The highest mountain range on Earth, the Himalayas from the northern border of the Indian subcontinent in Asia. The mountains extend in a massive arc for about 1,550 miles from west to east with more than 30 peaks rising to heights greater than 24,000 feet above sea level. Together, the Himalayan mountain system is the planet’s highest and home to all fourteen of the world’s highest peaks.

One of the high biodiversity regions of the world, it provides shelter to a large variety of flora and fauna. The Himalayan region has a rich and unique cultural heritage, and has managed to preserve its established traditions throughout history whilst absorbing customs, traditions and ideas from both invaders and immigrants. Many cultural practices, languages, customs and monuments are examples of this co-mingling over centuries.

The encyclopaedic work in five volumes—Introduction to Himalayas, Bhutan Himalayas, Indian Himalayas, Nepal Himalayas and Tibetan Himalayas—provides the reader a comprehensive tour of one of nature’s most astounding and wondrous marvels. Exploring the Himalayan range in its vast constitution, this work delves deep into the heart of this mountain range.

With a comprehensive account of a most breathtaking landscape, it is hoped that this work would be an interesting read to students, research scholars, policy planners, social scientists, administrators, travellers and general readers.

Rs. 4000 (set of five volumes)
THE AUTHOR

Ramesh Chandra Bisht, a renowned teacher of tourism management and a meritorious student and has won prizes and medals during his career. He has written many books and contributed papers on tourism and related subjects. He has designed a number of courses which have been adapted by many universities and colleges in India and abroad. He is also associated with various national and international bodies.

He has more than twenty years of experience in training and educational management. He is also an organiser and consultant at various seminars and workshops and has travelled far and wide. Presently, he is interested in sustainable tourism development and has written extensively on the subject.
Preface

Located on the highest plateau in the world, the Qinghai-Tibet plateau, Tibet, also known as ‘The abode of snow’ as it is known in Sanskrit, comprise the loftiest mountain chains in the whole world, and occupy southern Tibet in the majestic embrace of its Trans Himalayan range. As the name suggests, this region is beyond the man range of the Himalayan land, and occupies an ill defined area of about 1000 km with its width ranging from 225 km to 32 km.

Not only does this southern region of the Himalayas contain the highest mountain peak on earth, Mt. Everest, but are also the source of the great rivers of East and South Asia, including the Huang Ho and the Indus. It is from these regions of the Trans Himalayan land where the fearful gorges of the Brahmaputra, the Indus and the Satlej rivers flow into the Great North Indian Plains, contributing to their fertility.

With snow crested lofty peaks, commanding imposing, awe-inspiring view of the landscape, the Tibetan Himalayas offer one of the most scenic views on earth. This book brings forward the history, geology, ecology and the environment of the Himalayan land in the terrain of the roof of the world. Covering comprehensively the Himalayan region in Tibet, no issue, even the environmental problems, the social and political strife in the area, has been left untouched. Bringing under one roof an in depth look into the Himalayan region of Tibet, it is hoped that the book proves to be worth the read for the reader.

Ramesh Chandra Bisht
## Contents

**Preface**  

1. Introduction to Tibetan Himalayas  
2. Geographical Features  
3. Biodiversity  
4. People  
5. Customs and Traditions  
6. Government and Politics  
7. Economy  
8. Tourist Destinations  

*Bibliography*  
*Index*
Introduction to Tibetan Himalayas

Tibet or the “Roof of the world” as it is known is not mere a statement and it can be gauged by the fact that the lowest ranges of Tibet Himalayas are among the highest mountains. Located 470-kms away from Bhutan at an average altitude of 4,000 m.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The ancient history of Tibet is not well recorded, however, E. Haarh in his book “The Yar-lun Dynasty” gives a different view of Tibet to the general conception of Ancient Tibet as a country that has remained in the obscurity of barbarity until its structure of state was for the first time established towards the beginning of the seventh century A.D., and as almost spontaneous development. This conception for which L.A. Waddell and W.W. Rockhill, are partly responsible. This is the concept that Tibet emerges from barbaric darkness only with dawn of its Buddhism, in the seventh century A.D. A few specialists such as G. Tucci, L. Petech, H. Hoffman and R.A. Stein has remonstrated.

Studies of Tibetan and Chinese sources show that the above conception of Tibetan history, and of the conditions under which the Tibetan Empire under the kings of Yar-lun came into existence and flourished, is false as a whole- and false in the extreme.
First of all, the dogma of the Tibetan barbarity antecedent to the end of the sixth century A.D. has no real foundation. It derives from Chinese sources, but the descriptions of Tibet and its population as seen in the eyes of the Chinese brought up with the preconceived idea of inferiority of anything foreign, must be regarded with strict reservation. The spontaneous development of the Tibetan Empire, which was accomplished within two centuries, in itself scarcely conceivable on a supposed basis of barbaric darkness. During this development, the power of the Tibetans made the Empire of the Great T’ang tremble more than once, and at one time made it their tributary.

The oldest tradition regarding the origin of the Tibetan people reflects in pre-Buddhist shamanistic development. It claimed that the Tibetan people are descended from the simian offsprings of a monkey and a rock demoness. The four or six tribes of ancient times were said to have originated from four or six ancestral monkeys, who in the course of evolution lost their simian features and became men. Buddhist historians of later times retained this legend, but embellished it by making the monkey an emanation of the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara.

The first references to Tibetan people is found in Chinese records which relate many instances of nomadic Tibetan tribes attacking the borders of China in the five centuries which follow the year BC 200. These tribesman were organized in the family clans so typical of nomadic peoples, and by the sixth century several of these clans united to form the first Tibetan Kingdom.

Emerging by the seventh century from the legendary past of the nomadic inhabitants of the Tibetan plateau was Srong-tsan Gam-po, who may be singled out for special attention as his rule is associated with the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet. The introduction of Buddhism had far-reaching consequences, for Buddhism, combining with other elements of Tibetan religion into a form known as Lamaism and developing with the prestige of the state
First of all, the dogma of the Tibetan barbarity antecedent to the end of the sixth century A.D. has no real foundation. It derives from Chinese sources, but the descriptions of Tibet and its population as seen in the eyes of the Chinese brought up with the preconceived idea of inferiority of anything foreign, must be regarded with strict reservation. The spontaneous development of the Tibetan Empire, which was accomplished within two centuries, in itself scarcely conceivable on a supposed basis of barbarism, made the Empire of the Great T'ang tremble more than once, and at one time made it their tributary.

The oldest tradition regarding the origin of the Tibetan people reflects in pre-Buddhist shamanistic development. It claimed that the Tibetan people are descended from simian offsprings of a monkey and a rock demoness. The four or six tribes of ancient times were said to have originated from four or six ancestral monkeys, who in the course of evolution lost their simian features and became men. Buddhist historians of later times retained this legend.

The first references to Tibetan people is found in Chinese records attacking the borders of China in the fifth century which follow the year BC 200. These tribes were organized in the family clans so typical of nomadic centuries which were united to form the first Tibetan Kingdom.

Emerging from the nomadic inhabitants of the Tibetan plateau was the first Tibetan legend known as the story of Tsun Gam-po, who may be singled out for special attention in Tibet. The introduction of Buddhism into Tibet was his work. The introduction of Buddhism combined with the indigenous lamaseries in Tibet led to the development of the monastic system, which dominated and shaped the political and social structure of Tibet.

Monasteries served not only as religious centers but also in time as forts, granaries, and schools. By the end of the eighth century, an Indian system had won out over a Chinese system of Buddhism. Political events of the time may have influenced the religious choice, for the latter part of the eighth century was characterized by continual border warfare between China and Tibet.
During this early period, the Tibetans made military alliances with their neighbors and extended their military activities in all directions with considerable success. Tibet as not a vassal of China. On the contrary, the Tibetans and the Chinese fought as powers on an equal footing, with the Tibetans generally the aggressors and gaining the advantage both in territory and tribute.

Tibet was expanding and consolidating its power. During the reign of the 32nd King gNam-ri-srong-brTsan, recorded Nepali history has details of Tibetan military might penetrating the central and northern Indian plains. Khri-srong de-tsen (reigned AD755-797), son of Thri-de tsug-ten was one of the most powerful kings to rule Tibet. In about the middle of the eighth century, he organized a 14,000,000 strong military campaign to Central India. The Tibetan extended their rule over India as far as Bay of Bengal, which was known as the Tibetan Sea.

Some sections of the cavalry (Tamag) settled in Nepal from which descended the Tamang race of Nepal. As Khri-srong's son Muni-Tsanpo concentrated on the show of military might against China in the eastern part of Tibet, the small scattered dependencies in the Western side achieved independence and Nepal gradually became independent.

The contact between Nepal and Tibet has greatly contributed towards the spiritual and cultural development of Tibet. For example, when Bhrkuti Devi came to Tibet in marriage, many sacred and priceless objects of worship and culture along with expert Newari craftsmen came to Tibet. The world famous Mar-po-ri Pho-drang (The Red Palace) later rebuilt and improved by the great Fifth Dalai Lama as the Potala was initially constructed according to the wishes of the Nepalese consort Bhrkuti Devi for King Srong-tsen Gam-po. The statue of Chanrezi revered throughout Tibet was carved by the well-known Nepali craftsman and artist Thro-Wo. The most famous statue in Tibet, the Jo-bo (Lord) of Lhasa, more life-size Sakyamuni,
During this early period, the Tibetans made military advances in all directions with considerable success. Tibet and China were both in territory and tribute. The Chinese fought against the aggressors and gaining the Tibetan advantage both in territory and tribute.

Thus from the seventh century forward, Tibet experienced a distinctive new phase of growth and development:

...The political history of the period...(seventh to ninth centuries) is one of constant warlike activity. China was the principal rival and the Tibetans pressed further and further into the borderlands of what are now Kansu, Szechwan, Yunnan and Shansi. On one occasion they even captured Ch'ang-an (Sian) which was then the capital of China. By occupying strategic points on the routes through Central Asia they cut China's communications with the West, and the strain on Chinese resources and the spirit are echoed in the war-weary poems of the great T'ang poets... There were of course periods of peace...

In the ninth century following the death of the last of Srong-tsen Gam-po's line to rule all Tibet, there was a long period of turmoil and decentralization of authority during which Buddhism barely survived in central Tibet. Nevertheless, having survived and having become more Tibetan in the process, it gradually gained ascendance in central Tibet once more.

During the eleventh century, the great reformer Atisha, a Mahayana pundit, went to Tibet from India and revived the deeper teachings of philosophic Buddhism. A long-range effect of this visit was the establishment several hundred years later of a sect distinct from that of the followers of Padmasambhava. Thus it is seen in the sojourns of the two Indian pundits the beginnings of the older Red Hat sect of the Sa-skya-pa line and the newer Yellow Hat sect of the Dalai Lamas.

It may also be noted that Tibetan monks, having "the greatest veneration for the Ganges and places held holy in Hindustan," went to India to study, though the warm climate was unhealthy for them.
At the end of the twelfth century, the Islamic conquest of Bengal occurred, and as a result of the political upheaval following the invasion and the break-up of important centers of higher learning, many Indian scholars fled to Tibet for refuge. At this time of great cultural exchange between Tibet and India, political circumstances brought Tibet into close contact with China. It should be noted that the link between China and Tibet came into being only through the conquest first of Tibet and then of China by the Mongols, who during these years were spreading their dominating influence in Asia.

The Tibetans accepted the Mongols as overlords as early as AD1207. This acceptance of Mongol overlordship temporarily satisfied the Mongols, who did not then invade Tibet but directed their armies to other areas of Asia. In AD1240, however, after the death of the Khan and when the Tibetans had stopped sending the prescribed tribute, the Mongols under the Khan's grandson, Godan, did invade Tibet, pushing almost to the key city of Lhasa. Godan then summoned a lama of the Sa-skya-pa monastery of Tibet, Kunga Gyaltse, known as the Sa-skya Pandita, saying he needed him to advise his people on moral and spiritual conduct. The Sa-skya Pandita, who really had no choice, accepted the call. Taking with him two young nephews, one of whom was Phagpa Lodro Gyaltse, he arrived at Godan's camp in AD1247.

The Sa-skya Pandita imparted the teachings of the Buddha to Godan, and Godan gave him temporal authority over central Tibet, telling him that if the Tibetans helped the Mongols in religious matters, the Mongols would support the Tibetans in temporal matters. Before his death in 1251, the Sa-skya Pandita gave his religious authority to Phagpa. Godan died soon after and was succeeded by Kublai Khan, who did not yet rule all the Mongols but commanded the Kokonor region between China and Tibet for his brother.

In AD1253, Kublai invited Phagpa to his court and, impressed by the monk's eloquent exposition of the Buddhist religion, he asked Phagpa to be his religious teacher. Prior to receiving religious instruction, Kublai agreed to prostrate himself before Phagpa in private as a student and to consult Phagpa on matters concerning Tibet, but Kublai told Phagpa he must not interfere in political affairs regarding Mongolian and Chinese territories. According to tradition, Kublai gave Phagpa spiritual and temporal authority over Tibet proper, Kham, and Amdo. Kublai, it is supposed, looked upon Tibet as the sovereign domain of the Church and its head as his spiritual advisor, not as a political vassal.

It seems, therefore, that Tibet was a part of the Mongol empire in a very peculiar way. It was definitely not a part of China nor one of its provinces. The greater part of Tibet was ruled by indigenous Lamas whose government was sanctioned by the imperial court via the Bureau of Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs, but they created little or no interference from the emperors.

There must have been some trade, because in AD1277 licensed border markets were established in Tiao-men and Li-chou for Tibet with Tibet. Li-chou corresponds to modern Han-yuan in Szechwan province, southwest of modern Ch'eng-tu and Tiao-men ...situated in Western Szechwan and silver in Tibet, T'u-lu-kan and such places... The fact that licensed border markets existed for trade with Tibet is a certain indication that Tibet was treated by the Sino-Mongol government as a foreign country because such markets existed with China proper. They were established only in the border regions, where some trade and economic traffic entered the territory of Chinese provinces.

All this indicates that Tibet was a terra incognita, a foreign country for the Chinese and Mongols of which even the geographical essentials were little known. It was even the country where the Yellow River originated and even
In AD1253, Kublai invited Phagpa to his court and, impressed by the monk’s eloquent exposition of the Buddhist religion, he asked Phagpa to be his religious teacher. Prior to receiving religious instruction, Kublai agreed to prostrate himself before Phagpa in private as a student and to consult Phagpa on matters concerning Tibet, but Kublai told Phagpa he must not interfere in political affairs regarding Mongolian and Chinese territories. According to tradition, Kublai gave Phagpa spiritual and temporal authority over Tibet proper, Kham, and Amdo. Kublai, it is supposed, looked upon Tibet as the sovereign domain of the Church and its head as his spiritual adviser, not as a political vassal.

It seems, therefore, that Tibet was a part of the Mongol empire in a very peculiar way. It was definitely not a part of China nor one of its provinces. The greater part of Tibet was ruled by indigenous Lamas whose government was sanctioned by the imperial court via the Bureau of Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs, but they created little or no interference from the emperors.

There must have been some trade, because in AD1277 licensed border markets were established in Tiao-men and Li-chou for Tibet with Tibet. Li-chou corresponds to modern Han-yuan in Szechwan province, southwest of Ch’eng-tu and Tiao-men ...situated in Western Szechwan state-controlled families were charged with mining gold and silver in Tibet, T’u-lu-kan and such places... The fact that licensed border markets existed for trade with Tibet is a certain indication that Tibet was treated by the Sino-Mongol government as a foreign country because no such markets existed with China proper. They were established only in the border regions, where some trade and embassy traffic entered the territory of Chinese provinces.

All this indicates that Tibet was a terra incognita, a foreign country for the Chinese and Mongols of which even the geographical essentials were little known. It was the country where the Yellow River originated and even
unknown in China until Kublai organized an exploratory expedition in AD1280.

The letter of investiture given by Kublai to Phagpa in AD1254 and recorded in a Sa-skya text, is one from patron to lama:

As a true believer in the Great Lord Buddha,...I have always shown special favor to the monks and monasteries of your country.

Having Faith in the Lord Buddha, I studied the teachings of your uncle, Sa-skya Pandita, and ...I received your own teachings.

...and in return for what I have learned from your teachings, I must make you a gift.

This letter, then, is my present. It grants you authority over all Tibet, enabling you to protect the religious institutions and faith to your people and to propagate Lord Buddha’s teachings.

The monks and people of Tibet should be informed of what I am doing for them. I hope they will not look for any other leader than you.

To the monks, I should say that they should realize and be grateful that they have not been taxed; nor has their way of life been altered. We Mongols shall not respect you, if your monks do not conscientiously carry out the teachings of the Buddha.

As I have elected to be your patron, you must make it your duty to carry out the teachings of the Lord Buddha. By this letter, I have taken upon myself the sponsorship of your religion.

The patron-lama relationship between Kublai of the Mongols and Phagpa of the Tibetans deserves attention because this “priest-patron” relationship later characterized the relationship between the Dalai Lamas of Tibet and the Manchu emperors of China. Thus an important pattern was set that recurred in modified version between Mongol leaders and Tibetan religious leaders for many years to come.
When Kublai became Khan in AD1260, he gave Phagpa, who conducted the enthronement ceremony, the title of Tse-ri, or ‘Imperial Preceptor’. Tibet, however, was actually administered by the Panchen, or ‘Great Master,’ who kept an office at Sa-skya. By the time Phagpa died in AD1280, Kublai Khan, already effective overlord of Tibet, had completed his conquest of China and had established the Yuan dynasty.

During the time of Changchub Gyaltsen (AD1302-1364), Tibet gained independence from the Mongols, and with the establishment of the Ming dynasty in AD1368, China gained her freedom from the Mongols. Thus, according to a lay Tibetan historian, the “allegation that the Chinese Emperors of the Ming Dynasty (AD1368-1644) inherited claim to Tibet from their Mongol predecessors is not valid historically.” Thus during the fourteenth century, at different times and under different circumstances, both the Tibetans and the Chinese gained their freedom from Mongols.

To access the fall of the Yuan dynasty and the impact of the Tibetans it is noted the almost universal bias of Chinese historians against Buddhism as such and against Lamaism in particular. What offended the critics was the high prestige accorded the Tibetan lamas. It is correct to say that a considerable part of the blame for the accelerated fall of the Yuan must beborne by the Tibetans for their influence on the Mongol wasteful and corrupt practices. After the founding of the Ming dynasty, Chinese emperors continued to shower imperial favor upon the Lamaist clergy in Tibet and tried to establish good relations between the Chinese court and the Tibetan dignitaries of the Karma-pa sect. In the later Yuan this sect has supplemented the Sa-skya-pa sect in importance. It is true that Tibetan lamas were extremely powerful and frequently behaved arrogantly. For the Mongols, on the other hand, the Tibetan lamas of the Yuan period remained venerable figures and shared a place in their politico-religious history.
It seems to be a fact that most of Tibet proper remained outside the direct control of the Sino-Mongol bureaucracy and even the border lands were throughout the Yuan dynasty an unruly and troubled region.

In AD1368 after prolonged period of unrest and political instability the last Mongol emperor of China was disposed. The Mongol rule was replaced by the Chinese Ming Dynasty (AD1368-1643). The Ming rulers were never able to exercise any control over Tibet. It is important to emphasize the fact that during the reign of the Ming Dynasty, no Chinese army never crossed the border into Tibet, thus proving the sovereignty and independence of Tibet from the Chinese.

During the period from the mid-fourteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, the Yellow Hat sect of Buddhism was founded and in time, and not without a struggle, replaced the Sa-skya pandits as the most powerful and prestigious Buddhist sect in Tibet. Tibet's great religious reformer, Tsongkhapa, led the followers of Atisha in forming the new sect. Members of the Yellow Hats, the Ge-lug-pa, unlike the Red Hat sect, were forbidden to drink wine or to marry. When their leader died, his soul was said to have entered the body of a young child who then became the next leader. Through this successive reincarnation, the leader of the Yellow Hats gained immortality. Over a period of time, the new sect with its great monasteries of Ganden, Drepung, and Sera gained the dominant position both in religion and politics in Tibet.

Significantly, the founding of the Yellow Hats by Tsongkhapa, itself the culmination of a lengthy development since the time of Atisha, was, moreover, the prelude of events that profoundly influenced the future course of Tibetan history. The year 1642 is consequently the date of the establishment of the theocracy of the Yellow Church. Like the Sa-skya lamas, the Yellow Hats gained the dominant position by means of support from Mongol patrons.

The ascendency of the Yellow Hats began after the reconversion of the Mongols to Buddhism in the last years of the sixteenth century, when Altan Khan of Mongolia was converted by a successor of Tsongkhapa, named Sonam Gyatso. In a proclamation sponsoring Buddhism, Altan Khan, in addressing Sonam Gyatso, addressed: "Your visit to us has now helped the Buddhist religion to revive. Our relationship of patron and lama can be likened to that of the sun and moon". In return for converting the Mongols, Altan Khan bestowed the title of 'Dalai Lama' on Sonam Gyatso and posthumously on his two predecessors as well. Mongolian for ocean, the term 'Dalai' suggested the great breadth of the lama's wisdom. The relationship of a patron Mongol and Tibetan lama now tended to serve the interests of the Yellow Hats, though some leader supported rival sects and dissenters persisted.

From that time on, Buddhism was firmly rooted in Mongolia, and Tibetan-Mongolian relations strengthened when later Dalai Lamas were born in Mongol families. The fourth Dalai Lama, a Mongol, when at Drepung under the scholarly Lozang Choekhor, a lama from Tashilhunpo. This tutor became "Panchen Lama", the title meaning great scholar reincarnations have been recognized as the Lamas.

While Tibet and Mongolia strengthened their ties by supporting a common faith, the Dalai Lama did not gain ascendency over the Tibetan church until the fourth decade of the seventeenth century, when the young Mongol, Gushri Khan, marched to his assistance. In AD1641-42, Gushri Khan of Mongolia invaded Tibet, lessened the hold of rival sects, and established supreme authority over all Tibet from Tachenlu in the Ladakh border in the west. While the true donation of Gushri Khan are vague, this much is clear: "...the donation recognized to the Dalai Lama the
The ascendancy of the Yellow Hats began after the reconversion of the Mongols to Buddhism in the last years of the sixteenth century, when Altan Khan of Mongolia was converted by a successor of Tsongkhapa, named Sonam Gyatso. In a proclamation sponsoring Buddhism, Altan Khan, in addressing Sonam Gyatso, added: “Your visit to us has now helped the Buddhist religion to revive. Our relationship of patron and lama can be likened to that of the sun and moon”. In return for reconverting the Mongols, Altan Khan bestowed the title of ‘Dalai Lama’ on Sonam Gyatso and posthumously on his two predecessor as well. Mongolian for ocean, the term ‘Dalai’ suggested the great breadth of the lama’s wisdom. The relationship of a patron Mongol and Tibetan lama now tended to serve the interests of the Yellow Hats, though some Mongol leader supported rival sects and dissention persisted.

From that time on, Buddhism was firmly rooted in Mongolia, and Tibetan-Mongolian relations were strengthened when later Dalai Lamas were born in princely Mongol families. The fourth Dalai Lama, a Mongol, studied when at Drepung under the scholarly Lozang Chosgyan, a lama from Tashilhunpo. This tutor became the first “Panchen Lama”, the title meaning great scholar; and his reincarnations have been recognized as the Panchen Lamas.

While Tibet and Mongolia strengthened their ties by supporting a common faith, the Dalai Lama did not gain ascendancy over the Tibetan church until the fourth decade of the seventeenth century, when the young Qoshot Mongol, Gushri Khan, marched to his assistance. In AD1641-42, Gushri Khan of Mongolia invaded Tibet, lessened the hold of rival sects, and established the power of fifth Dalai Lama, conferring upon him “supreme authority over all Tibet from Tachienlu in the east up to the Ladakh border in the west”. While the terms of the donation of Gushri Khan are vague, this much does seem clear: “...the donation recognized to the Dalai Lama the
undisputed supremacy over the Tibetan church. It placed also all the resources of the state at his disposal for the purpose of furthering the welfare of the Lamaist religion, through the grant of sovereign rights over the 13 provinces of Tibet”.

The erection of the Potala, the great achievement of Tibetan architecture, was begun by the fifth Dalai Lama, who chose as the site of his palace the place where Srong-tsan Gam-po had built a palace for this Nepalese wife in the seventh century. It should be acknowledged that much of the power of the Dalai Lama depended not only upon the arms of Gushri Khan but also upon the unique and forceful personality of the ‘Great Fifth’ for once he had consolidated the Dalai Lama’s authority, Gushri Khan did not interfere in Tibetan administration. A significant figure who skillfully used his great spiritual influence to promote reconciliation among the Buddhists and Mongols, the fifth Dalai Lama ranks as one of the greatest men Tibet ever produced.

Soon after the fifth Dalai Lama assumed power in Tibet, the Manchus succeeded in taking the Chinese Empire from the Mings and in establishing the Manchu Dynasty (1644-1911). The early Manchu emperors sought the goodwill of the Dalai Lama to aid them in controlling the Mongols and their other Buddhists subjects. After receiving several invitations from the Manchu emperor, the Dalai Lama went to Peking in 1653 and was received with the ceremony one would extend to an independent sovereign. The Shun-chih Emperor would appear to have had sound reasons for treating the fifth Dalai Lama with great pomp and ceremony, for “at this period of China’s relations with Tibet, the temporal power of the Lama, backed by the arms of Gushi Khan and the devotion of all Mongolia was not a thing for the Emperor of China to question”.

The successor of the fifth Dalai Lama was Tsangyang Gyatso, who was enthroned in the Potala in AD1697. A gifted writer of romantic and lyrical verse, the sixth Dalai Lama was more interested in merry-making than meditation and was relatively indifferent to the responsibilities of his office. In spite of the advice of the chief minister and the titular king, Lhazang Khan, grandson of Ghusri Khan, the young Dalai Lama renounced his vows in AD1702. After the death of the chief minister, Lhazang Khan assumed political control of Lhasa. One of his first orders was that the worldy Dalai Lama be removed from the Potala. Later, with the support of K’ang-hsi Emperor, Lhazang Khan deposed the sixth Dalai Lama.

On the way to exile in China, Tsang-yang Gyatso died. Thereafter Lhazang Khan set up a Dalai Lama of his own choice, but the Tibetans and Mongols deeply resented the death of the sixth Dalai Lama and refused to recognize the candidate chosen by Lhazang Khan. In a few years, they received with joy the news that Tsangyang’s reincarnation had been found. Monks and nobles underlining the power of Lhazang Khan in the meantime, and by AD1717, the situation in Tibet was so tense that it seemed almost necessary to intervene on the part of the K’ang-hsi Emperor.

Perhaps in anticipation of Manchu action, the Dzungars, a Lamaistic Mongol tribe of the Qing of central Asia and great rivals of the Manchus in Tibet, killed Lhazang Khan, and occupied Lhasa from AD1717 to 1720. The harsh measures of the Dzungars turned Tibetan feeling against them, and the hostility increased when it became clear that the K’ang-hsi could not present Tsangyang’s reincarnation under Manchu protection at the Kumbum monastery in Kokonor. In the meantime, the Ka’ang-hsi Emperor began to send his armies against the Dzungars, but the troops sent in AD1718 were defeated. Fearing a Mongol-Tibetan combination against China and perhaps the foundation of a new Mongol Empire, the K’ang-hsi Emperor tried again. He did expel
gifted writer of romantic and lyrical verse, the sixth Dalai Lama was more interested in merry-making than meditation and was relatively indifferent to the responsibilities of his office. In spite of the advice of the chief minister and the titular king, Lhasang Khan, grandson of Ghusri Khan, the young Dalai Lama renounced his vows in AD1702. After the death of the chief minister, Lhasang Khan assumed political control of Lhasa. One of his first orders was that the worldly Dalai Lama be removed from the Potala. Later, with the support of K’ang-hsi Emperor, Lhasang Khan deposed the sixth Dalai Lama.

On the way to exile in China, Tsang-yang Gyatso died. Thereafter Lhasang Khan set up a Dalai Lama of his own choice, but the Tibetans and Mongols deeply resented the death of the sixth Dalai Lama and refused to recognize the candidate chosen by Lhasang Kahn. In a few years, they received with joy the news that Tsangyang’s reincarnation had been found. Monks and nobles undermined the power of Lhasang Khan in the meantime, and by AD1717, the situation in Tibet was so tense that it seemed to invite interference on the part of the K’ang-hsi Emperor.

Perhaps in anticipation of Manchu action, the Dzungars, a Lamaistic Mongol tribe of the Qosot Mongols of central Asia and great rivals of the Manchus, invaded Tibet, killed Lhasang Khan, and occupied Tibet from AD1717 to 1720. The harsh measures of the Dzungars turned Tibetan feeling against them, and this feeling of hostility increased when it became clear that the Dzungars could not present Tsangyang’s reincarnation, who was under Manchu protection at the Kumbum monastery in Kokonor. In the meantime, the Ka’ng- hsi Emperor began to send his armies against the Dzungars, but the troops sent in AD1718 were defeated. Fearing a Mongol-Tibetan combination against China and perhaps the foundation of new Mongol Empire, the K’ang-hsi Emperor tried again. Finally, in AD1720, the Manchus and Tibetans did expel
the Dzungars from Tibet, and seventh Dalai Lama, Kelzang Gyatso, was enthroned in the Potala.

The Manchus came as liberators and stayed as protectors in Tibet. The main features of the Manchu protectorate set up by the K’ang-hsi Emperor in AD1720 were a substantial Manchu-Chinese garrison in Lhasa with open communications to China and a council of ministers which was to administer Tibet under the supervision of the commander of the Manchu-Chinese garrison. This council, however, carried within its membership the beginnings of trouble, for in time it became a gathering of strong regional rulers rather than an administrative body interested in the whole.

After the death of the K’ang-hsi Emperor, his son successor, the Yung-chen Emperor, in AD1723 withdrew the garrison, and until AD1727, when civil war erupted, the Tibetan council of ministers administered Tibet. Manchu intervention in the civil strife led to the reestablishment of the Manchu garrison in Lhasa and the appointment of two resident Manchu officials, known as Ambans, to remain in Lhasa as direct representatives of the Manchu Emperor in Tibet and in charge of the garrison.

Thus, a new Manchu-Tibetan relationship was established, incorrectly based on the assumption that Tibet had been a tributary state for eight years, a new and dangerous status for Tibet was created by a unilateral move on the part of the Manchus. There was no written treaty, however, and the Tibetans continued to regard their relations with the Manchus in terms of the traditional patronage of the emperor which dated back to Yuan time.

From AD1728 to 1750, Tibet was ruled by Pholhanas, former supporter of the Lhazang Khan and now collaborator with the Manchus who bestowed on him the title of “King” of Tibet, and by his son Gyumey Namgyal, who reversed his father’s policy and sought the removal of the Ambans and the Manchu-Chinese garrison by force and, if feasible, with Dzungar support. Events surrounding the death of Gyumey Namgyal at the hand of the Ambans and the consequent death of the Ambans at the hands of the Tibetans led to the march of new Manchu-Chinese armies into Tibet. During the crisis, the Dalai Lama tried to restore order, and his success in these efforts was an important factor in raising him once more to a position of temporal power.

The Government of Tibet was reorganized in this combination of circumstances. Kingship was abolished. The council of ministers, known as the Kashag and composed of four ministers known as Kalon or Shape, regained some of it’s former importance. The Kashag acted as a collective body, required to reach a common decision on all matters; no departmental responsibilities were permitted. The Dalai Lama regained much of his power. In effect, there was a resurgence of religious supremacy over the lay nobility; the “reforms of AD1720 put the temporal supremacy of the religious hierarchy on a lasting basis.”

In AD1751 the seventh Dalai Lama took over full spiritual and temporal powers in Tibet. His powers were considerable in that all important decisions of state were referred to the Dalai Lama for his sanction. He appointed the district governors and officers of the army on the proposal of the Kashag and with the approval of the Ambans. Acting on his own, he had the exclusive right to appoint heads of monasteries and to approve the management of the state granaries. On the other hand, the powers of the Ambans were increased.

In addition to commanding the garrison, which numbered about 1,500, they had complete control of the Manchu postal service, an important aspect of the supervisory arrangement. Moreover the Kashag had to take their advice. Nevertheless, this system of government proved enterprising and the Manchu supervision provided a link between the Dalai Lama of Tibet and the Manchu emperor of China.
the death of Gyumey Namgyal at the hand of the Ambans and the consequent death of the Ambans at the hands of the Tibetans led to the march of new Manchu-Chinese armies into Tibet. During the crisis, the Dalai Lama tried to restore order, and his success in these efforts was an important factor in raising him once more to a position of temporal power.

The Government of Tibet was reorganized in this combination of circumstances. Kingship was abolished. The council of ministers, known as the Kashag and composed of four ministers known as Kalon or Shape, regained some of its former importance. The Kashag acted as a collective body, required to reach a common decision on all matters; no departmental responsibilities were permitted. The Dalai Lama regained much of his power. In effect, there was a resurgence of religious supremacy over the lay nobility; the “reforms of AD1720 put the temporal supremacy of the religious hierarchy on a lasting basis.”

In AD1751 the seventh Dalai Lama took over full spiritual and temporal powers in Tibet. His powers were considerable in that all important decisions of the Kashag were referred to the Dalai Lama for his sanction. He appointed the district governors and officers of the army on the proposal of the Kashag and with the approval of the Ambans. Acting on his own, he had the exclusive right to appoint heads of monasteries and to approve management of the state granaries. On the other hand, the powers of the Ambans were increased.

In addition to commanding the garrison which numbered about 1,500, they had complete control of the postal service, an important aspect of the Manchu supervisory arrangement. Moreover the Kashag had to take their advice. Nevertheless, this system of government allowed considerable scope if the Dalai Lama proved enterprising and the Manchu supervision proved lax.

This curious and unique arrangement between the Dalai Lama of Tibet and the Manchu emperors of China
continued, with some changes, to the opening years of the twentieth century. The seventh Dalai Lama died in AD1757. During this same year, it may be noted, the battle of Plassey, which marked the beginning of English expansion in Bengal, took place. These early years of consolidation of British power in India were marked in Tibet by a period when a Tibetan regent repressed the eighth Dalai Lama during his minority.

Events of the mid-eighteenth century tended more and more to diminish intercourse between India and Tibet. In Tibet, the exclusion of foreigners and the expulsion of missionaries occurred. Leaving Lhasa the missionaries took refuge in Nepal, where, by AD1770, other events reduced Indo-Tibetan contacts. Chief among these events was the defeat of the Newar dynasty by the militant tribes of Prithvi Narayan, chief of the state of Gorkha. The Newars had encouraged peace and trade and had allowed free intercourse between India and Tibet; the Gurkhas, on the other hand, blocked the passes into India, hampered with unfair tolls, and almost destroyed the previously flourishing trade between Tibet and India.

During the Ghorak conquest of Nepal, the ruler of Bhutan invaded and held Sikkim, the wedge of territory under Tibetan influence between Nepal and Bhutan. The Bhutanese thereafter invaded Cooch Behar, to the south toward Bengal, and thus came into conflict with the British. Warren Hastings, then governor of Bengal, sent a force which expelled the Bhutanese. The Panchen Lama, who resided at the Tashilhunpo monastery near Shigatse in southern Tibet, sent a letter to Calcutta interceding on behalf of the Bhutanese.

Hastings now Governor-General, decided to use this letter to try to establish friendly relations between British India and Tibet and sent George Bogle on a mission to Shigatse, “to open a mutual and equal communication of trade between the inhabitants of Bhutan and Bengal,” in AD1774. Bogle concluded that an open trade with Bhutan,

Introduction to Tibetan Himalayas

Nepal, and Lhasa was “an object worthy of attention” but “extremely difficult, if not impracticable, to be done by force.” This was Bogle’s impression of the relations of Tibet to China at the time of his mission:

— The Emperor of China is acknowledge as the sovereign of the country;
— but the internal government of the country is committed entirely to natives;
— the Chinese in general are confined to the capital, no tribute is exacted, and
— the people of Tibet, except at Lhasa, hardly feel the wake of a foreign yoke.

Bogle returned to India in June, AD1775, having been unable to establish trade between Bengal and Tibet.

In AD1783 Hastings sent a second mission to Tibet headed by Samuel Turner. Turner’s conclusions were similar to those of Bogle. Diplomatically Turner’s mission accomplished little beyond continuing existing relations and bringing to light once more the complex elements involved in Tibetan politics. One notable effort to trade Turner’s report was the reference to Russian and Anglo-Russian rivalry over Tibet which developed to a critical point at the beginning of the twentieth century. Shortly after Turner returned to India from Tibet, Hastings resigned. In the event, events connected with Nepal resulted in the cessation of friendly relations between Tibet and British India for over a century.

In the closing years of the eighteenth century, relations between the Gurkhas and Tibetans deteriorated markedly. Finally, the Gurkhas, tempted by accounts of the riches of Tibet, invaded Tibetan Lhasa’s monastery, invaded Tibet.

The Nepalese war of AD1788-92 was a prime illustration of the lama-patron relationship between the Dalai Lama and the Manchu emperor. Being a country
Nepal, and Lhasa was "an object worthy of attention" but "extremely difficult, if not impracticable, to do by force." This was Bogle's impression of the relation of Tibet to China at the time of his mission:

- The Emperor of China is acknowledge as the sovereign of the country;
- but the internal government of the country is committed entirely to natives;
- the Chinese in general are confined to the capital, no tribute is exacted, and
- the people of Tibet, except at Lhasa, hardly feel the wake of a foreign yoke.

Bogle returned to India in June, AD1775, having been unable to establish trade between Bengal and Tibet.

In AD1783 Hastings sent a second mission to Tibet headed by Samuel Turner. Turner's conclusions were similar to those of Bogle. Diplomatically Turner's mission accomplished little beyond continuing existing relations and bringing to light once more the complex elements involved in Tibetan politics. One notable feature of Turner's report was the reference to Russian efforts to trade with Tibet, an early suggestion of the Anglo-Russian rivalry over Tibet which developed to a critical point at the beginning of the twentieth century. Shortly after Turner returned to India from Tibet, Hastings resigned and soon thereafter, events connected with Nepal resulted in the cessation of friendly relations between Tibet and British India for over a century.

In the closing years of the eighteenth century, relations between the Gurkhas and Tibetans deteriorated markedly. Finally, the Gurkhas, tempted by accounts of the riches of the Panchen Lama's monastery, invaded Tibet.

The Nepalese war of AD1788-92 was a prime illustration of the lama-patron relationship between the Dalai Lama and the Manchu emperor. Being a country
devoted to the nonviolence teachings of the Buddha, Tibet did not maintain a standing army. In emergency, it called up the farmers from the field to fight, but they were ill equipped and without proper training. As patron and protector of Tibet, the Manchu emperor supplied the military might necessary to protect the Dalai Lama and to restore law and order. Once peace was achieved, the imperial force returned to China, just as they had done in AD1721, 1728, and 1751.

Only for a few years well-chosen Ambans were sent to Lhasa. Quite soon after 1793 the ebb tide set in strongly. The two Manchus overseeing the minting of coins were recalled to China in AD1802 and no replacements were ever sent back to Tibet. In AD1804 one Amban had to be removed for misconduct. In AD1818 another was found to be colluding in an attempt to evade Emperor orders. In AD1823 another inefficient Amban was dismissed. At the same time the influence of the Tibetan regents grew to an even greater heights than before; and from AD1819 until 1844 one of the most powerful and most oppressive Regents in Tibet’s history was able to exert well-nigh absolute rule without any interference from the Ambans.

The decree purporting to regulate the selection of the Dalai Lama by lot is well known and is sometimes cited as evidence of Manchu control over Tibet; but in AD1808 on the very first occasion on which it should have been employed the Tibetans completely disregarded it and the Emperor had to accept the fait accompli. Again in AD1818, when the 8th Dalai Lama was being sought the Tibetans had already put forward the one chosen.

The provision in the reforms of AD1793 which did have some effect was the exclusion of foreigners. Nevertheless, a few explorers found their way into Tibet. Thomas Manning in 1811 confirmed the bad quality and conduct of the Manchu representatives in Lhasa. The Lazarist Fathers Huc and Gabet arrived from China in 1846 were treated amiably by the Tibet regent. They regarded the Ambans as mere ambassadors sent to watch what the Tibetans did.

The 19th century brought the impact on western industrialization to China which marked the beginning of the end of the Manchu power. The Opium war of AD1839-42 with Great Britain, the Tai-ping rebellion, a civil war that ravaged China from AD1851-1864, and subsequent encounters with the force of Great Britain, France, Germany, and others drained the vitality and strength of the Manchu dynasty. The weakness of the Manchu court and the inability of the Manchu emperor to provide imperial support to the Dalai Lama’s government had a direct effect on development in Tibet.

In AD1841 the Hindu Dogra troops of Gulab Singh, Maharajah of Jammu invaded western Tibet. No imperial troops were forthcoming from China because of the Opium war, but the Tibetans were able to defeat the Dogras and conduct a treaty in AD1842. No representative of the emperor was present at the negotiations.

In AD1855 the Gurkhas again invaded southern Tibet, this time the Tai-ping rebellion occupied the imperial troops and the Tibetans were compelled to face the Nepalese forces alone. The Tibetans were defeated followed by a treaty that empowered the Nepalese to establish trade agencies in Lhasa and other centers, and gave them an annual tribute of 10,000 rupees in cash, in the nineteenth century it existed more in name than in fact.

In AD1890 and again in AD1893 the British government negotiated with the Manchu government on the boundary between Tibet and Sikkim and trade regulations. The Tibetan government which had not been a part of the negotiations, refused to honor them. Britain became concerned when a Burjat Mongol, Dorgiyn, a tutor of the 13th Dalai Lama, was received by the Tsar Nicholas
the Ambans as mere ambassadors sent to watch what the Tibetans did.

The 19th century brought the impact on western industrialization to China which marked the beginning of the end of the Manchu power. The Opium war of AD1839-42 with Great Britain, the Tai-ping rebellion, a civil war that ravaged China from AD1851-1864, and subsequent encounters with the force of Great Britain, France, Germany, and others drained the vitality and strength of the Manchu dynasty. The weakness of the Manchu court and the inability of the Manchu emperor to provide imperial support to the Dalai Lama’s government had a direct effect on development in Tibet.

In AD1841 the Hindu Dogra troops of Gulab Singh, Maharajah of Jammu invaded western Tibet. No imperial troops were forthcoming from China because of the Opium war, but the Tibetans were able to defeat the Dogras and conduct a treaty in AD1842. No representative of the emperor was present at the negotiations.

In AD1855 the Gurkhas again invaded southern Tibet, this time the Tai-ping rebellion occupied the imperial troops and the Tibetans were compelled to face the Nepalese forces alone. The Tibetans were defeated followed by a treaty that empowered the Nepalese to establish trade agencies in Lhasa and other centers, and gave them an annual tribute of 10,000 rupees in cash, in addition to extra territorial rights in Tibet. The Manchu influence in Tibet continued to decline and by the end of the nineteenth century it existed more in name than in fact.

In AD1890 and again in AD1893 the British government negotiated with the Manchu government on the boundary between Tibet and Sikkim and trade regulations. The Tibetan government which had not been a part of the negotiations, refused to honor them. Britain became concerned when a Burjat Mongol, Dorjieff, a tutor of the 13th Dalai Lama, was received by the Tsar Nicholas
II as the Dalai Lama’s envoy in July 1901. Lord Curzon, viceroy of India, began sending letters to Lhasa which were returned unopened. The subsequent events are well recorded, but suffice it to say the British sent the Younghusband mission to Lhasa in 1904.

About July 30, 1904, the 13th Dalai Lama left Lhasa enroute to Mongolia. On August 3, the British mission arrived in Lhasa. On Sept. 7, 1904, a convention between Great Britain and Tibet was signed. The main provisions were:

1) The establishing of two main trade agencies, one at Gyantse and one at Gartok in western Tibet. (The trade mart at Yatung had been provided for in the regulations of 1893, but the Tibetans had prevented it’s opening since they were not party to it’s regulations).

2) The abolition of Tibetan duty on trade with India.

3) An indemnity of 500,000 pounds payable in 75 annual installments, the British to occupy the Chumbi Valley until paid in full. The indemnity is later reduced to 160,000 pounds payable in 25 annual installments.

4) No Tibetan territory was to be ceded or leased without British consent.

The British government allowed the Government of China to pay off the Tibetan indemnity and the British troops withdrew from the Chumbi Valley in February 1908.

Following the withdrawal of the British Mission from Tibet the Manchus moved to take advantage of the weakened position of the Tibetans in an attempt to restore some semblance of influence again. From 1905 to 1909, Manchus and Tibetans were fighting in the Khams region and the imperial forces were forcing it’s way deeper and deeper into Tibet. On Feb. 12, 1910, Chao Erh-feng entered Lhasa and fired on Potala.

Introduction to Tibetan Himalayas

Again the Dalai Lama fled, this time south where he spent the next two years in exile in Darjeeling and Kalimpong, West Bengal. The Ambans sent a large army after the Dalai Lama. At a place about 30 miles from Lhasa, one of the Dalai Lama’s servants called Dasang Dradul with the help of a small army, stopped the pursuing Manchu army for three days, thus allowing the safe escape of the Dalai Lama to Darjeeling. A cabinet office was set up in Darjeeling which controlled all of the important decisions and matters such as the maneuvers for dispelling the Manchus from Tibet.

At the end of 1910 the majority of the Manchu-Chinese troops from Lhasa had to be sent to Po to fight King Kanam of Po, situated 700 miles to the southeast of Lhasa. In 1911 the Manchu Dynasty in China came to an end. When the news reached Lhasa, the Manchu-Chinese army arrested the Amban. There followed much rioting and looting. When the troops from Po returned to Lhasa led by General Chung, he asserted authority and opposed the Tibetans.

The Dalai Lama from Darjeeling appointed Dasang Dradul as the commander-in-chief and sent him to Tibet. Consequently, the three ministers appointed by the Ambans were imprisoned. One of the ministers, Kalon Tsonang was assassinated. In 1912, the Tibetans defeated the Manchu-Chinese troops and expelled them along with the Ambans from Tibet to China through India.

The Dalai Lama did not return to Lhasa until the end of 1912 on account of some fighting going on in Lhasa. Early in 1913, the Dalai Lama issued a declaration of Tibetan independence from Chinese suzerainty. The Dalai Lama rewarded all those who had performed outstanding service during the war among who was the regent Tsemonling. In particular Dasang Dradul was appointed the senior Commander- in-Chief as well as a cabinet member. By that time Dasang Dradul had become the
Again the Dalai Lama fled, this time south where he spent the next two years in exile in Darjeeling and Kalimpong, West Bengal. The Ambans sent a large army after the Dalai Lama. At a place about 30 miles from Lhasa, one of the Dalai Lama’s servants called Dasang Dradul with the help of a small army, stopped the pursuing Manchu army for three days, thus allowing the safe escape of the Dalai Lama to Darjeeling. A cabinet office was set up in Darjeeling which controlled all of the important decisions and matters such as the maneuvers for dispelling the Manchus from Tibet.

At the end of 1910 the majority of the Manchu-Chinese troops from Lhasa had to be sent to Po to fight King Kanam of Po, situated 700 miles to the southeast of Lhasa. In 1911 the Manchu Dynasty in China came to an end. When the news reached Lhasa, the Manchu-Chinese army arrested the Amban. There followed much rioting and looting. When the troops from Po returned to Lhasa led by General Chung, he asserted authority and opposed the Tibetans.

The Dalai Lama from Darjeeling appointed Dasang Dradul as the commander-in-chief and sent him to Tibet. Consequently, the three ministers appointed by the Ambans were imprisoned. One of the ministers, Kalon Tsurong was assassinated. In 1912, the Tibetans defeated the Manchu-Chinese troops and expelled them along with the Ambans from Tibet to China through India.

The Dalai Lama did not return to Lhasa until the end of 1912 on account of some fighting going on in Lhasa. Early in 1913, the Dalai Lama issued a declaration of Tibetan independence from Chinese suzerainty. The Dalai Lama rewarded all those who had performed outstanding service during the war among who was the regent Tsemonling. In particular Dasang Dradul was appointed the senior Commander-in-Chief as well as a cabinet member. By that time Dasang Dradul had become the
bridegroom of the Tsarong family and thus came to be known as Kalon Tsarong Dosang Dradul.

In about 1915, and subsequent years Tsarong’s power was unequalled. While in power, he applied modern training techniques to train the army; in civil administrations he brought many changes and improvements. Formerly, the Tibetan government did not mint coins by machinery. But Kalon Tsarong imported machines and established a large mint. In 1923, a new police garrison was established in Lhasa at Tsarong’s suggestion. Over the next years, Tsarong’s power disintegrated until the Dalai Lama relieved him of his rank of Commander-in-Chief. At the same time, another official of equal strength as Tsarong was gaining importance. He was Lungshar Dorje Tsegyal.

He was appointed Commander-in-Chief. In due course Tsarong was demoted from his post as a minister but was appointed as one of the heads of the Office of Factories for which he worked a long time. When the Communist invaded Tibet, Tsarong resigned his office. However, in 1959, he returned to Tibet to attend the Assembly. Soon afterwards, he was arrested by the Chinese Communist and later died in prison.

A few years before the death of the 13th Dalai Lama, Lungshar was relieved of his military command. The Dalai Lama appointed one of his personal servants, Kunphel, as the main political head. Kunphel now controlled the militia, mint and the factories which had been under Tsarong and Lungshar.

During the years preceding the death of the Dalai Lama, the relationship between the Tibetan Government and the Chinese central government had been a friendly one, with both countries sending friendly delegations. However, in 1932, trouble arose in the Kham region and Tibet lost large territories on the east of the Yangtse river.

The long reign of the 13th Dalai Lama ended with his death in 1933. The next incarnation of the Dalai Lama was recognized in a child in Chinese-ruled Amdo in 1938. The child was ransomed from the Chinese General MaPu-feng for a sum of almost half a million dollars and installed in Lhasa in 1940. The Regent appointed, the Rimpoch of Reting, was young and most unfortunately for Tibet personally ambitious. Intrigue with China culminated in a coup d’etat in 1947. This was put down with severity, and the Reting Rimpoch paid for his ambitions with his life.

The control of China by communist force brought a new factor into Tibetan-Chinese affairs and the first invasion of Communists People’s Liberation Army invaded eastern Tibet and captured the administrative headquarters of Chamdo in October, 1950. The Tibetan Government appealed to the United Nations; but the Nationalist Chinese and the Soviet delegates insisted that since Tibet is an integral part of China the problem was an internal one of that country and, thus, outside the jurisdiction of the United Nations. Consequently, no action was taken. Tibet was then forced to sign on May 23, 1951, at Beijing a 17-point agreement for its “peaceful liberation”. Point four of that agreement specifically stated that the existing political system of Tibet and the status and power of Dalai Lama would not be altered.

Several years of relative peace followed, during which the Chinese regime indoctrinated the Tibetans in the Chinese political system of communism. In 1956, the Chinese established a ‘preparatory committee’ whose function was to “prepare” Tibet for status as an autonomous region of the People’s Republic of China. This meant reforms relating to the social, economic, and political structures were to be carried out. Society in Tibet had been shaped for centuries by a religious-political system government by an “incarnate lama” who drew his officials on one side from the community of Yellow-Hat monks, and from feudal nobility on the other. The fabric of Tibetan society was so
The long reign of the 13th Dalai Lama ended with his death in 1933. The next incarnation of the Dalai Lama was recognized in a child in Chinese-rulled Amdo in 1938. The child was ransomed from the Chinese General MaPu-feng for a sum of almost half a million dollars and installed in Lhasa in 1940. The Regent appointed, the Rimpoche of Reting, was young and most unfortunately for Tibet personally ambitions. Intrigue with China culminated in a coup d'etal in 1947. This was put down with severity, and the Reting Rimpoch paid for his ambitions with his life.

The control of China by communist force brought a new factor into Tibetan-Chinese affairs and the first invasion of Communists People's Liberation Army invaded eastern Tibetan and captured the administrative headquarters of Chamdo in October, 1950. The Tibetan Government appealed to the United Nations; but the Nationalist Chinese and the Soviet delegates insisted that since Tibet is an integral part of China the problem was an internal one of that country and, thus, outside the jurisdiction of the United Nations. Consequently, no action was taken. Tibet was then forced to sign on May 23, 1951 at Beijing a 17-point agreement for its "peaceful liberation". Point four of that argument specifically stated that the existing political system of Tibet and the status and power of Dalai Lama would not be altered.

Several years of relative peace followed, during which the Chinese regime indoctrinated the Tibetans in the political system of communism. In 1956, the Chinese established a 'preparatory committee' whose function was to "prepare" Tibet for status as an autonomous region of the People's Republic of China. This meant reforms relating to the social, economic, and political structures were to be carried out. Society in Tibet had been shaped for centuries by a religious-political system government by an "incarnate lama" who drew his officials on one side from the community of Yellow-Hat monks, and from feudatory nobility on the other. The fabric of Tibetan society was so
woven that any attempt to change the feudal warp would inherently destroy the political woof on which the theocratic pattern depended.

Widespread discontent with Chinese policies and practices broke out in open rebellion at Lhasa on March 10, 1959, and the 14th Dalai Lama (like his predecessor half a century earlier) was forced to flee into exile to India. The aftermath of the revolt was marked by purges and the implementation of the reforms. The Dalai Lama at first hailed by the Chinese regime as a “victim” of an imperialist plot, was finally denounced in 1964 as the “ringleader” of the revolt. In September, 1965, Tibet was officially declared an autonomous region of the People’s Republic of China.

LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Tibet is called Bod (Po) by the Tibetans, Bhot by Indians, Tobet by Mongols, and Hsi-tsang by Chinese. Tibet comprises an area of 471,660 square miles and had a population of 1,500,000 before it was annexed by the People’s Republic of China in 1951. Ethnically, Tibet includes part of the Chinese provinces of Ch’iang-hsi, Kansu, Szechwan and Yunnan; part of Bhutan, Sikkim, and Nepal; and part of Jammu and Kashmir. The people in this vast area of ethnic Tibet differ in customs, dress, and dialects; however, they share a common religious system and written language. Lhasa, the capital, was the mecca of Tibetan Buddhism.

Tibet is on a high plateau wherein the northern two-thirds is known as the Chang Thang averaging 10,000 feet in elevation and receives an average of 10 inches of precipitation. It is devoid of trees and large forms of vegetation. The grasses that grow there are during the short summer season grazed by the sheep of nomads. The western and southern border of the Tibetan plateau is formed by the Himalayan mass that stretches from Naga Parbat in the northwest to Namcha Barwa in the southwest with the highest peak Mt. Everest. North of Lake Manasarovar and stretching eastwardly is the Trans-Himalaya or Kailas Range. The Trans-Himalayas are separated from the Himalayas by the deep river valley which flows across southern Tibet and then turns southward to the plains of India.

In the western and northern regions of Tibet, life is possible only for nomads who depend on their herds of yaks, sheep, and goats for transport, shelter, and sustenance. In this region even the plains and valleys are more than 15,000 feet above sea level, and the population does not exceed one person per square mile. Much greater densities are to be found in southeastern Tibet, in the Valley of the Tsang-pai for portions of which valley lie at an elevation as low 5,000 feet above sea level.

There are only three towns of any size or importance in Tibet. Lhasa, the capital, Lhassa, Gyantse and Shigatse, was the old and fortress of the dominated by the combined Temples. Potala, had a population of some 30,000 if the two great monasteries in the neighborhood are excluded. Drepung monastery, situated in the hills five miles from Lhasa, was the largest in the world with a resident population of about ten thousand monks, and the Sera, between five and ten thousand monks. Both Shigatse and monastery was only slightly smaller. Gyantse, trading town in southern Tibet of about ten thousand.

The total rainfall and snow over the Himalayas is less than 10 inches per year. The Himalayas at cannot pass. The barrier over which the monsoon reaches high altitude and they are exposed to the northerly wind which varies considerably in 24-hour periods to below 0°F at night. The air is dry.

The animal commonly associated with Tibet is the yak. They are used as draft animals and are the chief means of...
with the highest peak Mt. Everest. North of Lake Manasarovar and stretching eastwardly is the Trans-Himalaya, or Kailas Range. The Trans-Himalayas are separated from the Himalayas by the deep river valley which flows across southern Tibet then turns southward to the plains of India.

In the western and northern regions of Tibet, life is possible only for nomads who depend on their herds of yaks, sheep, and goats for transport, shelter, and sustenance. In this region even the plains and valleys are more than 15,000 feet above sea level, and the population does not exceed one person per square mile. Much greater densities are to be found in southeast Tibet, in the Valley of the Tsang-pai for portions of that valley lie at an elevation as low 5,000 feet above sea level.

There are only three towns of any size or importance - Lhasa, Gyantse and Shigatse. Lhasa, the capital, dominated by the combined Temple and fortress of the Potala, had a population of some 30,000 if the two great monasteries in the neighborhood are excluded. Drepung monastery, situated in the hills five miles from Lhasa, was the largest in the world with a resident population of between five and ten thousand monks, and the Sera monastery was only slightly smaller. Both Shigatse and Gyantse, trading towns in southern Tibet, had a population of about ten thousand.

The total rainfall and snow over most of Tibet is less than 10 inches per year. The Himalaya Mountains form a barrier over which the monsoon rains cannot pass. The temperatures are low because of the high altitude and they vary considerably in a 24-hour period. It is always bitter cold in the morning and evening. At noon the sun may rise to 100°F, but usually drops below 0°F at night. The air is dry.

The animal commonly associated with Tibet is the yak. They are used as draft animals and are the chief means of
conveyance for highland travel. The can carry heavy loads (160 lbs.) The animal's meat and milk form together with barley, the staple food of all Tibetans. The sheep provide the nomadic people of northern Tibet with skin for garments, and meat, milk, and butter for food.

The various social classes among the Tibetan may be classified as thus: cleric, noble, merchant, trader, farmer, nomads, and outcasts.

Clerics

Prior to the Communist annexation of Tibet, it was estimated that about 20% of the population belongs to the cleric order. The major sects are the Dge-lugs-pa, Bka'-brgyud-pa, Sa-skya-pa, and Rnying-ma-pa. The Dge-lugs-pa is the reformed Yellow Hat sect, which enjoyed political supremacy after the 17th century, when its sectarian leader, the Dalai Lama, gained secular control. The concept of a ‘reincarnation lama’ was a late development, arriving first in the 14th century. It soon became the practice among the various sects to find “rebirths” of deceased lamas, and the word ‘lama’ became a term of reference for such reincarnations” to distinguish them from ordinary monks. A lama is regarded by the faithful as a physical manifestation of the absolute Buddha, and every monastery of any size had one or more lamas in residence.

Nobility

There were about 170 noble families in 1933, but the number increased afterward. The nobles trace their descent in a number of ways. One group is composed of the number of a Dalai Lama’s family. There are only six families of this type. The next in importance are those who trace their lineage to early kings. One such family, the Pha-lha family is descended from Bhutanese, who was ennobled and given an estate near Gyantse comprising 130 farms and for the service he rendered the Lhasa government in the 17th century. There are seven such families.

The remainder of the noble families came into being as a reward for service to the government or to the Dalai Lama; or when a rich commoner was granted a nobleman’s estate for which there was no heir. The Tibetan government consisted of 175 lay officials, all of whom came from the landed nobles, and 175 monk lay officials, some of whom also came from noble families.

Merchants and Traders

Small scale trading was a sideline of many people. Even the large monasteries conducted trade widely and had administrative departments in charge of trade. Nobles and monks alike engaged in trade. Commercial transactions requiring long journeys were carried on by the men, while the women managed the shops and small retail trade. The caravans of mules laden with wool that wound their way to India, would return to Tibet carrying a wide assortment of items ranging from rice to felt hats from England. Sheep were used as transport animals in western Tibet and were also Nepalese, Indians, Chinese, Kashmiris and others also played substantial roles in commercial activities in Tibet. The most profitable items of trade - tea, wool, gold and rice - were controlled by the Tibetan Government.

Farmers and Nomads

The commoner people of Tibet were divided into sedentary agriculturalists and nomadic pastoralists. The agriculturalists formed the peasantry of Tibet, inhabiting the river valleys particularly in the southern and southeastern regions. Some peasants worked as tenants for the government, monasteries, and lamas or nobles. Others worked as hired or drafted labourers on land directly managed by the estate holder.
government in the 17th century. There are seven such families.

The remainder of the noble families came into being as a reward for service to the government or to the Dalai Lama; or when a rich commoner was granted a nobleman's estate for which there was no heir. The Tibetan government consisted of 175 lay officials, all of whom came from the landed nobles, and 175 monk lay officials, some of whom also came from noble families.

Merchants and Traders

Small scale trading was a sideline of many people. Even the large monasteries conducted trade widely and had administrative departments in charge of trade. Nobles and monks alike engaged in trade. Commercial transactions requiring long journeys were carried on by the men, while the women managed the shops and small retail trade. The caravans of mules laden with wool that wound their way to India, would return to Tibet carrying a wide assortment of items ranging from rice to felt hats from England. Sheep were used as transport animals in western Tibet and were often sold along with their loads at the end of the journey. Nepalese, Indians, Chinese, Kashmiris and others also played substantial roles in commercial activities in Tibet. The most profitable items of trade - tea, wool, gold and rice - were controlled by the Tibetan Government.

Farmers and Nomads

The commoner people of Tibet were divided into sedentary agriculturalists and nomadic pastoralists. The agriculturalists formed the peasantry of Tibet, inhabiting the river valleys particularly in the southern and southeastern regions. Some peasants worked as tenants for the government, monasteries, and lamas or nobles. Others worked as hired or drafted labourers on land directly managed by the estate holder.
A nomad is called 'Brog-pa (Drok-ba) meaning “one (pa) of the pasture- land (’Brog)". The herdsmen and shepherds pasture their flocks on steppes at altitudes too high for crop raising. Grazing land is scattered throughout the upland of Tibet. Some pastoral groups practice seasonal migration; during the winter they stay in the lowlands and in the summer graze their animals on mountain slopes.

Outcasts

Buddhist teachings maintain the equality of all living beings and the social gradation of a caste system is alien to Tibetan society. Nevertheless, there was a group whose members were treated as outcasts. They earned their livelihood from begging and from disposing of corpses.

RELIGION

The pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet was a form of Central Asiatic shamanism, called Bon in Tibetan. In Bon teachings the world consisted of three realms: heaven, earth, and underworld. Each is filled with spirits and demons and only the shaman (priest), who possess magical powers, can visit these realms in a state of trance, using a drum as his means of transportation. The shaman was also a psychopomp who guided the soul of the deceased to the netherworld. The concept of a medium or oracle plays as influential role in Bon shamanism.

The basic teachings of Bon shamanism were so rooted in the Tibetan tradition that most of them were adopted into the tolerant teachings of Buddhism. The various spirits and demons became the adversaries of the Buddhists, and monks and lamas perform exorcists rituals to effect a cure of a patient. The oracle was adopted as well, and there was even a state oracle who was a monk of the reformed Yellow Hat sect.

Buddhism was actively propagated in Tibet in the eighth century by Padmasambhava, a learned Indian Guru.

Introduction to Tibetan Himalayas

The teachings he spread were those of Vajrayana, the ‘Diamond Vehicle’; the esoteric school of Mahayana Buddhism that combines the Mahhyamika teachings of Nagarjuna with the psychosexual symbolism and metaphysical powers taught in the tantras. The nature of absolute reality cannot be known through ordinary thought processes as sense perception, but after a long course of intellectual investigation and concentrated study, it could be experienced in a state of meditation.

One cannot describe what the nature of absolute reality is, or is not, for the sake of communication it is called Sunyata (Tibetan: Stong-pa-nyid, ‘Voidness’). When one has experienced sunyata in meditation, one is said to have transcendent wisdom. Tantric teachings maintain that there are mystic sounds (mantras) and gestures (mudras) that have metaphysical power when correctly executed. This accounts for the use of the prayer-wheel by the Tibetans. The so-called prayer is, in fact, a mantra, printed on a roll of paper, and each time it is printed on the roll.

About the same time Padmasambhava and others were teaching in Tibet, Chinese monks were teaching the ‘mind-only’ doctrine of the Ch’an School of Buddhism. Ch’an teaches that the nature of absolute reality can be experienced only in the state of meditation. It occurs instantaneously, and the long course of study and intellectual development so strongly emphasized by the Madhyamika teachings are regarded as useless and even a hindrance by Ch’an.

A debate between the two schools of Buddhism was held under royal auspices resulting that the teachings from India were declared the superior one and the king issued an edict that it was to be the only doctrine professed in Tibet hence forth.

The monks who remain loyal to the Bon religion were, and are, known as ‘Black Hats’ while followers of
The teachings he spread were those of Vajrayana, the ‘Diamond Vehicle’; the esoteric school of Mahayana Buddhism that combines the Mahayana teachings of Nagarjuna with the psychosexual symbolism and metaphysical powers taught in the tantras. The nature of absolute reality cannot be known through ordinary thought processes as sense perception, but after a long course of intellectual investigation and concentrated study, it could be experienced in a state of meditation.

One cannot describe what the nature of absolute reality is, or is not, but for the sake of communication it is called Sunyata (Tibetan: Stong-pa-nyid, ‘Voidness’). When one has experienced sunyata in meditation, one is said to have transcendental wisdom. Tantric teachings maintain that there are mystic sounds (mantras) and gestures (mudras) that have metaphysical power when correctly executed. This accounts for the use of the prayer-wheel by the Tibetans. The so-called prayer is, in fact, a mantra, printed numerous times on a roll of paper, and each turn of the wheel is the same as saying the mantra as many times as it is printed on the roll.

About the same time Padmasambhava and others were teaching in Tibet, Chinese monks were teaching the ‘mind-only’ doctrine of the Ch’ an School of Buddhism. Ch’an teaches that the nature of absolute reality can be experienced only in the state of meditation. It occurs instantaneously, and the long course of study and intellectual development so strongly emphasized by the Madhyamika teachings are regarded as useless and even a hindrance by Ch’an.

A debate between the two schools of Buddhism was held under royal auspices resulting that the teachings from India were declared the superior one and the king issued an edict that it was to be the only doctrine propagated in Tibet hence forth.

The monks who remain loyal to the Bon religion were, and are, known as ‘Black Hats’ while followers of
Padmasambhava were called ‘Red Hats’, Nyingma-pa, from their distinctive head coverings.

In the tenth century, the Black Hats became so strong, that they almost succeeded in extirpating Mahayana Buddhism in Tibet. The first reformation movement came as a result of the teachings of Atisa, an Indian guru who arrived in Tibet in AD1042, and by translating the Buddhist scriptures, the Kagyur and the Tengya, into Tibetan language left the religion so firmly established that it was never again in any danger of being driven from the country.

The last and most significant reformation movement was led by Tsong- Kha-pa (AD1357-1419) and formulated his own teachings in placing special emphasis on the rules of monastic discipline and his followers became known as the Gelugpa. They wore yellow hats instead of the usual red ones to distinguish themselves from the unreformed monks, hence the name ‘Yellow Hat’ sect. In the seventeenth century, the Gelugpa achieved political supremacy through the Military assistance of the Mongols and it religious leader, the Dalai Lama, became temporal ruler of Tibet.

The aspect of the national character that has most influenced their past and their present is the devotion to religion which dominates the thought and actions of every Tibetan. The best-known aspects of Tibetan religion were the number and size of monasteries throughout the country; the system of reincarnating Lamas which has been operative since the twelfth century and of which the Dalai Lama is the chief exemplar; the method by which the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama is discovered; ritual dances; oracles; and ascetics. Less heard about the considerable number of quiet devout priests who spent their lives in study, meditation, and teaching, and of no less devout monastic men of affairs who administrated the discipline and the property of the numerous monasteries.

Almost every family in Tibet contributed at least one member to the religious order with the result that the population of the monasteries was proportionately very large. Bell estimates the figure at between a quarter and half a million. The title Lama, which means, ‘exalted’ or ‘superior’, is given only to the higher orders of priesthood and should not be applied indiscriminately to every member of the main body of monks and novices who inhabit the monasteries. Women are also admitted to religious life, but the number of nuns was a very small fraction of the number of monks.

The leading Lamas are always, or almost always, reincarnations of various Bodhisattvas, the Dalai Lama being the reincarnation of Avaloki Tesvara, Chenrezi in Tibetan, the God of Mercy, who intercedes for all beings in the Wheel of Life. The second most important Lama in Tibetan religious life is the Tashi Lama of Tashilingpo monastery near Shigatse, regarded as the reincarnation of Amitabha, the Buddha of Measureless Light.

At times when the Dalai Lama has not reached his majority and been enthroned the appointment of a regent becomes necessary and almost invariably the post is held by a Bodhisattva. When the Dalai Lama leaves Tibet once again a regency is necessary and a Bodhisattva is chosen. It is also normal for the abbots of the great monasteries of Sera, Drepung and Ganden to be Bodhisattvas. The abbots of these three monasteries along with eight government officials were entrusted with the task of presiding over the National Assembly.

**LANGUAGE AND SCRIPT**

The Tibetan language is classified as a member of the Tibeto- Himalayan branch of the Sino-Tibetan family of languages, and yet each developed independently over the millennia and so shared a common linguistic origin, Burmese, and Chinese.
Almost every family in Tibet contributed at least one member to the religious order with the result that the population of the monasteries was proportionately very large. Bell estimates the figure at between a quarter and half a million. The title Lama, which means, ‘exalted’ or ‘superior’, is given only to the higher orders of priesthood and should not be applied indiscriminately to every member of the main body of monks and novices who inhabit the monasteries. Women are also admitted to the religious life, but the number of nuns was a very small fraction of the number of monks.

The leading Lamas are always, or almost always, reincarnations of various Bodhisattvas, the Dalai Lama being the reincarnation of Avaloki Tesvara, Chenrezi in Tibetan, the God of Mercy, who intercedes for all beings in the Wheel of Life. The second most important Lama in Tibetan religious life is the Tashi Lama of Tashilhunpo monastery near Shigatse, regarded as the reincarnation of Amitabha, the Buddha of Measureless Light.

At times when the Dalai Lama has not reached his majority and been enthroned the appointment of a regent becomes necessary and almost invariably the post is held by a Bodhisattva. When the Dalai Lama leaves Tibet, once again a regency is necessary and a Bodhisattva is chosen. It is also normal for the abbots of the great monasteries of Sera, Drepung and Ganden to be Bodhisttvas. The abbots of these three monasteries along with eight government officials were entrusted with the task of presiding over the National Assembly.

LANGUAGE AND SCRIPT

The Tibetan language is classified as a member of the Tibeto- Himalayan branch of the Tibeto-Burmese sub-family of the Sino-Tibetan family of languages. Tibetan, Burmese, and Chinese shared a common linguistic origin, yet each developed independently over the millennia and
became distinctive in both spoken and written forms. Lacking reliable census data, the number of Tibetan-speaking people in Asia can only be approximate. The figure for Tibet proper is estimated at around 1,500,000 with perhaps an additional 5,000,000 in the Tibetan ethnic areas of western China, Bhutan, Sikkim, northern Nepal, and the Ladakh region of Kashmir.

The systems of writing Chinese, Burmese, and Tibetan are completely different. Chinese has been written in ideographs and logographs since the 2nd millennium B.C. The Burmese script dating from the 11th century A.D. is an adaptation of the 'square' Pali script. The Tibetan system of writing was modeled on an Indo-Aryan script during the seventh century A.D.

During the reign of the great King Srong-tsen Gampo in the seventh century, the economic situation of the country improved. Travel, trade, foreign relations and communications also increased. According to Tibetan historical tradition, a minister named Thonmi Sambhota was sent, c. AD640, to study Sanskrit in Kashmir. After returning to Lhasa, Thonmi formulated the Tibetan script from Lentsa and Wartu! He devised a syllabary consisting of 30 consonants and four vowel signs.

Gradually, variants of the original script developed into the following styles:

- Uchen (dbu-can), book script for Buddhist texts, often carved in wood for printing.
- Ume (dbu-med), curvise hand script for texts and general use.
- Bamyik ('bam-yig) decorative script for official documents.
- Drutsa ('bru-tsha), decorative script for official documents and title pages of books—especially those written in Ume.
— Lentsa, special type of script based on the ancient Gupta writing used for seed syllables and title of texts.
— Chuyik ('khyug-yig, 'quick writing'), fast hand script for notes, letters, and general use.