

The Ganden Phodrang and Buddhism

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Army-Repelling Rituals as War Propaganda In Pre-modern Tibet

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In Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, the classical Indian treatise on statecraft, it is argued that one of the main purposes of an army is its role as a deterrent. "The army serves as the foundation for keeping allies and enemies in check, instigating the enemy troops to sedition, and getting reinforcements into one's own army."

This presentation will look at the role of army-repelling (*dmag zlog*) tantric rites in contributing to the functions of deterrence, instilling fear in enemies, and of bolstering the confidence of one's own troops, in pre-modern Tibet. The *dmag zlog* genre of tantric rituals will be surveyed and assessed for their powerful propaganda functions in the political context of pre-modern Tibet - a cultural world in which enemies and allies alike were by and large followers of tantric Buddhism.

*Speaker

Buddhist Governments and War: Royal Dharma or an Evil Necessity?

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This presentation considers two Tibetan works on statecraft and the legitimacy of war in a Buddhist polity, and examines the Indian models that are likely to have inspired them. The latter are found to be far from uniform in the degree of military commitment they enjoin on righteous rulers. For the most part, they advocate inaction on the grounds that faith will produce the desired results by a circuitous route. Others *seem* to follow classical *arthaśāstra*, with due modification: the reluctant conclusion is that even if war is a necessity even for Buddhist kings, the karmic consequences are inescapable. Models of the ideal society, and the place of the army in them, are represented in works other than treatises by clerics. Examples cited are Gesar and a document of the Ganden Phodrang, which both offer short schemes of the social order and the uncontentious acceptance of a military stratum.

*Speaker

Tibetan troops fighting the ”enemy of Buddhist doctrine” (bstan dgra): The ‘Ba’ ra ba master Rig ‘dzin chos dbyings rdo rje (1772-1838) depicts the invasion of the Gorkhas

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In 1788, the king of the Gorkhas sent an army to Tibet. In the premises of Shel dkar, the Nepalese fought a battle against Tibetan troops, the Tibetans lost and consequently the Gorkhas occupied sKyid grong and rDzong dkar, plundered the region, and caused a time of disorder to the Tibetans. Peace negotiations failed and the Nepalese troops arrived as far as bKra shis lhun po. As counteraction, a military recruitment took place throughout Tibet, an act that was supported by spiritual leaders.

The ‘Ba’ ra ba master Rig ‘dzin chos dbyings rdo rje welcomed this action as he made his obeisance to the Chinese Amban who stayed in a military camp near sKyid grong. Using it as justification for the military activities, the Gorkhas were entitled as enemy of the Buddhist doctrine (*bstan dgra*) by Rig ‘dzin chos dbyings rdo rje, who was a native from Grwa in Mang yul sKyid grong. He belonged to the ‘Jam dpal gling pa family and was an important master of the ‘Ba’ ra ba transmission lineage, the ‘Ba’ ra ba being a subbranch of the many bKa’ brgyud traditions. His autobiography contains episodes describing the invasion of the Gorkhas in Tibet. Additionally, a text dealing with this specific recruitment of Tibetan troops was published in *Mang yul gung thang gi rig gnas lo rgyus* (2012).

The recruited men met at Lha sa, from where a huge army consisting of Chinese and Tibetan troops was sent to take control of the occupied parts of Tibet. Once the Gorkhas were defeated and the Chinese troops had left this region, local people, who additionally struggled with an epidemic, went on pilgrimage.

*Speaker

To Protect and To Serve: The Military during the Reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama.

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The proposed paper explores the various instances in which military force was employed during the reign of the V Dalai Lama (1642-1682) and attempts to offer a panoramic view of the role of the army in this period of Tibetan history. Sources such as the *Du ku la'i gos bzang* and the *Mi dbang rtogs brjod* provide information on the awareness and participation of the V Dalai Lama in decisions that affected the course of conflicts, as well as some specific details on armed clashes. In particular, the autobiographical diary of the Fifth Dalai Lama shows that he was well acquainted with dGa' ldan tshe dbang dpal bzang po, the general who led Tibetan and Mongol troops against Ladakhi and Moghul forces in the war of 1679-1684, as the two met multiple times and participated together in different religious activities. The sources also clarify the role played by Western Mongol chieftains both at the Dalai Lama's court and in Tibetan politics in general. Their constant presence at the rites officiated by the Dalai Lama and their regular and generous donations to the dGa' ldan pho brang are an indication of their awareness of –and possibly participation in– the administration's affairs.

*Speaker

Monk officials (rtse drung) as military officers in the Ganden Phodrang Army (1895-1959)

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Just as the entire Ganden Phodrang administration was composed of both lay and monk officials, the Tibetan army hierarchy also comprised both lay and monk officials appointed in various posts. Based on Tibetan biographies, autobiographies and on British archives, this paper presents a study of the monk segment of the Tibetan military hierarchy in the first half of the 20th century. After a general presentation of the available sample of individual monk officials serving in the Tibetan army, we will interrogate the distinctive features of their service as compared to the lay segment of the officer corps. Finally, we will focus on some representative examples, among which, the life and career of one of the most prominent monk military officers of the period under scrutiny, namely the bka' blon bla ma Byams pa bstan dar (1870-1922), Commander-in-Chief of the Tibetan army.

The Sino-Tibetan Disputes for Religious Authority in Early 20th-Century Kham— Focusing on Dargye Monastery—

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This research examines how the Tibetan and Chinese governments competed for religious authority over Kham in the negotiations which followed the military conflicts between Tibet and China in the 1930s.

After the collapse of the Qing Dynasty and the subsequent deterioration of the relationship between Tibet and China, the Kham region, located in the Sino-Tibetan frontier, became the frontline of confrontations between the Tibetan government and the Chinese warlords of Sichuan Province. Previous research has pointed out that amid the tension with the Sichuan warlords, the Tibetan government exerted its spiritual and temporal authority towards Kham society through the network of Gelukpa monasteries, which held a wide range of influence across areas including religion, politics, economy, and military issues. Dargye Monastery, an influential Gelukpa monastery in Kanze, played an important role for the Tibetan Government in expanding its rule over Kham, an expansion which escalated into armed conflicts over the territorial border between Tibet and China in the 1930s. Nevertheless, it has been overlooked how the Tibetan and Chinese governments negotiated control over Dargye Monastery after the military conflict. In my paper, through an analysis of Tibetan and Chinese archival materials concerning the Sino-Tibetan negotiation after their military conflict in Kham, I will clarify how the Chinese government attempted to restrict and undermine the influence of the Tibetan government with respect to the Dalai Lama's authority over the Gelukpa monasteries; at the same time, I will show how the Tibetan government tried to justify and keep its control over Dargye Monastery. Through this analysis and discussion, I believe that this paper will offer new insights into how the Tibetan government ruled Kham, as well as how it tried to prevent Chinese advancement before the PRC established its control over this Tibetan region in the 1950s.

*Speaker