



Full Independence (1913 - 1951)

The 13th Dalai Lama

Tibetans' involvement in the civil wars on China and Russia (1918-1922)

Sino-Tibetan War (1930-1933)

The 13th Dalai Lama



Thubten Gyatso (Tibetan: ཐུབ་བསྟན་གྱི་མཚོ།;; 12 February 1876 – 17 December 1933)

The 13th Dalai Lama was born in the village of Thakpo Langdun, south-east from Lhasa, and near Sam-ye Monastery, Tak-po province, in June, 1876 to parents Kunga Rinchen and Lobsang Dolma, a peasant couple.

In 1878 he was recognized as the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. He was escorted to Lhasa and given his pre-novice vows by the Panchen Lama, Tenpai Wangchuk, and named "Ngawang Lobsang Thupten Gyatso Jigdral Chokley Namgyal". In 1879 he was enthroned at the Potala Palace, but did not assume political power until 1895, after he had reached his maturity.

Thubten Gyatso was an intellectual reformer who proved himself a skillful politician when Tibet became a pawn in British and Russian rivalry. He was responsible for countering the British expedition to Tibet, restoring discipline in monastic life, and increasing the number of lay officials to avoid excessive power being placed in the hands of the monks.

Contact with Agvan Dorzhiev



Agvan Dorzhiev, (1854–1938), a Buryat Mongol, and a Russian subject, was born in the village of Khara-Shibir, not far from Ulan Ude, to the east of Lake Baikal. He left home in 1873 at 19 to study at the Gelugpa monastery, Drepung, near Lhasa, the largest monastery in Tibet. Having successfully completed the traditional course of religious studies, he began the academic Buddhist degree of Geshey Lhampa (the highest level of 'Doctorate of Buddhist Philosophy'). He continued his studies to become Tsanid-Hambo, or "Master of Buddhist Philosophy". He became a tutor and "debating partner" of the teenage Dalai Lama, who became very friendly with him and later used him as an envoy to Russia and other countries.

Contact with Carl Gustav Mannerheim



C.G.E. Mannerheim met Thubten Gyatso in Utaishan during the course of his expedition from Turkestan to Peking. Mannerheim wrote his diary and notes in Swedish to conceal the fact that his ethnographic and scientific party was also an elaborate intelligence gathering mission for the Russian army. The 13th Dalai Lama gave a blessing of white silk for the Russian Tsar and in

return received Mannerheim's precious seven-shot officer's pistol with a full explanation of its use, as a gift.



"Obviously," the 14th Dalai Lama said, "The 13th Dalai Lama had a keen desire to establish relations with Russia, and I also think he was a little skeptical toward England at first. Then there was Dorzhiev. To the English he was a spy, but in reality he was a good scholar and a sincere Buddhist monk who had great devotion to the 13th Dalai Lama.

Military conflicts and rebellion in Tibet

After the British expedition to Tibet by Sir Francis Younghusband in early 1904, Dorzhiev convinced the Dalai Lama to flee to Urga in Mongolia. The Dalai Lama spent over a year in Urga and the Wang Khuree Monastery giving teachings to the Mongolians. In Urga he met the 8th Bogdo Gegeen Jebtsundamba Khutuktu several times (the spiritual leader of Outer Mongolia). The content of these meetings is unknown. According to report from A.D. Khitrovo, the Russian Border Commissioner in Kyakhta Town, the Dalai Lama and the influential Mongol Khutuktus, high lamas and princes "irrevocably decided to secede from China as an independent federal state, carrying out this operation under the patronage and support from Russia, taking care to avoid the bloodshed".



Bogdo Gegeen Jebtsundamba Khutuktu

The Dalai Lama insisted that if Russia would not help, he would even ask Britain, his former foe, for assistance.

After the Dalai Lama fled, the Qing dynasty immediately proclaimed him deposed and again asserted sovereignty over Tibet, making claims over Nepal and Bhutan as well. The Treaty of Lhasa was signed at the Potala between Great Britain and Tibet in the presence of the Amban and Nepalese and Bhutanese representatives on 7 September 1904.



The Dalai Lama was suspected of involvement in the anti-foreign 1905 Tibetan Rebellion. The British invasion of Lhasa in 1904 had repercussions in the Tibetan Buddhist world, causing extreme anti-western and anti-Christian sentiment among Tibetan Buddhists. The British invasion also triggered intense and sudden Qing intervention in Tibetan areas, to develop, assimilate, and bring the regions under strong Qing central control. The Tibetan Lamas in Batang proceeded to revolt in 1905, massacring Chinese officials, French missionaries, and Christian Catholic converts. The Tibetan monks opposed the Catholics, razing the Catholic mission's Church, and slaughtering all Catholic missionaries and Qing officials. The Manchu Qing official Fengquan was assassinated by the Tibetan Batang Lamas, along with other Manchu and Han Chinese Qing officials and the French Catholic priests, who were all massacred when the rebellion started in March 1905. Tibetan Gelugpa monks in Nyarong, Chamdo, and Litang also revolted and attacked missions and churches and slaughtered westerners. The British invasion of Lhasa, the missionaries, and the Qing were linked in the eyes of the Tibetans, as hostile foreigners to be attacked. The Tibetans slaughtered the converts, torched the building of the missionaries in Batang due to their xenophobia. Tibetans Christian families gunned down after refusing to give up their religion at Yanjing at the hands of the 13th Dalai Lama's messengers at the same time during the 1905 rebellion when Father Dubernard was beheaded and all the

French missionaries were slaughtered by the Tibetan Buddhist Lamas. The name "Field of Blood" was given to where the slaughter happened.



In September 1908, the Dalai Lama was granted an audience with the Guangxu Emperor and Empress Dowager Cixi. The emperor tried to stress Tibet's subservient role, although the Dalai Lama refused to kowtow to him. He stayed in Beijing until the end of 1908.

When he returned to Tibet in December 1908, he began reorganising the government, but the Qing sent a military expedition of its own to Tibet in 1910 and he had to flee to India.

Dalai Lama and Tibetan Independence

In 1910, escaping Chinese invasion of Tibet, the Dalai Lama, "accompanied by six ministers and a small escort" which included his close aide, diplomat and military figure Tsarong Dzasa, fled to Sikkim and Darjeeling, where they stayed almost two years. During this period he was invited to Calcutta by the Viceroy, Lord Minto, which helped restore relations with the British.

Thubten Gyatso returned to Lhasa in January 1913 with Tsarong Dzasa from Darjeeling, where he had been living in exile. The new Chinese government apologized for the actions of the previous Qing dynasty and offered to restore the Dalai Lama to his former position. He replied that he was not interested in Chinese ranks and was assuming spiritual and political leadership of Tibet.



Tsarong Dzasa



13th Dalai Lama in India



Lord Minto

After his return from exile in India in 1913, Thubten Gyatso assumed control of foreign relations and dealt directly with the Maharaja and the British Political officer in Sikkim and the king of Nepal rather than letting the Kashag or parliament do it.

Thubten Gyatso declared independence from China in early 1913 (13 February), after returning from India following three years of exile. He then standardized the Tibetan flag in its present form. At the end of 1912 the first postage stamps of Tibet and the first bank notes were issued. Communication between Tibet and China were taking place only with the British as mediator.

In January 1913, Agvan Dorzhiev and three other Tibetan representatives[20] signed a treaty between Tibet and Mongolia in Urga, proclaiming mutual recognition and their independence from China. The British diplomat Charles Bell wrote that the 13th Dalai Lama told him that he had not authorized Agvan Dorzhiev to conclude any treaties on behalf of Tibet.

Because the text was not published, some initially doubted the existence of the treaty, but the Mongolian text was published by the Mongolian Academy of Sciences in 1982.



1910- The 13th Dalai Lama of Tibet, British Political Officer Charles Bell (both seated), and Sidkeong Tulku Namgyal of Sikkim

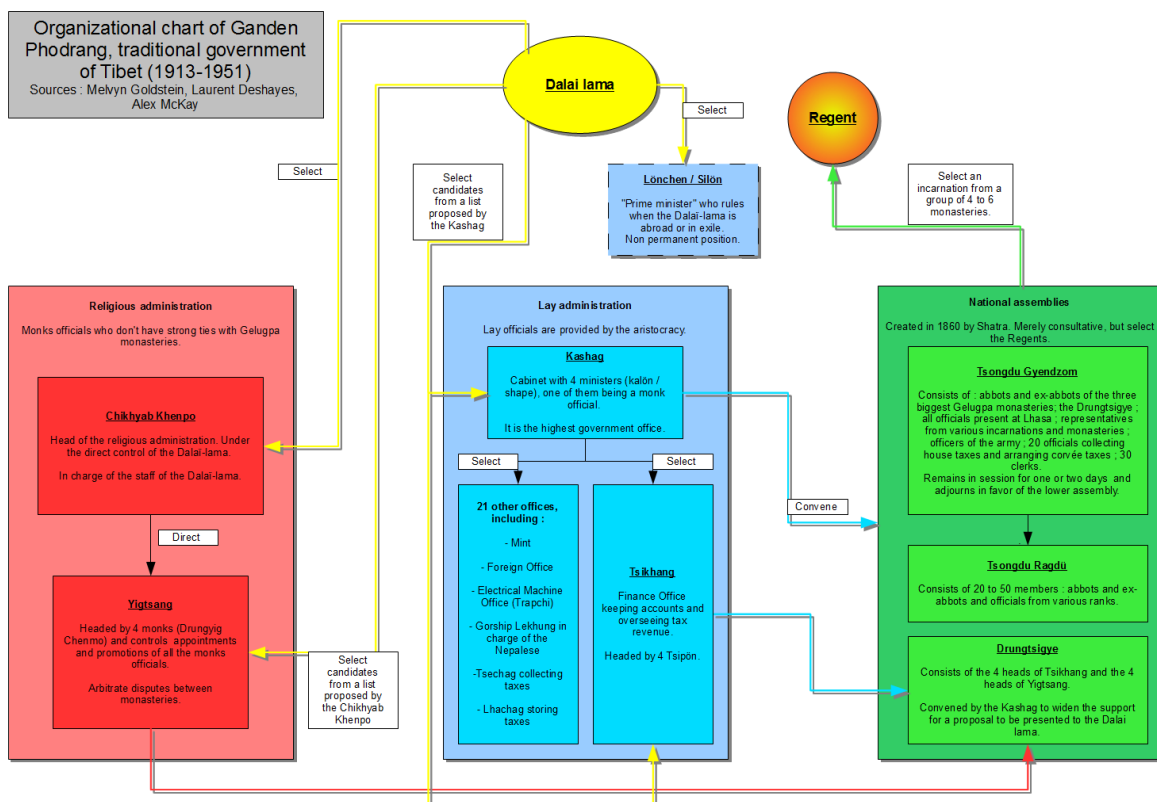
Reforms of the 13th Dalai Lama

Thubten Gyatso built a new medical college (Mentsikang) in 1913 on the site of the post-revolutionary traditional hospital near the Jokhang.

Legislation was introduced to counter corruption among officials, a national taxation system was established and enforced, and a police force was created. The penal system was revised and made uniform throughout the country. "Capital punishment was completely abolished and corporal punishment was reduced. Living conditions in jails were also improved, and officials were designated to see that these conditions and rules were maintained."

A secular education system was introduced in addition to the religious education system. Thubten Gyatso sent four promising students to England to study, and welcomed foreigners, including Japanese, British and Americans.

As a result of his travels and contacts with foreign powers and their representatives (e.g., Charles Alfred Bell and Gustaf Mannerheim), the Dalai Lama showed an interest in world affairs and introduced electricity, the telephone and the first motor cars to Tibet. Nonetheless, at the end of his life in 1933, he saw that Tibet was about to retreat from outside influences.







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In 1918-1921, Tibetans took part in the civil wars in Mongolia and Russian Siberia providing active support for Bogdo Gegeen and Baron Roman Ungern. The result was the defeat of both Bogdo and Ungern and the conquest of Mongolia and Tuva by Russian Red Army.

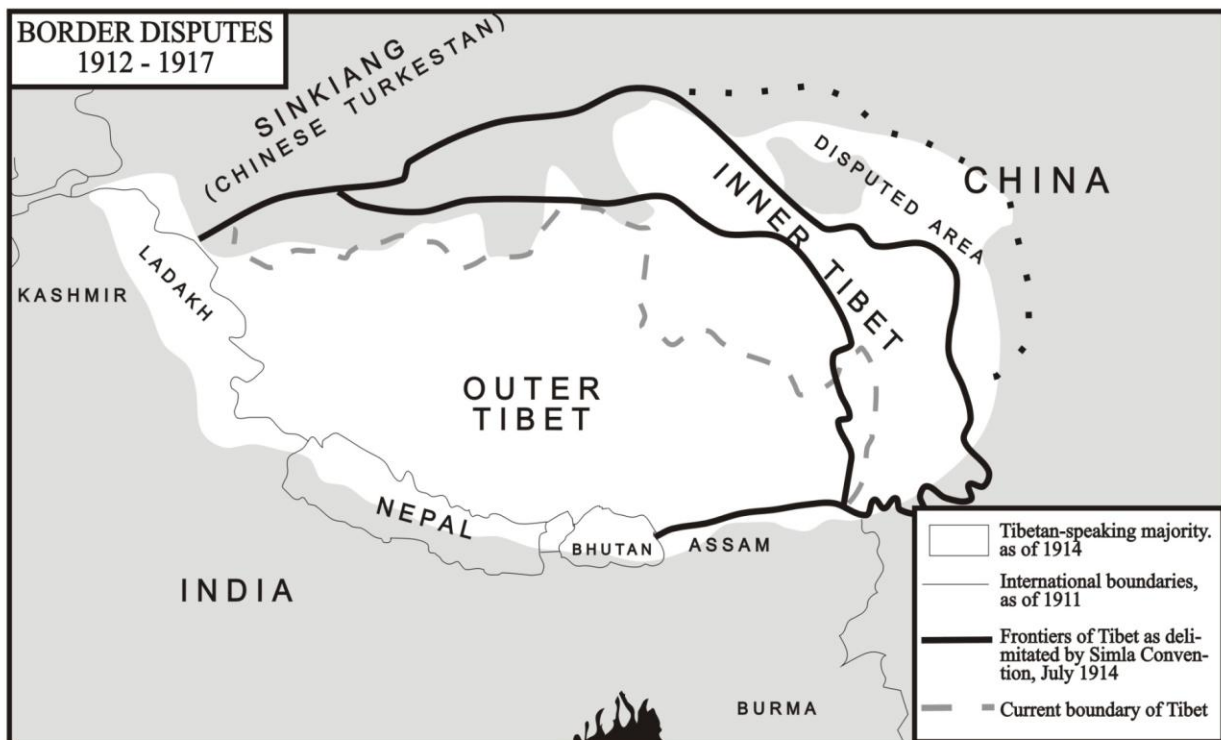


Simla Convention (1914)

In 1913-14, a conference was held in Simla between the UK, Tibet, and the Republic of China. The British suggested dividing Tibetan-inhabited areas into an Outer and an Inner Tibet (on the model of an earlier agreement between China and Russia over Mongolia). Outer Tibet, approximately the same area as the modern Tibet Autonomous Region, would be autonomous under Chinese suzerainty. In this area, China would refrain from "interference in the administration." In Inner Tibet, consisting of eastern Kham and Amdo, Lhasa would retain control of religious matters only. In 1908-18, there was a Chinese garrison in Kham and the local princes were subordinate to its commander.

When negotiations broke down over the specific boundary between Inner and Outer Tibet, the British chief negotiator Henry McMahon drew what has become known as the McMahon Line to delineate the Tibet-India border, amounting to the British annexation of 9,000 square kilometers of traditional Tibetan territory in southern Tibet, namely the Tawang district, which corresponds to the northwest extremity of the modern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, while recognizing Chinese suzerainty over Tibet and affirming the latter's status as part of Chinese territory, with a promise from the Government of China that Tibet would not be converted into a Chinese province.

Later Chinese governments claimed this McMahon Line illegitimately transferred a vast amount of territory to India. The disputed territory is called Arunachal Pradesh by India and South Tibet by China. The British had already concluded agreements with local tribal leaders and set up the Northeast Frontier Tract to administer the area in 1912.



The Simla Convention was initiated by all three delegations, but was immediately rejected by Beijing because of dissatisfaction with the way the boundary between Outer and Inner Tibet was drawn. McMahon and the Tibetans then signed the document as a bilateral accord with a note attached denying China any of the rights it specified unless it signed. The British-run Government of India initially rejected McMahon's bilateral accord as incompatible with the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention.

The McMahon Line was considered by the British and later the independent Indian government to be the boundary; however, the Chinese view since then has been that since China, which claimed sovereignty over Tibet, did not sign the treaty, the treaty was meaningless, and the annexation and control of parts of Arunachal Pradesh by India is illegal. (This later paved the way to the Sino-Indian War of 1962 and the boundary dispute between China and India that persists today.)

In 1938, the British finally published the Simla Convention as a bilateral accord and demanded that the Tawang monastery, located south of the McMahon Line, cease paying taxes to Lhasa.

The 1907 Anglo-Russian Treaty, which had earlier caused the British to question the validity of Simla, had been renounced by the Russians in 1917 and by the Russians and British jointly in 1921. Tibet, however, altered its position on the McMahon Line in the 1940s. In late 1947, the Tibetan government wrote a note presented to the newly independent Indian Ministry of External Affairs laying claims to Tibetan districts south of the McMahon Line. Furthermore, by refusing to sign the Simla documents, the Chinese Government had escaped according any recognition to the validity of the McMahon Line.

Sino-Tibetan War (1930-1933)

The Sino-Tibetan War is a war that began in 1930 when the Tibetan Army under the 13th Dalai Lama invaded Xikang and Yushu in Qinghai in a dispute over monasteries.

Immediately after the invasion, Chinese Muslim General Ma Bufang secretly sent a telegram to Sichuan warlord Liu Wenhui and the leader of the Republic of China, Chiang Kai-shek, suggesting a joint attack on the Tibetan forces. In 1932, the Muslim Qinghai and Han-Chinese Sichuan armies of the National Revolutionary Army led by Chinese Muslim General Ma Bufang and Han General Liu Wenhui defeated the Tibetan army during the subsequent Qinghai–Tibet War.



Ma Bufang



Liu Wenhui

Ma Bufang overran the Tibetan armies and recaptured several counties in Xikang province. The Tibetans were pushed back to the other side of the Jinsha river. Ma and Liu warned Tibetan officials not to dare cross the Jinsha river again.

Ma Bufang defeated the Tibetans at Dan Chokorgon. Several Tibetan generals surrendered, and were demoted by the Dalai Lama. By August, the Tibetans lost so much land to Liu Wenhui and Ma Bufang's forces that the Dalai Lama telegraphed the British government of India for

assistance. British pressure led to Nanjing declaring a ceasefire. Separate truces were signed by Ma and Liu with the Tibetans in 1933, ending the fighting.

