



Late imperial period (704-842)

Tride Tsuktsän (704–754)

Trisong Detsen (756–797 or 804)

Tride Songtsen (799–815)

Tritsu Detsen (815–838)

Langdarma (838–842)

Tride Tsuksän (704–754)

Gyältsugru generally known now by his nickname Me Agtsom ("Old Hairy"), was born in 704. Upon the death of Tridu Songtsen, his mother Thrimalö ruled as regent for the infant Gyältsugru.

Gyältsugru was officially enthroned with the royal name Tride Tsuksän in 712,[year that dowager empress Thrimalö died.

The Umayyad Caliphate and Türgesh became increasingly prominent during 710–720.

The Tibetans were allied with the Türgesh . Tibet and China fought on and off in the late 720s. At first Tibet (with Türgesh allies) had the upper hand, but then they started losing battles. After a rebellion in southern China and a major Tibetan victory in 730, the Tibetans and Türgesh sued for peace. The Tibetans aided the Türgesh in fighting against the Muslim Arabs during the Muslim conquest of Transoxiana.

The Türgesh empire collapsed from internal strife. In 737, the Tibetans launched an attack against the king of Bru-za (Gilgit), who asked for Chinese help, but was ultimately forced to pay homage to Tibet. In 747, the hold of Tibet was loosened by the campaign of general Gao Xianzhi, who tried to re-open the direct communications between Central Asia and Kashmir.

By 750 the Tibetans had lost almost all of their central Asian possessions to the Chinese. In 753, even the kingdom of "Little Balur" (modern Gilgit) was captured by the Chinese. However, after Gao Xianzhi's defeat by the Caliphate and Karluks at the Battle of Talas (751), Chinese influence decreased rapidly and Tibetan influence began to increase again. Tibet conquered large sections of northern India during this time.

In 755 Tride Tsuksen was killed by the ministers Lang and 'Bal. Then Takdra Lukong (Stag-sgra Klu-khong) presented evidence to prince Song Detsen (Srong-lde-brtsan) that they were disloyal and causing dissension in the country, and were about to injure him also. Subsequently, Lang and 'Bal really did revolt. They were killed by the army and their property was confiscated.

Trisong Detsen (756–797 or 804)

In 756 prince Song Detsän was crowned Emperor with the name Trisong Detsen (Khri sron lde brtsan) and took control of the government when he attained his majority at 13 years of age (14 by Western reckoning) after a one-year interregnum during which there was no emperor.

In 755 China had been greatly weakened by the An Shi Rebellion, which would last until 763. In contrast, Trisong Detsän's reign was characterized by the reassertion of Tibetan influence in Central Asia. Early in his reign regions to the West of Tibet paid homage to the Tibetan court. From that time onward the Tibetans pressed into the territory of the Tang emperors, reaching the Chinese capital Chang'an (modern Xian) in late 763. Tibetan troops occupied Chang'an for fifteen days and installed a puppet emperor while Emperor Daizong was in Luoyang. Nanzhao (in Yunnan and neighbouring regions)

remained under Tibetan control from 750 to 794, when they turned on their Tibetan overlords and helped the Chinese inflict a serious defeat on the Tibetans.

In 785, Wei Kao, a Chinese serving as an official in Shuh repulsed Tibetan invasions of the area.

In the meantime, the Kyrgyz negotiated an agreement of friendship with Tibet and other powers to allow free trade in the region. An attempt at a peace treaty between Tibet and China was made in 787, but hostilities were to last until the Sino-Tibetan treaty of 821 was inscribed in Lhasa in 823 (see below). At the same time, the Uyghurs, nominal allies of the Tang emperors, continued to make difficulties along Tibet's Northern border. Toward the end of this king's reign Uyghur victories in the North caused the Tibetans to lose a number of their allies in the Southeast.

Recent historical research indicates the presence of Christianity in as early as the sixth and seventh centuries, a period when the Hephthalites had extensive links with the Tibetans. A strong presence existed by the eighth century when Patriarch Timothy I (727-823) in 782 calls the Tibetans one of the more significant communities of the eastern church and wrote of the need to appoint another bishop in ca. 794.

There is a stone pillar (now blocked off from the public), the Lhasa Shöl rdo-rings, Doring Chima or Lhasa Zhol Pillar, in the ancient village of Shöl in front of the Potala in Lhasa, dating to c. 764 CE during Trisong Detsen's reign. It also contains an account of the conquest of large swathes of northwestern China including the capture of Chang'an, the Chinese capital, for a short period in 763 CE, during the reign of Emperor Daizong.

Tride Songtsen (799–815)

Under Tride Songtsen (Khri lde srong brtsan - generally known as Sadnalegs) there was a protracted war with the Abbasid Caliphate. It appears that Tibetans captured a number of Caliphate troops and pressed them into service on the eastern frontier in 801. Tibetans were active as far west as Samarkand and Kabul. Caliphate forces began to gain the upper hand, and the Tibetan governor of Kabul submitted to the Caliphate and became a Muslim about 812 or 815. The Caliphate then struck east from Kashmir, but were held off by the Tibetans. In the meantime, the Uyghur Khaganate attacked Tibet from the northeast. Strife between the Uyghurs and Tibetans continued for some time.

Tritsu Detsen (815–838)

Tritsu Detsen (Khri gtsug lde brtsan), best known as Ralpacan, is important to Tibetan Buddhists as one of the three Dharma Kings who brought Buddhism to Tibet. He was a generous supporter of Buddhism and invited many craftsmen, scholars and translators from neighbouring countries. He also promoted the development of written Tibetan and translations, which were greatly aided by the development of a detailed Sanskrit-Tibetan lexicon called the Mahavyutpatti which included standard Tibetan equivalents for thousands of Sanskrit terms.

Tibetans attacked Uyghur territory in 816 and were in turn attacked in 821. After successful Tibetan raids into Chinese territory, Buddhists in both countries sought mediation.

Ralpacan was apparently murdered by two pro-Bön ministers who then placed his anti-Buddhist brother, Langdarma, on the throne.

Tibet continued to be a major Central Asian empire until the mid-9th century. It was under the reign of Ralpacan that the political power of Tibet was at its greatest extent, stretching as far as Mongolia and Bengal, and entering into treaties with China on a mutual basis.

A Sino-Tibetan treaty was agreed on in 821/822 under Ralpacan, which established peace for more than two decades. A bilingual account of this treaty is inscribed on a stone pillar which stands outside the Jokhang temple in Lhasa.

Langdarma (838–842)

The reign of Langdarma (Glang dar ma), regal title Tri Uidumtsaen (Khri 'U'i dum brtsan), was plagued by external troubles. The Uyghur state to the north collapsed under pressure from the Kyrgyz in 840, and many displaced people fled to Tibet. Langdarma himself was assassinated, apparently by a Buddhist hermit, in 842 as he reportedly began persecution of Buddhists .

A civil war that arose over Langdarma's successor led to the collapse of the Tibetan Empire. The period that followed, known traditionally as the Era of Fragmentation, was dominated by rebellions against the remnants of imperial Tibet and the rise of regional warlords.



Silk Road

138 BC – 420 AD

629 - 751

1210 - 1365



The Phagmodrupa Dynasty or Pagmodru was a dynastic regime that held sway over Tibet or parts thereof from 1354 to the early 17th century. It was established by Tai Situ Changchub Gyaltzen of the Lang family at the end of the Yuan dynasty. The dynasty had a lasting importance on the history of Tibet; **it created an autonomous kingdom after Mongol rule, revitalized the national culture, and brought about a new legislation that survived until the 1950s.** Nevertheless, the Phagmodrupa had a turbulent history due to internal family feuding and the strong localism among noble lineages and fiefs. Its power receded after 1435 and was reduced to Ü (East Central Tibet) in the 16th century due to the rise of the **ministerial family of the Rinpungpa**. It was defeated by the rival **Tsangpa dynasty** in 1613 and 1620, and was formally superseded by the **Ganden Phodrang regime** founded by the 5th Dalai Lama in 1642. In that year, Güshi Khan of the Khoshut formally transferred the old possessions of Sakya, Rinpung and Phagmodrupa to the "Great Fifth".



The founder **Changchub Gyaltsen** came from the monastic principality Phagmodru which was founded as a hermitage in 1158 by the famous **Kagyü** scholar **Phagmo Drupa Dorje Gyalpo**. It was situated in the Nêdong district southeast of Lhasa. Some time after the death of the founder in 1170, some of his disciples met and organized a true monastery, called Dansa Thil Phagmodru evolved into a large and wealthy estate around the monastery, which was governed by members of the Lang family. They maintained a variant of the **Dagpo Kagyü** school of Buddhism known as the **Phagdru Kagyü**. When Mongol rule was imposed on Tibet in the mid-13th century, Phagmodru became an appanage under Hülegü Khan (d. 1266), forming one of the thirteen myriarchies (divisions) of Central Tibet. Towards the end of the 13th century the myriarchy fell on hard times and lost territory. Its fortunes were revived by Changchub Gyaltsen who became lord of the fief in 1322. He managed to defeat various local opponents at a time when the Yuan dynasty, overlord of Tibet, was on the decline. The **Sakya regime**, which was centered in Tsang (West Central Tibet) had hitherto wielded power over Tibet on behalf of the Mongols. However, Tai Situ Changchub Gyaltsen superseded Sakya in the period 1354–1358, thereby recreating an autonomous Tibetan state.[5] As the Mongol ruler Toghon Temür was beset by inner troubles he preferred to confirm the acquisitions of Changchub Gyaltsen and conferred the titles darakache and tai situ (grand tutor) on him.

The Ming dynasty made no attempt to reinstate the tight grip on Tibet once exercised by the Mongols. In 1372 the Hongwu Emperor conferred the title Guanding Guoshi on Changchub Gyaltsen's successor Jamyang Shakya Gyaltsen (r. 1364–1373) together with a jade seal.

The new regime governed from their palace in Nêdong in the Yarlung Valley. Changchub Gyaltsen did not take royal titles but preferred the title *desi* (sde srid) that means regent, namely for the ancient kings of Tibet (600-842) whose glory he wished to revive. The new regent reorganized the old Mongol-Sakya administration by sharing up the territory in divisions (*de* or *dzongchen*), under which were *dzong* (*rdzong*), districts. These were headed by *dzongpons* who governed from fortified cities (also called *dzong*) and combined civil and military functions. They were taken from Changchub Gyaltsen's close followers and were initially not hereditary. He moreover abolished Mongol laws and customs in favour of traditional Tibetan ones which were much less harsh. Three centuries later his laws were revised by the Fifth Dalai Lama and Sangye Gyatso and were valid until the overthrow of the Dalai Lama state in the 1950s. The dynasty in the first place wielded power over Central Tibet (Ü and Tsang).

After 1373 the rulers periodically dispatched formal tributes to the emperors of the Ming dynasty in China, and received from them the title Chanhuaawang (Chinese: 闡化王, prince who expounds Buddhism) in 1406.

The Ming court formally established a number of prefectures (都司) and counties (寨) in Central Tibet. A Chinese military commissioner was appointed in Hezhou close to the border in 1374. The emperor bestowed him with general governing authority over Do-Kham (Eastern Tibet) and Ü-Tsang (Central Tibet). However, there is no trace of this office in the Tibetan chronicles or documents. Tibetan sources show that the titles and seals sent by the Chinese authorities were valued by the Phagmodrupa as adding to their prestige, but that no ordinances, taxes or laws were imposed by the Ming. The emperor clearly preferred to issue formal appointments of Tibetans as rulers rather than to try and send officials or military commanders. Only essential matters, for instance the ownership of Sakya Monastery, were supposed to be judged by the emperor.

The first rulers were lamas who did not marry, and the succession up to 1481 went via collateral kinsmen. The dynasty was divided into three branches or rather functionaries: the ruling *desi*, the spiritual masters (*chen-nga*) of the Dansa Thil and Tsethang monasteries, and the preserver of the family

(dunggyu dsinpa) who sired children to continue the Lang lineage. While the first four rulers declined to take royal titles, being content with the dignity of desi, the fifth ruler Drakpa Gyaltsen appropriated the royal titles gongma (the high one, superior) and chogyal. From 1354 to 1435 the rulers managed to uphold a balance between the various fiefs. In particular the 47-years reign of Drakpa Gyaltsen (1385–1432) was remembered as generally peaceful and prosperous. The early Phagmodrupa era is famous for being culturally productive, and has even been termed a "golden age. There was an intense interest in reviving the glories of the ancient Tibetan kingdom, and many supposedly ancient texts were "rediscovered" by learned clerics. The monasteries gained increasing influence on the life of the Tibetans. This period included the work of the Buddhist reformer Je Tsongkhapa, founder of the **Gelug** sect, and that of his younger kinsman **Gedun Drub**, posthumously counted as the first Dalai Lama.

At length the Phagmodrupa were crippled by internal dissent in the Lang family. A brief civil war in 1434 weakened their position. Powerful feudatories took the opportunity to increase their power, in particular the **Rinpungpa family** who came to dominate **Tsang**. In 1481 one of their line, Donyo Dorje, managed to have the king Kunga Lekpa (r. 1448–1481) deposed. The **Rinpungpa** tended to associate with the **Karmapa** sect of Buddhism while the Phagmodrupa often (but not exclusively) favoured the rival **Gelug** sect. In the political landscape at this period it was important for rulers to find alliances with powerful monasteries and sects. Kunga Lekpa's grandnephew **Ngawang Tashi Drakpa** (r. 1499–1554, 1556/57–1564) managed to push back the Rinpungpa from the Lhasa area in 1517–18. He was the last effective king of the dynasty, keeping good relations with the Second and Third Dalai Lamas, but his influence was mainly restricted to Ü. As he grew old, new infighting beset the family, and his death in 1564 was followed by a long interregnum. Eventually his grandson Ngawang Drakpa Gyaltsen was placed on the increasingly hollow throne in 1576. Though largely powerless, he maintained some importance as a focal point around whom the various noble and clerical factions of East Central Tibet balanced. At the same time a new powerful dynasty arose in Tsang. This was the Tsangpa (1565–1642) who overthrew the Rinpungpa and increased their territory in various parts of Tibet. Like the Rinpungpa they allied with the Karmapa sect.

Rinpungpa was a Tibetan regime that dominated much of Western Tibet and part of Ü-Tsang between 1435 and 1565. During one period around 1500 the Rinpungpa lords came close to assemble the Tibetan lands around the Yarlung Tsangpo River under one authority, but their powers receded after 1512.

The Rinpungpa belonged to the Ger (clan, which is traced back to the days of the Tibetan Empire. One of their line, Namkha Gyaltsen, served as nanglon (minister of internal affairs) under the Phagmodrupa ruler Jamyang Shakya Gyaltsen, who held power over Ü-Tsang. He was appointed dzongpon (governor) of the fief Rinpung in Rong, a region in Tsang in an unknown year before 1373. His political position was strengthened by the marriage with the Phagmodrupa princess Sönam Palmö. Their daughter in turn was given in marriage to Sangye Gyaltsen, a Phagmodrupa prince, and gave birth to the later ruler Drakpa Jungne (r. 1432-1445). The son of Namkha Gyaltsen was Namkha Gyalpo who took over the Rinpung estate at the age of 14 and held a number of ministerial positions. He was succeeded in 1413 by his young son Norzang, a strong personality who expanded the fortunes of the family on a Tibet-wide level. He increased his control over territories in Shang, Tag, Ling and Kyur and was the patron of the Jamchen Monastery, founded in 1427. He also founded the Kyemotsal Monastery in Dzongkar in 1437.



Nickname(s): Gateway to Everest



The Rinpungpa took advantage of a family feud within the Phagmodrupa Dynasty in 1434. With the united troops from Rong and Shang, Norzang seized the important place Samdrubtse, modern Shigatse, from the governor of the Chonggye family. This is traditionally said to have taken place in 1435. Samdrubtse was a very strategic spot and the key to power over Tsang. In the following years Norzang expanded his influence over Tsang, Rong and Shang. His kinsman, the Phagmodrupa king Kunga Lekpa (r. 1448-1481) was born from a Rinpung princess and in turn married a Rinpungpa daughter. He was not able to stop the advances of his powerful vassal. Norzang himself married Kunga Lekpa's sister, further emphasizing the elaborated net of kinship ties between the two families. While still acknowledging the Phagmodrupa, the Rinpungpa subsequently built up a strong position, bearing the title desi (regent).

The increasing importance of the Buddhist sects in this period made it crucial for secular rulers to seek support from religious networks. In Tibetan historiography the members of the family are famous as the patrons of the Karma Kagyu school of Buddhism, which was sometimes opposed to the Gelugpa. However, the early Rinpungpa lords supported other sects such as **Sakya** and its important philosopher **Gorampa**.



After the death of Norzang in 1466 the fortunes of the Rinpungpa took a downturn for a while under his obscure son Kunzang. This person died in the 1470s and was succeeded by Donyo Dorje, the most powerful figure of the line. While pursuing an aggressive and warlike policy to achieve domination over Central Tibet, he also stood out as a religious patron. Thus he sponsored the foundation of the Yangpachen Monastery for the Shamarpa hierarch of the Karma Kagyu sect. This included comprehensive economic dispositions; 2,800 nomadic households were donated to the Shamarpa for providing butter-lamp offerings, and all the monks of Yangpachen were granted a daily measure of barley. His policy towards the Phagmodrupa was one of confrontation. The king Kunga Lekpa lived in a conflict-ridden marriage with the Rinpung princess, which added to the rift. Her kinsman Donyo Dorje eventually invaded the central domain of the king in 1480. In the following year a conference was convened in the Phagmodrupa capital Nêdong where the Rinpung princes participated. In the end Kunga Lekpa was forced to abdicate in favour of a nephew, a relative non-entity.

The agreement did not put an end to the endemic political turbulence in Central Tibet. The Rinpungpa proceeded to defeat various regional lords and increase their power. In 1485 they attacked the important estate Gyantse and captured the lord of Yung. New turbulence arose in 1489 and again allowed the Rinpungpa to keep the upper hand. Two years later Donyo Dorje's uncle Tsokye Dorje took power as regent in the Phagmodrupa seat Nêdong (1491–1499) during the minority of the heir Ngawang Tashi Drakpa. The years around 1500 saw the high tide of Rinpungpa power, and the authority of Donyo Dorje was almost absolute, being supported by the Karmapa and Shamarpa hierarchs. There was also a political expansion to the west. In 1499 the important kingdom of Guge in Ngari (West Tibet) had to acknowledge the Rinpungpa.

Due to pressure from the Rinpungpa, who favoured the Karma Kagyu, the Gelugpa school were forbidden to participate in the new year celebration and the great Monlam ceremony in Lhasa between 1498 and 1517. After the deaths of the powerful princes Tsokye Dorje (1510) and Donyo Dorje (1512), however, the power of the Rinpungpa declined. In spite of Rinpungpa patronage the hierarchs of the Karma Kagyu, Karmapa and Shamarpa, were adverse to being closely controlled by the secular lords. They therefore strove to once again stabilize the long-effaced Phagmodrupa rule. In the early sixteenth century Ngawang Tashi Drakpa of the Phagmodrupa managed to regain a degree of influence, pushing out the new Rinpung lords Zilnonpa and Ngawang Namgyal from Lhasa. He was friendly disposed to the Gelugpa leader Gedun Gyatso (posthumously counted as the second Dalai Lama), which at this stage did not exclude heartily relations with the Karma Kagyu. The direct power of Rinpungpa in Ü (East Central Tibet) was henceforth limited.

External threats and fall from power

An agreement between the factions of Ü and Tsang was reached in 1518. The nominal head of the Rinpungpa, the boy Zilnonpa, asked the king for investiture as dzongpon, and such was given. In fact, however, the Rinpungpa continued to wield power over Tsang on their own accord. The following decades were marked by a confusing succession of clashes and temporary reconciliations between the factions of Central Tibet. In 1532 the Rinpungpa domains were briefly threatened by an invasion by the Muslim general Mirza Muhammad Haidar Dughlat, operating on the orders of the ruler of Kashgar.[8] The waning of Rinpungpa power was marked by an abortive invasion of the Mangyül Gungthang kingdom in West Tibet in 1555, which was badly defeated.[9] In 1557 one of the retainers of the Rinpungpa, Karma Tseten, who was governor of Shigatse since 1548, rebelled against his lord. In 1565, finally, the learned and cultivated Rinpungpa ruler Ngawang Jigme Drakpa was defeated by Karma Tseten through a surprise attack. In that way **Karma Tseten** founded the new **Tsangpa Dynasty** which would rule large parts of Central Tibet up to 1642.

The Rinpungpa survived in their heartland Rong and periodically tried to revive their fortune. They staged an abortive attack on Kyishö in Ü in 1575 and quarreled with the Tsangpa ruler in the next few years. After the Tsang-Rong war of 1589 their power was exhausted, and they were forced to capitulate in 1590. Local Rinpungpa princes are known up to the early 17th century



Tsangpa Dynasty

was a dynasty that dominated large parts of Tibet from 1565 to 1642. It was the last Tibetan royal dynasty to rule in own name. The regime was founded by Karma Tseten, a low-born retainer of the prince of the Rinpungpa Dynasty and governor of Shigatse in Tsang (West-Central Tibet) since 1548.

During the 16th century Tibet was fragmented among rivaling factions, along religious as well as dynastic lines. The Phagmodrupa Dynasty lost any semblance of power after 1564 and its rival Rinpungpa was also unable to achieve unity. Among the traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, the **Karma Kagyu** school competed against the **Gelug**, which was headed by the Dalai Lama. According to tradition, Karma Tseten obtained a troop of horsemen by altering a document issued by his master, the Rinpungpa lord. He then raised the standard of rebellion in 1557 and managed to supersede the Rinpungpa by a surprise attack in 1565. This was facilitated by the simmering discontent with the Rinpungpa among several vassals. Known as the **Depa Tsangpa** or Tsang Desi, he became the king of Upper Tsang and allied with Köncho Yenlak, the 5th Shamarpa of the Karma Kagyu. Wangchuk Dorje, 9th Karmapa Lama, met him on several occasions and transferred tutelary deities to the ruler. This was a ritually important act to legitimize the new regime. Karma Tseten also patronized the **Nyingma**, **Sakya** and **Jonang** sects.

The rise of the dynasty should be seen against the anxiety for outside intervention in the deeply divided country. The alliance between the 3rd Dalai Lama and the Tumed leader Altan Khan (1578) likely aroused the fear of some aristocratic families in Ü-Tsang and of the non-Gelug schools. This motivated the Karmapa to seek protection from the Tsangpa rulers. The new dynasty strove to keep Tibet free from the recurring Mongol incursions which plagued the land on several occasions in the late 16th and early 17th century. The further aim was to revive the glories of the old Tibetan Empire and create a peaceful and well-ordered Tsang. This was partly successful; the last remains of Rinpungpa authority vanished in 1590 as they were forced to capitulate their heartland Rong to Karma Tseten. There is nothing to suggest that the regime kept any relations with the declining Ming dynasty of China.

Struggle against the Gelugpa

Our sources from this period are mainly concerned with religious affairs and do not disclose much about the administrative structure of the Tsangpa realm. The basis of their power is therefore still insufficiently understood. Nor is the history of Karma Tseten's closest successors well known, but in the early 17th century the dynasty is frequently mentioned as a competitor for power over Tibet. The family was generally opposed to the Gelugpa and Dalai Lamas, whose power meanwhile increased in Ü. The Tsangpa ruler Karma Tensung (or, in another account, his nephew Karma Phuntsok Namgyal) reacted by invading Ü from his base in Tsang in 1605 and attacking the Drepung and Sera Monasteries. 5,000 monks are said to have been massacred on this occasion. The Tsangpa army expelled the Mongol troops that assisted the 4th Dalai Lama, himself a Mongol prince by birth. The Dalai Lama had to flee and the Tsangpa ruler was close to become the king of Tibet.

In 1612 and 1613, the Tsangpa ruler subjugated a number of local regimes in West Tibet: the Ngari Gyelpo, Lhopa and Changpa. There were also spectacular successes in the east. The new acquisitions included Dagpo in the far southeast, Phanyul (north of Lhasa) and Neu (southeast of Lhasa). He was less successful against Bhutan, where his enemy, Ngawang Namgyal, the prince abbot of Ralung Monastery in Tsang and one of the reincarnations of the fourth Gyalwang Drukpa Kunkhyen Pema Karpo of the Drukpa Lineage, had taken refuge.

Expansion and Mongol response

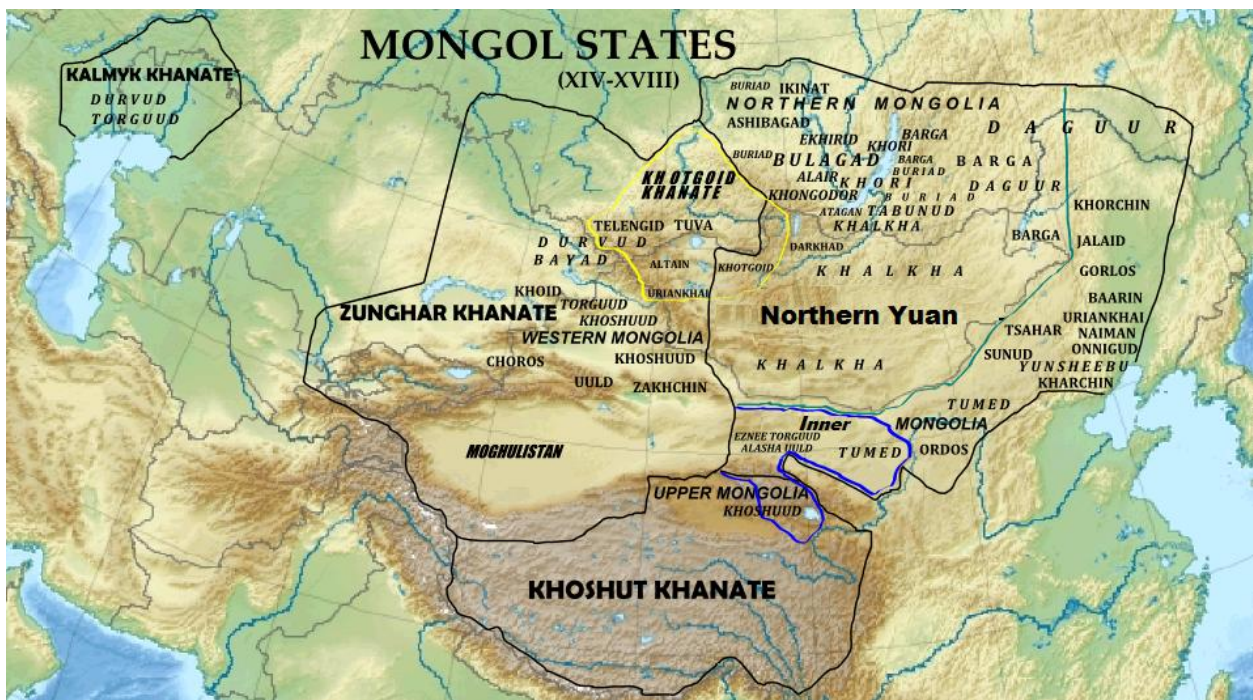
In 1618, the Tsangpa Gyelpo pushed further into Ü and defeated the local leaders of Kyishö and Tsal. By now Karma Phuntsok Namgyal was virtually the ruler of Central Tibet and was consecrated as such by Chöying Dorje, 10th Karmapa. In the following year 1619, the West Tibetan kingdom of Mangyül Gungthang was conquered. In the next year again Karma Phuntsok Namgyal returned to Ü in order to eliminate the last possible obstacle to his authority. Nêdong, the seat of the impotent Phagmodrupa Dynasty, was besieged and forced to yield to his power. Tsang forces occupied the entire Yarlung Valley.

The hegemony of Tsangpa was, however, only of a brief nature. Not least their position as an upstart family without aristocratic roots made their authority tenuous. After Yonten Gyatso's death, his successor, the 5th Dalai Lama (1617–1682), received help from the Mongols, who pushed into Ü in 1621. The new Tsangpa king Karma Tenkyong was defeated and besieged at Chakpori Hill by Lhasa, and his army only escaped annihilation through the intervention of the Panchen Lama. An agreement was made whereby the Gelugpa regained much of their former authority in Ü. The abbot of the important Drigung Monastery in Ü, allied to the Tsangpa, was abducted by the Tumed Mongols in 1623, which was a further blow. In retaliation Karma Tenkyong brought his troops to Ü and occupied the Lhasa region. The following years saw a lull in the fighting while both sides tried to attract allies. Karma Tenkyong sought the assistance of the Choghtu Mongols, and a troop under prince Arsalan invaded Tibet in 1635 in order to attack the Gelugpa positions. However, in the end Arsalan declined to actually support the Tsangpa, leading to an entirely unsatisfactory conclusion of the enterprise for Karma Tenkyong and the Karmapa and Shamarpa hierarchs. At the same time, Karma Tenkyong was threatened by Ladakh in the west, although it never came to open warfare.

Triumph of the Dalai Lama:



Ganden Phodrang regime founded by the 5th Dalai Lama in 1642. In that year, Güshi Khan of the Khoshut formally transferred the old possessions of Sakya, Rinpung and Phagmodrupa to the "Great Fifth".



In 1641 the leader of the Khoshut Mongols of the Kokonor region, Güshi Khan, set out from his home area and attacked the king of Beri in Kham, who was a practitioner of the Bon religion and persecuted Buddhist lamas. Güshi Khan had been in contact with "the Great Fifth" since 1637 and was a major champion for his cause. After having defeated Beri, he proceeded to invade Tsang. Justification for this was found in the alliance between Beri and Tsang, which allegedly aimed at eradicating the Gelugpa. The Dalai Lama was opposed to a Mongol invasion which would have devastating effects on Central

Tibet, but was not able to change the course of things. Güshi Khan's reputation as an invincible commander rendered resistance weak. The Tsangpa stronghold, Shigatse, was captured after a long and bloody siege in March 1642. Karma Tenkyong was taken prisoner with his foremost ministers and kept in custody in Neu near Lhasa. After a revolt by Tsangpa supporters in the same year, the incensed Güshi Khan ordered Karma Tenkyong placed in an oxhide bag and drowned in a river. Güshi Khan, who founded the Khoshut Khanate presented Ü, Tsang and part of East Tibet to the Dalai Lama to rule. In this way began the religious Ganden Phodrang regime that would last until 1950.