requested and obtained permission to be relieved temporarily from his duties as kitchen aid in order to serve Bstan lcog during his term of office as Bla gnyer of Dwags po. After the expiration of Bstan lcog's term of office, Nyi ma returned and was sent by the Bla brang to take charge of a minor estate of the Bla brang called phu gzhis. In the year of the Fire-Dog (1946) he was called back to resume his duties in the Bla brang. Nyi ma has now requested to be granted mi bogs because due to his stupidity he has accumulated a large amount of debts to such ones as Nang pa Sa nag pa, Rdo rje brag monastery and "Phreng gzhis do rdzong and has no means of repaying them being already stripped of all his belongings like a gypsy-beggar. Viewing the relationship between a serf amd master as equivalent to that of Lama and patron, and in consideration of Nyi ma's pitiful situation, his request is granted, despite all the inconvenience to the Bla brang..Henceforth he shall pay fifteen srang to the Bla brang before the twenty-fifth of the tenth month each year without excuses, and if he does this he is relieved of all taxation and labor obligations. However, the Bla brang can call him for service when the need arises on occasions such as celebrations and trips. Fire-Pig year (1949), twelfth month, seventh day.

The most common form this request for mi-bo took was when female serfs of aristocratic and monastic lords requested permission from their lord to marry out of the estate. In such cases the lord generally either obtained an exchange of persons (e.g., if someone from the village to which a female of village 'z' was going was coming as a bride to village 'z') or an annual mi-bo payment. Males going as bridegrooms could also request that status although it was usually harder to obtain and cost much more. In general with the exception of out-marrying females, this mode of procuring mi-bo status via request was very difficult for aristocratic and monastic serfs.

The second type of mi-bo dü-jung serf derived from

shung-gyu-ba was called chi-mi (spyi mi). A chi-mi, or 'common man,' was the serf of a shung-gyu-ba village as a collectivity, the name itself referring to the fact that the individual was the serf of the village in common. These chi-mi were obligated to pay an annual fee, but in their case it was paid to the village as a whole. They were also obligated to perform various services, control over which was in the hands of the village council (see below).

Like the other mi-bo serfs, the majority of chi-mi derived from parents who were chi-mi. Another common source was from shung-gyu-ba females who went as brides to other villages or to dü-jung and who did not procure an exchange. These girls automatically became chi-mi of the village, and like all serf ties, it was transmitted to their same-sex offspring via birth.

A small, but very interesting source of new chi-mi occurred when one or more of several tre-ba brothers gave up his rights to the land and wealth of the family and became chi-mi. Such cases were not frequent and never occurred if the male was the head of the family and had no children to succeed him. In contrast ot monastic and aristocratic serfs who had to obtain permission from their lord (which was difficult), for the shung-gyu-ba, if there was internal agreement within the family they only had to inform the headman or, at most, sometimes the village council, (i.e, the head of each tre-ba family) to settle it. As long as there were sufficient people in the family unit to fulfill its tax obligations, such alteration of status was not objected to by the other tre-ba. The

motivation for such actions were usually emotional. A younger brother in fraternal polyandrous marriages often fell in love with another girl and preferred to live with her as a dü-jung rather than continue as a tre-ba in the polyandrous arrangement. Another common motive was that a brother simply did not get along with his father, other brothers, or joint wife, and again preferred to go out on his own as a dü-jung. Furthermore, some tre-ba sons did not have the drive and motivation to continue the pressure laden position of tre-ba and preferred to live a more carefree life with no land but also no tax responsibilities. In all these arrangements the tre-ba became a chi-mi of the village. In addition to the standard annual mi-bo monetary payment, there were also some work obligations to which the chi-mi were liable. The most difficult of these were military service and tre-ro (khral rogs) or 'helper of taxpayers'. In all of these a degree of control over one's own time and labor was lost, but nonetheless, they still resemble the general mi-bo type in that they received wages for their work.

There were two types of chi-mi: those who resided in the village and those who did not. While both paid mi-bo, the latter were never tre-ro and were rarely, if ever, told to serve as soldiers, although they might be told to pay a fee toward supporting a soldier. In a sense, for the chi-mi residence in the village (which generally was the natal village) made him more liable to have to fulfill various service responsibilities.

Nonetheless, although service in the military was a real possibility, since only a samll number of soldiers were actually required, the chances were good that a particular male chi-mi would not be required to go.

The tre-ro type of chi-mi dü-jung were those chi-mi who were assigned by the village council to help (ro) a particular tre-ba family, that is to say, they were required to work for one of the tre-ba families, albeit at the standard daily wage rate. The tre-ba generally received such tre-ro in ratio to their tax obligation or need. This is sharply contrastive to the tre-ro typed of 'tied' dü-jung serf discussed in the next chapter since the latter were often paid only the equivalent of room and board. The only difference between the regular mi-bo dü-jung and the tre-ro type was that the latter were to an extent not free to choose their employer although they received the same wage. In theory the resident chi-mi, particularly the tre-ro, could not be refused permission to leave the area, but in reality most did not seriously attempt to leave since the village was traditionally their home and being a tre-ro was not so oppressive as to preclude being able to earn a viable living.

The two types of mi-bo cited above were obtained from the individual's original lord. It was also possible for runaways to place themselves under new lords. In the old days, before the institution of the Agriculture Office, runaway serfs if they did not obtain mi-bo from their old lord, either remained

without a lord or placed themselves under a new lord. During the runaway's lifetime there was danger that if his old lord found him the lord could take him back and punish him. The common practice of accepting runaway serfs was often the source of bitter disputes between the new and old lords, but whoever won, the runaway was still a serf with a hereditary lord.

In the first decade of the twentieth century the Agriculture Office (so nam las khungs) was instituted. Its function was to look after 'extra men and extra lands' (mi lhag dang sa lhag) and it was authorized to accept any persons who had been without a lord for three years, in other words, three years after they ran away, and issue them mi-bo documents at the fixed annual fee of five sho (zho)[2] for men and 1 1/2 trang-ga (tram ka) for women. These individuals became the serfs of that office so that to the question, "Who is your lord (khyed rang gi dpon po su red)?" they answered, "The Agricultural Office." During this stage, they had the least obligations and the most freedom from all points of view. Because of this, people at first flocked to become the serfs of that office. Gradually, several other government offices also took to issuing such mi-bo documents.

However, the honeymoon soon ended. Eventually, a new practice referred to as cup-gong-sar (khab gong gzer), or literally, 'to fasten a needle to a lapel,' was instituted by these offices and the easiest status was converted into the one closest to the 'tied' aristocratic and monastic dü-jung

serfs. This new practice consisted of the Agricultural Office attaching their mi-bo serfs to estates or shung-gyu-ba villages which were short of labor, and had petitioned them for help. This was perceived as being similar to fastening a needle to a lapel. The dü-jung who became 'fastened' were in a sense similar to the tre-ro category we discussed above under the chi-mi. Just as the tre-ro were selected by the village from among the chi-mi residing there, the 'needles' were given from those serfs already living intthe area to which they were tied. The difference is that these 'needles' could not even theoretically leave the area. Nevertheless, they were paid for their labor according to the going daily wage rate. Samada, for example, had a lot of serfs attached to them on that basis after they petitioned the Agriculture Office stating that they could not fulfill their tax responsibilities due to the dearth of manpower available to them. They obtained a written document from the Agricultural Office stating that they could make the 'needles' do whatever work was needed. This included sending them to fulfill Samada's military obligations. The main difference between the 'needles' and the 'tied' serfs was that the 'needles' worked not on a corvée basis but for salary. They had simply lost the choice of selecting who they wished to work for.

The following document is a mi-bo document (mi bogs lag 'dzin) issued from the Lha sa gnyer tshang Office of the Government. After the institution of the Agriculture Office absorbing

these extra people, other offices, like the above one, also accepted serfs (though to a lesser extent).

ohu rta mi zhib sar ra 'phrod byung (in red)
lha khul mi deb shog grangs 39 gsal wa gling so las khang khungs sha khrom na 'og sdod pa rgya kha che lu 'u hral jon gyi bza' zla tre bo khang tshan gsum gyi mi khongs dman zi snyug shing rta lo ma rang lo 40 bu mo yi sin lcags lug lo ma rang lo 3 sleb pa ma mad gnyis kyi chu bya lo'i mi bogs ('di shing phag 'das)
'go khral dngul srang gsum zho gsum skar lnga las 'bul byung ba deb sbyor grub bas gtsang 'dzin lha gnyerllas khungs nas zla tshes la

gong gsal ma mad gnyis dang shing khyi gsar skyes bu mo pa'i sin me byi gsar skyes bu mo sran snyus bcas ma mad bzhi nas me byi zla 10 tshes 25 bar lo gsum mi bogs 'go khral dngul srang bcu bzhi dang zho lnga skar lnga bcas las 'bul byung ba deb sbyor grub bas tsang 'dzin zla 10 tshes 23 la dgong gsal ma mad gnyis nas me glang zla 10 tshes 25 bar gyi lo 'khor mi bogs 'go khral dngul srang gsum zho gsum skar lnga las 'bul byung ba deb sbyor grub bas gtsang 'dzin zla tshes la/ gong gsal ma mad gnyis nas sa stag zla 10 tshes 25 bar gyi lo 'khor mi bogs 'go khral srang gsum zho gsum skar lnga las 'bul byung ba deb sbyor grub bas gtsang 'dzin zla tshes la/ gong gsal ma mad gsum nas sa yos dang lcags 'brug lo gnyis kyi mi bogs 'go khral sdoms dngul srangdgu dang zho bdun las 'bul byung ba deb sbyor grub bas gtsang 'dzin zla tshes la/ gong gsal ma mad gsum nas lcags sbrul chu rta lo gnyis kyi mi bogs 'go khral dngul srang dgu dang zho bdun las 'bul ba deb sbyor grub bas gtsang 'dzing zla tshes la/ gong gsal nas ma mad gsum nas chu lug lo'imi bogs 'go khral dngul srang lnga dang zho tho skar lnga las 'bul byung ba deb sbyor grub bas gtsang 'dzin zla tshes la/ gong gsal nas shing spre shing bya gnyis kyi mi bogs 'go khral dngul srang bcu dang zho lnga las 'bul byung ba deb sbyor grub bas gtsang 'dzin zla tshes la

Approved in the Water-Horse year reexamination. (in red).

As shown on page 39 of the Lhasa area's book on people. The wife (Zi snyung) of the Chinese Muslim Lu'u hral jon who lived in the Wa gling area in the house belonging to the Agriculture Office (so nam las khungs) below the meat market who was the serf of the three Tre bo khang tshan (dorms)* was (born) in

* She was a Tre bo khams pa who married a Chinese Muslim. At first she was the serf of the 3 Tre bo khang tsan of Sera, Drepung and Ganden, but during the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's time, every Tibetan woman married to a foreigner automatically belonged to the Lha sa gnyer tshang regardless of who she belonged to before the marriage.

the shing rta year (1894) and was forty (1934); had a daughtet Yin sin born in lcags lug year (1931) was three years old (died in shing phag (1935) *. The lease-fee (mi bogs 'go khral) for the water-bird year (1933) 3 srang and 3 zho and 5 skar were received and entered in the record book of the Lha sa gnyer tshang office . As above, the two, mother and daughter, in the wood-dog year (1934) another daughter was born called Pa'o sin and again in the me byi year (1936) a daughter Sran snyus was born. These four together up to the 25th of the tenth month in the me byi year (1936) paid 14 srang, 5 zho, 5 skar. The 'das-bsngo (death offering) for the daughter Yi srin was 5 zho. These amounts were received and entered in the record book on the 23rd of the tenth month. As above, from the mother and daughter, until the 25th of the tenth month of the me glang year (1937) the sum of 3 srang, 3 zho, 5 skar, was received and entered in the record book. As above, from the mother and daughter , until the 25th of the tenth month of the sa stag year (1938) the sum of 3 srang, 3 zho, 5 skar was received and entered in the record book. As above, from three, the mother and daughters for the two years, the sa yos (1939) and lcags 'brug 1940) years, 9 srang, 7 zho was received and entered in the record book. As above, from the mother and two daughters, for the lcags sbrul (1941) and chu rta (1942) years, 9 srang, 7 zho was received and entered in the record book. As above, from the three, the mother and two daughters, for the chu lug year, the sum of 5 srang, 2 zho, 5 skar was received and entered in the record book. As above, for the two years shing spre (1944) and shing bya (1945), the sum of 10 srang, 5 zho was received and entered in the record book.

The above, then, were the main types of dü-jung. Let us now return to the tre-ba as exemplified by the situation in Samada. Samada consisted of the eight tre-ba families of: Nopa, Gyana, Tagpa, Tagsur, Maow, Gyana Trangga, Shalo and Genpa. These eight families hereditarily owned segments of the total Samada land mass, and these holdings together comprised all the land, pastures, and so forth belonging to the village of Samada. Each of these families were corporate and named. The land they possessed and the obligations they had belonged to the named

* The children were not included in the mi bogs payment and were mentioned solely that the government could keep track of the daughters.

corporate unit and not to any particular individual. Inheritance was joint (although females had fewer rights - especially concerning land - than males) and the eldest brother usually succeeded his father and became the head of the family unit. Generally, a 'monomarital' principle was practiced whereby only one intaking-spouse marriage per generation was made, but that one marriage could be monogamous, polyandrous, polygynous, etc., depending on the composition of the family. Inheritance generally was patrilineal, that is, daughters were sent out as brides and the sons kept at home to continue the unit's continuity. However, the reverse could and did occur although usually only in cases where the unit either had no males or completely incompetent males. Although Tibetans perceived this inheritance as patrilineal, objectively, it was bilateral with a strong patrilineal emphasis. In addition to this, inheritance was also closely linked with serfdom in that it was generally considered that the corporate familial unit was required to have among its members a shung-gyu-ba serf from Samada, or at the very least, from the same district. Since the bond of serfdom was inherited through same-sex parents, it was common for a family to be mixed in terms of lords, i.e., its members were serfs of different lords. For example, if a shung-gyu-ba tre-ba took a bride who was the serf of an aristocrat, all his female children would also be serfs of that aristocrat. If, when that tre-ba died, he left no male children, the land holding unit would then consist of only the female dü-jung serfs of the

aristocrat. In such a case, even if the other tre-ba of the village neither objected nor initiated litigation to obtain the land the females held, the females' right to tenure was shaky. Because of this, the remaining females almost always immediately brought in a male bridegroom (a type of adopted bridegroom) who was a shung-gyu-ba for either the mother or the daughter (s) or both together.

The land that the eight tre-ba families held (called tre-ten (khral rten)) obligated them to fulfill a variety of tax obligations to their lord, the government, and was perceived as the basis (ten) from which they paid their taxes (tre). Generally, when asked who their lord was, shung-gyu-ba simply said the government (shung), but it is clear that they viewed the district administration as their direct lord. This point is illustrated by their use of the term 'district inner tax' for the type of taxes generally given to one's direct lord (see p.65). These tax obligations of the tre-ba were the foundation of the government-Samada interaction and as such illuminate one of the most salient features of shung-gyu-ba villages in Tibet. Since taxes formed the main axis of village-government relations, and since only the tre-ba had land and taxes, a majority of the population, the dü-jung, were for all practical purposes irrelevant to the government. On the other hand, as we shall see below, the possession of land was the prerequisite for having any voice in the affairs of the village. Therefore, from the point of view of the administration of the village, the dü-jung were also irrelevant. But before examina-

ing political behavior in the village let us continue the discussion of taxes.

The most important unit for the measurement of land relating to taxes was the gang (rkang). The gang was a land unit calculated by the amount of seed sowable in a delimited area, although the simple criterion of size was conjoined with other variables such as potential fertility of the soil and the overall climatic condition of the area. The establishment of figures such as the above ones for Samada were usually done at one of the land settlements or shib-shung (zhibs gzhung); for Samada, the land settlement of 1847.[3] The final figure, in terms of the amount of seed per gang, was not really important. What was important was that taxes on the land were based on these calculations and copies of these records were held by the peasants. In effect, this tax list and not the above gang units became the basis for the villager's interaction with the government representatives.

Although the above explanation of the method used for establishing gang was fair, less rational factors often significantly affected the amount of taxes the shung-gyu-ba villages were burdened with. Gift giving was certainly relevant in such petitions, but verbalness and the ability to present one's case cleverly were more crucial factors. Tibetans from Samada had two oral verses they used to illustrate the importance of these factors:

(1) zhon gyi zhon chen zhon chung la

rta pa'i nyin lam bcu brgyad yod

zhon gyi brag tsa rig mo la
ston gyi 'bras 'dzam bu gling gi bzhi cha gcig//

The zhon (area), the big zhon and the small zhon extends for eighteen days by horseback.

Zhon's mountains, pastures, and fields,
have a yield of one-fourth of the world.

(2) Skyen mkhar la rag lung rag la
ston tog nya pa nyung ma yin

rtsam pa rin chen gser las dkon
gal ste byung tshe tshal las dmar//

In Skyen mkhar the land is coarse
the crops are fish and turnips

Tsampa (staple food) is rarer than precious gold
and even if it comes, it's redder than tshal (a red dye).

These verses, which lose their impact when translated directly into English, are very humorous to Tibetans. They refer to incidents of villagers petitioning the government for tax concessions. The representative in the first verse, bragged about his area's wealth, and of course, procured only an increase in his taxes. In the second verse, the village's representive painted a portrait of extreme poverty and won the concession. While this is no doubt an exaggeration, situations like it, in fact occurred. In the end, the results of the universalistic investigation of factors such as weather and fertility often bore little resemblence to the actual tax situation. For example, the village of Kangmar (fourteen miles north of Samada) paid only one of the three main types of taxes, having obtained concessions (chag yangs) for the other

taxes on the basis of supposed 'extreme hardship' resulting from their location at the intersection of two trade routes.

Two general categories of gang were used in village Tibet, the chi-gang (phyi rkang) and the nang-gang (nang rkang). The chi-gang literally translates as 'outer gang' but its actually meant the gang used by the government in its tax calculations. The nang-gang literally meant 'inner gang' and referred to the gang used by the villagers to calculate taxes and land internally. Samada had as their chi-gang one tax or dur-gang ('dur rkang) and five military or mag-gang (dmag rkang). These chi-gang, like the taxes that derived from them, fell collectively on the village of Samada, that is to say, the eight tre-ba families. These families interacted with the government not as individual land holding and tax-paying units, but collectively through the village administration in which, in terms of decision making, each of the families had equal rights. In a sense, this illustrates the logic behind tre-ba -- who for one reason or another became dü-jung -- becoming serfs of the village as a whole (chi-mi) rather than the individual families.

Internally, the village land was divided into fourteen nang-gang. Each family held land tenure documents issued by the government enumerating their fields with the amount of seed each took. The breakdown of the fourteen nang-gang between the eight families was as follows:

Mao: 3 1/4 nang-gang	Nopa: 1 3/4 nang-gang
Kana: 3 " "	Shalo: 1 1/2 " "

Genpa: 2 nang-gang
Kana tranga: 1 " "
Tagpa: 3/4 nang-gang
Tagsur: 3/4 " "

Whereas the gang was the fundamental land measurement unit for taxes, the basic volume measure was the kay (khal). It is very difficult to convert Tibetan measures into western ones with precision and what follows is to be viewed as only an approximation. The kay was standardized by the government according to volume and was the only measure accepted for government taxes. This government kay was called ten-tsing-ka-ru (bstan 'dzin mkhar ru) or bo ('bo). Surkhang (1964) estimated one ka-ru kay equalled 27 pounds. Bell (1924) thought 33 pounds and Shakabpa (1967) stated 32 pounds. In the first place, since different crops differed in weight and since the kay was a unit of volume no single figure suffices. I arrived at a figure of 27 pounds for wheat based on calculations made from a Tibetan bag which was said to hold exactly 15 lang-dong kay (see below). Since that bag weighed 35 kilograms and equalled 2.8 ka-ru kay I was able to establish the above figure. However, although that was the standardized measuring unit for the government, local areas usually had their own measures and often even monasteries and aristocratic lords had their own private kay. In Samada the following units were used.

3 lu-gu (blug gu) = 1 lang-dong kay (glang dong khal)
12 lu-gu. = 1 chag-dong kay (lcags dong khal)
16 lu-gu = 1 ten-tsing ka-ru kay

8 local or yu (yul) lu-gu = 1 lang-dong kay

In order to illustrate the approximate land size the tre-ba family possessed let us examine the land holdings of the Nopa family as cited in their land tenure document which the head of the family reconstructed from memory. The fields mentioned amounted to about 90% of all his fields and included all his larger fields:

gzhung rgyugs sa mda' nor skyid kyi khral rkang gcig dang bzhi ca gcig kyi sa cha thob gras/ shar che mo la son khal 80 dpal skyes can la son khal 150 zam gdong son khal 3 shos che gong 'og gnyis la son khal 8 ra zan son khal 15 gyem a skyid mu rur son khal 20 yu ra lho ma son khal 25 bde chen son khal10 ba rim son khal 8 chu kham ma son khal 10 spe rang son khal 5 lhas kham son khal 20 sha'ul son khal 10 spe zung son khal 5 zhing mo che son khal 30 kyana phu dkyil shos son khal 25 bag chung son khal 3 ngan rgon son khal 9 spel dmar kyid son khal 5 brag gdong son khal 5 sa ri bi khog son khal 3 ka rder che mo son khal 30 khyim spe son khal 12 stong rgyab son khal 6 rgya rbal che mo son khal 20 zing spe zing krug ma li gnyis la son khal 25 ri sog gong 'og gsum la son khal 10 spe ham son khal 10 sngon du kyang bu spe grang gis 'dzin pa khral rkang phyed kyi thob khong gsar du byung ba zla rgyang son khal 26 ba 'ul son khal 5 bcas dang ri tsa thob gras snga chen dngul sprang 115 snga chung dngul srang 5 rkyen chen srang 5 sho lung nas srang 10 phrabs rang nas srang 5 du lung srang nas 115 shar sprim nub sprin nas srang 115 mal bzang nas srang 3 lho chung nas sprang 5 rdza phu 'dud nas srang 6 bcas bdag 'thus lag 'dzin du khral spyi tshang 'dzoms nas me lug zla tshes la//

A list of his fields in order of size: according to amount of seed (son) each took, i.e., son-kay (son khal)

dpal skyes can:	150	son	kay	spa ham:	10	son	kay
shar che mo:	80	"	"	ri sog gong 'og (3):	10	"	"
zhing mo che:	30	"	"	shos che gong 'og (2):	8	"	"
ka rder che mo:	30	"	"	ngan rgon:	6	"	"
zla rgyang:	26	"	"	stong rgyab:	6	"	"
zing spe zing krug:ma li (2):	25	"	"	ba rim:	8	"	"
yu ra lha ma:	25	"	"	spe rang:	5	"	"
kyang phu dkyil shos:	25	"	"				

brgya rbal che mo:	20	son	kay	spe zung	5	son	kay
lhas kham:	20	"	"	spel dmar kyid:	5	"	"
gyem a skyid mu ra:	20	"	"	brag gdong:	5	"	"
ra zan:	15	"	"	ba 'ul:	5	"	"
khyim spe:	12	"	"	zam gdong:	3	"	"
bde chen:	10	"	"	bag chung:	3	"	"
chu kham ma:	10	"	"	sa ri bi khog:	3	"	"
sha 'ul:	10	"	"				
	508				82		

This gives a total of 590 kay for about 90% of his fields. In addition to these, as his land tenure document (lag 'dzin) indicates, he had rights to ten pasture areas. To convert this kay figure into acres is very difficult. Firstly, adjusting for the 10% of his field not cited, we arrive at a figure of about 649 son kay for the total seed capacity. Adjusting that kay figure to barley on the basis of the ratio of a bushel of wheat to barley (60 lbs. to 48 lbs.) we arrive at a kay of 22 lbs. for barley. Taking the figures from the Agricultural Statistics, 1967 U.S. Department of Agriculture, we find that barley seed per acre averages 1.59 bushels per acre in the U.S. However, in irrigated areas in the U.S. the ratio is as high as 2.5 bushels per acre. Taking the figure of 2.5 bushels per acre as reasonable (since the land in Samada was irrigated), we arrive at an acre total of 113 acres. That figure roughly agrees with the acreage total Nopa estimated he had, "a little over 100 acres." It also generally agrees with the statements of the other tre-ba from Samada who estimated that the acreage ranged from about 20 acres for the smallest families to about 300 acres for the largest. It

should be stressed that while the above figures are extremely crude the Tibetans were farming in India using the acre system, and therefore, were familiar with acre sizes.

With this background, let us now examine the tax obligation of Samada. We shall list the tax responsibilities of Samada in detail because it was from such shung-gyu-ba villages that the government obtained the majority of its goods and corvée services. It also will serve as the basis for later comparisons with the obligations of dü-jung. Generally, taxes in Tibet were divided into two categories, nang-tre (nang khral) and chi-tre (phyi khral). Both of these can be further differentiated according to whether the tax was payable in kind or lag-dön (lag 'don) or in corvée labor or gang-dro (rkang 'gro). Nang-tre referred to taxes one gave or performed for one's own direct lord, and chi-tre to taxes one gave or performed for the central government. Samada paid a series of taxes they called tsong nang-tre (rdzong nang-khral) or 'district inner tax,' the district being the equivalent of their lord. These were, with the exception of one, all taxes in kind (lag 'don). They were, as listed in the lag deb zhibs gzhung (literally, 'hand book of the land settlement') copy of the government's official record book: 1) Dge rtsam: in the fourth month they had to give ten kay of tsamba (rtsam pa) or barley flour to feed the monks during the religious prayer festival in Gyantse called Sger rtsa (equivalent to Sa ga zla ba) which took place at the Pe-gö chö-de

(Dpal 'khor chos sde) monastery. This tax had been converted into money and was paid for the village by the Chanya (Bya nyal) family in Gyantse who, as mentioned above, was one of the hereditary district clerks.

Chanya acted as Samada's agent for a number of taxes like this one, paying them when they came due and then at the end of the year receiving reimbursement from Samada. 2) Inga mchod: this was a tax to subsidize the prayer festival commemorating the death of Tsong kha pa on the 25th of the tenth month. Samada had to pay 15 kay of barley before that festival. Again, the Chanya family paid this and charged Samada according to the going rate of barley at the time of purchase. 3) 'Bab tsa: this tax was 75 gya-ma (rgya ma)* of hay. It was due in the tenth month and was also paid by Chanya. About 2 1/2 gya-ma of hay made up one side of a two-side load (to-po) for mules and other pack animals. 4) Shog rgyugs: this tax required two kay of the flower of a poisonous plant called simply dug gi me tog or 'poisonous flower.' Samada paid Chanya cash and he purchased the necessary flowers. Although the villagers were not positive, they thought the poisonous flowers were used in the preparation of Tibetan paper. 5) Dngos rigs: in the old tax books, in addition to the basic foodstuff taxes, there were all kinds of utensil taxes such as iron rings, needles, leather ropes and so forth. This had been converted into money and Samada was required to pay 60

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* Each gya-ma equalled about 6 1/2 pounds.

sang (srang) and then, after a reform which lessened the amount by 1/4, 52 sang. This amount had to be paid in the eleventh month in the district's main office (Lhan rgyas-khang). Samada paid this tax themselves since it fell due the same time as their meat tax, and that tax required them to go to Gyantse. 6) Meat tax (Sha khral): this tax was measured in a unit called sha-kay (sha khal) or meat kay.The sha-kay was subdivided into 20 nya-ga (nyag), each nya-ga in turn equalling 6 por (spor). The district officials would not count more than four kay per sheep although the best sheep often weighed 4 kay 15 nya-ga. This tax was paid in the eleventh month. The heads of the families drove their sheep to an innkeeper in Gyantse with whom they had a standing arrangement. The innkeeper slaughtered the sheep for them and for this, plus their lodging, he got everything except the actual carcass, that is to say, he got the internals and the head*. Their tax was 92 sha kay, 8 nya-ga and 6 por. This was equivalent to approximately 25 sheep. 7) Rgya-shing brngos gsum: this was at one time the basic government tax but over the years had become minor. It amounted to only three sho (zho) a year for the one tax gang ('dur rkang). 8) Kang-nyer (Khang gnyer): this was the only corvée tax of the 'inner tax' category. For this tax the village had to provide one kang-nyer for the district. All total, there were

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* The villagers did, however, keep the skin.

thirteen kang-nyer for Gyantse district. These thirteen not only served as the district's messenger service, but were also responsible for the upkeep of the district administrative headquarters (rdzong). Each of these thirteen was assigned the upkeep of a section of the building. The cost of repair work were the responsibility of the village. They also had to pay the Kang-nyer a salary.

In addition to the above taxes which were paid to the Gyantse District Commissioner, Samada had other tax obligations. One of these was to the monastic estate of Ser-chog. The history of this monastic unit is complicated and only peripherally relevant to this study so I shall not include it here. Whatever the basis (the Tibetans use the word brten 'basis' to illustrate the source from which taxes derive), Samada had to give the following in taxes to the administrators of that monastic unit: 1) Butter tax or mar-kay (mar khal): about 46 mar-kay of butter calculated not with the standard government butter measuring unit but with Ser-chog's own, larger one. This tax was collected in the sixth month since that was the time the sheep and cows were brought down from pasture and milked. 2) Meat tax or sha-tre (sha khral): in winter they had to give 2 1/4 carcasses of good meat to Ser-chog. 3) Wool tax or pay-tre (bal khral): about five kay of wool. 4) Woolen cloth tax or nam-tre (snam khral): this was converted into cash so they had to pay four sang and eight sho. 5) Barley or dru-tre ('bru khral): they had to pay 130 kay of barley, but

they had an old document from the Council of Ministers converting that amount into cash at the rate of six sho per ka-ru kay of grain , and also stating that this amount could not be increased.

This last tax became involved in a controversy during the reign of the Regent Taktra (Stag brag-1940-50). After a reexamination of Samada's lands and taxes, the people of Samada were informed by the local District Commissioner that the exchange rate of six sho was insufficient since inflation had rendered that amount a mere pittance. Henceforth, they were told, they had to pay the barley tax in kind. In reply to that, the tre-ba of Samada told the government that they had no basis (brten) for paying that tax. They said that at first this tax to Ser-chog was made as an expression of faith and not on the basis of land held. They told the government to check their sa leb rtsis record book (for lands) and insisted that no land basis would be found for these taxes. In addition to that, they presented the old document from the Council of Ministers that stated that the conversion rate could not be altered. As a result of these arguements, the Regent (and indirectly the aristocratic family who administered the estate) was unable to alter the tax. This incident is illustrative of the government- shung-gyu-ba relationship and shows the relative high degree of independence of the shung-gyu-ba.

Another non-district obligation was the bo-ma (bogs ma)

payment the village had to make to the So-nam le-gung (So nam las khungs) or Agriculture Office. Bo-ma is the term used for either the lease or the lease fee of anything, be it land or people. For generations, the tre-ba of Samada had been using a number of empty fields within their borders to graze their cattle. In the first decade of this century, on the advice of the Emperor of China's representative in Lhasa, the Amban, a new office was created to look after 'extra people and extra lands(mi lhag sa lhag).' The extra people aspect will be examined later, but the extra lands referred to just such a situation in Samada. The Tibetan government claimed ultimate ownership of all land in Tibet. In accord with this, the new office promulgated (via the Council of Ministers and ruler) a rule stating that any agricultural land that had lain fallow for ten years could be put into use by anyone after they informed the Agriculture Office and obtained their permission. For the first three years the user did not have to pay any taxes on this new land, and after that had to pay only 1/10 of the yield to the Agriculture Office and, if there was an owner, 1/20 of the yield or 1/20 of the land to the owner as compensation. These lands were called gsar 'bol-zhu ba. The new user of the land received a permit (lag-'khyer) from the office and did not have to pay other taxes on the land. The land, however, was not considered as the hereditary property of the user. Rather, it was perceived as bo-ma or leased land, the final rights of disposition

therefore remaining with the owner, the government. It was, however, possible for the user to eventually petition the Council of Ministers to obtain permanent title to the land. As the following case illustrates, a large number of disputes arose out of this new rule since the old owner usually tried to block the petitioner. On one occasion, the Chan-tsö (Phyag mdzod) or Chief Steward of the powerful aristocratic family of Doring (Rdo ring) asked the Agriculture Office for use of the fallow lands being used as pasture in Samada. As soon as the Samada villagers heard about this they also petitioned that office to grant them the use of the land and a dispute broke out. The government finally settled the dispute by proclaiming that the village of Samada could retain possession of the land but they had to repay the Chan-tsö all the expenses he had incurred as a result of the litigation. Moreover, Samada had to pay the Agriculture Office a fixed amount of bo-ma (lease payment) totaling 130 kay of grain (which was converted to 126 sang). At that time that was a substantial amount.

The above taxes comprised the non-corvée tax inventory for Samada. Let us now examine the second category of taxes, the chi-tre or 'outer tax.' This tax consisted of payments in kind and corvée service to the government. In explaining their taxes in kind, the Samada villagers lumped them in with the tsong nang-tre ones, although they knew which ones had to be sent to Lhasa (for example, the Rgya shing brngos gsum tax).

The chi-tre taxes in kind were few and not important, but the corvée taxes included two major types which were used in the entire area of central Tibet. The significance of these will be seen in Chapter Seven, but for now, let us discuss them as they existed in Samada.

The first was the mag-tre (dmag khral) or military tax. We mentioned above that Samada had five mag-gang or military gang in the government record books. In general, a military gang exempted the holder from all taxes except provision of a soldier. Although sometimes these units were held by individual families, usually they were held collectively by a village as was the case in Samada. This tax was, in their opinion, the hardest of all the taxes. For their five mag-gang they had to supply five soldiers to the Gya-jong (Rgya-sbyong) regiment. That regiment was the first Tibetan one, having originated during the time of Miwang-Polhane (Mi dbang-Pho lha nas) in the early eighteenth century. They also had to provide one and one-quarter soldiers for the Shi-na (Bzhi-sna) levy for the Gu-sung (Sku srung) regiment. The Shi-na meant that for every four mag-gang one soldier had to be supplied. Samada's total, therefore was six and one-quarter soldiers. The tre-ba usually collectively hired men to serve in their place, paying their expenses and salary. The salaries Samada paid varied. Until about 1933 they paid nine sheep carcasses and nine sang. However, during the time of the Reting Regent (1934-40), the soldiers demanded their salary

be paid in cash and received eight do-tse (rdo tshad)[4]. This amount kept increasing and at the time of the Chinese invasion of 1950-51, the salary was forty do-tse a year or about fifty ka-ru kay of grain. The village also had to supply the soldiers with clothes , and later, even bedding. In addition to this private salary, the government provided the soldiers with a salary in tsamba (a few kay a month) and some money (the exact amount varied with regiments according to such things as wether the regiment gave daily soup and tea).

The second major chi-tre tax fell on the local administrative unit which was called the tsho (tsho). The tsho was a small territorial unit consisting usually of a few villages and was related to the sa-tsig (sa tshig) corvée transportation tax levy. Tibet contained a series of locations or stations called sa-tsig. The distance between these varied, some being as short as eight miles and others as long as twenty three miles. These sa-tsig were linked up into routes that covered the entire polity. Along these routes government-sanctioned goods and communiques were transported as well as letters, officials and so forth. The main responsibility of the tsho was to provide the necessary animals and people to transport the goods and so forth from their sa-tsig to the next sa-tsig station in the next tsho where another group of villagers would move it on. The tsho, then, was the unit from which those obligated to fulfill this tax were drawn.

The tsho (and sa-tsig) of Samada was bounded on the north by that of Kangmar and on the south by that of Gala (Ka la) as can be seen in the map on p.40. The basis for the calculation of Samada tsho's corvée tax obligation was twenty four nang-gang. These were held by aristocratic and monastic serfs as well as by the Samada shung-gyu-ba. Fourteen of the twenty four nang-gang were held by the Samada shung-gyu-ba, nine by the fourteen tre-ba of the aristocratic serfs of the Phala family who were attached to the village of upper Salu of the Trong-dü (Grong stod) estate, and one was from the two tre-ba families of the monastic estate of Dri-gü ('Bras khud) monastery. The sa-tsig obligation required performance of various services, the most important of which was the provision of ke-ma (khal ma) or carrying animals and da-wu (rta'u) or riding animals to persons possessing a lam-yig (lam yig) or requisition permit of the central government. As a result of the importance of these two obligations, Tibetans generally called the tax da-wu ke-ma. In addition to the animals, the villagers had to provide, depending on the specifications in the lam-yig, firewood, lodging and persons to load, unload, and accompany the goods to the next sa-tsig. The obligation to provide such services was proportional to the number of gang, thus, Samada was responsible for 58.5% of the tax, upper Salu for 37.5% and Dri-gü for 4% of the tax.

In order to command this corvée service, a person had to possess a lam-yig. Lam-yig were issued primarily by the

Council of Ministers (prior approval of the ruler was not needed) and also by the Regent (using his own seal), and the Dalai Lama (using his own seal). The Provincial Governors (Spyi khyab pa) could also issue lam-yig, but only for their province. The Trade Agents (Tshong spyi) sometimes issued them but only in relation to trade matters. These lam-yig specified the amount of ta-wu and ke-ma that had to be provided. Before presenting the lam-yig to the villagers (actually to the village headman), the holder had to present it to the District Commissioner for his validation, that process be-being called tong-tsin (thong 'dzin), the government thereby being able to keep records of their use. Without the tong-tsin the villagers did not have to perform the tax, but on the other hand the District Commissioner could not refuse to authorize a lam-yig. There were two general types of lam-yig: the permanent variety and the single-instance variety. While the single-instance holders can not be specified, the permanent ones for Samada will be cited below. Before enumerating these, mention should be made that any loss or breakage-- a significant factor since the roads were bad and often flanked by precipitous drops-- had to be repaid by the villager doing the tax. During the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's reign a new rule was promulgated stating that each user of ta-wu ke-ma had to pay 2 sho per ke-ma (that is, for each carrying animal) and 4 sho per ta-wu (or riding animal). Although the villagers only had to furnish the specified amount of ani-

mals, the users usually said that such and such an office needed the goods at once and urged them to furnish extra ones. The villagers usually did this with the idea that when loss or breakage occurred they could remind the users of their former extra services. For the tsho of Samada, the main permanent lam-yig holders were: 1) Ding ri 'Bras khang: this tax was for a large amount of rice which came to Samada via Gala once in the sixth or seventh Tibetan month and once in the eleventh or twelfth month. The rice eventually went to the Bla phyag office in Lhasa. Their lam-yig entitled them to come four times a year with 150-160 ke-ma each time, but they had that emended so that they could come twice a year but levy 300 ke-ma each time. Accompanying the rice loads were four dö-gyab (dod rgyab) or caravan bosses sent by the Ding ri office. When they arrived, housing had to be arranged for them. The general arrangement was that the three village units took turns: for every fourteen days Samada supplied the house and so forth, Salu did nine days and Dri-gü one day. Along with the house, the provider had to supply firewood, fodder, bed, but not food. In addition to the 300 ke-ma (the 300 carrying animals) they had to provide 4 ta-wu. These 300 animals were divided on the 14-9-1 basis and then internally on the village's nang-gang basis. If a family did not have enough animals to take his share of the load in one trip he had to either hire animals or ask (and/or bribe) the caravan bosses to let them do it in several trips. Three trips was the maximum per-

mitted. Usually if the ke-ma amounted to more than ten, a villager would do it in two trips. For example, for a ke-ma of 300, Samada would have had to send 174 animals. From this, the Nopa family with their 1 3/4 nang-gang had to send about 22 animals. Along with the animals the villagers usually sent two men for every 15 ke-ma. The Ding ri office was also entitled to a return trip but this usually did not require much ke-ma. 2) Phag ri 'Bras khang: they came twice a year (once in the eleventh month and once in the twelfth month) and used about 200 ke-ma. On the return trip, however, they required 300 ke-ma. Moreover, since this occurred in spring when the animals were in poor condition due to the dearth of fodder and agricultural work, this was one of the hardest of the animal corvée taxes. 3) Bsam yas Dkar me: theoretically this lam-yig was for the transportation of butter for butter lamps at the Bsam yas (Samye) monastery. However, the command over the ta-wu ke-ma was leased out by the monastery to traders who paid them in money for the use of the lam-yig. All of this was administered by a large family in Lhasa who had to send a fixed cash amount to the monastery. These caravans came once up from Gala and once back using about 200 ke-ma each way. They did not come at any set times since that depended on which trader leased the right and what types of items he was transporting. 4) Shog grub: this was paper which was being transported to Lhasa and Gyantse from Phag ri and totaled about 200 ke-ma. 5) 'Brug pa Lo phyag: this was

a big Bhutanese family which held, until the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's time, four or five lag-gyer (lag 'khyer) which were documents like lam-yig but usually related to an individual's exemptions. Each of these lag-gyer was good for about 40-50 ke-ma. 6) At New Year's time there were usually emergency shipments of dried fruits from Phag ri and Gro mo for Lhasa that had to be transported by day and night to ensure their arrival in Lhasa before New Year's day.

The above holders of permanent lam-yig were the largest of those who passed through Samada. But in addition to these, there were many small, irregular shipments which came from various government offices, as well as a variety of officials travelling with lam-yig, some of whom were regular like the postmen (sbrag pa) and the government messengers (e drung) but most of whom were irregular. The arrangement for all of these corvée taxes was the responsibility of one of the two shung-gyu-ba headmen of Samada. In general, if the tsho included shung-gyu-ba, their headmen had the overall responsibility for organizing the tax. The headman had to maintain records of who had done what sa-tsig taxes in the tsho and whose turn it was on any particular day, and also he had to make sure that the documents (lam-yig and tong-tsin) were in order when the users initially brought them to him. This performance of the sa-tsig transportation tax by the shung-gyu-ba was one of the most important services they provided the government and in a number of cases, villages were created

along major trade routes so as to facilitate this corvée movement of goods.

Another similar corvée levy was the tsong gye (rdzong-'khyer) or literally, 'district carrying.' Unlike the sa-tsig levy which was what Tibetans called go-bab (sgo 'bab) or 'one that lands at the door,' the tsong-gye required animals from all over the district to be assembled at the district headquarters (in this case Gyantse) and from there transport goods to the next district's headquarters. This levy was irregular and could occur at any time. It was called by the District Commissioner and administrated by the officials called Tsho-pön (Tsho dpon) who were mentioned in Chapter Two. The general practice was for the District Commissioner, on the basis of the load's size, to issue an order to the Tsho-pön telling him to assemble, e.g., 600 ke-ma. The Tsho-pön then in turn issued an order to all the tsho in the district, but since he needed only 600 ke-ma, he usually let off families that he liked or who gave him gifts. Those who had to provide animals generally paid their Tsho-pön in cash and let him arrange the transport himself. Because of this the Tsho-pön usually privately maintained a large number of animals.

Another widespread, though relatively minor corvée tax was called dud gnam la btang tshad shog, or 'whoever sends smoke to the sky come.' This tax fell on all households whether dü-jung or tre-ba. It was a rare, irregular levy initiated by the central government for special work such as irrigation

and canal repairs and required one person from every household to appear at the specified time.

The last tax we shall mention here was the one called tsün-tre (btsun khral) or sometimes tra-tre (grwa khral) both of which, however, gloss as 'monk tax.' This tax referred to the right of monasteries, in the case of Samada, Dri-gü monastery, to take children from their area when the monastery's monk population could not be maintained via voluntary entrance. There were two customary norms for this 'monk tax': 1) for tre-ba families the norm was that if there were three sons, the middle one should become a monk (bu gsum bar ma). 2) for dü-jung families the norm was more oppressive in that even if there were only two sons in a family the monastery claimed the right to make one a monk. Concerning this tax, not only were the tre-ba better off in terms of their obligation, but they were able to evade their obligation much more easily than the generally poorer dü-jung families.

These taxes were paid primarily according to the number of gang a family held. If a family held 2 of the 14 nang-gang, then they had to pay 2/14 of the collective amount of the tax. However, Samada did attempt to compensate for fluctuations in non-landed wealth through a reapportionment scheme, and in fact, most agro-pastoral villages had some sort of scheme. In Samada there was a biannual evaluation of valued possessions which was known as go-trang (mgo grangs) or 'head count.' The basis for this calculation was that a nang-gang

was divided into six phu-lu (phul). Then, one phu-lu eaualled:

75 sheep, or

105 goats, or

22 yaks, 'bri, bulls, mdzo and cows, or

1 house, or

1 person over eighteen.

Each phu-lu of this type was calculated as worth one sang and two sho. The money collected from that was kept separately in a box called the chi-gam (spyi sgam) or 'common box' which was sealed every time money was either taken out or put in. The funds were the collective property of the tre-ba and were used for such things as the salary and expenses of the kang-nyer, the headmen, and litigation expenses of the village collectively. This reapportionment mechanism was important since one of the first indications of economic decline for a family was the dwindling of their herds.

Political behavior in Samada and other like villages was intimately intertwined with the system of stratification outlined in the early part of this chapter. In all shung-gyu-ba villages there was an operative norm of equality in terms of ascriptive rights to authority between the tre-ba. In any decisions concerning the village only the tre-ba had rights, but all of the tre-ba families had equal rights. In Samada, the eight tre-ba families had equal rights in decision-making on village affairs and can be thought of a comprising a village council, although there was no named structural unit. The

customary process for decision making was for the headman (discussed below) to call a meeting of the heads (apo) of each tre-ba family to discuss the question or situation until some kind of consensus was reached. Their scope of jurisdiction included anything which concerned the village. In other words, policy was a collective right of the tre-ba families.

In addition to this council, there was also a named political position that was called gen-bo (rgan po). Although gen-bo literally translates as 'elder,' because the incumbents were not necessarily, nor usually old, I shall refer to that position as headman. Recruitment into that position varied considerably in different villages. Sometimes the position was hereditary, sometimes all of the tre-ba families rotated in holding it and sometimes as in Samada the tre-ba selected the headman by consensus. In villages where there were more than one headman, particularly where rotation was followed, there was always one more or less permanent headman who was able to read, write and calculate. The others, regardless of their qualifications functioned more as assistants to the main one. In Samada there was no limit on the term of office and the incumbent generally held it until he desired to relinquish it, although the village council could eject a headman for incompetence or corruption.

The two headmen in Samada were chosen by the council by consensus, and were highly capable persons. In addition to possessing the ability to read, write and calculate, they were also intelligent and verbal. In all influence relationships

in rural Tibet control of economic resources and wealth was a crucial variable. The position of headman was no exception to this and the headman was usually from one of the higher tre-ba families. Nevertheless, motivation and intelligence, particularly concerning the ability to weigh multiple courses of action and suggest solutions that in the end prove advantageous, were also important factors. The headman was usually someone from a wealthy family who was respected for his ability to get along with others and for his good advice. Also, since the headman was the spokesman for the village and the point of intersection between the village and the rest of the political field in which they existed, it was also important for the headman to be able express the demands and opinions of the village. The interplay of ascription and achievement will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Succession to the office of headman generally did not generate conflict. The number of potential candidates was limited by the samll number of tre-ba families and the even smaller number among these who were wealthy and whose male head had the needed achievement and parsonality characteristics. However, if the village council was in fact unable to reach consnesus, then the problem was taken to a higher level, usually the Lang, for settlement. Samada had two headmen, the gen-chen (rgan chen) or big headman and the gen-chung (rgan chung) or little headman. The gen-chen was primarily concerned with the external relations of Samada and was the one who usually did

the travelling to confer or present the village's position before government officials. The gen-chung was concerned with the internal affairs of the village and the corvée transportation area of the tsho. It was his responsibility to organize the sa-tsig transportation tax, informing the villages how many animals were required. He also was in charge of apportioning and recording the other taxes paid by Samada and seeing that they were ready for shipment at the required times. Furthermore, it was his responsibility to call a meeting of the tre-ba heads whenever a situation occurred that required some decision. The gen-chung was also the one to whom disputes and accusations of criminal acts were usually first brought by the participants. Although he had no authority to adjudicate, that is to say, to render a decision, he was a key figure in mediating such altercations.

Economic improvement was certainly not the basic motivation for accepting or competing for the position of headman. The gen-chung received a nominal salary of 24 sang a year and the gen-chen received only travelling expenses of 10 sang per day on the road and one lu-gu of fodder for his horse. Furthermore, the opportunities for obtaining gifts or other types of income were very small. Compared with the amount of time the job required, the economic rewards were inconsequential. The domination of others was also not a strong motivational factor for the position itself had very little authority over others. The headman was the agent of the tre-ba rather than their head.

If he had an effect on the decisions of the village it was as a result of his persuasive influence or his control of other tre-ba via economic dependency relationships, but not as a result of occupying the headman role. What then were the incentives behind recruitment? Firstly, it should be noted that in fact there was considerable reticense on the part of the tre-ba to accept the position. I collected in the field one drawn out case in another shung-gyu-ba village where hereditary headman refused to perform the duties of the position claiming that all the tre-ba should partake. Nevertheless, there was a high degree of respect and prestige associated with the position of headman. The headman was known by all the permanent district officials and often even by the District Commissioners. Sometimes they achieved widespread reputations in their district and in general were shown greater respect and deference than the normal tre-ba. Moreover, while the authority content of the role was low, an aggressive, wealthy tre-ba who was motivated toward political control could use his resources to turn the headman position into a politically powerful role.

In addition to the headman, there was also usually an intermittent role called tü-mi (<u>'thus mi</u>) or delegate. This role came into play when the headman had to go outside of the village on some important matter and the other tre-ba, partly to check up on him, sent one or two delegates from the tre-ba (usually by rotation) to accompany him.

We have already indicated that the tre-ba as a group and the headmen as their agents, while they had no formal authority over them, completely dominated the dü-jung. The following cases point up important mechanisms by which this control was maintained.

One year, during the period when the tre-ba males had gone to Gyantse to pay their meat tax (sha khral), a young boy and a young man had an argument and the young boy purposely farted. That act of disrespect incited the young man to slap the boy. The boy, in turn, burst out crying and ran home. When he arrived home he told his grandmother simply that the young man had beaten him. The grandmother, who was famous for causing altercations, said that they had to get revenge. They called their relative Wangdrub and then the three of them went to beat up the young man. When they arrived at the man's house one of his relatives was there and he tried to stop the fight, but Wangdrub, thinking the fellow was trying to help his relative, pulled him to the floor by his hair. This brought a bystander into the ruckus and turned it into a big fight. Wangdrub's wife and another relative then came, as did three relatives of the man who tried to break up the fight. They fought, and eventually Wangdrub's side lost. During this fighting, the tre-ba wives went to intervene, but at the end of the day both sides were loudly complaining and the matter was left pending.

When the tre-ba and gen-bo came back from Gyantse, the

gen-bo listened to both sides' version of the affair and told them that nothing could be done since there was no property or land involved. "We can't punish you for fighting among yourselves, but since this is not the first time you all have caused trouble like this, from now on you all must leave the village area (lung pa)." The disputants then begged the gen-bo to allow them to stay in Samada. They said that they would not fight again and that since they were yü-drang (yul sprang) or 'gypsy-like beggars,' if they went who would do the 'polluting' jobs. The gen-bo then relented under condition that they not cause trouble again. However, the gen-bo said they were going to receive a whipping. The beggars said that as long as they could stay, whatever was done was all right. They all gave their word that the fight was over and the gen-bo decided that each one would get forty lashes. The old woman said that she was too old to be whipped and would raise the money to pay a fine. In order to be fair, the gen-bo allowed someone from the other side also to pay a fine.

A second case sheds further light on the political interaction between the two strata. This incident took place in the nearby shung-gyu-ba village area of Chimdro (Chim 'brog). When the Tibetan government instituted the drug-na (drug sna) military levy, the village of Chimdro received notice from the District Commissioner that they had to send two soldiers. The tre-ba of that shung-gyu-ba village decided to send two of their chi-mi. They, furthermore, felt that although there were

many chi-mi of the village living in other regions, if they selected chi-mi actually living in Chimdro, they would be more reliable. A list was compiled of all the chi-mi males between the ages of eighteen and thirty (the informant was not positive of these years). The twelve persons so collected were made to throw dice, the lowest two having to serve as Chimdro's soldiers (of course they would get a salary). One of the two lowest was a shephard for one of the qu-pön (khyu dpon)[5] and that qu-pön said that he needed the man as his shephard and would make up the difference in pay between what Chimdro paid their soldiers and what it would cost to hire an outsider.

The other loser was named Topkye (Stobs rgyas). His family had five sons, of which he was the youngest. They protested that they did not think he should have to go since in the past their family had on many occasions served the region. For example, the father had served in the army, the eldest son had served as postman (sbrag pa), the next son again served in the army, another son got the postman's job (but hired another to do it), and now the youngest son had to go into the army. They went to the gen-bo and told him this and it was decided to hold a big meeting of the tre-ba to settle this. However, the night before this meeting, two of Topkye's brothers quietly went off to appeal to their lang. The next day, when the Chimdro tre-ba met they decided that since the choice resulted from his own throwing of the dice and not their desire to send him in particular, there was nothing they could do. When they went to tell

Topkye's father this decision they found out that the brothers had gone to the lang. The tre-ba decided that they should send representatives to the lang also, and sent two delegates to represent the village since the gen-bo had to remain in Chimdro to work out the financial aspects of sending the two soldiers. The tre-ba threw dice to see who would go as delegates and one of the two was the informant who dictated this case. The tre-ba decided to send the two delegates the next day with a letter from the village. The main content of the letter was that: 1) the village was sending delegates since the gen-bo was occupied, 2) the selection of the soldier was by dice and not by appointment, and 3) if you don't abide by our decision we will never be able to raise levies again as everyone will dispute our decisions.

By the time they got there the two brothers had already talked to the lang and had obtained in writing what the delegates considered as a favorable decision and had already taken it back to Chimdro. When the two delegates gave the lang their letter he told them he could do nothing. He said that he was sorry they had come, knowing how valuable time was to a tre-ba, but all he had to say he had said in the letter he had given to the two brothers. He wrote in the letter that the village ought to reconsider and do what is best, but that the final decision is with the village. He then told the delegates to return home. However, the two delegates feared that they would get badly scolded for not accomplishing anything and so refused

to leave, asking him to please write a new decision in accordance with what is written in the letter they brought. The lang (who was also tsho-pön) said he would only give them a letter stating that they had arrived and have given him the village's letter. The two delegates, however, still refused to go, insisting and pleading over and over again with the lang to give them a letter. They even prostrated three times before him. The lang finally began to hedge a little and asked the two delegates what they normally did in Chimdro when a decision could not be reached on some matter. The delegates said that they usually did dkon mchog brten bstan shog. This referred to throwing dice in front of the statue of a god to determine some issue, the implication being that the loser lost because of the god's intervention on the side of right. As their last resort they asked the lang to give them a letter advising this procedure. They told him that if he did this and the village lost, even if one of the tre-ba themselves had to go they would send someone. Eventually the lang relented and give them a letter to that effect.

When they returned to Chimdro and showed the letter to the gen-bo, it was agreed to do that but they decided that if Topkye lost and would not go, they would tie him up and send him to Gyantse. Topkye's side agreed to throw the dice and even stated that if they won they would contribute toward hiring another soldier. The tre-ba then recalled all the chi-mi for the showdown since if they lost, one of the remaining chi-mi

would have to go. However, those chi-mi said they wouldn't go since they had already thrown the dice and won. Finally, the tre-ba settled it by saying that as long as they contributed financially to hiring another soldier it was all right.

The next day, after doing an offering ceremony to the gods (lha gsol), one of the gen-bo representing the village threw dice with Topkye. The upshot was that Topkye lost and agreed to serve, but it is interesting to note that the tre-ba had already decided to send the gen-bo to Gyantse in the event they lost so as to persuade the government to decide in their favor and make the boy go. In this case, because the dispute affected the entire village and concerned taxes, the tre-ba did not resort to giving gifts to the government officials to whom they took the case for adjudication, although it was said that the boy gave some to the lang.

Because a complete analysis of Tibetan law would require a separate study, only the most salient features will be discussed here and those solely to illuminate the intra and inter village power structure. The two cases cited above illustrate typical ways that political resources were manipulated and activated in shung-gyu-ba villages. Several critical factors emerge from the above cases that delimit the conscious model the Tibetans had. Firstly, while rules and norms for organizing and evaluating behavior were man-

ifestly perceived, they were often of a type that rendered universalistic settlement difficult in particular situations, this being the case even though a formal juridical hierarchy existed to which such disputes could be taken and ideally settled according to universalistic principles. While the rules were clear in terms of isolated behavior, relative to other behavior the evaluative mechanisms were often ambiguous in terms of hierarchy and precedence of one behavioral norm over another. For example, did the village's right to command the service of their chi-mi override the fact that a particular chi-mi family unit had served more than their share? While conflictive principles such as these are a universal source of conflict and dispute, in Tibet, this ambiguity was further compounded by other behavioral patterns.

Complicating the legal system was the pattern of the disputants presenting gifts of varying value to the adjudicator. The term bribe in inapplicable here because the gifts were neither solicited by the adjudicator nor were they coterminous with any overt agreement between the giver and the adjudicator. In fact, the acceptance of a gift on the part of the adjudicator did not guarantee that the case would be decided in favor of the giver. Furthermore, since both sides in disputes gave gifts trying to ascertain and match the other in magnitude, the efficacy of the gifts were in large negated. In the case of Topkye there is no way to determine the effect of the gift on the Lang's original decision to give a letter

requesting the village to reconsider, but the fact that a gift was indeed given illustrates this important aspect in legal matters. Before continuing, however, let me stress that there were areas of behavior that were considered as being basically beyond gift-giving, the most important of which involved criminal cases and land tenure disputes, particularly when a village collectively was concerned. Another such situation was seen in the above case where the village collectively considered that the norms involved were unambiguous enough so that they did not have to particularize the evaluative criteria. Since it is not possible to examine all the intricacies and subtleties of the legal system, let us continue in our discussion of village power relations.

The mixture of often ambiguous rule applicability and particularizing gift giving led to a pattern of behavior similar to Gluckman's "reasonable man" concept on the part of the adjudicators that I call the principle of "reasonable settlement." This reasonable settlement principle was related to the reticence of adjudicators to decide cases in favor of one of the protagonists. Although ancient legal texts were available, disputes were, except for particular categories of behavior such as those mentioned above, generally settled in such a way so as to permanently end the dispute. In other words, the reasonable settlement norm worked so that rather than decide A was right and B was wrong, although the adjudicator had the authority to do so, a settlement was made

whereby both A and B agreed that the matter was closed. In effect, decisions were of a compromise nature. In the light of this, not should be made of the opportunity for any disputant to reject (khra log) the formal decision of the adjudicator (the lowest formal government adjudicator was the District Commissioner although customarily the Lang and Chantsö were first asked to settle the case) and take the case to a higher adjudicator (either the Governor or the Council of Ministers in Lhasa).

In terms of the tre-ba dü-jung relations, these cases illustrate the importance of wealth and the control of economic resources. The tre-ba owned all the land and the dü-jung had to either work as day-laborers of, as was usually the case, to lease land from the tre-ba. Although there were a variety of types of bo-ma (bogs ma) or lease, the main one was the type where land was leased in return for work. This was known as le-shing (las zhing) or 'work field.' The tre-ba, especially those with larger land holdings, needed concentrations of labor for their fields at times when the labor demand exceeded the supply. To obviate this recurrent problem individual tre-ba leased small plots of their land to dü-jung in return for which the dü-jung was obligated to work the tre-ba's fields before accepting jobs on a day wage basis with anyone else. The rate was standard for that region. For each dong of seed kay (1 dong = 2 lu-gu, therefore 8 dong = 1 ten tsin ka-ru) the leased field held, the dü-jung was obliged to work one day without

salary (but with food) at a time specified by the tre-ba. This rate of 1 dong of grain was also the standard day wage rate. The advantage of the le-shing was obviously that the leasee could make profits over the one dong per day rate and the tre-ba, in turn, was able to guarantee himself a labor supply for the critical agricultural peak times. Similarly the dü-jung usually lived in vacant houses owned by the tre-ba, the size of the house determining the number of days of work it obligated the holder. The dü-jung who entered into such arrangements were called gang-mi (rkang mi). This relationship was voluntary and had to be renewed each year, either party being able unilaterally to dissolve the relationship. For bigger tre-ba families, the le-shing pattern was the most advantageous. Along with leasing land to the dü-jung, other items such as plowing animals, agricultural equipment, seed and so forth were all commonly lent on a work-return basis. The result of all this was generally to establish dyadic economic dependency relationships. The dü-jung considered Samada their home. They often were able to become financially comfortable and occasionally a few became wealthier than the poor tre-ba and even lent them money and so forth. However, the land they held was always the property of the tre-ba and the threat of withdrawal was a major coersive resource. Moreover, as we saw in the first case, for the poorer dü-jung, the village held the threat of complete expulsion over their heads and in effect was able to fine and punish them based on these coercive resources.

However, as we saw in the second case, capable dü-jung were able to present their positions against the tre-ba by taking their complaints to the Central Government. In reality, this was an option mainly for the better off dü-jung families since it required considerable outlay of expenses both in gifts and in travel and lodging. Even for those able to afford it, this was not very efficacious. Firstly, we have seen that the legal system was oriented to the principle of the 'reasonable settlement' and that this in effect particularized the formal adjudicative network. Since the dü-jung generally had less resources behind him, this was detrimental to him and he ran the risk of losing even if he was more in the right. Although Topkye was able to go to the Lang, we saw that the tre-ba were determined to win the case and had decided to go to the District Commissioner in Gyantse if they lost the dice throw. In all probability the dü-jung Topkye would not have been again able to expend the needed money, or if he could, was unlikely that he could continually match the tre-ba in gifts. Furthermore, since the tre-ba were important to the district by virtue of their role as the government's main taxpayers, and the dü-jung were not, officials often tended to be partial to tre-ba.

In reality, therefore, the poorer dü-jung had very little actual recourse against the tre-ba's actions. The richer dü-jung, on the other hand, tended not to base their defense on the adjudication system or authority relationships but

rather on placing poor tre-ba into economic debtor dependency roles so as to be able to have some support within the ruling group if it was ever needed.

Let us now briefly examine the distribution of power and influence within the tre-ba stratum. As one would guess, the resources basic to domination over the dü-jung -- wealth and control of economic resources -- were the main ones relevant to intra-stratum power competition. But it is important to realize that there was considerable mobility concerning wealth.

The hereditary land holdings of the tre-ba ranged from about 30 acres to 300 acres. The size of their herds varied in a similar fashion. A characteristic feature of economic activity in the village was that there was a high degree of fluctuation concerning wealth when viewed diachronically. While a tre-ba's possession of hereditary fields afforded him control over the major source of potential wealth, whether or not any particular person became or stayed wealthy varied according to variables such as ability and available family labor power. All the villagers emphasized the importance of an intra-family labor supply in determining who got rich and who did not. Because of their being on the one hand agro-pastoralists, and on the other, performers of the animal corvée transport tax, three males were ideally required: one to look after the corvée donkey, one to oversee the agricultural work, and the third to look after the herds. Unless a polyandrous marriage was contracted there was always a period when one's children were too

young to work and the danger of economic disintegration great because of the unreliability of hired dü-jung unless direct supervision was given. As we shall see below, even with polyandrous marriage, bad fortune could destroy a family in a short time. The following case of the Nopa family is illustrative of this rapid fluctuation in wealth.

In the informant's (Nopa) grandfather's time he heard that the crops were always bad and his grandfather took more and more loans, the family eventually becoming very poor. In his father's generation, there were four brothers who polyandrously took a bride for their 1 1/4 nang-gang. When these four were small they were very poor and had to hire themselves out for work. As they grew older, the land was the same but the crops improved and finally they were able to purchase their own animals and keep the boys at home looking after the donkeys and so forth (for the da-wu kə-ma tax). However, just as the family was becoming economically successful (when the informant was about twelve years old) all four 'fathers' died within a space of eight years. The offerings required on death and the loss of adult manpower left the family badly in debt. The mother and the two young children had to depend on hired hands and this was bad because there was no one to adequately oversee the work. At one point Nopa may have had as many as 700 sheep, 100 goats, 12 donkeys, and 3 horses, as well as grain stacked to the ceiling in his storehouse, but within a short time all was depleted. When he was about 19 years old Nopa

took active responsibility of the family's affairs. He worked the land hard to eliminate the family's debts. The most he was ever in debt was 400 chag-dong kay (2400 dong) and a few sacks of barley flour. With hard work he and his brother (polyandrously married) were able to bring the family up to their fathers' level in grain and donkeys and pay back the debts in about five years, but to attain the previous level of sheep took a much longer time. This example is typical of many I have heard and is characteristic of the situation in Tibet.

This recurrent economic fluctuation was joined with a high positive achievement orientation toward wealth. The incompetent, unlucky tre-ba could conceivably become poorer even than the richer dü-jung, and in such cases his potential persuasion or power over others or policy was not very different from that of a dü-jung. Economic power, particularly in the sense of control over people via asymetrical dependency relationships on a non-ascribed basis, not only afforded the holder potential political influence, but also protected him against capricious attacks or demands by others. In addition to this, it also afforded him high prestige and respect, this being an important factor in Tibetans' value system. We shall discuss acheivement in greater detail in the following chapter.

What emerges from the above discussion is that shung-gyu-ba villages comprise two strata of serfs: the shung-gyu-ba

tre-ba and the dü-jung, and that the former dominated the latter. The dü-jung had no part in the decision making processes in the village. They owned no land and had to lease what they had from the tre-ba. Because of this they were highly vulnerable to threats of withdrawal of land or expulsion from the village by the tre-ba. Moreover, although they had recourse to the government's adjudicative system, the peculiarities of that system worked to discourage its use and discriminate against the dü-jung when it was used.

Taking the tre-ba then as the dominant group, we find that internally they had an overt norm of equality. All the tre-ba families had equal rights and no decision could be made for the village unless all the families agreed to it. The political positions that existed were fundamentally administrative and were influential solely as a result of the individual characteristics and economic resources of the incumbents. Because of a high degree of economic fluctuation, wealth varied considerably in each generation and in the end, control of wealth and the concomitant ability to set up economic dependency relationships via loans was the critical factor in differential control of power.

In terms of their relationships with the government, Samada and the shung-gyu-ba villages were relatively autonomous internally. Generally the government actively affected them only in terms of collection of taxes. It did have jurisdiction in terms of disputes, but the initial action had to

be made by the participants. There was no force of officials to oversee the behavior of the villagers and the tre-ba were free to decide their own affairs as they pleased. In the next chapter we shall examine the second major political sub-unit, the aristocratic and monastic estates.

Footnotes

1. Monks, however, were released from their status of serf so long as they remained monks. If they again became laymen they generally either became serfs of their monastery or reverted to the status of serf of their former lord.

2. Tibetan currency breaks down as follows: 1 sho = 10 gar (skar); 10 sho = 1 sang; 50 sang = 1 to-tse (rdo tshad) and 1 trang-ga = 1 sho and 5 gar.

3. W.G. Surkhang (1966) gives a detailed description of these land settlements.

4. See note two.

5. Chimdro had an interesting history. Originally two sections, one agricultural and one pastoral nomadic, in the third or fourth decade of this century the two sections, after a tax dispute, were reorganized into one agro-pastoral village with all the land and taxes being equally divided between the families. The qu-pön was an hereditary position in the nomadic section. In the days before the taking up of agriculture, there were eight qu-pön forming eight groups to which the other families attached themselves for at least one season. The qu-pön were the hereditary leaders leaders of these groups and it was they who threw dice to determine which qu-pön could use which pastures, and then led the others for

that year. The entire question of nomads in Central Tibet will be discussed in an expanded work.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MANORIAL ESTATE

In this chapter we shall continue the discussion of village level political behavior begun in the last chapter by examining the second major sub-unit, the manorial estate and the somewhat different behavioral configurations it contained. We will also discuss the two main types of estate serfs; the tre-ba and the 'tied' or dü-jung like tre-ba serfs.

The most common and important Tibetan shi-ga (gzhis ka) or estate was very similar to the manor of feudal Europe. It was divided into demesne land (phyag 'debs)[1] and tenement land (khral rten). Tenement land was that land alloted by the lord to his serfs. The serfs cultivated their tenements and kept the yield. The demesne land was that land of the estate that the serfs cultivated as corvée tax service for the lord who retained the complete yield. We shall define 'estate' as the hereditary land of a lord and manorial estate as an estate divided into demesne and tenement lands with attached serfs.[2]

When we talk about manorial estates in Tibet we really refer to the manorial estates of the aristocracy (sger gzhis) and of religious institutions or their sub-units (chos gzhis). The government maintained some estates (both manorial and regular) which were primarily given to officials to supplement, or in lieu of, salaries. These estates were known as tsong-shi

(rdzong gzhis) or tab-ten (thab-rten). The government, at any particular time, also had a number of confiscated estates called shung-she (gzhung bzhes)[3] or literally, 'taken estates.' Nevertheless, because the former types of estates were small in number and size and the latter were held only temporarily by the government until a time suitable for their reallocation to another lord, the estates of the government were relatively unimportant. The main government lands, that is to say, the lands from which they obtained the major portion of their income via taxes, were really not estates at all -- in the sense we use it -- but were the shung-gyu-ba villages described in the last chapter.

All estates, manorial and otherwise, were held by virtue of land title documents issued by the Central Government which were called the ten-tsig (gtan tshig). All those lords who predated the coming to power of the Dalai Lama's government at some time had to have their hereditary tenure over their estates confirmed.[4] These land title documents stated the historical circumstances under which the land was given and the taxes the holder was obligated to perform for the government. An example of this is the following manorial estate land title document of the Tshe-cho-ling (Tshe mchog gling) monastery's Pu-shi (Phu gzhis) estate in the district of Tren-go ('Phreng sgo):

Nyin mo'i snang ba la longs su spyod pa'i sgye 'gro spyi dang/ phye brag rgyal khab chen po'i las bzhi'i 'phrin las kyi byed por mngags pa bka' mda' rtsis gsung/ chos sde che chung

gi mkhan sprul/ lha zhol gyi gnyer mi dpon/ rdzong gzhis bkar yongs sogs mdor na bya zhi drag gi sne mor mngags slebs spyir btang dmigs bsal rgan bcu mi dmangs dang bcas ba mtha' dag la sbrings ba/ sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa' chen po la bzhugs pa rnams ni 'gro ba rnams gnas skabs dang/ mthar thug gi bde ba bla na med ba dang ldan bar gyur cig snyam du thugs la dgong so/ de'i phyir kho bo yang sems can thams cad gnas skabs dang mthar thug gi bde ba phun sum tshogs pa dang ldan na ci ma rung snyam du yid la bsnags kyang/ snga la gor bod sde gsar la brten skye 'gro mang po zhig mi rdags pa'i lam du gyur pa dang/ dkar min gyi las mang po bsngags pa rnams sbyang ba dang/ gnam gyi lha gong ma bdag po chen po sku tshe khri khrag khri khrag gi bar du zhabs pad brten par dmig rje thams cad mkhyen pa gong ma rim byon gyi mdzad pa dang rjes su mthun par dge 'dun gyi sde rnams par dag pa zhig gsar 'dzugs byed 'dod pa'i thog/ dpal ldan bla dam pa yongs 'dzin paṇḍi tā chen po'i gdan sa skyid grong gi ri gros gor dmag gis bcoms par brten dge 'dun byings 'di phyogs su 'byor ba tshang ma 'dul khrims gtsang zhing mchod yul bla na med pa bcas 'di nas bzhugs yul gyi gtsugs lad khang gsar bsgrun dang/ mtshas gzhis rten khungs su ge ra ba'i 'dzin khongs sa rigs la nye ba ltos bcas ma 'cham pas 'os min gyi zhu gtug byung ba/ phreng sgo phu shar 'don bzhi dang tshas lung gzhis grong rta rkang gcig/ lha sa dkar rma shag chen gyi khang zhing sa ris bdag thob 'dzin khongs su yod kyi ri klung gi rtsa chu shing gsum/ g.yog bod 'brog dud che chung gi bogs bshas mi gra lag 'bab sogs 'dzin rnying nas bdag pa gang na ci yod tshang ma gzhung len gyis thog nas gong gsal dge 'dun rnams kyis 'tsho thebs su ji srid rgyal bstan nams gnas kyi bar sbyor 'jags bgyis pa 'di thad/ khral rig sgrubs chag skor kyang dpal ldan bla ma dam pa yong 'dzin paṇḍi tā rin po che 'di nyid spyir mdo sngags kyi chos tshul mtha' dag la gzigs pa yang pa sogs mkhas btsun bzang gsum 'dzoms pa dang/ ngos la'ang 'jam mgon bla ma'i ring lugs dri ma med pa'i dbang lung gtams ngag ji snyid zhig bum ba gang 'jo'i tshul du rtsal ba'i bka' drin gsum ldan zhig yin shes/ lha sde mi sde su thad nas kyang 'di la mig 'gran yong don ma mchis pad gong gsal 'don 'bab le tshan la/ rdza 'dam/ gad pa/ gar pa/ gar dgos 'ul mi/ tshal rdza rnga/ rdo khral rags rgyag/ ar po che chung/ sol ba lci spen gyi khral/ sogs ma shing tsher gcod 'dren/ gzhis 'bru yong 'bru mchod 'bru sran ma sogs 'bru rigs skyel 'brel tshams g.yog/ shog g.yog/ rdzong gzhis kyi g.yog bya/ bde sgo nga/ shing 'bras spus 'don khral 'gel/ tshogs smon 'o khral/ gru sam lam bzo/ 'ob yur sang/ dar rgod 'dzin pa bye shug 'ul mi/ sa rdzi brngod 'phar/ chang bcol/ ba mar/ spyin/ ljang thang rgya bogs dgos cha/ rta zam mi zam gyi sgrubs cha/ shing rigs tshag 'dzugs gcod 'dren thel 'beb/ rga 'don yur len/ rga bre chu bcog/ 'bam tshong spus bsgyur/ kha tshang chu 'khor gyi khral/ gro kha bsdu ba/ bzo rigs lag shes kyi khral/ chu res/ rjo rags/ 'tsher 'bebs/ 'tsho khral/ chu rin/ sa rtsi/ ga khral/ nor lug khyu 'dzin

sogs 'dzin snying dus nas kyang 'khrid rgyun mi 'dug pa ltar dang/ smon brngon/ shing khral/ rgya bsos/ rtsag rtsig snga phyi'i 'bru don lam thog 'khrid sgrub/ ngo 'don la dmag dang drung sphyi'i zhabs dngul/ spyi rims bka' 'gyur bsdu 'brel/ don gyi ga khral bcas gyi 'bab tshang ma zhib rtsis kyi gong ma bdag po chen po'i zhabs brten dang/ bstan srid bde thabs/ ngos gyi ring 'tsho sgrubs thebs bcas su ji srid rgyal bstan nas gnas kyi bar 'khri med gstang chod du sbyor 'jags byas pa yin pas da lam res dang/ drag mang leb 'dur yod khral lag g.yor/ gal che dmigs bsal/ chu chen yur ma gshom sogs las nyad pa'i ma 'ong 'byung 'gyur gyi khral rigs la gtogs so cog 'gel gtser byas mi chog pas bde bar tham ga 'dzin 'jug pa dang/ las khungs so so'i deb gzhung khag la'ang 'di thog nas chag chod kyi mchan bkod dgos rigs 'tshems med yong ba gyis/ zhes go bar bya ba'i yi ge sa bya zla 10 tshes 7 dge par pho brang chen po po ta la nas bris/

zhes gong gsal gtan tshig sher bam zhal zhus la he bags med pa'i tshe-gling bla brang gi las dam/

In general to everybody, and in particular those who work for the government as the Council Ministers, the Generals and the Finance Ministers, and to the abbots and incarnate lamas of big and small monasteries, and the Lhasa mayor and the officials in charge of the Zhol area, and to the districts, the estates, the grain collectors,and in short, the lower civil and military officials, in particular the headmen and bcu dpon, and the people in general: As for the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, they are praying for the permanent and temporary happiness of all creatures. Because of that I also am thinking about the coming of happiness to all beings. However, last year, because of the war with the Gorkhas and Tibet many people died. In order to cleanse the bad karma from that war and to bring long life to the Emperor of China and to benefit religious and secular affairs, and for my long life, and in accordance with the deeds of the successive Dalai Lamas, I want to establish a good monastery. Because the hermitage in Skyid grong of the tutor of myself the Dalai Lama was destroyed during the war, most of the monks came here Lhasa . Because the monks lived according to the vinaya and are monks worthy of revering, we shall erect a new monastery for them to live in. Since the relatives of Ge ra ba are fighting over the lands of Ge ra ba and have appealed to the government to adjudicate, the government has confiscated the estate of Phu-shar in 'Phreng sgo which had four 'don, and the Chos lung estate and serfs which had one horse rkang, and in Lhasa the house, fields and hills called Dkar rma shar chen and whatever grass, water and trees he owned in the hills and valleys, and also such things as the yields and the lease-obligatedworkers from agricultural and nomadic servant families, and in all, whatever the old owner owned wherever it is. All that is given

to the monks mentioned above for their livlihood for as long as the Buddhist faith remains. Concerning what taxes have to be paid and what concessions are made: The great tutor is well educated in such things as sutras and mantras and in short is very intelligent dilligent and pure, and besides that, since I received all the teachings of Tsong kha pa from him and because I am so indebted to him, whoever looks at this, gods or men, cannot expect the same treatment concerning the tax concessions . All of the following taxes were exempted from the days of the old owner: hay, sweepers, dancers, sending men wherever there was government need, sending men to cut grass in Tshal, sending men and stones for making dikes, sending men for large and small constructions, charcoal, yak dung and spen wood cutting and transporting hay, wood and thorns, transporting such grains as lentils for the estates, government collectors and the religious institutions, sending for dyeing, sending men for making paper, sending men to work on the district's estates, chickens and eggs, fruit, milk for the holidays of Molam and Tshogs mchod, making roads, bridges and boats, clearing irrigation canals, sending men to help erect prayer flags, sending men to help clean the large dike in Lhasa, a type of clay, grinding tsampa, making beer, cow's butter, gum, the salary and needs of the Chinese official in Ljang, needs of coolies and horse carriers, planting cutting transporting and doing making of seals for all kinds of trees, sending men to open irrigation canals for water, sending people to adjust the flow of water irrigation canals, from having to buy goods at monopolistic prices, sending men for frying and grinding grain, food rations for gobernment messengers, providing services of craftsmen, sending men for waterworks, sending men to work on Jo Rinpoche's dike, giving living quarters to travellers, exemption for tsho taxes money for irrigation, money for animals, and taking care of government herds. However, the Molam tsampa tax, the wood tax, the tax to support the Chinese, and corvée transportation taxes as well as the old and new miscellanious taxes have to be done. Also, calculating carefully the amount that would have been paid from the payment of fees in lieu of providing lay officials and military tax and reading the Kanjur should be carefully calculated and use that money to subsidize prayers for the long life of the Emperor, the religion, government, and my long life. As long as the Buddhist faith remains you are exempted as stated above and all clearly belongs to you. Furthermore, on special important occasions or floods, whatever tax it is, in the future cannot be levied and every office should make note of this. Written from the Potala in the earth-bird year (1788) on the seventh day of the tenth month.

This is the errorless copy of the land title document made by Tshe mchog gling Bla brang.

Although religious and aristocratic manorial estates

varied tremendously in size and organization, several generalizations can still be made. Firstly, the lords of manorial estates were not mere landlords but were also a type of ruler. They not only collected taxes and corvée services from the serfs attached to their estates but also maintained the peace by adjudicating disputes and crimes, having the authority to fine, whip and imprison their own serfs on the estate. Secondly, the administrative organization through which the lord ruled his manorial estates was patrimonial in nature. The lord selected his officials from among his household staff of serfs functioning as servants. These were usually taken from large tre-ba serf families, but there were always a series of steps through which these persons passed in the household staff before they gained the approval of the lord and were appointed by him to these more important and lucrative administrative posts.

One of the largest estate holders was the aristocratic family called Tön-ba (Thon pa). That family held about 150 dön ('don) of land which was divided into nine large estates.* The unit called dön was identical in function to the gang (rkang) but differed in that it was used only for aristocratic and religious estates, although not necessarily for all of them. The gang seems to have been historically the earlier of the

* Since we are not interested in the other types of land holdings which did not have attached serfs, we shall hereafter simply use the word estate to refer to manorial estate.

two and one dön was defined as being equal to two gang. The rationale for the creation of the dön unit seems to have been that by halving the older gang figure for an estate, the taxes, particularly the military and animal transportation taxes, would also be halfed. For example, an estate having 150 gang would then have had only 75 dön. Because the amount of land remained the same, this change permitted the tax burden on the lord's serfs to be lessened without having to convert demesne land to tenement land. On the other hand, it also potentially permitted the lord to reconvert tenement land back into demesne land. However one views it though, it was certainly initiated to improve the situation of the lords.

In relation to other aristocratic houses, Tön-ba had an elaborate system for selecting servants and administrative officials. Differentiated in status from their other serfs were seventy two families called gyen-kang (rgen khang) from whom Tön-ba took his household staff. The origin of that term has interesting implications in that if refers to a mounted bowman. While it is more likely that these mounted bowmen were serfs rather then knights or samurai-like vassals, it does indicate clearly that in pre-Gelugpa Tibet, large aristocratic families maintained military specialist families. These 72 families of Tön-ba were exempt from paying taxes to the lord, but had to pay taxes to the government. They also had a larger land measure -- a gang which was like a dön (rkang 'don dang 'dra ba) -- that is to say, if one gang for serfs held thirty

seed kay (khal) then these families' gang held sixty kay.

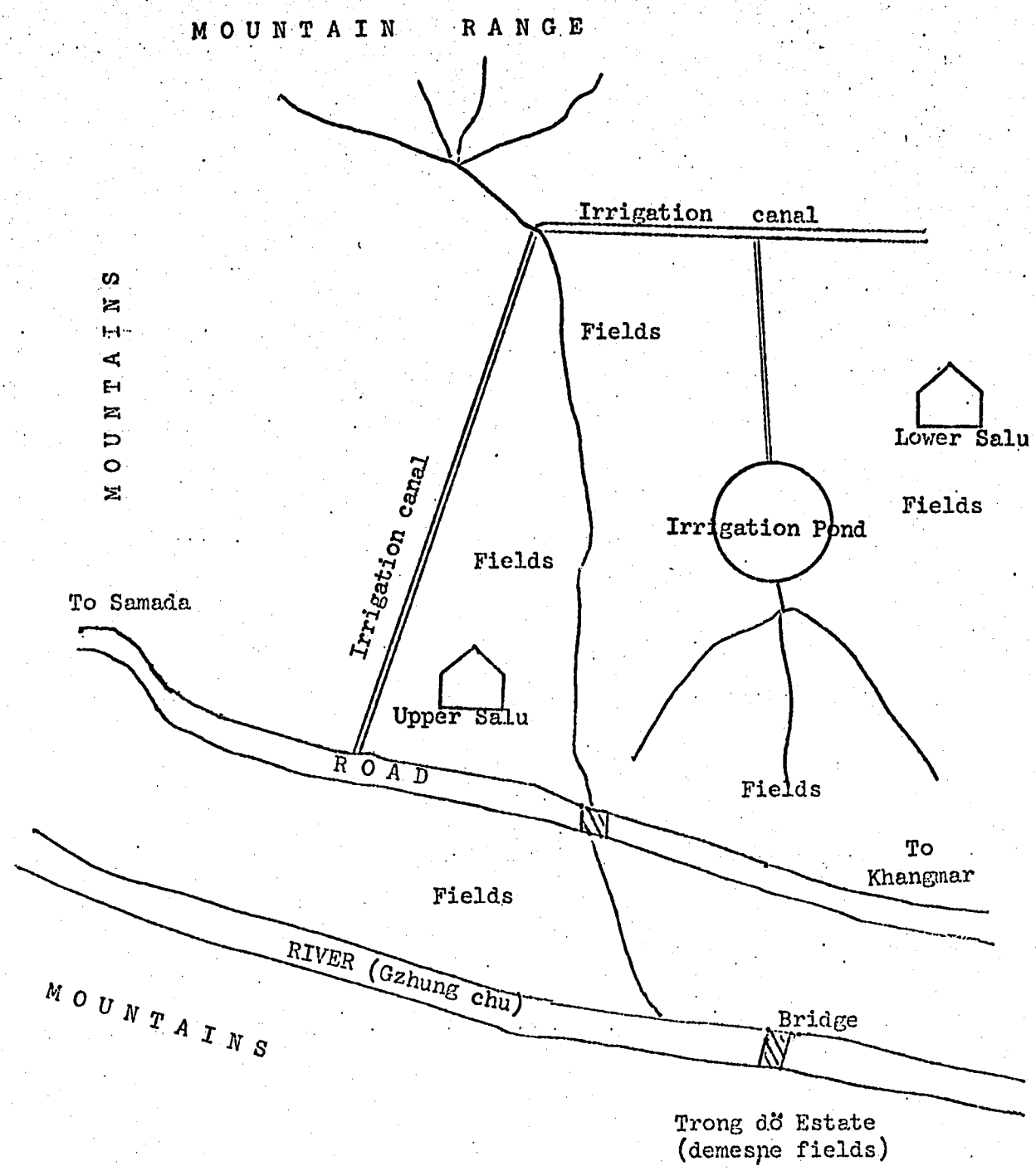
The number of positions needed to administer a lord's estates obviously varied according to the number and size of them. Nevertheless, one position, the shi-dö (gzhis sdod) or estate steward, was always necessary. Moreover, if a lord had several estates he usually also had a type of chief steward who was referred to as chan-tsö (phyag mdzod), though the name varied with different families. Tön-ba for example, had two such chan-tsö, one for internal estate affairs and one for external dealings such as trade or accompanying the lord to provincial government posts. In general, the position of chan-tsö primarily functioned as a coordinating link between the estates and serfs and the lord. The chan-tsö was often asked to adjudicate disputes between the serfs of his lord, and was generally responsible for directing the flow of goods from the estates to the main residence of the lord. As we shall see in the following case, these higher positions were often in reality hereditary, but there is no question that the families had to formally petition the lord to reinstate them each generation and that the lord had the right to refuse.

The best way to illustrate the estate and its serfs is by citing another actual case history. The case discussed below occurred in the tsho of Samada on the estate called Trong-dö shi-ga (Grong stod gzhis ka) which belonged to the very large aristocratic family called Phala. The serfs attached to that estate were divided into two villages called upper Salu

(Sa lu stod) and lower Salu (Sa lu smad). These two villages illustrate the two main types of estate serfs and tenement holdings. Upper Salu contained fourteen named corporate family units which were roughly comparable to the shung-gyu-ba tre-ba of Samada. In fact, they referred to themselves and were referred to by others as tre-ba (khral pa). The tenements they held were hereditary so long as their tax obligation to the lord was fulfilled, and like the shung-gyu-ba, they were tied to their land. Unlike the shung-gyu-ba, however, the lord had the right to reallocate individual family members as servants to serve him on other estates and in a variety of capacities although he could not take the head of the family or his spouse. In terms of these tre-ba serfs, the lord only occasionally took children from the better families to serve him as servants (and potentially as administrators) in Lhasa. However, in terms of the serfs of lower Salu the application of this right of reallocation was much more common. Lower Salu consisted of eight families who in many ways resembled the dü-jung (dud chung) described in the last chapter. Like the dü-jung they had no hereditary tenements, and the tenements they did have were very small when compared to the tre-ba. However, unlike the Samada dü-jung they were tied to the estate unless the lord decided to reallocate them. For these types of serfs the lord had the right to refuse them permission to marry out of the estate with serfs of different lords, and even to enter the monastic order. Aside from land tenure the

main difference between these two types of serfs concerned the types of taxes and services they were required to provide their lord. The tre-ba serfs, in addition to taxes in kind ans some work on the lord's demesne lands, also had to perform the corvée animal transportation tax (rta'u khal ma) for nine of the twenty four nang-gang of the Samada tsho. We listed the main users of that service in the last chapter, and here shall only note that having to provide 37 per cent of the animals and so forth was a significant burden. The dü-jung-like serfs of lower Salu, on the other hand, were primarily concerned with working the lord's demesne lands and the other tasks peripheral to that. They did, however, have to pay a few nominal taxes in kind. The tenements of the tre-ba ranged approximately from fifteen acres to one hundred and those of the dü-jung-like serfs from one or two acres to about fifteen.

In terms of the organization of the estate, there was one family who held the position of estate steward in a more or less hereditary fashion. That family lived on the estate and were known, even as refugees in India, as Grong stod gzhis ka, that is to say, by the name of the estate. The Estate steward's son was taken by the lord as a servant when he was a boy. Had the uprising in 1959 not ended the political system we are discussing in this work, that boy would have most probably served the lord in various administrative positions and eventually, when his father was ready to retire, would have petitioned the lord to allow him to succeed his father as estate



MAP 3. Upper and Lower Salu

steward. The estate steward received about twelve kay of grain in salary along with some tax free land and as much leased land as he wanted at low rates from the lord. He could settle minor disputes and disturbances and could issue fines, inflict minor whippings and even imprison for a short time if the case was clearcut. In major cases (for example the one cited below) the lord or his higher status officials like the chan-tsö (chief steward), lang (glang) or tsho-pön (tsho dpon) were consulted, probably in reverse order. If these did not or could not settle the case satisfactorily, the last resort was to bring the case before the lord in Lhasa (although in Phala's case one of the family annually visited the estates). As highest authority of the estate the lord could inflict severe whippings, imprison his serfs for long periods, put them in irons and fine them. As we shall see in the following case, although the lord was generally the final adjudicator, there was another channel for adjudication which, while rarely used, represented nevertheless an option for the serfs. This option consisted of taking the dispute and/or the lord's decision to the Central Government for adjudication either in the person of the District Commissioner, the Governor, or more usually, the Council of Ministers in Lhasa.

In addition to the estate steward, both upper and lower Salu had headmen who were called tsho-mi (tsho mi). These were appointed by the estate steward usually from the larger families. They were the focal point for incoming commands and

information and were responsible for seeing to their dissemination to the other serfs. They had no authority to decide disputes and so forth, but were often called to give opinions or to mediate cases, especially those involving marital and personal disputes. The upper Salu tsho-mi was also responsible for organizing the da-wu ke-ma transportation taxes that upper Salu had to do together with Samada.

The following history concerns the life of a serf we shall call Wangdü and begins in the village of lower Salu. Wangdü was born in lower Salu. His father was from the 'eight' dü-jung like tre-ba families of lower Salu and his mother was from the 'fourteen' tre-ba families of upper Salu. He had two younger brothers one of whom died as a child. During his youth, his father held only four phu-lu of land (six phu-lu equalled one nang-gang) or, since each two phu-lu equalled fifteen seed (sön) kay, a total of thirty seed kay of land. He estimated that this was about three or four acres. Because before the age of thirteen (and after the age of sixty) a lord could not demand services and taxes from his serfs, for Wangdü, as for all village children, childhood was a time of carefree play. But when he turned thirteen, his lord (Phala) sent him to serve as a tre-ro (khral rogs) or 'helper to a tre-ba' to one of his large sheep herds in upper Nyeru (Nye ro stod). This was a common pattern among the dü-jung like serfs of aristocrats and monasteries in Central Tibet. When sent as a tre-ro, the serf was really a servant of the person to whom

he was sent. While Wangdü stayed in Nyeru he worked as a shepard and as a caravaneer. He was paid no regular salary but received food and clothes from the head of the herd. On Phala's estates such young dü-jung like serfs were often taken and sent to his nomad herds, but it should be noted that all young boys were not taken, nor was the position necessarily permanent. As in Wangdü's case, the lord could be petitioned to give a tenement to the serf, and if such a tenement was obtained it was considered permanent (but not hereditary) as long as the serf fulfilled his tax obligations. Nonetheless, it is clear that the lord possessed more rights over these type serfs than the regular tre-ba serfs who held their tenements hereditarily. All youth ran the risk of being sent for such service and for some it ended in a life of extreme servitude.

Wangdü stayed in Nyeru for about ten years. The events leading to his eventual return to Salu were actually begun by his father. On one occasion, one of the families from the 'eight' gave up their six phu-lu of land in Salu to head one of the herds that Phala had in the area. Wangdü's father took that opportunity to discuss with the headman the possibility of getting permission for Wangdü to return to Salu and work a part of the now vacant land. After gaining his support, the father spoke with the estate steward (gzhis sdod) about the matter and finally obtained his permission to bring his son home. When Wangdü returned he was given two phu-lu of land

(fifteen seed kay). He and his wife (he had married a mi-bo possessing dü-jung of another lord in Nyeru) lived together with his father and his father's second wife. Soon after, because of friction between the two couples, they internally decided to separate and Wangdü established his own neolocal household, retaining the two phu-lu of land which were already in his name.

After separating from his father, Wangdü had some extra time since his two phu-lu of land did not consume all his time either from the point of view of actual labor or from that of his corvée tax obligations. He hired himself out to other families who were short of labor and since labor was a perennial problem for the larger tre-ba families, he had no difficulty procuring work. He generally took plots of land on lease in lieu of salary. Leased fields (called le-shing (las zhing)) were given by their owners on the basis of one day's work for each dong of seed kay the field took. In other words, if he took a field of ten dong seed ke he was obligated to work for the owner ten days. While he worked he received his meals but the seed and equipment for the land he leased he had to supply himself. The yield from the leased land was of course entirely his. In addition to this land, there was some fallow land near his regular fields and he opened them for cultivation. From these various sources he ended up with about twenty two seed kay of land, fifteen from the two phu-lu and seven extra on which he did not have to provide taxes to

his lord. However, since he had no animals for plowing and no farming implements he had to borrow them from the tre-ba in the 'fourteen' paying one day's labor for one day's use of a team of animals.

He worked very dilligently, particularly concerning collecting manure and even used dog feces, a method rarely resorted to. During the years after his separation with his father he got very good crops and after a few years of hard work said that he had managed to save enough grain so that he even loan some out. He considered trading too risky a venture and thought only of increasing his wealth primarily via his fields and secondarily via loans. Loans of grain in Tibet generally had rather high interest rates. The standard rates were:

lnga drug skyes:	five kay	becomes	six kay	(20%)
bzhi lnga "	four kay	"	five kay	(25%)
bdun brgyad "	seven kay	"	eight kay	(14%)
bcu sur "	ten kay	"	eleven kay	(10%)

In other words, if the loan was made at the interest rate of five-six, for every five kay loaned six had to be repaid at the end of a year. Often, however, the borrower was unable to repay the full amount due and in such cases it was common for him to pay only the interest, e.g., the one kay, leaving the capital as a permanent loan. As is obvious, after a few years a lender could regain his original loan yet indefinately receive the interest payment.

In terms of subsistence, let us roughly estimate Wangdü's income and expenses. Firstly, the local measure of seed kay was the lang-dong kay which was equivalent to four dong or eight lu-gu. The standard salary for one day, as cited above, was one dong. This amount, if it was paid in tsamba grain flour would suffice for one person for two days. Based on this and an average yield ratio for all his fields (22 seed kay) of six times the seed (which on an average would be quite good) we arrive at a yearly agricultural income of 132 kay. Subtracting the 22 kay of seed, that leaves 112 kay or 448 dong profit. Figuring roughly 365 dong as the yearly minimum food consumption for him and his wife, he still had a profit of 83 dong or a little over twenty kay for other expenses such as clothes house repairs, prayer sponsorship and the few small taxes they had to pay. Wangdü worked hard and by maximizing fertilizer use and being fortunate concerning rain, obtained a surplus in the span of a few years. If however, he was somewhat less capable and lucky and obtained an average yield of only four times the seed he would have obtained a gross of only 330 dong, a figure which would have necessitated supplementation through hiring himself out as a day laborer simply to meet his minimal food requirements. Often such deficit yields forced the individual into a perpetual debtor syndrome wherein he borrowed during the year and paid back at harvest but then was again left with an insufficient food supply for the year. The relative difference

in potential economic wealth is seen clearly when we recall that Nopa, the Samada shung-gyu-ba tre-ba discussed in Chapter Three, held about seven hundred seed kay of land, and his was a medium sized (in terms of land) family.

Continuing the case history of Wangdü, we find that the next thing he did was to lease (bo-ma) more land from an old couple who had a number of children and four phu-lu of land, but who were unable to handle the corvée taxes that went because the children were too young to work. The couple asked him to take two phu-lu of land bo-ma (lease) for three years, at which time the children would be old enough to help. The arrangement they made was that Wangdü would do all the work and the taxes and that from 12 of the 15 seed kay (each two phu-lu was standardized at 15 seed kay) Wangdü would keep all the profits, and from three the old couple would keep all the profits. All the seed would be supplied by Wangdü.

In addition to corvée labor on the lord's demesne land Wangdü paid approximately the following taxes for his two phu-lu of land: the bottom of a sheep and about three sang for small taxes like the rgya shing brngos gsum. For the military tax, the following arrangement: for the one soldier's salary the amount was divided into two halves. One half the eight paid 1/3 and the fourteen 2/3 and on the other half the eight paid 1/4 and the fourteen 3/4. To Ser-chog (Gser lcog) for each six phu-lu the eight collectively had to pay one butter kay and ten nya-ga (nyag). These taxes in kind or lang-dön

(lag 'don), however, were inconsequential compared with the corvee tax called shi-yo u-la (gzhis g.yog 'u lag). That tax was the basic nang-tre (nang khral) or inner tax to one's lord. It consisted mainly of labor on the demesne fields of the manor, although it also included other types of services the lord could command such as construction work, shearing sheep, or transportation of goods. This, in fact, was the raison d'etre for the eight's existence, and it is estimated that for one nang-gang of land (six phu-lu) there was some sort of corvée work every day, that is to say, a person was required almost every day.

Continuing Wangdü's case, we shall now examine his economic and social upward mobility as seen by his movement from the 'eight' to the 'fourteen.' This mobility revolved around one of the tre-ba of the 'fourteen' named Dorji. In Dorji's father's generation his family had been one of the wealthiest among the 'fourteen,' but during his own lifetime the family's wealth had become depleted. He had a wife and number of daughters but when his wife left him, the daughters went with her.[5] He married again, but soon after he and his new wife separated leaving him alone again. In the meantime he had lost almost all his animals, and to get seed for his fields and people and animals for his sa-tsig transportation tax he had to continually give out his land on lease (bo-ma) and pawn (te-ma). Te-ma (gte ma) loans were a type of pawnage. The pawner left plots of his land as security (te-ma) for a loan and until the

loan was repaid, the holder of the pawned land could plant it.[6]

When Wangdü first met Dorji, the latter had only one horse and one bull left. Wangdü took two fields lease (bo-ma) from Dorji. In payment for these he had to perform most of Dorji's share of the sa-tsig tax. In addition to this, Dorji often came and informally borrowed such things as grain and butter for which there was no payment or overt accounting. Wangdü freely gave it, obviously with the notion that he could eventually force Dorji to give him another lease field due to his economic dependence (he in fact clearly implied that in later conversations). Wangdü said that the next step in the story was that Dorji approached him concerning his (Wangdü's) merging with him and setting up a joint household in upper Salu (the 'fourteen'). Whether Dorji actually initiated the move or whether Wangdü guided him into it does not affect the significance of what follows for illustrating important types of resource manipulations and strategy in relation to land and indirectly to power. After discussing the arrangements for a few months, Wangdü and his wife moved in with Dorji, the three living polyandrously.

When the other tre-ba of upper Salu found out, except for two families which were related to Wangdü, all the others were dead set against allowing Wangdü to move up into their stratum. They first tried to convince Dorji that he would lose in the end since Wangdü was not trustworthy and would kick him out. When this failed, they claimed that Wangdü had

no right to move from the 'eight' to the 'fourteen.' They argued that if Dorji was unable to fulfill his tax responsibilities the other tre-ba collectively have the first option to assume the land and the tax obligation (and in actuality, their argument was in accord with the usual custom). Eventually, since planting time was only a few months away and both sides insisted that they had the right to plant the fields, they decided to take the dispute for settlement to one of the higher officials of their lord --the lang-- in Gyantse. The plan was for three representatives from the 'fourteen' and both Wangdü and Dorji to go to Gyantse and present their cases respectively. However, on the night before they were all supposed to leave, Wangdü took Dorji and secretly left for Lhasa to put their case directly before their lord. Wangdü felt that if they took the dispute to the lang they would definately lose since the 'fourteen' were all big families and knew the lang personally. Furthermore, even though they could appeal the lang's decision to their lord, they would certainly lose use of the fields for that year.

It took them eight days to reach Lhasa by foot. When they arrived there they immediately went to their lord's house. In the meantime, however, the representatives of the 'fourteen' reached Gyantse and when they did not find Wangdü they eventually figured that they must have gone to Lhasa. They then sent off an urgent letter to the lord in Lhasa by

horseback explaining their version of the circumstances surrounding the incident. This letter arrived the very morning that Wangdü and Dorji arrived. Thus, when those two later went to see the lord, he already knew of the incident and had already received the tre-ba's petition.

Wangdü had a relative who was one of the minor house stewards of the lord and he first explained the events to him asking him to arrange an audience with the lord. His relative did that and the lord saw them the same morning. The lord knew Dorji and asked him what had happened. Since Dorji was not very bright, Wangdü had carefully coached him on what to say but the lord, after listening, still scolded Dorji carefully recounting all the aid he (the lord) had given Dorji in the past. The lord said that no matter how much he tried to shore up Dorji, he just got deeper and deeper in debt and that Dorji was unfit to be a tre-ba. The lord further stated that because of this, the land in question should go to the 'fourteen' until he made his yearly round of the estates that coming winter, in other words, the 'fourteen' could use Dorji's land for the coming agricultural season.

Although the lord had already made a decision, Wangdü asked to be heard. He carefully recounted all the events that led up to the merger and then said that he had always considered the 'fourteen' to be the same as the 'eight' since they were both under the same lord, and how in the past there had been instances where individuals had moved from the 'eight'

to the 'fourteen.' He stressed the fact that he had spent a great deal of money for animals, seed and so forth before the merger and how even after the merger he had continued to use his own capital for Dorji. He also said that he was not behind in the sa-tsig corvée transportation tax (i.e., Dorji's) nor in any other ones, and that the other tre-ba wanted the land not because they considered Wangdü to be incapable but rather because they were jealous at his success and ability. He concluded his plea by saying that as a result of making so great an investment in Dorji, if he wasn't able to keep the land he would probably go bankrupt. If the lord would let him keep the land he swore that he would never be deficient in taxes. Phala, after hearing this eloquent speech, told them that he would think the matter over.

On the third day after their initial meeting with their lord, the lord called them in and told them that he couldn't make a final decision on the matter until his winter round, but that in the meantime Wangdü could stay in the 'fourteen' and use Dorji's land that agricultural season. He gave them a written document to that effect. It is important to note that in this case it was unquestionably Wangdü's logical and verbally skillful presentation of his case that impressed the lord and motivated him to reconsider his initial decision.

Taking the lord's written decision, Wangdü and Dorji walked back to Salu. The day after they arrived they went to inform the tsho-mi (headman) of their trip and the lord's

decision. The headman then called a meeting of the heads of all the tre-ba families at which time he made known the contents of the lord's decision. There was a general uproar when the detail were known because the tre-ba had assumed that they would win. Although the tsho-mi told the other tre-ba that there was nothing they could do, some of the tre-ba said that they were also going to go to Lhasa, and others even suggested doing tra-lo (khra log) i.e., refusing to accept the lord's decision and taking it to a higher authority, in this case the government in the person of either the District Commissioner or more likely, the Council of Ministers in Lhasa. None of these threats materialized, but the tre-ba families did attempt to force Wangdü out by, on the one hand, threatening to work the disputed fields in lieu of the money Wangdü owed them for doing the sa-tsig taxes while he was away in Lhasa, and on the other, by more or less ostracizing him from all social interactional patterns of the village (although his relatives did not do that).

However, these did not deter Wangdü, and that year he got a bumper crop. He said he had so much grain he didn't know where to keep it all. The other tre-ba were still harping on the sa-tsig debt he owed them and at one of the periodic accounting meetings they arrived at a very large figure which they claimed he owed, and demanded he repay it at once. But Wangdü, after examining their figures, found them to be inaccurate since his credits, that is, the amounts of money the

users of the tax paid for each animal were not listed.[7] This marked the end of their attempts to directly harass him into returning to the 'eight.' But it did not mark the end of their hopes. The other families then tried another tack. They began to work on Dorji trying to instigate him to kick out Wangdü. Although Dorji didn't listen to them when he first came back from Lhasa, now their strategy worked and within a month Dorji openly stated that he would keep the wife but that he didn't want Wangdü any more and Wangdü should return to the 'eight.'

As a result of this, relations became very strained and Wangdü secretly went to Gyantse to see the lord before he arrived in Salu for his winter round. He told the lord that Dorji now wanted him to return to the 'eight,' but since he (Wangdü) had used his own seed that spring and had even repaid some of Dorji's debts, he requested that the lord give him permission to use the land for a set number of years, the actual amount of years to be fixed by the lord himself. The lord did not commit himself and simply told Wangdü to wait until he came to Salu. When he did arrive for his winter round, Wangdü and Dorji went together to see the lord and repeated the events which had transpired since they returned from Lhasa. The lord then scolded Dorji vehemently and told Wangdü that he didn't have to return to the 'eight.' He was to stay in the 'fourteen' and assume all of Dorji's land, his house, but also all of his tax responsibilities and debts. The lord then

informed the estate steward of the decision and he in turn informed the other tre-ba. As for Dorji, Wangdü had to give him enough household utensils to start a new household and let him use one of his vacant houses in lower Salu where the lord had ordered Dorji to go. Later the lord gave Dorji, more as a token of his non mi-bo serf status than as anything else, one-half phu-lu of land in the 'eight.'

In the end then, although Wangdü was subjected to various types of psychological sanctions he was able to move upward into the tre-ba stratum. Although this type of mobility did not occur frequently, it does reinforce a number of the salient features of village power relationships mentioned in Chapter Three by clearly illustrating the interrelatedness of economic power and other variable like aggressiveness, verbalness and intelligence.

One would have normally expected that the combination of the tre-ba acting collectively, controlling the major economic resources and actual wealth, and having ready access to the lord's officials on a particularistic level to have easily swung the pendulum in their favor. But other factors mediated to neutralize these advantages. While the tre-ba collectively dominated both the sources and the actual economic wealth in Salu, they were unable to use that control as a source of coercion because Wangdü was economically independent. Not only was he not in debt, but he was in fact a creditor and was on the dominant end of a number of dyadic dependency relationships.

This economic stability and independence exhibited by Wangdü must be viewed as the foundation of his challenge to the combined might of the village economic and political elite. However, economic independence by itself obviously was a necessary but not a sufficient cause. Factors relating to the individual and his goals, motivations and perceptions of the courses open to him must be evaluated before patterns of mobility and power can be understood.

Wangdü characterizes what I shall call the "achievement syndrome." The various behavioral patterns comprising that syndrome all focus around a goal orientation of the actor. The most general avenue for betterment was through economic enterprise. There was a shortage of labor power in Tibet and a concomittant surplus of fallow land. Whatever social stratum an individual was born into, economic wealth was a viable goal, although the aristocrats had a much greater potential in terms of magnitude than someone from the lower strata. Land could always be leased, new land could be sown and trading was open to all persons. In fact, several 'achievers' I interviewed overtly stated that there was no reason for anyone to remain poor in Tibet unless they were either very lazy or completely imcompetent. This open access to wealth cannot be over-emphasized. The poor dü-jung or tre-ba existed in a cultural milieu in which there was a conscious and relatively realistic model for economic betterment, and in which it was even possible to aspire to positions of respect and influence through control

of wealth (although persons born into the 'unclean' stratum could aspire to wealth and power, but not to respect). Although in some ways this may seem paradoxical since I have already indicated that the tre-ba hereditarily controlled all the land and were economically dominant, in terms of individuals, economic mobility was open within certain ascribed parameters.

Aggressiveness was another of the important characteristics of the achievement syndrome, especially in view of the widespread pattern of opting to live with a dissonance producing situation rather than go to the expense and inconvenience of attempting to alter it via adjudication. Wangdü clearly illustrates this aggressiveness in his interactions with the other tre-ba. Another crucial factor was the strength of motivation toward success or betterment. Again Wangdü illustrates this. He worked extremely hard after his return to lower Salu meticulously collecting all sorts of manure, leasing agricultural fields and carefully accumulating a surplus which he then reinvested. Even in the resettlement camp in Mysore he and hsi family were strongly motivated toward economic betterment and were one of the hardest working and most successful familial units.

The last major feature of the achievement syndrome was what I shall call capableness or intelligence. It is obvious that unless aggressiveness and high motivation were accompanied by the capacity to perform the tasks properly and make the right

decisions, they were of little utility. Capableness, moreover, was closely connected with what I have at various times referred to as verbalness. Verbalness is difficult to define in English, although it was a conscious evaluative criterion in Tibet. The quality of verbalness implied something over and above mere communication of information. It involved the use of expressive vocabulary within clauses and a sophisticated linking of clauses to express ideas and convey information in subtle, often artistic constructions usually garnished by highly appropriate folk sayings, proverbs and anecdotes. Those who had this ability were highly respected and the usual term for them was kha bde po or more honorifically, kha bzo 'pher bo Both Wangdü and the Samada headman Nopa had this ability, and in general I have found it to be one of the most constant features of leadership or mediative roles both in Tibet and among the Tibetan refugees in India.

Although the lord of Salu was an aristocrat, it can be considered typical of both religious and aristocratic estates. Nevertheless, in order to illustrate some obvious differences of religious estates such as the fact that the administrators were monks rather than household staff, the monastic estate of Dri-gü Monastery (Bras khud) located in the Samada tsho area will be briefly outlined. That monastery had two villages of serfs attached to its estate (Lheting and Pikya). The former had thirty families and the latter twenty. Each of these families was allotted six seed kay of land per adult and a house per family by the monastery. In return, the monastery's dü-jung

like serfs had to do only the inner tax of corvée labor on the demesne land of the monastery. The monastery calculated the gang (rkang) in terms of people, three people making up one gang (although very poor families often petitioned to have two sons count as one). In general, for each gang one person was required for corvée labor every day. Moreover, because the monastery was obligated to do one twenty fourth of the Samada area's sa-tsig transportation tax they set aside two families who held more land but who had to do the sa-tsig tax. These two families were more like tre-ba but nevertheless differed since they reverted back to the lower status if they did not fulfill their tax obligation adequately.

The equivalent of headman in these villages was called gya-u. The four monastic administrators chose one for each of the two villages. These drew a salary of thirty cag-kay (lcags khal) a year and had the same functions as the tsho-mi headman in Salu. Above them were four monks appointed by the monastery to oversee the estates. These monks served for a four year term and were equivalent to the estate steward in Salu. The hierarchy of authority in disputes was from the headman to the four monks to the monk's general assembly.

Even though Salu was under the jurisdiction of an aristocratic lord, Lheting and Pikya under a monastic lord and Samada under the district, they were all a part of the same cultural micro-area. They spoke the same sub-dialect, performed ceremonies such as marriage indentically, and in general, pos-

sessed the same cultural inventory. There was a modicum of social relations between families, particularly the tre-ba, of the village units, and even some inter-marriage, although among the tre-ba this was not too great due to the complications involved in marrying persons from another lord. In general, the circle within which social interaction such as visiting friends and relatives, and taking and giving spouses occurred, extended for perhaps twenty square miles. But even in this rather extended field, interaction was on an individual or family level and there were few, if any, multi-village ceremonies or functions. In fact, one of the most characteristic features of Tibetan village life was that there was little cooperation within a village and almost none between villages. Salu performed the transportation tax along with Samada but this was a result of a government arrangement and was solely concerned with taxes. There was hardly any community spirit. Although tre-ba were administratively lumped together, there was little or no positive sentiment concerning such things as improving the village. The families comprising a village were very individualistic and were primarily oriented toward betterment of their own familial unit vis-à-vis the others in the village. There was considerable distrust between the tre-ba, the sending of tü-mi or delegates, as mentioned above being a good indication of this. When viewed on a larger field, persons from other dialects and cultural areas were generally treated with hostility.

Rural Tibet was thus a series of contiguous villages and demesne lands some of which were shung-gyu-ba villages and some of which were estates serf villages. These villages were administratively divided under one or another district unit which served to link the villages and estate units with the Central Government (with the exception of three estates discussed later).

The most salient difference between the shung-gyu-ba villages and the estate-serf villages was that the estate-serf villages like Salu were primarily under the authority and jurisdiction of their lord or his officials and secondarily under the District Commissioner, but the shung-gyu-ba villages were primarily without any direct authority and secondarily under the District Commissioner in much the same way, although somewhat more directly than the estate-serf villages. As long as the shung-gyu-ba tre-ba fulfilled their tax responsibilities they were left comparatively free in terms of deciding how to allocate their time, resources and settle their differences. On the estate units, however, this was not the case.

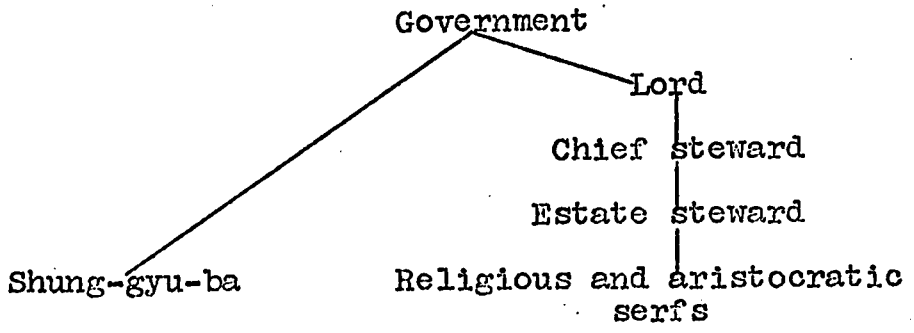


FIGURE 1. Authority hierarchy between shung-gyu-ba villages and estate villages.

The lords of manorial estates were autocratic, patrimonial type rulers of delimited political communities (their serfs) within delimited territorial areas (their estates). However, since all persons living on their estates did not actually fall under their jurisdiction, this is not exactly the same as designating them as territorial rulers. The authority of the lord over his serfs did not -- legitimately - extend over the dü-jung serfs of other lords living on his estate. Nor did it extend directly over his own mi-bo dü-jung serfs who lived in other areas, although these had to fulfill stipulated services for him and could expect support from the lord in certain situations. In reality, though, in the same way that the Samada shung-gyu-ba dominated their dü-jung, these lords dominated the dü-jung from other lords residing on their estates.

Within the limitation imposed by tradition norms and values, lords exercised considerable authority over their serfs. The orientation of this authority was primarily in relation to extractive and adjudicative functions. A lord or his administrative staff made decisions "allocating values" but they were always situations specific in nature. "Laws" having universalistic applicability and relating to personal behavior were rarely, if ever, promulgated. However, a fundamental right of the lord was authority over the movement and work of his serfs. Although taxes in kind were formally stipulated, and could not be altered unilaterally, a lord, to varying degrees, could

reallocate his serfs and could demand corvée work from him literally without limitations. Furthermore, as we have stated, the serf could not leave the estate without obtaining permission from the lord, even to become a monk. This right to command the physical services of serfs was coupled with the right to maintain the peace through adjudicating disputes and criminal accusations and unilaterally imposing punishments. Lords, or their administrators such as estate stewards, could fine, flog, schackle and imprison (including life sentences). Moreover, the Central Government did not directly interact with the estate serfs (unless the latter initiated the action) since all relevant decisions and so forth of the Central Government went through the lord and his administrative staff to the serfs.

The obvious questions, then, are what were the basis for this wide ranging authority and what were the restraints, if any, on it. It was a part of the matrix of samsaran existence that there were lords and serfs, and for serfs to obey their lords. The bonds between lord and serf were usually charged with a deep rooted traditionalism which raised the relationship to much more than ruler-subject or landlord-tenent. An example of this is the case involving the family of the writer's wife. After a dispute resulting from a divorce, the Regent confiscated the estate in question. When that Regent lost power to another Regent, the new one then appropriated the estate. Nevertheless, even after the Chinese communists had already occupied the capital, some serfs and headman from

that estate came to the old lord asking them to petition the Dalai Lama (who had recently assumed secular authority) to return the estate(to the old, real lord). The real lord did not petition the Dalai Lama, but this perception of the tie clearly indicates the often deeper, affective character of the lord-serf relation. Moreover, the religious belief system reinforced this institution. Tibetans are Buddhists and fundamental to the Buddhist belief system is the notion that one's essence (sems) passes through endless reincarnations on the path oriented toward enlightenment. The casual factor determining the level and character of the rebirths is the cumulative affect of ones own deeds in past lives, that is to say, the result of karma (in Tib. las or las rgyu 'bras). Needless to say, the existence of lords and serfs as well as the other unequal social positions were explained in accordance with that philosophical principle. A serf is serf because of karmic inheritence. By providing a more profound justification for social inequalities than mere tradition, this was unquestionably a very important factor.

One of the important factors in assaying the stability of the political system in such traditional societies as Tibet is examining the border areas where authority based on tradition approached power based on political resources. Although the lords had numerous open-ended rights over their serfs, the application of this authority was perceived by all as being within certain customary limits. But who was there

to ascertain whether these customary limitations were in actuality being bypassed or ignored? We have indicated above that one major restraint was the right of serfs to take complaints against their lord or one of his decisions to the Central Government for adjudication. I have collected a few cases where this occurred, but in general, this was not a channel commonly available. Firstly, the money involved in taking a case before the Central Government in Lhasa was considerable, and when gifts were considered, well beyond the means of the small dü-jung like serfs. Except for a few of the larger tre-ba, it was relatively unfeasable. Actually when such disputes occurred they generally were collectively made by the village as a whole, that is to say, by all the tre-ba as a group. Even then, they were faced with the prospect of taking their case before lay government officials who were themselves manorial estate holders. As we shall see in the next chapter, the estate holding aristocracy monopolized the lay segment of the bureaucracy and because of this, the serfs had to overcome strong feelings of status-group loyalty held by the aristocrats as well as particularistic ties of kinship, friendship and marriage before obtaining satisfaction in a case. Suffice to say that while this avenue of protest exerted some restraint on the lords, it was not the major source of power available to the serfs.

One of the most significant features of rural Tibet was its underpopulation. We have indicated earlier that new land

was available to anyone willing to turn it over and day-labor jobs or land for leasing were also readily available. The demand for labor simply outstripped the supply. The reasons for this do not concern us here, but the consequences do, since this was the ultimate source of the serf's leverage. Serfs could flee from their estate or village if they were shung-gyu-ba leaving behind their land, taxes, and debts and start anew in some other area. Certainly this action was not lightly taken, but the option was a real one and serfs in fact, on occasion overtly, though subtly, threatened to resort to it in their petitions to their lords and the government. They usually phrased it in a manner implying that unless some concessions were made to them they would be unable to fulfill their tax obligations and therefore would have to flee their land. Of course, the option to run away was not a right serfs held and if a lord could apprehend his runaway serf he could forceably retun and punish the serf. But as stated above, there were no police in Tibet and no administrative network to check who went where.Moreover, since the demand for labor was great, the lords and land owners in new areas, leave alone turning in runaways, often even went out of their way to shield them. We thus see the combination of such factors as manpower shortage, the realistic opportunity for economic mobility, strong religious supports for the traditional system of ascribed inequality, the right to petition the government, and the ever-present option of running away to a new area

as mediating the oppressive nature of the institutions of serfdom and the manorial estate and as maintaining the system with a high degree of stabilty. Over a period of hundreds of years there is no record of a large-scale revolt of serfs against their lords or the government. There was no tradition of peasant uprisings in Tibet.

Before concluding this chapter some mention should be made concerning the extent and importance of the manorial estate in Tibet. Surkhang Shape estimates that perhaps over fifty per cent of the land and people in Tibet were organized in manorial estates, and for the area we call Central Tibet, a much higher figure would be necessary since it was in this area that estates were most common. Moreover, these areas contained the best agricultural land. Thus, a large percentage of the population and resources in Tibet were in the control of political sub-systems ruled by hereditary lords or religious institutions. Before examining the relative rights of the government vis-à-vis the sub-systems, let us examine that government.

Footnotes

1. In common usage, however, the term for estage--shi-ga--was used.

2. Carrasco (1959:209) included under estate "the right to collect revenue from a number of peasant households" but I think it more efficacious to differentiate that type of political unit as well as those units with land but no serfs, from the political unit we have delimited as estate.

3. There seems to be considerable confusion concerning the phonetically similar terms of gzhung bzhes [ˇsuŋˇše] and gzhung gzhis [ˇsuŋsi]. The former term literally means 'taken estate' but actually refers to confiscated estates that the government held. The latter term literally translates as 'government estate' but in fact was not a commonly used term. The few permanent estates that the government possessed were generally under districts and called tsong-shi (rdzong gzhis). Both the confiscated estates (which had a rapid turnover) and the permanent government estates were relatively unimportant economically since the bulk of the government land(from which it derived its income)was the land partitioned out into the shung-gyu-ba villages.

4. This very important point was made by the former Council Minister Surkhang Shape in a personal communication.

5. It was the custom in Tibet for daughters to go with their mother and sons with their father in marital separations. This, as we have seen, parallel's the transmission of serf status

through one's same sex parent.

6. Normally in te-ma loans if the loan was not repaid at the end of the stipulated period, the pawn was lost permanently. However, in such cases involving land, since the land was the lord's it could not be permanently alienated. Generally the debtor simply lost use of the land while stil having the tax responsibility.

7. During the reign of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama the ta-wu ke-ma transportation tax was slightly reformed in that the users of the corvee services had to pay the providers a small amount for each animal provided. The rates were 2 sho per carrying animal and 4 sho per riding hourse. For goods transported for the British-Indian government the rates were:

2 1/2 rupees per carrying animal

3 rupees per riding horse

1 1/2 rupees per person

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RULER AND THE BUREAUCRACY

In the previous Chapter we examined the manorial estates and noted that the existence of that institution was one of the salient features of the Tibetan political system. In this Chapter we shall delimit the major structural components of the Central Government and discuss aspects of their articulation.

The Tibetan polity was characterized by a state type of political structure. There was a pattern of clearly differentiated political roles and positions which made up the offices of the Tibetan government. The formal government was headed by the office of the Dalai Lama, or in his minority, a Regent. The ruler, as we shall refer to both these positions, stood above a system of hierarchically arranged offices. Occupying these these offices under the ruler was a permanent bureaucracy composed of one segment of monk officials called tse-drung (rtse drung) and one segment of lay officials called trung-go (drung 'khor) or shö-drung (shod drung). Traditionally each of these categories of officials was fixed at 170 persons, but in recent times that figure was not rigidly held to, as for instance, during the third and fourth decades of this century

there were approximately 200 lay officials and 230 monk officials.[1]

Let us begin this examination of the government with the bureaucracy. As indicated above, lay officials were recruited solely from the manorial holding lay aristocracy and the monk officials from sources within the Gelugpa sect. Leaving monk officials for the time being, the fact that half of the bureaucracy, and as we shall indicate below, the most important half, were recruited solely from the manorial lords illustrates an important feature of the Tibetan political system. As such, some discussion of the composition and character of the aristocracy is in order.

The Tibetan aristocracy was a social stratum that consisted of about 150 named families. In Tibetan these families were called either gu-dra (sku drag) or ger-ba (sger pa). Membership in this stratum was primarily ascribed through birth, although, as we shall indicate below, there was some limited mobility. Each of these families hereditarily possessed at least one, but usually more than one, manorial estate. The aristocracy was internally differentiated in terms of prestige and status. The highest internal sub-stratum was the yab-shi (yab gzhis)or families descended from the natal family of a Dalai Lama. There were only six of these: Lha-lu (Lha klu - 8th and 12th D. L.), Yuthog (G.yu thog - 10th D. L.), Pün-gang (Phun khang - 11th D. L.), Langdon (Glang mdun - 13th D. L.), Taktse (Stag 'tsher - 14th D. L.), and Sampho (Bsam pho - 7th

7th D. L.).*

The sub-stratum under them was called de-bön (sde dpon). There were four families in this category, one of which overlaps with the above yab-shi one: Dogar (Mdo mkhar), Gab-shi (Dga' bzhi), Tönpa (Thon pa) and Sampho (Bsam pho).[2]

The next category was called mi-dra (mi drag) and consisted of about 15 families: Shatra (Bshad sgra), Phala (Pha lha), Surkhang (Zur khang), Sejung (Gsar byung), Tsharong (Tsha rong), Lheding (Lha sding), Tering (Phreng ring), Ngabo (Nga phod), Canglochen (Lcang lo chen), Horkhang (Hor khang), Rampa (Ram pa), Trumpa (Brum pa), Shegalingpa (Shel dkar gling pa), Khemey (Khe smad), Kapshopa (Kha shod pa), and Shasur (Bshad zur).

Under these were the mass of aristocratic families called ger-ba (sger pa)** by the government but commonly referred to as gyü-ma (dkyus ma) or "common." There were about 110-120 of these gyü-ma families. This internal stratification was in general directly related to the possession of estates so that the highest sub-stratum held the most estates and the gyü-ma the least.

The Tibetan term for government official is shung-shab

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* The 9th D.L.'s natal family consisted of a mother, her brother (a monk), and a daughter. The mother and daughter married - merged with the Surkhang family and therefore there is today no yab-shi family for the 9th D.L.

** Ger-ba was also colloquially used to designate the aristocracy in general.

(gzhung zhabs) or literally, 'servant of the government.' As the name indicates, these aristocrats owed 'service' to the government, but the relationship between the aristocrats and the government was not simple because the relationship was also perceived by the aristocrats as a monopoly over the positions. The standard rule was that one male from the aristocratic family had to become a government official for each estate of the shab-ten pa-shi (zhabs rten pha gzhis) variety. The term shab-ten pa-shi literally translates as "estate which is the vasis for service." There was no special name for hereditary estates which did not require government service and generally the majority of the larger estate holding families' estates were of this latter type. Although I have no direct evidence to substantiate this, I strongly suspect that in the period between 1642 and 1751 when these relationships between the aristocracy and government were established, service was based not on the number of estates but rather on a family basis. Later, as estates passed back and forth among the aristocratic families through marriage mergers, lack of progeny and so forth whoever obtained an estate that formerly required government service was obligated to continue the obligation. We saw in Chapter Four that the Tshecholing monastic estate was obligated to perform prayers in lieu of paying the fee required when a family did not have a required male official. This fee, called ngo-dö (ngo dod), or 'substitute for the real one.' illustrates that the requirement was not simply a theoretical

rule. The validity of the rule was continually reinforced via this mechanism, although it should be noted that the amount was in fact rather nominal. In other words, each of the aristocratic families had one estate (or group of estates) which was similar to the traditional 'family seat' and then possibly additional estates which had been acquired by a variety of means over the years.

Although the government in general possessed the right to confiscate estates for very serious offenses against the ruler or the nation, it was very rare for all the estates of a lord to be confiscated. This punishment was generally reserved for participants in failing coup d'etats, in other words, for persons who overtly withdrew their support from the ruler. Usually, the family-seat estate was immune from confiscation. In fact, although the aristocrats perceived the government had the right and power to confiscate, they did not perceive that they held their estates simply as a result of their serving the government. This is not mere sophistry. They had to serve, but the estates (particularly the old family seats) were theirs by hereditary right. These estates were not simply salary estates. In regards to this, it is often stated (e.g., Carrasco: 210) that aristocrats could not sell their estates but I have found this to be not completely accurate. Estates were very rarely sold but that is what one would expect since the manorial estate was the major economic resource in Tibet. Nevertheless, hereditary estates held by

lords -- with the exception of a family's shab-ten pa-shi -- could be and on a few occasions were, sold, e.g., Kapshöba sold an estate to the Loseling college of Drepung and Migyab sold one to another aristocrat (Shatra). In such instances the government had to be informed, but so long as both parties were willing, there was no objection.

It is far more accurate in terms of the participant's conscious model of their culture to say that the aristocratic families had the right to monopolize the lay official positions in the bureaucracy than to say that they were forced to serve. As we shall see later, the bureaucracy, particularly the lay official segment, had considerable authority and power and the right to serve was highly valued. This perception derived in part from the high social prestige attached to the status of government official. Aristocrats had a distinctive "style of life." As a rule they lived in the capital in grand houses with servants, they dressed in silks, entertained among themselves lavishly, and formed basically an endogamous grouping which represented Tibetan haute culture. The case of the Lhagyari (Lha rgya ri) family in the late 1950's is illustrative. The Lhagyari were one of the wealthiest and most prestigious families in Tibet, being considered higher than the regular aristocratic families. Descended from the ancient kings, they held huge estates in E for which they were exempt from having to provide government officials. Furthermore, whenever the head of this family, the Tri-chen (khri chen) was

in Lhasa, he would sit above the Council Ministers at formal functions because of his very high status. Yet, in the late 1950's, he petitioned the government to make him an official. He ended up with a lower rank than he had before, but was satisfied because he had gained active entree into the Lhasa aristocratic high society (and their "style of life"), which previously had viewed him with respect due to his status, but nevertheless as a provincial rustic. This important perception of their obligation as a right is further illustrated by the common custom of aristocratic families enrolling more males than the minimum obligatory requirement. I stress this point because I think that this important segment of the landed stratum saw no contradiction or centralizing infringement between the rights of the government such as confiscation and service and their interests as a hereditary land holding stratum. In reality, they would have considered withdrawal of their monopoly over the lay official positions as a serious infringement of the highest order.

The actual entrance process for aristocrats was simple. Generally, families entered their sons in the bureaucracy in their middle teens after they had completed their basic education. This education was usually obtained at one of the private schools in Lhasa, but sometimes it was done at home with private tutors. The content of this schooling consisted mainly of learning to write the various Tibetan scripts properly. The letters of the Tibetan alphabet all have prescribed shapes,

and it was considered important for officials to be able to write them, particularly the kyu ('khyug) cursive script, correctly. These schools also taught the students how to read, but the proficiency obtained would definitely not encompass the ability to read religious treatises or sophisticated poetic works. Students interested in further education usually studied with learned monks after finishing their primary education. It should be noted that these private schools were tuition free and included children from the trader stratum.

The actual procedure for entrance consisted of the family informing the Finance Office they wanted their son registered. The normal age for this was about fourteen years. A After that was accomplished, the child could actually enter on any auspicious day. During the first stage of his career he would be under the jurisdiction of the Finance Office and was called a tsi-tru (rtsis phrug) or 'Finance (office) student.' As the name indicates, this initial period was primarily one of study. Moreover, the tsi-tru was not considered a full government official (shung-shab) during this stage. As a tsi-tru he studied a variety of subjects for several years. These subjects included such things as multiplication tables, fractions, and the Tibetan method of making arithmetic calculations called di-u (rde'u btang).

The transition from this initial training status to that of full lay official or trung-go (drung 'khor) was limited to six persons each year. At the three occasions of the mi-bab-

jen-shu (mentioned below in the monk officials' section), the names of the youths ready for entry were sent to the ruler and he selected two. It is important to emphasize that the ruler could not stop an aristocrat from gaining entree. At most he could delay him for a few turns, and although this affected the later seating arrangements, it was of little significance. What emerges as a striking characteristic of the lay bureaucracy was that recruitment was entirely in their hands. The ruler had no control over the selection and training of lay officials and while he was able to affect somewhat the order in which the tsi-tru became full officials, the lay officials were actually autonomous concerning these factors. The ruler did, however, have control over the appointment of officials to particular offices.

We stated earlier that although membership in the aristocracy (and therefore the lay official segment) was ascribed through birth, there was some mobility. One of recurrent institutionalized means of entree was the ennoblement of the natal families of the successive Dalai Lamas. These were ranked as the top level of the aristocracy and in actuality were so treated both in terms of deference and possession of wealth. Another far less important and non-regular mode of entree was ennoblement of individuals for outstanding acts of service to the government. This mode was basically in the hands of the ruler and occurred a number of times, particularly during the modern period, although it was never used by the

ruler to challenge the old aristocracy, at least not after the political structure was organized in 1751. Regardless of this potential for mobility, what is important is that the ennobled families became hereditary manorial estate holders and therefore had the same orientation concerning the overall system as the older aristocracy.

The category of lay officials (trung-go) was therefore the monopoly of the manorial holding lay aristocracy. The ruler had no authority or actual power to determine or obstruct any individual from entering the service. At most he could delay entree for a short time. Although these aristocratic families were obligated to serve as officials, they in fact perceived it as a right (although they knew they could not refuse to serve) and often enrolled more than the required number of sons as officials. The prestige and power associated with being a government official was great and the competition was not to avoid service but to enter and obtain the authoritarian positions within the government.

The other segment of the bureaucracy consisted of monk officials. As the name denotes, these were all monks, but only monks of the Gelugpa sect were eligible. Actually, only monks enrolled in one of a small number of monasteries, i.e., Sera (Se ra), Drepung ('Bras spungs), Ganden (Dga' ldan), Ri bo bde-chen, 'Phos lam rim, Ri ba chos gling, Dga' ldan chos 'khor, Rtse tshogs, Rnam gra, Gnas chung, were eligible. The majority of monk officials were enrolled in the first three monasteries

hereafter collectively called Sedregasum, the other monasteries mentioned being relatively small and insignificant.

Monk officials were considerably different in outlook and comportment from the regular monks. They were much more secularized and in keeping with this did not have to maintain the numerous vows required of monks residing in monasteries, although they were expected to maintain the vow of celibacy. It was not unusual for a family to enroll their son formally in one of the acceptable monasteries so as to make him eligible for applying for a monk official position, but not actually put him in the monastery for an extended time. One night's stay in the monastery was sufficient to have one's name entered in that monastery's records.

It seems that the origin of monk officials dates back to the assumption of power by the 5th Dalai Lama when he created 16 positions: 8 ken-chen (mkhan chen) and 8 ken-chung (mkhan chung). These terms are abbreviations for ken-bo chen-bo, that is, respectively 'great abbot' and 'little abbot.' From these original 16, gradually the number and scope of activities of these officials increased to the point where most of the offices in the government were comprised of both monk and lay officials and where the number of each segment was approximately equal. This development of the monk official segment was potentially a serious threat to the aristocrats and the religious manorial lords. The development of a bureaucracy with autonomous goal orientation could have led to a serious

power struggle between landed and non-landed which, as Eisenstadt (1963) points out, was characteristic of the development of centralized bureaucratic states. Some reasons for the non-occurrence are related to the composition of that segment.

Like lay officials, monk officials were internally divided into status segments. The highest and smallest segment was called trung-dra (drung drag) or 'better officials' and was comprised of monk officials from aristocratic families. A number of these aristocratic monk officials came from families who had to provide officials to the monk official segment instead of to the lay official one. The most important of those were Tregang (Bkras khang), Rong namse (Rong rnam-sras), Möndrong (Smon grong) Tamnyen (Gtam snyan) and Rong Pelun (Rong dpal lhun). Also included in this category were persons from aristocratic families who did not have to serve as a monk official but for one or another reason decided to enter that branch of the bureaucracy. Some famous ones in modern times were the Monk Council Minister Rampa (Ram pa), the Drönyechenmo (Mgron gnyer chen mo) Phala (Pha lha), and the Chief Minister Changkhyim (Chang khyim). Although this category was numerically small, it tended to control a disproportionate number of the highest positions. Almost all the aristocrats who became monk officials procured high positions. This penetration of the monk officials segment by the aristocrats at the highest levels acted to offset a clear-cut

divergence of orientation between these two segments of the bureaucracy, and to afford the aristocracy, as an interest group, some influence over the policies and goals of the monk officials.

The next category was called trung-dring (drung 'bring) or 'middle officials' and was comprised of those monk officials who had been officials (las sne) in their respective monasteries before entering the ranks of the monk officials. The personnel of these first two categories were expected to have completed their education before entering government service and were not given any further training after entry. These two segments amounted to about 10 to 15 per cent of the monk official total. Like the aristocratic monk officials, the trung-dring officials tended to dominate a disproportionate number of the higher positions, though to a lesser extent.

The lowest category was the trung-gyü (drung dkyus) or 'common' officials. There were two sub-types within this unit. One was recruited as a sort of tax (khral) from the Gelugpa monasteries cited on page 153.

When there was need for new monk officials, the Ecclesiastic Office (yig tshang) would notify the monasteries to send a stated amount of bright young monks, usually pre-teens, to them for training. Because of the inadequacy of the salary paid by the government, the monasteries almost always chose boys from families which could help financially during the training-apprenticeship period. Usually these boys were selec-

ted from the (chos mdzad) group of young monks who were exempt from acting as servants due to payments made by their families to the monastery. These children were placed in the school attached to the Ecclesiastic Office, the Tse lab-tra (Rtse slob grwa) or 'monk officials school.' While there, the less capable students were weeded out and sent back to their monasteries and the better ones were kept to become monk officials. The training given in the Tse lab-tra consisted of reading, writing, grammar, and composition. The rest of the monks comprising the trung-gyü category of monk officials were generally sons of either middle class traders or wealthy peasants. There was, however, another important source of these gyü-ma monk officials. Within the three huge monasteries of Sendregasum there were a number of small kinship-like corporate units commonly referred to as sha-tsang (shag tshang). Sha refers to the living quarters of a monk and tsang indicates a family. These monk units were extremely wealthy and maintained their diachronic identity generally by 'adopting' nephews and cousins of the elder head. Although probably there were no more than twenty such wealthy sha-tsang, they, like the aristocrats, tended to become monk officials and obtained a disproportionate number of the major positions.

The formal mode of entrance for all monk officials was the ceremony called mi-bab jen-shu (mi babs spyan zhu)[3] or literally 'person's appearance - visual presentation.' This was a ceremony at which the candidates would come and formally

present samples of their calligraphy to the ruler. It occurred three times each year. Once was on the 25th of the tenth month (dga' ldan lnga mchod),[4] a holiday when the officials formally changed from summer to winter costume. The second time was on the 8th of the third month (brgyad gtor), a holiday when, among other things, government officials changed from winter to summer dress. The third time officials were chosen was during new year's celebration. These three were also the times when the two aristocrats were selected from the Finance Office's school by the ruler.

In reality, though, the ruler had very little influence over this procedure. The prospective officials first submitted their names and handwriting samples to the Ecclesiastic Office. This office maintained a comprehensive list of all such candidates. Each year the list was brought up to date and persons who died, took wives, etc., were deleted. From the list that was left, the Ecclesiastic Office's four heads selected the number of persons they had already decided were needed. That total list and the selected names was then taken to the higher ranking Lord Chamberlain (Spyi khyab mkhan po). He could object to their selections, in which case the five of them would discuss the matter until an acceptable list was arrived at. This list of the selected candidates and the candidates themselves were presented to the ruler at the mi-bab jen-shu ceremony. However, it is important to note that the complete list of potential candidates was not shown to the

ruler and the ceremony was generally a mere formality.

The criteria for selection by the officials was highly particularistic since the candidates, except for the monk official's school ones, actively recruited support by giving gifts of varying value to one or more of the five officials mentioned above. This practice, as we shall show, also pervaded the entire bureaucratic promotion process.

Although the mi-bab jen-shu was actually a mere formality, it does illustrate the greater theoretical control of the ruler over the monk official segment and that the obvious motivation for the creation and expansion of that segment was to check the total control of the governmental administrative processes by the aristocracy. But, from another point of view, the monk officials were not the mere puppets of the ruler. Eisenstadt (274) points out that in centralized bureaucratic states the "principle political orientation of the bureaucracy in so far as they transcended its members' desires for personal benefits and influence, were focused mainly on the attainment of some autonomy vis-à-vis the rulers or the foremost social strata." This was certainly an important feature of the political process in Tibet. Although the monk officials represented the Gelugpa sect in some ways and therefore the ruler and monasteries, they also had interests which were autonomous from those and which focused on the influence of the bureaucracy in general, and their segment of it in particular. In fact, although the monk officials had close ties with

Sendregasum, the leaders of these institutions did not perceive them to have the same orientation as they did, and did not consider them completely reliable. Richardson (24) correctly stated that "although they acted as the watchdogs of the Church in the civil administration they seemed to fall between two stools and were often viewed with some suspicion by the main body of monks."

I shall refer to the monk and lay officials described above as Shung-shab (Gzhung zhabs)[5] or 'government officials' henceforth in order to distinguish them from another group of government employees of a very much lower status called Nang-sen (Nang gzan) or 'government clerks' as I shall translate this term. They were permanent clerks and secretaries in the various offices of the government, but were not considered to fall into the category we glossed as government official. Traditionally there were about 150 of them, but in recent times this number increased somewhat. Recruitment for these was basically closed, the positions de facto being passed down from father to son. These clerks were expected to learn to read and write on their own and generally attended one of the private schools in Lhasa. Since these positions were not sources of political power, the above brief discussion will suffice.

The most important and influential position in Tibet was that of the ruler. After the murder of the son of Pholhanas in 1750 by the Manchu Emperor's representatives in Lhasa, the Emperor reorganized the polity, making the 7th Dalai Lama the

temporal head of Tibet and setting up a bureaucracy headed by the Council of Ministers beneath him. The ruler had ultimate authority over all decisions and policy of the government. The bureaucracy theoretically had to submit all their decisions to him for his approval before they could implement them. The authority of the ruler included the all-important sphere of appointments to bureaucratic positions.

A few words should be said concerning the relationship between the Dalai Lamas and what Weber (1964:358) conceptualized as charisma. Perhaps the most crucial support for the office of Dalai Lama, and therefore the government, was charisma or extraordinary personal characteristics. The Dalai Lama is the emanation of the great bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (spyan ras gzigs), the "patron saint" of Tibet. He continually returns to human form to help mankind, and Tibetans in particular, find the path to Buddhist salvation. He is not, like the Pope, the representative of the deity, but rather a manifestation of the deity. This extraordinary quality adhering to the Dalai Lamas was not derived from each individual Dalai Lama but has become institutionalized or "routinized" as Weber called it (Ibid.:363). The charisma adhered to the position of Dalai Lama irrespective of the particular incumbent. Given the Tibetans' cultural acceptance of the incarnation of Lamas, all that was required for the institutionalized charisma to function properly was some adequate mechanism to insure widespread belief that the proper incumbent was selected for the position. Here again,

the mode was not new, but it was elaborated on and enhanced in grandeur. Mere humans could not by themselves properly determine the incarnation, and the institutionalization depended on supplying the selection process with supernatural supports. The speeches and comments of a late Dalai Lama would be examined for any possible clues as to where he would be reborn. Other unusual occurrences, such as strange cloud formations or the shifting of the position of the corpse of the late Dalai Lama toward a particular direction, were analyzed by high Lamas, oracles, the Regent, and high ranking officials. The Regent and other high dignitaries also visited a holy lake (lha mo'i bla mtsho) in which visions were traditionally seen concerning the Dalai Lama's rebirth. All of these preliminary examinations of cryptic, supernatural signs ended in the sending out by the Regent of one or more search parties composed of government officials and high Lamas to areas deemed probable places where the Dalai Lama would return to Tibet. In these areas the parties would examine stories of wondrous or strange births of children in the proper age category and finally would administer a series of tests to the prospective candidates, the children and their parents not being forewarned that they were considering the boy for the Dalai Lama. These tests consisted of showing the candidates several pairs of articles, e.g., rosaries or walking sticks, one of which had been the personal possession of the late Dalai Lama. The child was expected to choose the late Dalai Lama's things, thereby

proving that he had residual knowledge of his last life, the ability to recall the events of one's past life being a characteristic of bodhisattvas and buddhas. On the basis of the reports sent by the one or more search parties, the Regent, after consulting with high Lamas and government officials, would inform the Assembly of the situation and guided by the Regent they would accept the candidate as Dalai Lama. After the boy arrived in Lhasa there was a formal enthronement ceremony. Because the charisma associated with the position of Dalai Lama was institutionalized, it did not matter significantly who was actually chosen.[6] In fact, on a number of occasions the Dalai Lama was actually chosen by a lottery.

The newly selected Dalai Lama was usually about three or four when he first entered Lhasa to be formally enthroned (khri phebs) as Dalai Lama. From then until the age of eighteen or twenty, the Dalai Lama did not have any control over political affairs, paramount power being vested in the Regent. Ideally, he spent those years in study under the tutelage of his two main tutors or yong-tsin (yongs 'dzin) who were appointed by the Regent. The education the Dalai Lama received was the traditional education of the Gelugpa sect, and he was even expected, like other monks, to partake in public religious debate-examinations and eventually take vows as a fully ordained monk (dge slong). The majority of his time not spent in study was generally spent in formal ceremonies or audiences. What little free time he had during this period was, moreover,

rigidly restricted as to what he could do and where he could go. The Dalai Lama really had very little freedom of movement. He could not interact or even walk among laymen unless the situation was formally delimited. This is very important for his political role since it meant that he could not obtain firsthand knowledge. He could not go and find out anything for himself. In the autobiography of the 14th Dalai Lama (1963: 41) he wrote to refute statements made by foreigners that he was like a prisoner in the Potala palace:

slob sbyong byed dgos pa'i rkyen gyis phyi bskyed yang yang byed pa'i go skabs med pa de bden pa yin/ 'on kyang po ta la dang lha sa'i grong khyer gyi dbar la nga'i nang mi tsho'i khang pa zhig brgyab yod cing/ de nas nyung shos la zla re'am/ yang na bdun phrag drug nang du 'phrad kyi yod par brten nang mi dang ya bral du gyur yod pa ma red/

Because of the need for doing studies, it is true that there was no opportunity for going outside often, however, between the Potala and Lhasa city my family built a house and at the least once a month or every six weeks, I met them at home. Because of that I did not become separated from my family.

He goes on to say (Ibid.:42) that even at the Potala there was the daily ceremony of morning tea (drung ja) for the monk officials, and there he would often meet his father. He also told how he would have liked to call to his father to come to him in the morning when he would see him coming to the palace stables to give the horses special treats. I am in agreement with the Dalai Lama that equating him with a prisoner is a gross misrepresentation, but in terms of his political role, even his rebuttal illustrates his structural isolation.

Incarnation as a mode of succession necessitated recurrent periods when the ruler (Dalai Lama) was not old enough to rule. There was no way that these transition periods could be avoided and authority smoothly passed from one Dalai Lama to the next. After each Dalai Lama's death there was always a period of about twenty years when the new Dalai Lama was in his minority.

From 1757, the year the 7th Dalai Lama died, the Manchu Emperors selected Regents to rule in the name of the Dalai Lama from among the great religious figures of the Gelugpa sect. This practice gradually developed into the Regency being the prerogative of a small number of incarnate Gelugpa Lamas.* From a diachronic viewpoint, the Dalai Lama was little more than a legitimizing figurehead. From 1757 to 1895 the apex position was actually held by Regents. Even when a Dalai Lama, like the 8th, managed to reach majority age, a Regent was retained who carried out secular affairs. The following chart illustrates this graphically.

DALAI LAMA	RULED	REGENT	
7th Kesang Gyatso (1708-57)	1751-57	Demo	1757-77
8th Jampal Gyatso (1758-1804)	1781-04[a]	Tshomoling	1777-86
9th Lungtok Gyatso (1806-15)		Kundeling	1789-1810

* Lama (bla ma) is a difficult term to translate in English. It refers to a renowned religious personage who usually, although not necessarily, was also an incarnation. Lama may also refer to the person one has faith in or the person one receives religious teaching from.

10th Tsultrim Gyatso (1816-56)		Demo	1811-44
		[b]Tshemoling	1819-44
		[b]Reting	1845-64
		[c]Shatra (aristocrat)	1862-64
12th Trinley Gyatso	1873-75	Ditru	1864-72
		Kundeling	1875-86
13th Thubten Gyatso	1895-1933	Demo	1886-95
		Reting	1933-41
		Taktra	1941-50

[a]The 8th Dalai Lama was very otherworldly and the Regent was kept even though he reached majority age. The Regent actually ruled during his reign.

[b]These two Regents were deposed in a coup d'etat.

[c]Shatra was a Council Minister and in the confusion of the coup of 1862 he was charged with restoring order by the Manchu Amban and confirmed by the Emperor. This was an exceptional situation and on his death in 1864, a high Lama was again selected.

FIGURE 2, Reigns of Dalai Lamas and Regents

Based on the above figures which were taken from Petech (1959), we see that from 1751-1950 there was a shift in ruler on the average of every 13 years, with Regents ruling 77 per cent of the time. If we exclude the reign of the 13th Dalai Lama (1895-1933), we see that Regents ruled approximately 94 per cent of the time. Tibet was therefore characterized by a caretaker-type of ruler.

The Regents originally were selected by the Manchu Emperor but after 1875, they were appointed by the General Assembly. (This body will be discussed in detail below). The Regents

were powerful rulers, but were not as potentially powerful as the Dalai Lamas. They ruled not from sacred right, but by secular selection. One of the most significant differences between the reign of a Regent and a Dalai Lama was that overt expulsion from office was not a possible course of action against the Dalai Lama, but was against a Regent. Although there was no manifest norm concerning this, past incidents where Regents were ousted in power plays served as relevant models for those involved in the competition for power. (Overt assassination was the only potential mode of expulsion of a Dalai Lama). Although I shall examine this in greater depth in the next chapter, it should be noted here that this differential in potential political power afforded the bureaucracy, and particularly the lay, aristocratic officials greater overall potential power during the periods when a Regent ruled. In general, the focus of the Regents was on self-aggrandizement and their religious corporations, or Labrang (bla brang), became extremely wealthy, both in movable wealth as well as in manorial estates. But since Regents were also incarnate lamas, succession for them also required a complete shift. In the chart on p. 166 the 2nd Demo was the incarnation of the 1st, but between these two other Regents ruled. This, of course, structurally precluded the establishment of one line of related lamas as rulers.

Under the ruler was a network of hierarchically-arranged bureaucratic offices headed by the Kashag (Bka'shag) or Council

of Ministers. These offices were associated with the formal ranking system for the government bureaucracy in the manner depicted in Figure 3.

The government bureaucracy was formally stratified in a rank system ranging from three to seven. The ranks one and two were not used and were presumed by some to be occupied by the Dalai Lama and the Regent. Moreover, there were several ranks which were considered to fall between the numerical ones. This ranking system came into prominent use in interpersonal deference behavior, particularly at official government ceremonies and functions where seating arrangements were based on these ranks.

The ranking system itself was not important nor did it carry political authority and power. Appointment to a higher office carried automatic promotion of rank. However, once a person obtained a given rank, he was then appointed only to offices on that rank level. Thus rank, in addition to its important function of regulating interpersonal deference behavior, was also important as the framework within which appointments to offices were made. The lack of correspondence of rank and office to power and authority can be seen clearly in the case of the ken-che (mkhan che) and Chief Secretaries or trung-yik chen-mo (drung yig chen mo). Although the former was a higher rank and obtained deference behavior from the latter, the ken-che had no political duties and the Chief Secretaries were unquestionably more powerful politically.

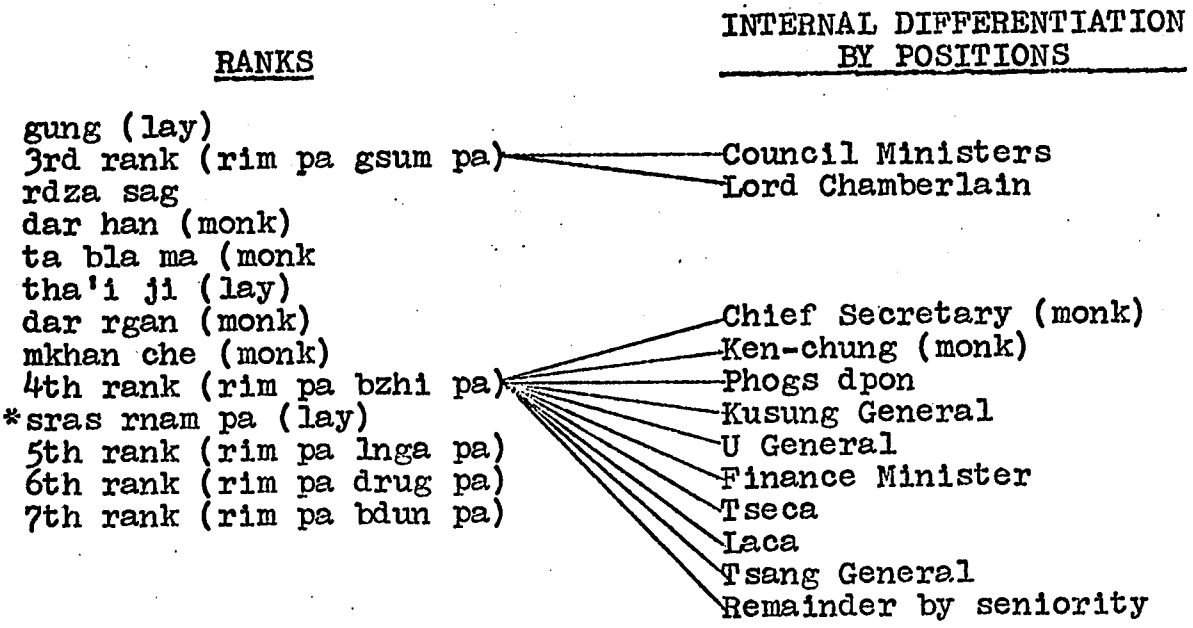
Rank	Monk Officials	Monk and Lay Officials	Lay Officials
3	Spyi khyab mkhan po	Bka' shag	
Rdza-sag		Gyod zhib, Dmag spyi khang, Phyi rgyal las khungs	
Mkhan-che	Nang ma khang		
4	Yig tshang, Rtse 'gag, Shol 'gag, Zhabs 'par-khang, Mgron gnyer-chen mo, Sne mgron	Rtse phyag, Bla phyag, 'Bab-zhib, Phogs dpon, Shol phogs-khang, Chos don, Bde zhib	Rtsis khang,○ Mda'-dpon(Dmag spyi - khang)
5	Rtse gnyer,○ Rtse-mgon(Rtse 'gag), ○ Shol gnyer(Shol 'gag)	Zhol gnyer, Lha gnyer	Mi dpon, Bsher-dpang,○ Bka' shag-zhol(Bka' shag),○* Ru dpon(Dmag spyi-khang)
6	Mchod rdzas do dam, Phyag dpe do dam, 'Dod dpal do dam		Chib dpon,○ Bka'-drung(Bka' shag), ○ Bka' mgron(Bka' shag)
7	Shing gnyer, Bzo khang do dam	Rtsam len, Rtsa gnyer	

Gra bzhi dngul khang
Spyi khyab ba
So nam las khungs
Zhib khang
'Bru khang
dpon
Rdzong

○ = position within an office. The office is cited in brackets.
* Ru dpon are usually selected from ranks and not from the bureaucracy.

FIGURE 3. Government bureaucratic offices under the ruler.

A list of the ranks from high to low based on seating hierarchy follows below. We shall indicate those ranks which were limited only to monk or lay officials by writing lay or monk in brackets after the title.



Tibet was organized as a bureaucracy in the sense that there was a hierarchy of offices each of which had a reasonably clearly delimited sphere of activity, there was a system of internal promotions based theoretically on universalistic principles of ability, salaries were paid (although they were below the minimal substence level), officials in the performance of their duties acted theoretically according to overt normative principles of behavior, there was extensive use of written records, and finally, failure to fulfill one's respon-

* All the yab-shi. de-bön, and mi-tra officials held this status

Internal differentiation as with 4th rank could also be done for 5th, 6th, and 7th rank.

sibilities could result in disciplinary action.

This falls short of Weber's (333-34) "purest" type of bureaucratic administration for a number of reasons, the main one being the restrictive nature of initial recruitment, particularly for lay officials who were manorial lords. The domination of the bureaucracy by elements representing other more fundamental interests was an important feature of the Tibetan system. Furthermore, there was a low level of technical knowledge required for initial entrance, mere literacy being sufficient. But, even though the composition of the officials poses some problems, the network of offices to be discussed below certainly had the fundamental characteristics of a bureaucracy.

The offices of the Tibetan government varied in composition and function. Each of the offices was headed by a fixed number (or fixed range) of officials. The ratio of monk to lay was also set. Thus, whereas the Ecclesiastic Office always was composed of four monk officials of the fourth rank (ken-chung), the Council of Ministers was usually composed of three lay officials and one monk official of the third rank.

Although a few offices such as the District Commissioners and Governors had a limited term of office, the majority of the offices, particularly the higher ones, had no fixed tenure and the incumbents remained in their positions until they were either promoted or demoted. Thus, for the highest offices, appointment was tantamount to granting the position for life.

With the important exception of the Council of Ministers and, to a lesser extent, the Ecclesiastic Office, most of the offices had specific functions, although often one office was responsible for a number of unrelated specific duties. While we shall not attempt to describe each office in the bureaucracy, a listing of the types will illustrate the broadness of the governmental structure. There was an Office of Foreign Affairs, a Judicial Office, an Agricultural Office, several types of Treasuries, a Military Office, a Finance Office, a Mint Office, and a Salary Office, to name a few.

Promotions to these offices was theoretically based on ability, but it was common for hopefuls to attempt to recruit support among those relevant to the appointment process by giving large gifts. The particularization of the appointment process played an important part in setting up the type of competition discussed in Chapter Six which characterized the Tibetan political system.

The bureaucracy in general had broad authority not only concerning the implementation of policy, but also the initiation and formation of policy. Although the ruler held final authority concerning governmental output, the majority of the system's demands were converted into policy by the bureaucracy and, in general, the major initiator of the policy was the bureaucracy. This broadness of the authority of the bureaucracy was one of the most salient features of the political system.

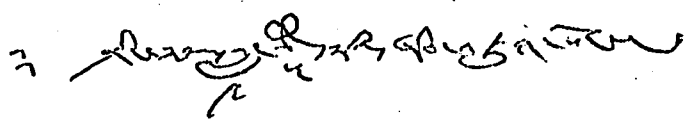
The highest and most important office of the bureaucracy

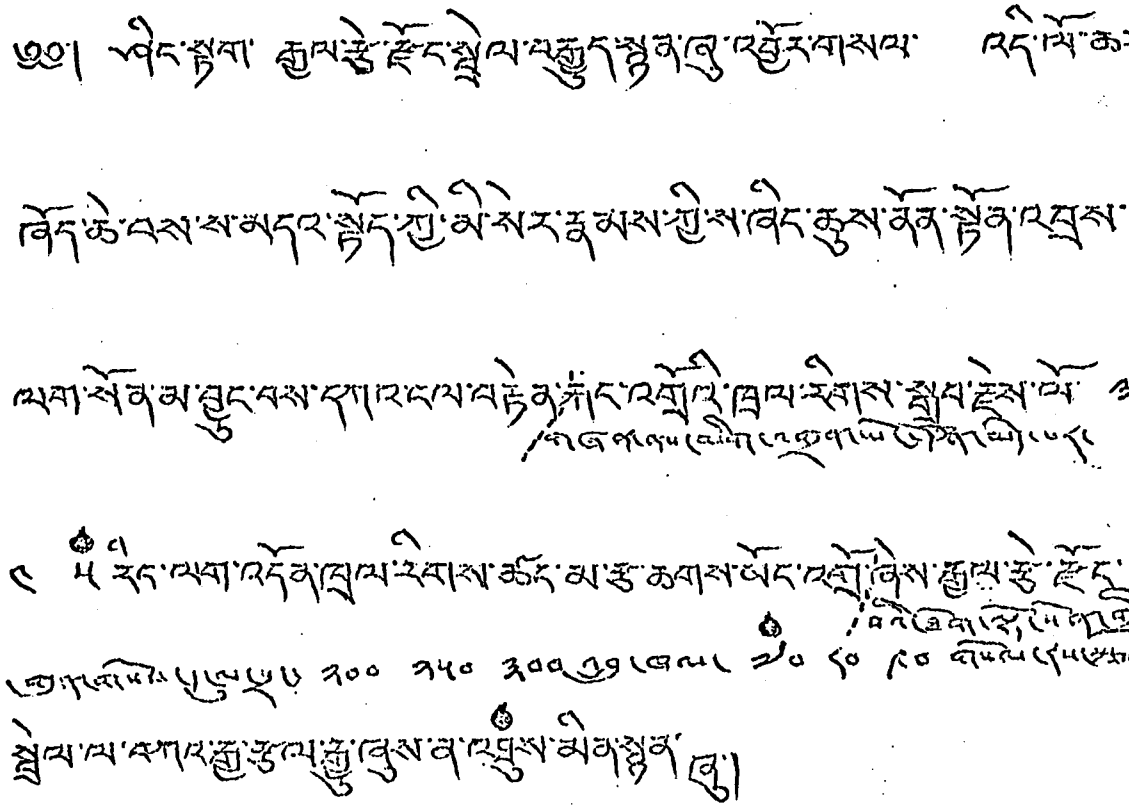
was the Council of Ministers of Kashag (Bka' shag). When the Council was reorganized in 1751 by the Manchu Emperor, it consisted of three aristocrats (the three de-bön families mentioned on p.146) and one monk official. In time, the custom of having a monk Council Minister was lost and it was not until 1894 that it was reinstituted. In the period we are interested in the Council was composed of three Council Ministers of the third rank, called Shape (Zhabs pad) or interchangeably, Sawang chenmo (Sa dwang chen mo) or Kalön (Bka' blon). These were appointed by the ruler on the recommendation of the Council, although the ruler did not have to adhere to the Council's recommendations. There were no portifolios in the Council and all the work and decision making was done collectively with consensus being required for action. The Council was the administrative center of the Tibetan government. It received initially all incoming secular information, requests, telegrams and the like, sorted them out, and then sent each bit to the appropriate office or officials for examination. For example: (1) A request concerning disposition of tax funds would be sent to the office concerned with the collection of that tax, for example, the Finance Office or the Laca or Tseca treasuries. (2) A murder case would be sent to the Sherbang. (3) Matters of foreign affairs would be sent to the Office of Foreign Affairs (phyi rgyal las khungs). (4) Religious matters or questions concerning monk officials would be sent to the Ecclesiastic Office (yig tshang). The Council was

also the repository of important government records and documents. In all secular matters, when the examination by the appropriate lower office was completed, the report, with appropriate recommendations or comments, was sent back to the Council for perusal and possible emendation, and from there sent to the ruler for final approval. No secular matter could reach the ruler without going through the Council. Furthermore, the Council's seal was the official one required for all formal orders of the government.

The Council had wide authority concerning internal affairs even though their decisions were subject to final scrutinization by the ruler who had the authority to reject them and issue new decisions. The manner in which recommendations for action were sent to the ruler was important for the ultimate success of the recommendation. The standard form that recommendations took was that after a decision was made on some issue, a recommendation was sent to the ruler with internal options as to amount, and so forth, which he would check off and finally an option of accepting or rejecting the recommendation itself. For appointments of lay officials, the Council usually sent up three names, but in law cases and ot other administrative matters, there was no fixed number. In order to clarify this, one of the former Council Ministers, Surkhang Shape composed a sample recommendation that hypothetically went from the Finance Office to the Council to the Dalai Lama, then back to the Council, and from there to the

Finance Office, and finally, to the district in question. In Tibet, each of the higher offices used a different color ink, thereby making it immediately clear to the reader who had added what comments. Although all the reports and recommendations were written in the cursive form of script called kyu ('khyug), for the purpose of illustrating the method I shall rewrite the initial report in block letters (dbu can), the Council's additional comments in semi-block letters (dbu med) and the Dalai Lama's in kyu:





It was examined (by me the Dalai Lama) on the 5th day of the 9th month of the wood-tiger year.

Wood-tiger year. A report has arrived from Gyantse district (officer). This year because of heavy rains, the people of Samada's fields have become covered with water and they were not able to harvest a crop. Based on the great difficulties caused by that,((which others have no means for imitating)) after doing their corvee taxes, for three four five years we are requesting a concession of taxes in kind. ((and on top of that, to make up for the loss, ~~silver coins 200, 250, 300~~ and barley khal 70, 80, 90 to be given as a gift)).

Please instruct if it is all right or not to do this.

The first sentence of the translation was the standard one used by the Dalai Lama to indicate he had seen the paper. The parts of the translation that are in double brackets indicate those additions that the Council of Ministers added. The double underlining (in Tibetan a ཨ) and crossed out clause indicates the option the Dalai Lama chose and his rejection or recommendation of the Ministers' additions.

This document points up important facets of the competition for decision making power between the ruler and the Council of Ministers in its position as the highest of the permanent bureaucratic offices. As is typical of bureaucracies, a great deal of their ability to influence or control the decision making process or those persons who control that process derives from their accumulation of special knowledge and/or experience. In Tibet there was no significant special knowledge, but experience was an important resource that the Council in particular and the bureaucracy in general possessed. Whenever a new Dalai Lama or Regent appeared he was confronted by the Council

(and other high offices) with their staff of professional bureaucrats with long standing experience, and he could not facilely ignore their recommendations without risking a complete withdrawal of support by the aristocracy and leading monk officials.

In the above incident he theoretically only knew what was in the recommendation, and since the recommendation was strongly supported by the Council for approval he would almost always leave the basic notion intact, even though, as he did here, he might well alter some points within the decision.

There were several clear-cut types of decisions that had to be sent to the ruler for approval: (1) decisions which involved the expenditure of government funds, (2) decisions which involved the transfer of land from one owner to another, (3) decisions granting permanent tax exemptions (chag yangs), (4) promotions and demotions, (5) decisions involving border and foreign relations. The majority of topics other than these were settled unilaterally by the Council. Mr. Surkhang estimated that in the six day work week* there were about one hundred pieces of business which were sent to the ruler for final confirmation. Usually about 70 per cent of incoming questions were settled unilaterally by the Council, so that if one hundred items were passed along to the ruler in a week, perhaps two hundred and twenty-five were settled by the Council. A few examples of the types of things the Council might settle

* Except for holidays the government offices operated all year.

will clarify this: (1) A situation where due to floods a new dike had to be constructed. The Council could order the subjects (serfs) of that district (and even neighboring ones) to do corvée labor (no money was required, therefore it did not need the ruler's approval). (2) The Council could act on a villager's petition to have his taxes postponed for a year or so due to such things as crop failure, etc. (3) Requisitions for corvée labor and wood from government preserves could also be ordered by the Council. (4) Murder cases and other legal disputes (depending on their importance) could be settled by the Council in its capacity as court of last appeals. Of the petitions and decisions that went to the ruler, only about 10 or 15 per cent were very important. On administrative items that were not of significant importance, for example, (3) below, the ruler more often than not made no change or only a minor change. In the important items, the ruler changed the content perhaps as much as 50 to 60 per cent of the time. Furthermore, items directly related to governmental affairs were immediately dealt with by the ruler, while items involved with disputes and personal petitions often were not answered for months or even years. Several examples of the content of items that had to be sent to the ruler were: (1) A request from the Commander-in-Chief's Office to send a regiment from Lhasa to Tsang. (2) A request from the English Trade Agent concerning some foreigner's desire to visit Lhasa. (3) A request from the Ecclesiastic Office for money and grain to

rebuild a monastery destroyed by an earthquake. (4) The Council's nominations to fill a vacant position of General.

When the Council settled an item themselves, they simply wrote the decision as if it had already been seen by the Dalai Lama and then sent it out for implementation. This was possible because the official seal for governmental output was that of the Council, even if the item went to the ruler for approval. Generally speaking, the percentage of items unilaterally settled by the Council increased considerably during the reign of a Regent and decreased during that of a strong Dalai Lama like the Thirteenth.

One of the main sources of the Council's power was their control of the administrative process. They were the only office that could send secular items to the ruler for approval and the only secular oriented office that could have direct contact with the ruler. Also, since all incoming secular information went to them, they were the office that decided to which lower office a request should be sent. Moreover, they had the authority to add their own comments to anything any of the lower offices had written. They also, by virtue of their central position, could de facto block or hold up requests (particularly those concerning individual disputes or concessions) by simply not acting on them. While this was not done for routine governmental business or appointments, it was a potential threat and an important source of power for the Council Ministers vis-à-vis the rest of the bureaucracy

Moreover, by virtue of their ability to initiate action, they could use the knowledge of past events (as recorded in the Council's record books) to attack enemies. For example, they sometimes found old debts and initiated action for their collection with interest, or they passed along the information to friends that X's land documents were not very good, implying that if they contested ownership they would stand a good chance of winning (the case would be heard by the Council). The position of Council Minister was therefore a very important potential source of power, and the Council of Ministers, in effect, controlled the daily operation of the government.

Although the Council's authority was broad, it was partly counterbalanced by its lack of authority over the segment of the bureaucracy controlled by the monk officials. The division of the bureaucracy into two segments was based on different sources of recruitment. However, that division also, to some extent, implied differences in jurisdiction. Religious matters were considered solely the jurisdiction of the monk officials. The main offices concerned with such matters were the Ecclesiastic Office, which was headed by four 'Chief Secretaries' or Tru-nyi chen-mo (Drung yig chen mo), and above them, the office of the Lord Chamberlain or Chi-gyab ken-bo (Spyi khyab mkhan po). In the same manner that information concerning secular affairs was initially received by the Council of Ministers, purely religious matters initially were received by the Ecclesiastic Office. The majority of such matters had

no political relevance and concerned such things as the government's subsidizing of prayers, searching for new incarnations, request for additional funds by monasteries and disputes between monasteries. Whereas the Council of Ministers generally delegated matters to lower offices, the Ecclesiastic Office did not. Minor matters, particularly the routine recurrent ones, it decided itself. On more important matters, such as the last two mentioned above, the four heads of the Ecclesiastic Office were obligated to take their opinion or recommendation to the Lord Chamberlain. Depending on his views, the recommendation was either left or altered and then when a clean copy was rewritten, the Lord Chamberlain took it to the Dalai Lama for approval.

In terms of the overall political system, the most significant aspect of this division was the control of the recruitment, and subsequent promotions, of all monk officials by the Ecclesiastic Office acting in conjunction with the Lord Chamberlain. We have already discussed initial recruitment so let us now turn to internal promotions. Whereas the Council of Ministers prepared the lists of candidates for submission to the ruler for all positions which required secular officials, it had no voice at all in the candidate lists prepared for positions requiring monk officials. For example, if a District required one monk and one lay official, the lay names were compiled by the Council, but the monk candidates were compiled by the Ecclesiastic Office. For monk officials, though, the

names initially selected for submission to the ruler by the Ecclesiastic Office were subject to alteration by the Lord Chamberlain. He could invert the ranking of the candidates, delete, or add other names. Since almost all the important offices were headed jointly by monk and lay officials, this appointment authority was important.

As the Assemblies will be discussed below, suffice to note here that the four Chief Secretaries of the Ecclesiastic Office also played an important role in the operation of that institution. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that the Lord Chamberlain was traditionally called by the Council of Ministers to join it in discussions on matters of important national interest.

The monk official section was, therefore, internally autonomous from the lay officials' segment. It controlled its own initial recruitment and its internal promotions, although, like lay officials, its nominations were subject to the approval of the ruler. As regards this, it is important to note that the Lord Chamberlain had direct access to the ruler and on matters within the jurisdiction of the monk officials did not have to go through the Council of Ministers(see Figure 4).

We see, therefore, that the two sections of the Tibetan bureaucracy had areas of special competence. The Council was the highest authority in the permanent bureaucracy for secular matters, but had no authority over monk officials or religious affairs. The Ecclesiastic Office and the Lord Chamberlain had

complete control over religious affairs, but only peripheral influence over secular matters. Nevertheless, the practice of making joint monk-lay appointments to offices, especially the Council of Ministers, afforded the monk official segment in general a significant check on the lay section.

Before discussing promotions and the Assemblies, the office of Chief Minister or Si-lön (srid blon) merits mention. That position was not a part of the permanent bureaucracy, and although it was higher than the Council, normally played a less important role (except in periods when there was no ruler and it functioned as the ruler). That position was begun by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama about 1904-07 when he was residing in self-imposed exile in Mongolia as a result of the Anglo-Tibetan War and the subsequent English invasion of Lhasa. At that time, he appointed three former Council Ministers: Shatra, Shökhang, and Changkyim as joint Chief Ministers. While the Dalai Lama was in exile these Prime Ministers had tremendous authority and powers and functioned like Regents, but after the Dalai Lama returned (after 1911), they acted only as a bridge between the Council and the Dalai Lama, i.e., the Council had to send all their petitions, request, and so forth to the ruler via the Prime Minister(s) who could make comments on the petitions if they wanted. By about the 1930's, two of the original three Prime Ministers had died, leaving only Shökhang remaining. In order to offset his potential power, the Dalai Lama appointed his own nephew Langdün (Glang mdun)

as co-Prime Minister. At the time of the death of the Dalai Lama in 1933, only Langdün remained and he became equal in authority with the new Regent. Within a few years, however, the Regent managed to maneuver him into what amounted to retirement, and after that, no new Prime Minister was appointed until the Fourteenth Dalai Lama fled Lhasa in 1950. Because of its relatively short life span, I shall not discuss the Prime Minister's position further.

The complete list of government offices with corresponding rank is cited on p.169. Discussion of each office would entail space not warranted by their individual effect on the political process. Although the heads of these various offices could use their positions to exert some degree of influence within the bureaucratic structure, in terms of the overall political process, the Council dwarfed all the other offices so much so that individual description of their duties sheds little light on the process.

We have had occasion at various times to mention officials' salary and appointments. Appointments, as we said, were ultimately in the hands of the ruler although the Council Ministers (for lay officials) and the Ecclesiastic Office and Lord Chamberlain (for monk officials) had considerable influence over that process by their authority to submit nominees to the ruler. We further stressed that while the criteria for appointments was theoretically universalistic, the custom of recruiting support via gift giving was pervasive. Richardson

(23) states:

> It was the established system that persons who were suitably qualified by reank frequently secured their appointments by what can only be described as bribery but which in Tibet carried no moral stigma.

Although I feel that there is no question but that such practices were considered improper by those doing it (the political verses mentioned in the next chapter use such major incidents as one of their main themes), it was not something that carried negative sanctions with it. In keeping with the high achievement orientation and individualistic competition for authority and power, it was not how you got positions, but whether you got them.

Coupled with this is the fact that the salaries paid by the government were sorely inadequate. Richardson (22) comments that "no official received anything but a nominal salary." When these factors are related to the divisions within each of the bureaucratic segments concerning status and basic wealth, several interesting patterns emerge. First, there was a clear differentiation between the poorer aristocratic families who were interested in acquiring positions for their own immediate potential profit and the richer, usually mi-tra and higher, families who were large estate holders and were more oriented toward obtaining authoritative and high status positions. Whereas the former generally moved from one to another provincial position, the latter attempted to stay in Lhasa, the capital. For instance, the positions of General or Finance

Minister were important and relatively influential but had very limited potential for wealth procurement. Monk officials' positions operated in a similar fashion. The early years of the Tse-labtra students (the ones taken as tax from the monasteries) were without significant income and these boys when they became full monk officials usually attempted to procure lucrative positions at once. Just as the bigger families tended to dominate the authoritative positions in the lay segment, the richer monk officials did the same in their segment. We have already indicated how the aristocratic monk officials and those from the big monk 'families' (sha-tsang) controlled important positions disproportionate to their numbers. These patterns emerge clearly when we examine the actual composition of the two most important positions in the government, the Council Ministers and the Lord Chamberlain, over the period from 1900 to 1959.

Of the 41 Council Ministers, 12 were monk officials and 29 were lay officials. Of the lay officials 72 per cent were from mi-tra or higher families. Of the remaining 28 per cent, 14 per cent were from very rich families. Therefore, 86 per cent of the lay Council Ministers were from either the larger mi-tra families or lower, but very rich families. Of the remaining ones, only one was actually from a small poor family. Of the 12 monk officials, 33 per cent were from aristocratic families, 33 per cent from the large, very wealthy sha-tsang families. Thus, 66 per cent of these were either from aris-

tocratic or large monk families. In summary, then, about 80 per cent of the Council Ministers were from the small number of large aristocratic and monk families.

For the Lord Chamberlain's office, there were ten incumbents in this century. Six, or 60 per cent of those were aristocratic monk officials, three or 30 per cent were from the big sha-tsang families, and only 10 per cent or one, was from a lower background. Therefore, 90 per cent of the incumbents of that position were from this higher level.[7]

In relation to the character of the bureaucracy these patterns are important since they point up that the larger estate holders (along with the very rich sha-tsang units for monks) tended to dominate the important bureaucratic positions, and particularly the lay aristocrats, whose influence extended from the lay segment over into the monk one. The lack of adequate salary, the concomitant necessity of usually having to give large gifts for the higher positions, and also the greater expenses required of the higher rank officials in terms of living standard and ceremonial responsibilities, besides the need to maintain a large house in Lhasa, made it difficult for the poorer aristocrats to compete for the high positions such as Council Minister. While monk officials had less ceremonial expenses, the same factors generally were applicable.

Although we shall discuss their relevance to the competition for political power in the next chapter, this discussion of the government would be incomplete without some mention of

the Assemblies.

We stated earlier that the Regent was chosen first by the Manchu Emperor of China and later by the General Assembly (tshogs 'du rgyas 'dzoms). While the origin of the latter institution is not clear, there is some reason to believe that it may have arisen during the time of Pholhanas in the early eighteenth century. Once, in order to petition the Manchu representative in Lhasa to return the 7th Dalai Lama from where he was being kept near Litang, he arranged a meeting of monks and government officials to strengthen his position and to protect himself against any future punishment by the Emperor by making the request seem to be a collective wish of the group.[8]

But at that time the modern name of tsong-du (tshogs 'du) or assembly doesn't seem to have been used. That development seems to have accompanied the internal strife of the 1860's. During that period of confusion, a body calling itself Gan-dre-drung-sum (dga' 'bras drung gsum) or 'the three, Ganden Monastery, Drepung Monastery, and the government officials' met and, led by a lay aristocrat, deposed the Regent (Reting). That body then selected an aristocrat as Regent and after his death, appointed the next Regent. From that time on the Assembly or tsong-du, as it was called, selected the Regent, although the wishes of the late Dalai Lama were followed if he had indicated his preference.

There were three types of Assemblies, all of which met irregularly. They were convened at the request of the Council

of Ministers to consider and give an opinion on specific questions supplied them by the Council. The Council, however, had to consult the ruler before convening either of the two larger Assemblies. The smallest of these Assemblies was really a type of standing committee. It consisted of the four heads or Chief Secretaries of the Ecclesiastic Office and the four heads of the Finance Office(Rtsis khang). These eight together were called Drung rtsis brgyad (brgyad=eight) or the 'Assembly of Eight' as we shall call it. These eight were often unilaterally convened by the Council of Ministers to render an opinion on some difficult matter. Usually the Council's motivation was both to increase the force behind the proposal as well as to protect themselves against later repercussions by widening the base of support for a proposal they were going to present to the ruler.

The largest of the three Assemblies, the Tshogs 'du-rgyas 'dzoms, has been called the National Assembly, but this has misleading connotations. I prefer to call it a less politically loaded name, the General Assembly, since this does not imply that the Assembly was national in composition. It in fact, comprised only all the abbots (mkhan po) and ex-abbots (mkhan zur) of Sendregasum; all the lay and monk officials present in Lhasa at the time; a representative of the following Bla brang and monasteries: Rwa sgreng, Kun bde gling, Tshe smon gling, Tshe mchog gling, Sde drug, Bkra shis lhun-po, Dga' ldan Khri rin po che, and Sa skya[9];the ru dpon and

brgya dpon (the captains and lieutenants) of the army in Lhasa, and finally, the twenty or so tsho pa of Lhasa. These tsho-pa were basically in charge of collecting house taxes in Lhasa and arranging corvée taxes. The responsibility for this work was delegated permanently to three aristocratic families, and non-hereditarily to another twenty or so families. There were aristocrats among that twenty although most of them were wealthy traders who owned property in Lhasa. There were also about 30 drung gtogs. These were clerks (nang gzan) who, as a result of their service, were made 'honorary' officials and were allowed to wear a red sash to indicate this higher status. Generally, the head clerks of the larger government officials were given this status.

The General Assembly could only be convened by the Council (with ruler's permission). However, although they stipulated the topic for discussion, neither were allowed to attend the meetings. The Assembly was generally convened when important decisions had to be made that the Council (and ruler) wanted to collectivize responsibility for by overtly obtaining the support of Sendregasum and the government officials. A few examples of things which were discussed are: (1) selection of a new Dalai Lama or Regent, (2) a major internal disturbance such as the dispute between the Panchen Lama and the Government or the Sera Byes rebellion, (3) institution of new taxes affecting the entire nation, such as the various military taxes, (4) important issues concerning foreign affairs.

In addition to their other responsibilities, the drung rtsis brgyad acted as moderators for the two larger Assemblies. At these meetings they would open the meeting by reading the problem to be discussed and would then remain during the course of the discussion, often taking part in it. Since votes were not taken, the final decision of the meeting was generally ascertained by one of the members, or more usually, one of the moderators, attempting to sum up the feelings expressed by the members verbally and then asking the meeting at large if this interpretation was accurate. If there were no dissenting opinions or changes, they would then appoint someone to write up a draft of this and bring it back. After the draft was read, if it seemed all right, it would be taken by the moderators to the Council. Although the Council and ruler could not simply cross out parts of the petition they didn't like (as in the bureaucratic memos), they could paste their comments over the passages, the result, therefore, being the same. If such comments were made, the Assembly would rewrite the draft and then if agreement existed they would affix their seals to it. Normally, only four seals were affixed: one representing all the government officials and one for each of the three monasteries of Sendregasum. This clearly illustrates the importance of these two segments. In reality, the other representatives rarely spoke at the meetings although they did offer their seals on some occasions, such as on documents involving foreign nations.

Sometimes the General Assembly was divided up into smaller committees (tshogs chung), as was the case in the selection of Reting Regent, on the basis of rank, e.g., all fourth-rank officials met together to discuss the issue. Furthermore, the General Assembly was often adjourned after a day or two in favor of a smaller body called the tshogs 'du hrag bsdus, which I shall henceforth refer to as the Abbreviated Assembly. This Assembly consisted of the abbots of Sendregasum and a few government officials chosen by the Council of Ministers and the Ecclesiastic Office from all the governmental ranks. The size of this body varied depending on the number of government officials sent, but generally fell between twenty and fifty. This body need not result from the descaling of the General Assembly and, in fact, was usually the one initially convened, the General Assembly being convened only on major international issues and very important internal ones, like the selection of a Regent or Dalai Lama. The Abbreviated Assembly used the same seal as the General Assembly and operated in the same manner. Neither of these Assemblies, however, could either initiate or fianlly decide administrative action. Whether or not their advice was heeded, and if so, when it was converted into policy, depended solely ontthe Council and ruler. In short, the Assemblies were consultive bodies which represented primarily the two great political groupings: the monks of Sendregasum and the bureaucratic officials. In the next chapter we shall indicate how the Assemblies were really dominated by the

monks, and how even Tibetans perceived them as the mouthpiece of Sendregasum (Richardson: 25) says, "...but its main significance was that at its meetings the voice of the great monasteries of Lhasa...was heard through their abbots." The flow of administrative input-output is shown in figures 4 and 5, p.194 and figure 6, p. 195

In conclusion, we have noted that the paramount authority on all secular matters was the Dalai Lama or Regent. Under him, the bureaucracy was divided into a segment representing the aristocracy and a counterposed segment representing primarily the Gelugpa church. The monk segment, although responsible for religious affairs and the monk officials, actually can be viewed as a check on the aristocratic officials. Monk officials served side by side in most of the important offices, e.g., the Council of Ministers and the Office of the Military Commanders-in-Chief (Dmag spyi khang), but nevertheless, it seems clear that the aristocratic officials as a unit dominated the monk officials. The basic reasons for this are severaldfold: (1) The Council of Ministers was dominated by lay officials. (2) The Generals were all lay officials. (3) Most of the important border districts were administered by lay officials. (4) While the lay official segment was monopolized by aristocrats, the monk official segment was infiltrated by aristocrats, some of them serving hereditarily and some by choice, but usually controlling important positions disproportionate to their numbers. (5) The lay aristocratic officials

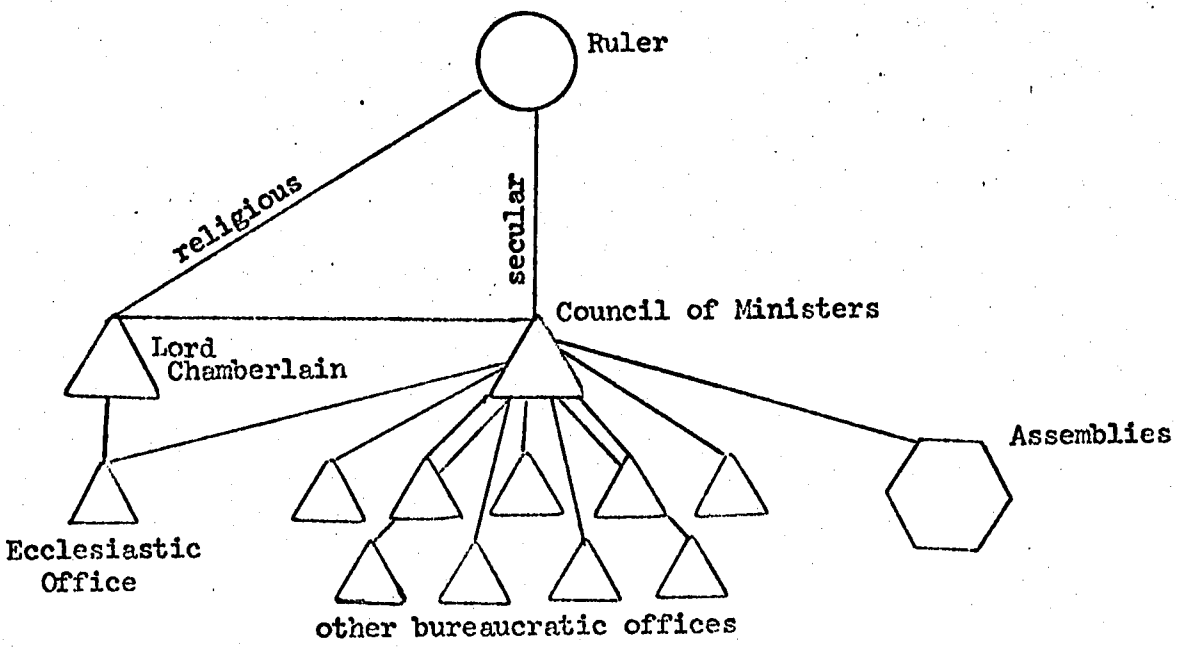


FIGURE 4. Lines of access to Ruler when no Chief Minister

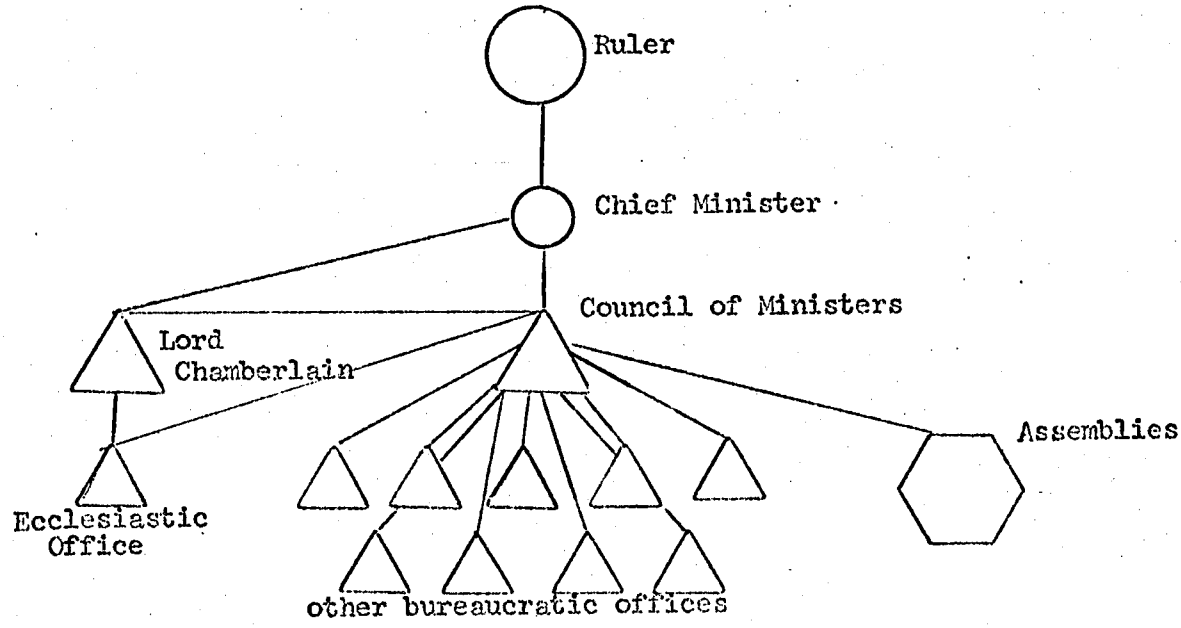
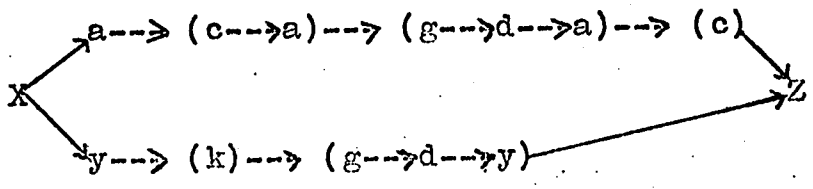


FIGURE 5. Lines of access to Ruler when there was a Chief Minister

particularly those in the higher category, held sizable estates and thereby controlled a large portion of the wealth (both land and people) of the country. (6) The closed nature of the aristocracy tended to foster a feeling of exclusiveness and group consciousness which when coupled to extensive kinship and marriage relationships between the two hundred or so families, tended to give incumbents in high authority positions built in support-fields. I should be reiterated, though, that the position of ruler was the dominant one in the authority network.

The fundamental groupings in the political arena, then, were the ruler, the bureaucracy with its two segments, and the monasteries headed by Sendregasum. We have shown how the potential paramount authority of the ruler was limited by restraints upon his movement and education and by the existence of a bureaucracy dominated by the traditional aristocratic stratum and as a unit, possessing a number of important rights such as initiating policy. The monasteries of Sendregasum and their articulation will be examined in some detail in the next chapter where we shall complete the discussion of the Central Government by discussing the complex competition for political influence.



Key:

-->	= direction of input-out flow
X	= input
a	= Council of Ministers
c	= source within bureaucracy excluding (a), (k)
g	= Chief Minister(when existent)
d	= ruler
Z	= output
y	= Ecclesiastic Office
k	= Lord Chamberlain
( )	= optional

FIGURE 6. Diagrammatic schemata of administrative process for secular and religious items.

Footnotes

1. This approximation was made by the former Council Minister Surkhang Shape.

2. The reason for this overlapping seems that at first the name yab-shi was not used, but the natal families of the Dalai Lamas were called de-bön. Later, probably during the Eighth Dalai Lama's time, yab-shi came into use and Sampho was classified under both yab-shi and de-bön.

3. Until about 1910-1911 this ceremony was for the Tibetan government to present their nominees for office to the Manchu Emperor of China's representative in Lhasa (the Amban) for approval.

4. The holidays mentioned were of course really related to other events. Dga' ldan lnga mchod commenorated the death of Tsongkhapa, and Brgyad gtor was the great gtor brgyab (ceremony to get rid of evil) in Lhasa.

5. This is a traditional Tibetan distinction.

6. The fact that after the 5th Dalai Lama no Dalai Lama has been found in the aristocracy seems very significant, but I have no documentation, nor have I heard Tibetans imply, that the selection was consciously manipulated so as to exclude aristocratic families.

7. Personal communication from Surkhang Shape

8. In the mi dbang rtogs spyod, f. 313 a, "...mchog gi sprul

sku rnams dang, gdan sa chen po rnam pa gsum la sogs pa'i bla ma dang, sne mo 'dzin pa rnams dang/ mi'i bdag po rang nyid kyi gtos zham ring pa drung na spyod pa'i rigs can bdag cag la sogs pa thams cad 'dus par mdzad de gtso bo de dag 'dug pa'i gnas lha klu dag ba'i tshal du gshegs nas thams cad kyis pus mo bcugs/ mgo bo dud pa'i phyags byas/ thams cad mkhyen pa rgyal ba'i dbang po'i pi cing du spyan drangs par...

9. This was the only one that was not Gelugpa

CHAPTER SIX

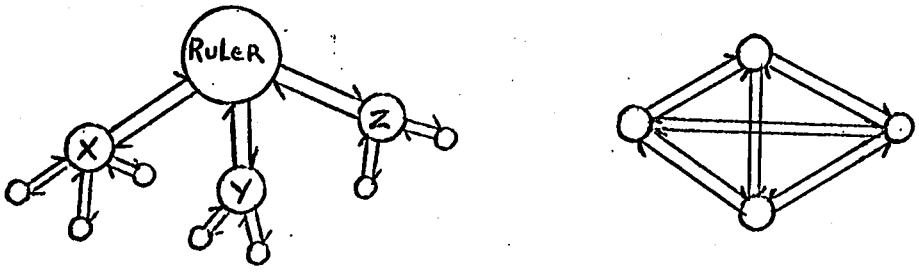
THE TIBETAN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT: COMPETITION FOR POLITICAL INFLUENCE

In Chapter Five the formal network of positions and roles which comprised the government was outlined and their authority content discussed. Several aspects of the power competition were also mentioned. It was indicated that the theoretically paramount authority of the ruler was not necessarily complete in practice, and that the Council of Ministers, functioning as the most important office of the bureaucracy, could compete in various ways with the ruler concerning decision making on the highest level.

If not in all political systems, in all state-type systems there is competition for control of or influence over the decision making and implementing processes of the government. In the Tibetan political system, the formal authority positions were sources for potential influence rather than actual indices of authority. Potential influence refers to the notion that, on the one hand, not all persons with political influence have equal resources or are able to make use of resources equally efficaciously. Thus, whether or not, or to what degree the incumbent of, say, the position of Regent was able to activate that resource at any given time and exert

influence over the decision making and implementing processes of the government is a topic for empirical investigation.

Taking structure here to mean simply recurrent patterns of behavior, I shall now examine the major patterns of the influence competition in Tibet on the highest governmental levels. This competition can be divided into several important segments. The first will be referred to as the favorites. Persons in that category formed a centrifocal grouping around the ruler. The concept centrifocal grouping refers to a kindred like network in which a number of persons have similar, differentiated interactions with a central figure but in which no differentiated interactions between the non-central figures resulting from their residing in parallel relationships with the central figure exist (see figure 7, below). Thus, they did not form a group in the standard use of that concept.



Primary and secondary centrifocal groupings

Normal group

⟷ = lines of interaction

FIGURE 7. Centrifocal groupings.

Whatever power or influence these persons possessed directly derived from the extent of their influence over and/or persuasion with the central figure. Furthermore, persons with primary links with the central figure (in figure 7: X, Y, Z) were themselves usually centers of secondary centrifocal groupings. The persons comprising these groupings, i.e., the favorites, were usually bitter rivals with intense competition of the type where X tries to increase his power and decrease the power of all competing Ys and Zs the normal situation.

The favorites were similar to a larger field of supporters I shall call the followers. The relationship between the ruler (or any other central figure) and his followers was characterized by overt manifestation of support on various issues by the followers and reciprocal recognition of that by the ruler through some reward. Whereas the favorites were basically concerned with influencing the decision making process via the authority position of the ruler, the followers were generally motivated by hopes of inducing the ruler to reward their overt support on some issue with wealth and/or status via promotions, support in litagations and so forth, although more altruistic motives also existed. In both of these types of relationships there were no formal dependency links as in client-patron situations, and there were no manifest norms concerning mutual obligations. It was an extremely loose arrangement and the degree of overt support

and recognition varied considerably. It was, furthermore, often from this field of followers that favorites arose. In the incident cited below, the behavior of the Tö (stod) abbot illustrates the manner a favorite might, if motivated attempt to ascent to the category of favorite, as well as other important aspects of the competition for power.

About 1940, a meeting of the Abbreviated Assembly was convened to discuss giving the Regent additional estates. At that meeting the lay official Qung-ram (khyung ram) made a speech which he planned as support for the Regent's desire for more estates. He was actually among those favored by the Reting Regent and since the Regent's coming to office had already been promoted to rdza sag (just below third rank) from fourth rank (rim bzhi), and had been appointed Governor of the lucrative Hor areas. However, he was very long-winded and tended to give rambling, involved speeches. On that day, during his speech he said that some persons say that:

> ri bo bzas nas mi 'grangs
> rgya mtsho 'thung nas mi ngom
>
> Having eaten the mountain, there is no satiation
> Having drunk the ocean there is no quenching (of thirst)

in relation to Regents. He had every intention of going on to condemn this notion as being erroneous and inapplicable to the present Regent, but before he could say that he was interrupted by another supporter of the Regent, the Tö Abbot of Sera Monastery. This Abbot demanded to know how he could make

such a statement about the Regent, and when Qung-ram tried to say that the abbot had misunderstood him, he wouldn't listen to him. In between this, several officials spoke up supporting Qung-ram and finally when Qung-ram again tried to explain the phrase, the Abbot shouted at him that he had heard him say it. Qung-ram then got very angry and said something roughly equivalent to, "And if I said it so what!"

There was a lot of anti-Regent sentiment and Qung-ram became the darling and focus of that sentiment. Had he gone to the Regent and apologized he would have probably received nothing more than a verbal chiding and the incident would have been finished, but he chose not to, seemingly having taken a liking to his newly found prestige. After some time one of the close supporters of the Regent thought of a scheme to retaliate against Qung-ram. This person had recently been Governor of the same region where Qung-ram then was, and it is said that he instigated some peasants he knew to initiate a complaint against Qung-ram on the grounds that he was abusing and cheating the peasants. Soon after, a group of about ten peasant representatives from this region arrived in Lhasa to present a petition to the Council of Ministers, and the Council and Regent appointed a fact finding committee composed of four government officials to investigate the allegations. These, however, were all enemies of Qung-ram, and when they notified him to come to give testimony he simply ignored them, never thinking anything would come of it. He was wrong. The

Regent got angry and sent soldiers to take him into custody and attach (sgo the'u rgyab)[1] his house and belongings.

When the first news of this misbehavior allegation reached Quang-ram it seems he became convinced that the time had come for action to be taken against the Regent. With the backing of some officials and elements of the monastic complex he formulated a plan to produce a spontaneous Assembly meeting that his supporters would dominate and thereby force the Regent to resign.[2] To this end he had written a letter denouncing the Regent at some length. When his house was searched and his possessions attached, this letter was found and turned over to the Regent. With this in his hands, the Regent had Qung-ram whipped, denobled and expelled from government service. He also confiscated all his estates, houses, and movable wealth and after publically humiliating and imprisoning him, exiled him to Western Tibet for life.[3] This was not an isolated case and many similar ones could be cited.

From the point of view of the role of ruler, the favorites filled a structural gap regarding the acquisition of information by affording him sources of information and opinions independent of the formal bureaucratic network (although favorites might indeed actually be government officials). It also, to an extent, secured a positive support network for the ruler, although this was a significant fact mainly during the reign of a Regent since the Dalai Lama could not be expelled from office.[4]

The followers and favorites (with their followers) further were a supply of persons on whom the ruler could rely and readily obtain actors for various tasks such as spying. Here again, this was more significant during the period of a Regent than that of a Dalai Lama.

The composition of the favorites and followers varied. In both categories it is important to distinguish the government officials from the others (who were almost always monks). Government officials, particularly lay officials, were generally less reliable and loyal than monks. In the first place, lay officials had hereditary estates and the right to serve as government officials. This gave them a high status independent of the rewards or favors of the ruler. Furthermore, after the ruler passed on, the lay official or his descendants would remain as would their estates and status. A second factor was that the use of promotions and appointments (or demotions) as the ruler's major coersive resource was characterized by inherent contradiction. By virtue of raising an official to a high authority position it, in effect, diminished his reliability. He was more apt to be motivated by desire to maintain his position than by supporting his benefactor, the ruler, especially in serious situations where the official might lose his own position. The basic reason for this was, as I mentioned earlier, that an official could not be demoted by the ruler on any whim. Unless he breached some norm he was secure in his position. There have been many

instances when a Regent raised an official to a high position only to find that when the chips, so to speak, were down, he either withheld active support or even threw his support to the ruler's rival.

Common monks, on the other hand, were much less likely to transfer their allegiance since they had no independent source of status and power to protect. They might indeed become very wealthy through their relationship with the ruler, but a favorite without the ruler was just a common monk, and this gave excellent incentive to the monk favorites to remain loyal to the ruler. The disadvantage of monks as favorites was that they generally had only minimal networks of supporters behind them and thus afforded the ruler little overall potential support. In the Dalai Lama's case, his need for widespread support networks was so minimal that he tended to keep monks and poor persons as favorites. The Regent, on the other hand, depended (outside of his own monastic personel) on government officials to a far greater extent. By favoring a few key aristocratic families the Regent could gain support, not only of those families, but a number of others which were closely allied, usually through kinship ties, as well as followers and so forth of the aristocrats as centers of centrifocal groupings.

It is important to reiterate though, that while the favorites were important to the ruler as sources of information and support, looking at it from the point of view of

what they did, their category was also very important since they often exerted tremendous influence over the ruler and therefore the highest decision making levels of the government. It should be noted that the type of influence the favorites exerted over the ruler was persuasion. Through affect relationships and/or intellect, the centrifocal grouping members influenced the ruler concerning decisions which were pending, or instigated him to initiate some new policy. Whereas each favorite tried to monopolize this influence over the ruler vis-à-vis other favorites, the ruler generally maintained more than one, the advantage for him being obvious.

Related to this is the relationship between a new ruler and the bureaucracy. When a new ruler took office he inherited entrenched incumbents in the highest offices of the bureaucracy. Furthermore, during the early days of a reign, due to the experience and prestige of the Council Ministers and other relevant high officials, the influence of the Council in particular was considerably increased, that is to say, they were able to control a greater percentage of the decision-making process. As time progressed and the new ruler began to stabilize a field of favorites and followers and feel more confident in his new role, a potential conflict situation arose. If he felt that incumbents in the important positions such as Council Minister, General and Chief Secretary were either hostile, or not responsive to his wishes, he could not simply demote them (or him) and appoint one of his own supporters. It

was a norm (or "rule of the game") of the Tibetan political system that government bureaucrats had a right to office and could only be dismissed on the basis of some breach of their role's normative behavior (this we saw was important in explaining the unreliability of followers). The ruler, therefore, had to wait for either natural vacancies to occur or breaches of proper behavior, even minor ones. While it was true that he could also promote an individual into a higher ranking but powerless position, this was seldom feasible. Nevertheless, if the ruler remained in office for any length of time he would have generally filled a majority of the crucial offices with persons acceptable to him, thereby diminishing any potential threat to his incumbancy. Often, however, as the reign progressed in time the favorites of the ruler looked apprehensively at the threat of the Council to their influence positions. An incident occurred just before the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1933 which illustrates this, as well as the manner favorites influenced the ruler.

The incident revolves around a power struggle within the Council of Ministers between the lay Council Minister Tri-mön (Khri smon) and the Monk Council Minister Chö-dar (Chos dar). One day in the Council office they had a big public argument(which was a breach of official etiquette). One of the two main favorites of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, the Finance Minister Lung-shar (Lung shar) took that opportunity to send a letter to the Dalai Lama informing him of the quarrel,

telling him how the Ministers were cheating the people and giving all kinds of favors to their friends and how, in general, they were not acting in the best interests of the government. He advised the Dalai Lama to demote them, presumably hoping that he would be appointed to the Council in their place. As a result of this letter, the Dalai Lama decided to demote Tri-mön, but when the other main favorite, Gün-be (Kun-'phel), heard about it he got very agitated and went to the Dalai Lama. He pleaded with the Dalai Lama not to demote the Ministers and it is interesting to note that his argument was primarily affect oriented. He told the Dalai Lama that the Ministers in question were not his friends so he had no ulterior motives. However, if they were demoted, everyone would blame him for instigating it and he would make a lot of dangerous enemies. Gün-be's affect-oriented argument finally won out over Lung-shar's more intellect-oriented one, and the Dalai Lama decided to do nothing. This pattern of influencing the Dalai Lama was considered somewhat improper as can be from Lung-shar's argument to Gün-be after the Dalai Lama's death. Lung-shar wanted Gün-be to return all the notes he had sent to the late Dalai Lama, and told Gün-be that if others saw the notes it would reflect derogatorily on the image of the late Dalai Lama.[5]

The mirror image of the centrifocal in-group category was an out-group category composed of persons who were out of favor and/or hostile to the ruler (or in some instances to

persons in the primary centrifocal grouping). The sole unifying feature of this category was that its members were either discriminated against or knew that g ven an opportunity they would be discriminated against. Generally the persons in this category were reluctant to do anything else but wait for either an opportunity to move back into favor with the influence holders, or until one of the periodic shifts of Dalai Lama or Regent occurred and a new influence configuration arose.

On infrequent occasions, however, what we may consider the normal competition for power erupted into a major attempt to oust the ruler. On these occasions clandestine, anti-ruler groups emerged which were comprised of members of the out-group joined with elements of the monasteries. The Qungram incident cited above illustrates just such a plot emerging to depse the Regent. The manner such a move might be made will be discussed in more detail in a latter part of this chapter.

Between these two segments were the majority of the bureaucratic officials. An understanding of their position is critical for understanding the total political system. They stood more or less neutral in the competition for political influence on the highest levels. They were neither in the out-group nor among the active followers of the ruler. They were more interested in competing on lower bureaucratic levels for improving their own rank and position than in outwardly entering into the higher level competition. The reason for this

was clearly a result of the high degree of danger associated with the latter. Although it was hard to move up into the 'followers' and primary centrifocal grouping, it was all too easy to move downward into the out-group, this downward movement usually being accompanied by loss of material wealth and/or estates. The danger and subsequent fear of losing their estates is the key to the behavior of the lay officials. As we have seen in Chapter Four, the aristocratic lay officials had large agricultural (and some pastoral) lands with attached serfs to work them. Because this type of manorial estate was the most important and productive form of economic wealth in Tibet, the preservation of these estates was one of the highest values. Even monk officials, who (except for a few aristocrats) did not have hereditary estates, tended to follow the same pattern as their lay official counterparts, for they too had something to protect. The higher monk officials like the Chief Secretaries, the Lord Chamberlain and the Monk Council Minister all had sources of income as a result of their positions. In effect, they had their position to protect since as stressed above, unless they misbehaved they could not be demoted and as long as they did not get involved in plots they could presumably live comfortably. This segment of uncommitted officials had no ideological committment other than self-preservation and was therefore very vacillatory, tending to bend readily with whatever it cognized as the most powerful political breeze.

In reality, their neutrality and uncommitted status can be viewed as following a principle of inaction. The majority of the government officials, particularly the lay and higher monk officials, remained inactive in any major power play until they perceived a victor. During the normal influence competition, this same segment remained neutral, passively following whatever lead the power-holders made. As a result of this, it was relatively easy for out-group activists to coerce this segment into refraining from action, but extremely difficult to induce them to act on their behalf. Even for the in-group it was often difficult for the ruler to set his followers in action. In showdowns, they often decided to wait and attempt to protect their wealth and status vis-à-vis affording active support for their "leader" in his time of difficulty. Furthermore, this uncommitted segment was relatively indifferent to the direction of government policy as long as it did not threaten their position, and also indifferent as to who came out victorious in any given plot so long as they escaped unscathed.

Concerning the infrequent major power plots, there were two crucial resouces that the participants might make use of: (1) the military and (2) the monastic complex of Sendragasum (or various alliances of sub-units within it). Of these two the monks were by far the more important. The reasons for this will emerge clearly after a brief discussion of the military in Tibet.

Before about 1911 there were no permanent garrisons of soldiers. Service in the military was a corvée tax, but the soldiers only had to show up for a very short time in fall and spring, unless of course there was war. Even after that date, it wasn't until about 1915, after the Simla conference, that England gave Tibet its first modern bolt rifles (about 5,100 of them).[6] Before the appearance of the modern rifle and cannon, the overwhelming numerical superiority of the monks of Sendregasum and the superior obedience of the monks to their abbots and other monastic offices relegated the military to a very weak position. After the acquisition of modern guns and the establishment of permanent garrisons (particularly in Lhasa) potential coersive power undoubtedly shifted to the military. However, in keeping with the general principle of inaction, activation this potential force for power maneuvers was very difficult. In modern times (e.g., the 1940's) the military complex consisted of a number of regiments (dmag sgar) most of which were deployed in border areas. The only units that were relevant in power conflicts were those stationed in Lhasa. There were two main military garrisons in that area: (1) the Sku srung dmag sgar and the Gra bzhi dmag sgar. The first were the bodyguards of the Dalai Lama and were located at the Norbulinka palace. They had about 1,000 soldiers. The second was located a few miles outside of Lhasa and also had 1,000 soldiers. Each of these regiments was commanded by two generals (mda' dpon) both of whom were lay officials. Under them were

a hierarchy of officials ranging from ru dpon through brgya-dpon to zhal ngo to bcu dpon, the latter being a head of ten men, the next of fifty men, the next of 100 men and the ru dpon being the more or less permanent officers of the regiment. The ru-dpon were usually men who had worked their way up from the ranks, although sometimes lay officials were appointed. Administrating these as well as the other regiments such as the Ga tang (Shigatse), Nga tang (Gyantse), Ca tang (Tingri), and Cha tang (Lhasa artillery) was the office of the Commanders-in-chief (Dmag spyi khang) which consisted of two Dmag-spyi (or Commanders-in-chief as I refer to them) one of whom was a monk official and the other a lay official. This office administrated and coordinated military affairs and all correspondence of the regiments with the Central Government had to go via that office.

From previous discussions it is obvious that the relationship between those involved in power competition and the generals and commanders-in-chief was very important. Because of this, the ruler usually tried to fill the important garrisons with persons favorable to him as soon as possible. An example of this was when Taktra Regent (Stag brag) changed one of the remaining generals who was very pro-Reting by using the petty excuse that the official appeared at a ceremony about fifteen minutes late to demote him. However, as we have stressed, even pro-ruler generals were not reliable. This was illustrated by the inaction of General Nang byung in the

Gün-be affair in 1933, and the effete attempt of the generals of the Grong drag regiment that same year in the face of an anti-Gün-be plot. All these generals were supporters of Gün-be; Nang-Byung also was a close friend.

In actuality, the potential of the military was not directly efficacious for out-group plotters. Nevertheless, by immobilizing the military as Lung-shar did 1933, such a group could indirectly obtain significant benefits. The most important actual source of power was the monastic complex of Sendregasum.

Even though the Gelugpa sect had many large monasteries in both Central and Eastern Tibet, only three played any significant role in the political system. These three: Sera (Se ra), Drepung ('Bras spungs) and Ganden (Dga' ldan) were all in the immediate vicinity of the political capital of Tibet, Lhasa. Sera and Drepung were only a few miles outside of Lhasa and Ganden about thirty miles away. This factor of distance, coupled with the smaller number of monks in it, relegated Ganden to a lesser role in power machinations.

Although there are no exact figures available, Tibetans traditionally say that Drepung housed 7,700 monks. Sera 5,500 and Ganden 3,300. Richardson (1965: 25), who lived in Lhasa for years, estimated a total of about 20,000 monks and that probably is a reasonable figure. Richardson (Ibid.: 7) further estimated that in 1952 Lhasa had a population of about 30,000 and the next largest towns in Central Tibet -- Gyantse and

Shigatse -- had about 10,000. The Tibetan army numbered only around 10,000 soldiers. In terms of Tibetan demographic patterns, then, the three seats of the Gelugpa sect -- Sera, Drepung and Ganden -- were enormous. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, these three monasteries were centers of wide networks of affiliated branch monasteries (dgon lag) which were scattered throughout Tibet. There was a continual flow of monks from the provincial village monasteries to the parent monasteries and visa versa. When Sendregasum took a position on some issue they in effect could claim to be speaking for the majority of the Gelugpa monks.

The monks housed in Sendregasum were not other-worldly, withdrawing monks. As I pointed out in an article on Idab ldob (1964) about 10 per cent of the monks in these monasteries were a type of anti-monk called Idab ldob. They fought extensively among themselves under a type of code of chivalry, indulged in homosexual practices (going to the extreme of actually stealing boys for that purpose), and in terms of their overt behavior seem hardly to resemble monks.

In general, Tibetan monasteries were divided into two gross categories: (1) The 'readers', that is to say, those monks who were highly literate, who were pursuing advanced studies and who partook in the Gelugpa debating curriculum. (2) The 'non-readers' or those monks who ranged from illiterate to semi-literate to literate in terms of reading simple texts. About 90 per cent of the 20,000 monks of Sendregasum

would fall into the second category of monks who were not pursuing advanced studies, and who were, in reality, a type of worker monk. Using these rough estimates, we find that in the immediate vicinity of Lhasa there were about 17,-18,000 relatively secularized monks with about 2,000 fighting (Ldab ldob) monks ready to head the foray. These monks were both physically and emotionally capable of resorting to violence given the proper stimulus, this stimulus generally being concerned with the theme of defending the religion (chos). Monks had little to fear from reprisals since, on the one hand, they had no estates and so forth to lose, and on the other, were relatively safe due to the anonymity of collective demonstration. Furthermore, every year during the New Year's period the monks of Drepung actually ruled Lhasa for about a month during which time they could and did punish anyone breaking their rules, including even aristocrats.

Those three monasteries acting in concert, or sometimes even sub-units singly, held what was in effect, de facto veto power over the government. In the name of upholding religion (chos) in Tibet they usually could coerce the ruler and government to yield to their demands. Except in situations where they were involved in major plots, they did not usually initiate policy demands.

Internally, the three monasteries were rife with both inter-monastic and intra-monastic rivalries. Bitter hostility traditionally existed between the various sub-units (grwa-

tshang) which were similar to colleges in English universities. These intra-monastic, inter-college conflicts were often very intense. In 1949 when the Che (byes) of Sera revolted against the Regent and government, the other large college in that monastery, Sera Me (smad), cheered on the government troops while they shelled the rival college's quarters. Nevertheless, on issues they viewed as important, the three monasteries were able to put up a monolithic front when confronting the government.

In 1947, for example, when, with the backing of the Council of Ministers and the Regent, and English school was about to be opened in Lhasa, the abbots of the three monasteries went to the Council together and demanded the scheme be rescinded as it would harm religion. This, joined by demonstrations by monks, especially the Idab Idob, forced the government to acquiesce even though they had already signed a teacher to a three year contract and had bought the books and so forth. In the end the government had to pay the teacher three years salary and close the school before it had even opened.

It has been mentioned above that the monasteries were sub-divided into colleges. These, and even sub-units within them, were sometimes involved in the power competition in the sense of (their leaders) either supporting an out-group (as did Sera Che for Reting in 1949) or through influential members being involved with the ruler as favorites or followers. An incident related to the Qung-ram case cited earlier illus-

trates the political power even a single monastic college could wield.

The abbot who accused Qung-ram at the meeting, the Tö abbot, was the abbot of an anachronistic college that no longer existed except in name, but nevertheless continued to fill the position of abbot. After his conduct at the Assembly meeting, the abbot became very close to the Regent and the Regent decided to procure the position of abbot of one of the functioning colleges in Sera for him. The Reting Regent chose Sera Me, a college traditionally cool to his incarnation line. It is necessary to digress slightly and explain the preceding statement. For the last several hundred years the Regent was almost always selected from a small number of high incarnation of the Gelugpa sect. Each of these had traditional ties with one or more colleges of Sendregasum and received at least part of their education there, for example, Reting incarnation was affiliated with Sera Che college. In terms of the political process, this automatically gave the new Regent complete support from at least the college to which he was affiliated (there were nine colleges in Sendregasum). On the other hand, it also brought about a situation where his college's rivals became, if not his rival, at least reserved toward him. In Reting's case the rival college was the Sera Me college, and it was as abbot of that college that the Regent wanted to appoint his friend.

Although there was often some small variation, abbots

generally served for six years. In Sera, the abbot of the anachronistic Tö college generally became the abbot of a real one at the first vacancy. In this instance, however, the Regent decided to speed up the process by coercing the incumbent abbot of Me, an elderly monk who was respected and liked by all the monks, to resign. The Regent is said to have sent that abbot a message secretly advising him that unless he resigned at once he could look forward to a lot of trouble.

The abbot feared the consequences both of ignoring the Regent, and also of informing the monks beforehand of his decision (as was customary) since he felt they might cause a disturbance and the Regent would think he incited it. He therefore secretly resigned. When the monks found out they were furious and began to talk of causing a disturbance. They only desisted from open demonstration and possible violence as a result of the pleas of the old abbot who told the monks that if they cared for him they would not creat an incident since it would be he who suffered. The monks finally agreed, but nevertheless decided to manifest openly their antipathy toward the Regent.

Traditionally, the ruler maintained some control over Sendregasum through possessing the final authority to select the abbots. The normal procedure, paralleling the government, was for a college to select five names (nominees) and send them to the ruler who would make the final appointment. On this occasion, however, the monks didn't include the Tö abbot

among the five names (although he would normally have been), and on top of that, in an unprecedented move, wrote that under no circumstances would they accept him as their abbot. This was a direct affront to a well established authority-right of the position of ruler.

The ruler was furious but impotent to do much. He first tried to persuade the monks by recalling an incarnate Lama of that college who was giving a sermon in Tashilhunpo and sending him to try to persuade the monks to back down from their position. But the monks didn't listen to him, and in fact, sent word to the Regent that if the Tö abbot ever returned to Sera monastery his life would be in danger. They further stated that if the Regent tried to use force, they would close down the college and all leave the monastery. In the end the Regent was forced to abandon his plan. In order to save face, the Tö abbot had to give up his monastic vows and retire to the province, since if he remained an abbot he had to live in Sera, and if anything happened to him, it would be extremely embarrassing to the Regent. In retaliation for the monks' conduct, the Regent accused the old abbot of instigating the monks and stripped him of his prestigious rank of ex-abbot (mkhan zur) (a rank which permitted him to attend General Assembly meetings) making him a common monk.[7]

These few examples show clearly the tremendous power this monastic complex exerted in the normal political process. Let us now go on to examine the role of Sendregasum in times

of major political upheavals. Although we discussed the Assemblies in Chapter Five, a few additional comments concerning them and their relation to major power plays should be made. The monastic complex of Sendregasum was the major source of power in high level power plays, but their potential power was generally routed through the General and Abbreviated Assemblies. Whereas the Assemblies were usually used by the ruler or Council to collectivize difficult or delicate decisions by formally obtaining the support of the bureaucracy as a whole and Sendregasum--these two forming the politically dominant segments in the Assembly-- they were also used to oust a ruler or some other important figure.

Major plots generally were organized by one or more lay officials who manipulated the monks of Sendregasum to obtain their own political ends. The aristocratic leader had a core of close cohorts who followed him for a variety of reasons such as: (1) His charasmatic appeal (2) Extreme antipathy to the Regent (3) Considerations of material and status rewards (4) Conviction that the leader's policy is correct. Lung-shar's power move to destroy his rival and enemy Gün-be illustrates very well the way the monks of Sendregasum could be activated and manipulated. This incident will be treated in detail in the history of Tibet the former Council Minister Surkhang Shape is now writing so I shall note only the most salient features.

Lung-shar, after deciding that Sendregasum was the best

source for the destruction of Gün-be's growing power, incorporated into his group a very powerful figure from both Sera and Drepung monasteries. Both of these persons were former monastic administrative officers with high prestige among the monks. They were wealthy traders and had broad fields of followers in their respective monasteries. The strategy was for them to incite the monks of their monastery to action via some highly emotional argument relating overtly to religion. In this instance the plan called for planting the idea that foul play was involved in the recent sudden death of the Dalai Lama among the monks. Those two then spread that idea through monk intermediaries who ranged from followers to paid agitators. They primed their people on what and when to speak out and by planting them among the monks were able to surreptitiously direct the course the action would take without it becoming apparent that they were even involved. In this case the plotters arranged for special delegates (_'thus mi_) to be appointed to represent the demands of Sendregasum. Furthermore, a number of these delegates were intimately involved in the scheme. The plotters, manipulating the delegates, drew up a resolution demanding the immediate convening of the General Assembly to discuss the circumstances surrounding the Dalai Lama's death and took it to the Council of Ministers. The Council and the Chief Minister, not perceiving at that point the real goals of the convening of the Assembly, and being somewhat frightened by the apparant solidarity of

the monks, agreed.

Once this end had been obtained, the remainder of the plan was relatively easy to activate. Two main segments in the General Assembly were the government officials and the abbots (and/or delegates) of Sendregasum. It has already been shown how government officials tended to operate on the basis of a principle of inaction, and in the meetings tended not to criticize publically a policy they thought the ruler or the power holders were in favor of. The abbots and delegates, on the other hand, were much more outspoken in their role of spokesmen for the twenty thousand monks of Sendregasum. Even though the abbots had their positions to protect, since they had no families and since their terms in any case were temporally limited, they were less prone to follow the principle of inaction. The delegates, however, having only ad hoc positions with nothing to lose, were the most outspoken. When one of them stood up and said something in the "isn't it so?" form, the meeting generally orally acquiesced since saying no would have entailed making an open stand against Sendregasum and being singled out from the collective security of crowd anonymity. The monks' views generally prevailed.

The above then, comprised the important aspects of the competition for political influence on the highest levels of the Central Government. Before discussing some differences in the reigns of Regents and Dalai Lamas, let me say a few words about several feedback mechanisms through which political

criticism was expressed. Easton (1965:128) has summerized the relationship of feedback to the political system:

> Information about the state of the system and its environments can be communicated back to the authorities; through their actions the system is able to act so as to attempt to change or maintain any given condition in which the system may find itself. That is to say, a political system is endowed with feedback and the capacity to respond to it. It is through the combination of these properties--feedback and response--... that a system is able to make some effort to regulate stress by modifying or redirecting its own behavior.

In Chapter Two, the role of the provincial administrations in terms of their ascertainment of information concerning general and specific conditions in their area was discussed. Now let us examine several expressive modes which are relevant to the influence competition. Tibet had no newspapers and no radio stations. Except for official government proclamations (rtsa tshig) there were no regular, public outlets for news of any type, let alone political criticism. However, two irregular, anonymous, informal types of political criticism and commentary did exist in Lhasa, the Tibetan capital. The first and more common I shall call the political verse. It was a type of satiric verse that could be sung to a tune or recited orally. It was almost always composed by government officials for political motives and then surreptitiously passed along both to common people who often sang them publically and to friends within the political elite who sang or recited them privately at parties and so forth. Because of the humor and stylistic beauty of the verses, and because they ridiculed persons in

very high social statuses, they generally caught on at once and within no time became spread throught Lhasa, particularly within the politically relevant.[8]

The songs actually occurred infrequently, usually appearing after some important political event. They were almost always composed with the objective of attacking or embarassing a political enemy, and though the verses did not have any direct affect on the political process, they could bring out and intensify existing dissatisfaction with a figure or policy and help to focus antagonistic sentiment toward it or him. In this context it was a source of feedback relating to the influence competition and improper behavior of government officials.

Another type of political opinion was the yig sgyur or wall poster. Like the verses these were anonymous creations, but creations usually written in prose not verse. They tended not to be satiric. They generally expressed criticism of a government decision or behavior of an official that was either in process or had just finished but was still politically relevant. These writings, which as their name implies were stuck up on walls and sides of buildings, were more negative value judgements concerning relevant situations than than the negative summations of events that the verses tended to be.

Gossip rounds out this discussion of types of political criticism. It was used mainly within the ranks of the politi-

cally relevant and was a commonly used resource for attacking political enemies as well as an indication of support attitudes. The three types of criticism mentioned above were, then, modes of attacking competitors, sources of feedback for the power holders, and lastly, channels for the release of pent up tensions and frustrations which resulted from the uncertain position of the majority of the "uncommitted" government officials and the rigid code of interpersonal deference behavior which restricted the overt expression of animosity or hostility. In its latter function it was a culturally accepted mode in which feelings and opinions normally required to be repressed could be overtly expressed.

During the periods when a Regent ruled (approximately 80% of the time since 1682), political influence was balanced between the Regent, the bureaucracy in general and the lay official dominated Council of Ministers in particular, and Sendregasum representing the Gelugpa church and religious values in general. It is important to note that the latter to categories were the two that controlled the manorial estates on a hereditary basis. I shall not repeat the various ways these three segments compete for political influence but do want to emphasize that while the balance between them was not equal, no one segment could obtain disproportionate power.

When a Dalai Lama ruled, however, the situation was somewhat different. In the first place, whereas the Dalai Lama ruled as a right deriving from his occupancy of that

position, the Regent ruled by appointment of the government and General Assembly. Related to this was the circumstance that the Dalai Lama could not be expelled from office while the Regent could and was. If the Dalai Lama came to majority age and if he were interested political affairs and influence, he could wield tremendous authority and power with relatively little concern for maintenance of support among the politically relevant, that is to say, basically among the bureaucracy and the Sendregasum complex. The period of rule of a strong willed and opinionated Dalai Lama like the Thirteenth was relatively unpredictable in terms of the direction of government policies. Rapid changes and reforms could be facilely promulgated by him. The limits to what he could do were set more by the values inculcated during his socialization process (which was in the hands of monks) than by formal limits to his authority. Relevant to his orientation was the important factor that the natal families of the Dalai Lama were ennobled and presented with huge hereditary manorial estates. This custom served to anchor the Dalai Lama to the existing system and must be viewed as a strong restraint against his altering the structural status quo since any such change would negatively affect his parents and siblings also.

While the rough balance that existed during the reign of a Regent could be thrown out of kilter by a strong Dalai Lama, even he did not ignore the attitudes and feelings of the monastic complex of Sendregasum, and to a lesser extent,

the bureaucracy. During the period of the Dalai Lama, competition for power was more oriented toward the favorites.

The recurrent patterns of political competition derive to a large extent from the basic characteristic that the most valuable source of economic wealth was the hereditary, agricultural estate with associated serfs. However, while the supply of this resource was fixed, the demand was ever expanding. Approximately every fifteen years (on the average) there was a change in the ruler. Each such change meant that the new Regent or the family of the new Dalai Lama had to receive sizable estates. This was particularly true in the case of the Dalai Lama's families since they had no estates to begin with but ended up among the largest landholders. Since estates were fixed in number and hereditarily distributed to aristocratic families and monastic units, this necessitated procurement of estates from present holders, and what in reality occurred was that there was a recurrent pattern of confiscation of estates. This, in turn, accounted for the in-group, out-group segments and explains the anxieties of the bureaucrats which led to the behavior pattern of inaction.

Footnotes

1. Sgo the'u rgyab literally means 'to put a seal on a door.' It refers to the custom of actually putting a government seal on the locked door of a house whose possessions have been attached or confiscated.

2. If he had been able to do that it would have more or less paralled the ousting of the Reting Lama the last time his incarnation was Regent in 1862.

3. Direct communication from former Council Minister Surkhang Shape.

4. He could, however, be killed, or proclaimed to be a false Dalai Lama. The latter only occurred once, and then at the hands of the ruling Mongols who claimed the profligate 6th Dalai Lama was false.

5. Direct communication from Surkhang Shape.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. An example of a political song is:

rwa pho dwang bstod lang nas
stag la og gzhol g.yog song
stag pho ngo tsha med pas
rwa pho hop te zas song

The billy-goat acting showoffish
Has put (his) beard on the Tiger
(and) The Tiger shamelessly
Has suddenly eaten the ram.

The background for this verse is the billy-goat (rwa) refers

to the Reting (rwa sgreng) Regent and the tiger (stag) to the Taktra (stag brag) Regent. The events satirized concern Reting's resignation and designation of his successor as Taktra who he thought would be harmless, and then Taktra's refusal to relinquish the position in favor of Reting.

CHAPTER SEVEN

STRUCTURAL INTERRELATIONS

In Chapter Two we indicated that the coexistence of numerous political sub-units possessing considerable internal authority within a centralized, autocratically organized Central Government reaised interesting questions concerning potential conflict and its management. In Chapters 2, 3 and 4 the salient features of the two major sub-units were described. In Chapters 5 and 6 the Central Government was outlined. What remains to be examined are the relative rights between the sub-units and the center.

Except for Tashilhunpo (Bkra shis lhun po), Sakya (Sa skya), and Lhagyari (Lha rgya ri), all the estate sub-units in Tibet were basically equivalent in terms of political rights. These three were perceived to have, and in fact did have, greater rights over their estates and serfs than the other estate lords, but these rights were not qualitatively different and do not alter the basic structural configuration of government. Nevertheless, it will be necessary in some instances to specifically single out these sub-units.

The Tibetan Central Government not only controlled, but completely monopolized the maintenance of military troops in

Tibet. Only the government was permitted to keep troops and only they did. These troops were recruited from both the shung-gyu-ba serfs and the serfs attached to the manorial estates of lords in the form of corvée military taxes called mag-tre (dmag khral). The soldiers of any particular lord were not maintained as separate unit under the leadership of an appointee of their lord but were integrated with conscripts from other lords. As stated in Chapter Six, the heads of the army were the Commanders-in-Chief and the Generals of the different battalions (dmag sgar). These were appointed by the government (the Council of Ministers and the ruler) from among the government officials (shung-shab). Moreover, except for one minor instance,[1] all the lower military officials were either appointed directly by the government, or the choices of the soldiers themselves were subject to government confirmation. These soldiers were a standing force on duty all year.

The number of soldiers was increased or decreased solely at the discretion of the Central Government. None of the estate sub-units, including the three mentioned above, had any voice in such matters at all. This right included the unilateral calling up of new permanent levies by the government as well as the ad hoc type of military levy called yü-ma (yul dmag). This has been referred to as a 'militia' (Rahul, 1962a:291) and 'territorial army' (Das: 180) but actually it did not refer to any kind of regular military force. It was simply a levy called by the government from the countryside

in times of national crises such as wars. It was not permanent and did not train after its dissolution. What is important though, is that the government had the power to raise whatever troops it needed.

A second important right the Central Government maintained over all the sub-units was control of the communication-transportation network (the sa-tsig network). This control included both the right to determine who could use it and the more basic rights over extracting the corvée services on which it was based from both the shung-gyu-ba and the serfs of lords. Only the lam-yig document issued by the government could command the services provided by that network.

A third aspect relates to the fact that only the Central Government coined money and postage stamps and only the government could enter into generally binding agreements with foreign nations. The government, moreover, regulated the export-import flow of certain goods such as salt and tea.

Another important, though somewhat more complex, factor concerns law. Whereas disputes and crimes between serfs of a lord were under the jurisdiction of that lord, cases involving serfs from different lords fell under the jurisdiction of the government if the parties involved could not settle it themselves or through mediation. This was true regardless of where the dispute occurred. Moreover, murder cases were always considered to be under the jurisdiction of the government; the government retained ultimate control over the taking of

human life.

Murder cases, wherever they occurred, were required to be reported to the representatives of the Central Government. Usually this was the local District Commissioner, but it could also mean the Council of Ministers in Lhasa if the participants were important persons, or if the sub-unit involved was one of the three mentioned above. The District Commissioner generally sent one or more of his subordinate officials (e.g., a district clerk) to investigate, and if there were suspects, bring them back to the district headquarters. In the end, the district officials would send a report to Lhasa stating the evidence and their recommended punishment. Lhasa would then either approve this or amend the punishment. For the three units mentioned above, especially for Tashilhunpo, the collection of evidence and the interrogation was often done by the officials of the units themselves, but the government had to be informed and the punishment approved. Henderson (1964:1099) implied otherwise concerning the Sakya sub-unit, stating that Sakya was "quasi-independent" and by omission implying that they settled all internal affairs autonomously. In fact, there was no mention at all of the Central Government in his article. I have indicated some problems concerning the Tibetan Seminar from which Henderson obtained his data in footnote one of the Introduction. Suffice to mention here that there was no disagreement among Tibetans in India concerning the rights of the Central Government concerning murder. In fact, one of

the members of Sakya's own Council of Ministers stated that "if a person is killed in Sakya they have to inform the Shigatse district or Lhasa."

Moreover, cases normally within the jurisdiction of the estates could be brought to the Central Government for review even after they had been settled and punishment decreed by the primary sub-unit. If the Central Government reversed the earlier decision, the lord of the sub-unit in question had no recourse but to accept. Serfs could even bring their lord before the government to have grievances adjudicated. In fact, in 1950 the rightful ruer of Sakya was dethroned as the culmination of about a year of internal political machinations among the ruling families. In this case the Central Government was petitioned to appoint another person of the ruling family as head. In the end, the Central Government decided in favor of the young rival (the present ruler) of the then acting head of Sakya and decreed that he should become ruler, although most probably the original one, being the elder, should have obtained it. The latter petitioned the government to review its decision and for years investigations were made but even at the time of the uprising in 1959, the original decision remained valid. This type of adjudication is not to be confused with mediation, for the sub-unit did not have the option to ignore the decision of Council of Ministers (or Chief Ministers in this instance). On the other hand, the Central Government did not have the authority to intervene

unless the case was brought to them.

Whereas the sub-units obviously could not make rules for the other areas, the Central Government could make new rules or decisions affecting all of the sub-units. We have already seen how the government did just that in relation to conscripting corvée soldiers and that was not a unique situation. In the early 1920's under the leadership of a favorite of the Dalai Lama, the Finance Minister Lung-shar, a new revenue tax was instituted. Due mainly to the creation of a standing army (previously the soldiers came only for a few months twice a year), the expenses of running the government had greatly increased after the return of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama from self imposed exile in India in 1913. In order to counteract this, a tax was made which fell on the previously little taxed larger aristocratic lords, (the upper three categories mentioned in Chapter Five). This new tax was to be in proportion to the size of their estates, and was to fall on the demesne lands. Although favoritism and other particularistic relationships greatly affected the application of this tax, it was nonetheless generally implemented.

Tashilhunpo was mentioned above as being the political subsystem with the highest degree of autonomy from the Central Government. For this reason the events surrounding the implementation of a similar new tax on Tashilhunpo called ma-bo shi-sur (dmag phogs bzhi zur) or '25 per cent of the soldiers' salary' is very important. Briefly, when the Central Government

tried to make Tashilhunpo pay 25 per cent of the military salaries and expenses. they demurred, saying there was no precedent for such a tax and that they were exempt from such taxes on the basis of their old documents. The government insisted, nevertheless, and in 1923 the incarnate ruler of that unit, the Panchen Lama, with a number of his officials fled for refuge to China. A delegation of government officials and troops was sent from Lhasa to intercept and bring him back but they were unsuccessful and the Panchen Lama safely escaped to China. The Central Government then sent several officials to Tashilhunpo to assume the activities normally held by the Lama. Since they did this tactfully, assuring the Tashilhunpo officials that no drastic changes in structure would be made, they were able to take over that sub-unit without violence. There was really no 'traditional' precedence for such an action on the part of the Central Government but the fact that they were able to accomplish it with little disturbance indicates the disproportionate power levels involved.

Another relevant aspect concerned the regulation of runaway serfs by the center. We indicated earlier that the Agriculture Office insittuted a rule which gave all serfs who ran away from their lord and had not been caught for three years the right to place themselves under the government as serfs of that office. Previously, of course, a lord could forcibly return and punish his runaway serfs whenever he found them.

The dominance of the Central Government over the manorial

sub-units emerges clearly from this discussion. The Central Government unquestionably controlled all the major sources od political power, but what equally characterized the Tibetan political system was the fact that the manorial estate holding strata in actuality dominated the governmental bureaucracy, and the government's policy was not oriented toward extensive regulation and extraction of revenue from the manorial sub-units. The goal of political competition was the procurement of rewards in the form of government positions, estates, trade monopolies and so forth.

The political system that evolved during the period from the initial Mongol-Gelugpa victory in 1641 through the reorganization of the government in 1751 was a radical shift from the previous system. The great feudal lords were transformed into 'servants' of the government, their very name (gzhung zhabs) literally translated as such. Moreover, the right to keep armies was taken out of the hands of the lords and embedded in the Central Government. Backed first by Mongol troops and then by Manchu ones, the Tibetan government that emerged was one where the bureaucracy was dominated by the lay aristocracy, particularly the bigger families. From the beginning, the ruler, whether he was a Dalai Lama or a king like Pholhanas, recruited the bureaucracy from the aristocrats. While the aristocrats lost major rights they had previously held, in reality, they ended up no worse because of their crucial role in the operation of the government. It is interesting to note

that after twenty two years of rule (1728-50) by the lay aristocratic Pholhanas family (father and then son), the Manchu Emperor of China, after a supposed rebellion plot, reorganized the government into the form it maintained until the 1950's. The ruler was to be the Dalai Lama and under him the bureaucracy was to be headed by a collectively organized Council of Ministers. It seems likely that the Manchu strategy was to create a border state which was strong enough to eliminate the endemic, internal feudal type warfare, but not powerful enough to ever become a threat to the Manchu Dyansty. The checks-and-balances type of configuration which arose served that end very well indeed.

Although the 7th Dalai Lama was placed at the apex of the government by the Manchu and given final authority (subject in important appointments to the Emperor and his Amban representative, in the system that developed the Dalai Lama was little more than figurehead. From 1757 to 1895 the apex position was actually held by Regents. Even when a Dalai Lama managed to reach majority, for example the 8th, a Regent was retained who carried out the secular affairs. What is important for the balance of powers is that the Regents (due to Manchu policy) were selected from the religious incarnate leaders of the Gelugpa sect and not from the aristocracy. Except for a short period in the 1860's when a coalition of two of the great monasteries and aristocrats overthrew the Regent and ruled for a few years, the Regents have all been incarnate

Lamas. Moreover, from 1757 to 1950 when the 14th Dalai Lama assumed power, (excluding the reign of the 13th Dalai Lama and the 1860's civil war period) there was a change in Regents on the average of every 13 years. Tibet was therefore characterized by a caretaker type of ruler.

In 1895 the 13th Dalai Lama ascended to temporal power. Not only was he the first real autocratic Dalai Lama to rule since the 5th, but his ascension to power was followed by the expulsion of all Chinese and the proclaiming and implementation of Tibetan independence (1913-50). During the reign of the 13th Dalai Lama the very tenor of the political system shifted. The great backlog of reverence and institutionalized charisma which had been built during the two hundred some odd years since the Dalai Lamas first obtained investitute now emerged in the person of the politically minded, strong willed, 13th Dalai Lama. The 13th Dalai Lama was a real autocrat. His word was final and he effectively ruled the country. He demanded efficiency from the government officials and punished severely even small oversights and errors. He chided the great monasteries for their secularization and it is said that once when the abbots of Sendregasum came to protest some innovation of his claiming that is was contrary to something begun by the great 5th Dalai Lama, the 13th told them "and who was the 5th Dalai Lama," in other words, reminding them that the 5th and the 13th are the same and therefore can never be in opposition.

Structurally, the potential for a highly centralized

autocratic asiatic despotic state existed and the reign of the 13th Dalai Lama when compared with those of the earlier Regents illustrates this. But with the death of the 13th in 1933 a Regent was appointed and the normal political competition emerged and continued until the arrival of the Chinese. The reign of the 13th Dalai Lama must therefore be viewed as an atypical interlude, but a highly revealing one in that it shows the tremendous potential power which was embedded in the Tibetan political system. At the end of this chapter we shall offer some thoughts on why this did not develop.

Let us now summarize the salient features of the Tibetan polity and the manner in which the generalized articulation of the bureaucracy, Sendregasum, and the ruler acted to produce a viable political system.

Although the position of ruler was at the apex of the hierarchy of authority and had rights over finances, appointments, confiscations of estates and major policy dicisions, the manner of selection, the training, the "sacred" cloistering and subsequent isolation from first-hand information functioned to restrain his activation of the prerogatives of his position. Moreover, we have seen that except for the 13th Dalai Lama, the other Dalai Lamas have either died before reaching their majority or had become so other-worldly that they left political affairs in the hands of a Regent even after achieving formal authority. This then produced the pattern whereby the ruler was a Regent who controlled a caretaker type

of regime. Regents had less influence. They were not ruling from sacred right but from secular selection (whether at first by the Manchu or later by the Assembly). Related to this was the fact that although the Dalai Lama could not be ejected from office since he held it as a godly right, the Regent could, and in fact on rare occasions was. Moreover, the Regents, as caretaker rulers, generally were oriented toward the acquisition of wealth, particularly estates and during their reign became phenominally wealthy. Since their religious corporation (Labrang) became religious lords of manorial estates, they had no interest in altering the underlying institutional configuration. The fact that the Regent was an incarnate lama precluded any possibility of the monopoly of the position of ruler by one incarnation succession line. For example, from the time when the first Regent, the Demo Lama died in 1777 until when the second Demo Lama (the incarnation of the first) became Regent in 1811 two other Regents held the position.

The second major structural unit was the bureaucracy. This bureaucracy was not the "classic" Weberian type for its membership was recruited from sources that the ruler had at best only indirect influence over. The lay officials were all manorial estate holding aristocrats and the ruler had no control over their recruitment at all. Each family was required to serve, and conversely had the monopolistic right to serve. The monk officials were all from the Gelugpa sect but which monks were selected rested fundamentally with the administrative

heads of the monk official segment itself. The Tibetan bureaucracy furthermore, was more than the simple administrative organ of the ruler. It had the important role of collecting information and then sorting it into proposed policies. On minor issues, (which comprised the majority of the items), the Council of Ministers as the highest office in the bureaucracy acted as the final determiner of policies. On important issues such as allocation of money and appointments to the high bureaucratic offices, the ruler had the final right of decision, but as mentioned earlier, the manner that policy proposals were sent to him was certainly to the advantage of the bureaucracy. This competition between the bureaucracy and the Regent also was affected by the tenure of appointments and the nature of succession.

Contrasted with the frequent rotation of rulers was the permanence of the bureaucracy. When a new Regent entered office he was faced with a regular, experienced bureaucracy. While the ruler had rights to fill positions, he did not have the right to create openings by demotion of incumbents unless there was some failure or breach of behavior on their part. In other words, although the Regent could eventually appoint his supporters to major positions, this was a slow process and in the earlier parts of reign, the upper echelons of the bureaucracy often were not his avid supporters.

In addition to these two structural units, Sendregasum, that is, the three monasteries of Sera, Drepung, and Ganden,

was another very powerful and important politically active category. The Gelugpa church or sect has generally been treated as a monolithic structure. We have already indicated that this is a gross simplification. While the monk official, the ruler and Sendregasum could present a monolithic front on the highest levels, their interaction usually was competitive in nature. Sendregasum was a huge manorial estate holder. Both the monasteries as a whole and the individual colleges held manorial estates. Furthermore, they perceived themselves as the protectors of the faith and the spokesman for the mass of more or less dependent Gelugpa monasteries scattered throughout the polity. Since these three monasteries housed approximately 20,000 monks, their opinions, especially since they were couched in religious terms, had great influence over the bureaucracy and the ruler. In earlier chapters we discussed the virtual veto power that these monasteries held over policies of the formal government. Moreover, they were the dominant force in the Assemblies and the potential source of power in political plots.

Fundamental to the stable contraposition of these three units was, on the one hand, the acceptance of the state headed by the Dalai Lama as the legitimate form and on the other, the lack of orientation by the rulers toward significantly altering the manorial institution and the power of the manorial holders in the government. Political activity in Tibet was not infused with contrastive ideological content. Individuals

or groups competed not to alter the system but rather to rearrange the distribution of valued items so as to procure a greater share for themselves or at least not to lose a portion of what they already held. This mutual acceptance of both the principle of centralization and localization was one of the salient features of the Tibetan political system.

When this factor is coupled with the restraints the bureaucracy and Sendregasum placed on the Regent, the complex competition for power and rewards described in Chapter Six emerges. The Regent using his ultimate authority over policy and appointments attempted to set up a field of followers and supporters in the bureaucracy and Sendregasum. Government officials and elements of Sendregasum, on the other hand, attempted to control and manage the authority invested in the position of Regent (or ruler) by influencing the incumbent. Because the valued items in this competition were identical for all, the main ones being manorial estates and high offices, in-groups and out-groups inevitably arose with the valued items moving from the latter to the former. The majority of the political elite strove to protect and gradually increase their positions and wealth and subsequently followed what we have referred to as the principle of inaction.

On very rare occasions the acquisitive drive of the Regent or his favorites became so great as to coalesce the out-grouping into a clandestine plot, and in such instances a <u>coup d'etat</u> was planned or attempted. But as we saw, these were

very infrequent and oriented only toward deposing the incumbent. They were in Gluckman's terms, "rebellions" and revolutions. But the infrequency of rebellions can be explained in part by the frequent changes in the incumbent ruler (approximately every 13 or 14 years) with the accompanying movement of many persons from the out-grouping to the in-grouping, since the new Regent customarily sought his supporters and favorites from the former. Thus the intense circular competition described in Chapter Six.

Underlying the operation of the government and competition between the political elite was the pacific nature of the population as a whole. The institution of serfdom and the absence of any officialdom to police the exercise of power and authority over the serfs was potentially oppressive. While it is obvious that serfs were a downtrodden group, they had several important resources. The serfs with the highest tax and service obligations held land often, as we saw, in considerable amounts. More important, though, was the severe shortage of agricultural labor for both the manorial lords as well as for the shung-gyu-ba. Due in large to the high rate of infant mortality and the drain of the huge monastic institution, there was actually more land than could be cultivated. This afforded the serfs the powerful restraint of threatening, though subtly, to run away. If the situation became unbearable, that channel of release was open, and the serf could change his status if after three years he became a serf (dü-jung) of

the government. The high evaluation placed on labor in villages made the earning of livlihood by a runaway serf no problem at all. The majority of the population of rural Tibet were in fact not tied serfs but rather the mi-bo (human lease) possessing dü-jung, who generally were runaways in origin.

While the political system described here had impressive diachronic stability, this should not be confused with perfect equilibrium. Had this been a study concerned with the historical development of political institutions, change and development could have been shown in the institutions and relative powers of the three main political units.

In conclusion, let us briefly relate the Tibetan political system to the two most relevant models of political systems, feudalism and centralized bureaucratic state. The Tibetan political system has been characterized in several different ways. Shen (1953:89) refers to Tibet as a theocracy. Later (112) he talks of feudal lords. The 14th Dalai Lama (1962:60; 1963:53) and Bell (1928:64) both refer to Tibet as feudal. Li (1954:viii) writes of "a feudal society and a theocratic and aristocratic government." Carrasco (1959:208) sees similar ties with praebendal feudalism but finally characterized it as either a simple of semicomplex type of Oriental society.

Feudalism has been defined in a number of ways. Marc Block (1965,vol.2:446) broadly characterized feudal society as having (1) a subject peasantry, (2) widespread use of the

service tenement (the fief) in lieu of salary, (3) the supremacy of a class of specialized warriors, (4) ties of obedience and protection which bind man to man and which were called vassalage within the warrior class, and (5) fragmentation of authority. Ganshof (1952:xvi) offered a more restrictive definition of feudalism than Block's. He saw feudalism as focusing on the institutions of obligations of obedience and service between free men (lords and vassals) usually concerning military service. He was interested mainly in the "meaning of the words 'lord' and 'vassal', and the legal relationship which existed between the persons which they described." Nevertheless, since the fief was generally a part of the lord-vassal relationship, his focus was similar to Block's.

The most cogent definition of feudalism was presented in Strayer (1956). Discussing the earlier definitions of feudalism he pointed out (Ibid:16) that feudalism is not synonymous with aristocracy since there were many aristocracies which were not feudal. It is also not a necessary concommitant of the presence of manorial estates, for such types of estates have existed in many other societies. "It is only when rights of government...are attached to lordship and fief that we can speak of fully developed feudalism..." He further (Ibid:16-17) saw feudalism as "a form of government in which political authority is monopolized by a small group of military leaders" and in which the "king, at best, can merely keep peace among the lords and is usually unable even to do this." Strayer

goes on to differentiate a first and a second stage of feudalism in Western Europe:

> Early feudalism might be described as a series of overlapping spheres of influence, each centered around the castle of some strong local lord. Later feudalism is more like a series of holding corporations; the local lord still performs important functions but he can be directed and controlled by higher authorities. Appeals from the local lord to his superior are encouraged; petty vassals are protected against excessive demands for service or attempts to seize their fiefs (Ibid.:19)...In this much more highly organized feudalism rights and duties are spelled out in great detail. The amount of service owed is carefully stated, rules of inheritance are determined, the rights of government which can be exercised by each lord are defined and regulated. Force is still important, but only the king and the greatest lords possess sufficient force to gain by its use; the ordinary lord has to accept judicial solutions to his controversies (Ibid.:21).

Even from this terse outline of the feudal polity we see a number of similarities with the Tibetan political system. The institution of serfdom with its associated manorial estate certainly resembles the European manor (fief) in the sense of both the holder having obligations to the ruler and in the various governmental functions the lords were permitted to exercize over their serfs. Carrasco (208) characterizes land tenure in Tibet as non-feudal because "land is granted as salary to officials of an absolute ruler who demands unrestricted obedience and who can resume the land at will." In a footnote to that statement he comments that even in the relationship between the government and what he calls the subject states, the "elements of personal fidelity and contractual agreement between two parties seem to be lacking."

But this seems a drastic overstatement of the actual situation. As we have indicated in Chapter Five, the ruler could not take back the estates of lords (or even the shung-gyu-ba serfs) without some due cause, that is, without some breach of obligation on the part of the lords. Complete confiscation of all the manorial sstates of a lord by the ruler only occurred when the breach involved withdrawal of support for the ruler through an act such as a coup d'etat or some other heinous crime. Furthermore, there was certainly a contractual aspect to land tenure. The manorial lords as well as the villager land holding serfs (tre-ba) had land title documents which stated the taxes they had to provide.

Oaths of fealty were not a common feature of the Tibetan social system and in the normal lord-serf relationship were not required. The link that bound lord and serf was transmitted through hereditary. The manorial lords, in turn, did not consider themselves to have dyadic personalized fealty relationships with the ruler. Nevertheless, one might view the enthronement ceremonies for new rulers, particularly the new Dalai Lamas, as a symbolic form of fealty. On these occasions all the government officials, the leading incarnate lamas, the abbots of the main monasteries and the representatives of the political sub-units which did not have to provide government officials like Sakya and Lhagyari, came to pay respects to the new ruler and offer traditionally fixed offerings called tri-beb (khri phebs) or 'arriving on

the throne.'

There were therefore a number of institutions that closely resembled those of late European feudalism. However, there were also a number of important factors which make the feudal model seem inappropriate. The main difficulties lie in the direction of the extensive rights of the center over the lords. In the first place, only about 50% of the arable land was actually held in the form of aristocratic and religious manorial estates. Moreover, there were the rights ennumerated in the first section of this chapter. These factors, coupled with the existence of a bureaucracy and overall provincial administration, make the model of feudalism not the most appropriate for the Tibetan situation.

In light of the presence of a bureaucracy and the other factors, the typology developed by Eisenstadt (1962) seems the most useful for Tibet. He defined (18) the characteristics of what he calls "the historical bureaucratic polity" as:

(1) The development of autonomous political goals by the rulers, and to some extent, by those who participate in the political struggle.

(2) The development of a limited differentiation of political activities and roles.

(3) Attempts to organize the political community into a centralized unit.

(4) The development of specific organization of administration and political struggle.

While all four of these features were present to some degree, the content and orientation of political behavior in

Tibet was significantly different. Esinstadt saw the crucial development of political struggle along the lines of the ruler, the bureaucracy and the traditional landed classes such as the aristocracy, e.g., (16) "Such rulers attempted to make these organs the bureaucracy as independent as possible of the more traditional and aristocratic strata and groups, and to give them some power and prestige vis-à-vis these strata." However, in Tibet, as we have seen, this type of orientation did not develop. Rather than the bureaucracy being differentiated from the traditional aristocratic stratum, it was in fact dominated by it. Also, the fact that Regents ruled from 1757 to 1895 and became great manorial lords seriously affected the autonomy of their political goals, and their interest was in fact focused mainly on economic self-aggrandizement. Moreover, the presence of the Manchu-Chinese military strength during that period precluded any radical change in the system the Manchu originally instituted. The coincidence of the coming to power of the 13th Dalai Lama in 1895 with the complete expulsion of the Manchu representative and troops in 1911-12, removed both of these important restraints upon the reorientation of political competition to a central-decentral axis. But while the reign of the 13th Dalai Lama was an interlude of vigorous broadening of the control of the center, of improving the performance of the officials, and of increasing the revenues of the center, the underlying structural arrangement was not significantly altered.

The reasons for this relate to the reasons why Tibet can be only categorized as a marginal centralized bureaucratic state. Because the bureaucracy was recruited outside the traditional manorial lords only to a small degree, the ruler was faced with a situation where almost all the elements in the ruling elite had crucial vested interests in maintaining the basic status quo. The great monasteries of Sendregasum with their 20,000 monks were large religious manorial lords. The religious corporations (Labrang) of incarnations, particularly the ones which had Regents, were also large religious lords. These both separately and via the Assemblies were a powerful political force. The aristocracy, of course, were also manorial lords and we have seen how they dominated the bureaucracy. The monk official segment of the bureaucracy, however, seems not to fit the pattern. From the original 16 officials instituted by the 5th Dalai Lama, that segment grew to over 200 by the reign of the 13th Dalai Lama, and they had even in the late 19th century reinstituted the custom of having a monk Council Minister. The development of this segment might have posed a serious threat to the aristocracy and even the monasteries, but several factors acted to mitigate its vigor. While there is no question that it functioned to prevent the complete domination of the governmental process by the aristocrats it was also not free of their influence. Along with its development in terms of size and responsibilities, the parallel development of lay officials becoming monk

officials and holding high positions completely out of proportion to their numbers to a large ex ent negated the threat of the monk officials. On top of this, we also saw that there were a number of very wealthy monk families (called sha-tsang) who were closely associated with Sendregasum and who also held a disproportionate percentage of the high monk official positions. Thus, when the Chinese restraint was eliminated and an aggressive Dalai Lama with motivation for centralizing the polity came to power, the structural checks which had developed precluded his readily gaining support from any politically important segment of the population for making significant changes since all of them had vested interests in maintaining the fundamental integrety of that system. In the end, the death of the 13th Dalai Lama brought one of the traditional regents to power (Reting) and the focus returned to systemic status quo and individual economic self-aggrandizement.

Viewed in terms of the feudal and centralized bureaucratic models the Tibetan political system can be seen as one which moved from a type of late feudalism to an incipient form of centralized bureaucracy when the Gelugpa sect under the Dalai Lama obtained secular control over Tibet.

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