



Cycle de conférences du projet ERC TibArmy
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22, avenue du Président Wilson 75016 Paris

**“A Survey of the Military and its Relationship to dGe lugs pa Religious Hierarchs
(1682-1895)”**

by

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In the period between the death of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1682) and the assumption of political power of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (1895) a number of military conflicts were fought in Tibetan territory. Some of these were internal, including a civil war and attempts to quell rebellious chieftains at the periphery of the plateau. Others, instead, were clashes with foreign powers that had attempted to encroach upon territories the dGa' ldan pho brang considered in its political sphere. This presentation aims to offer an overview of the military engagements that occurred in this period, and particularly to examine in which way religious hierarchs of the dGa' ldan pho brang became involved with these military affairs. Several sources, including the lives (*rnam mthar*) and autobiographies (*rang rnam*) of religious hierarchs, as well as the life stories of laymen, such as the biography of Pho lha nas bSod nams stobs rgyal (1689-1747), and the autobiography of rDo ring bsTan 'dzin dpal 'byor (b. 1760), can be used to trace the role of some of the dGe lugs pa hierarchs with respect to the employment of armed forces. In addition, the multiple viewpoints shown in these sources also allow the investigation of more general questions concerning the army of the dGa' ldan pho brang, such as when it originated, how it operated, and how it developed and was shaped by contemporary historical events.



© “Horpa militia guarding northern border of Tibet”,
Photography by Sven Hedin (*Tibet. The Sacred Realm. Photographs 1880-1950*, Aperture, 1983, 89).