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Lobsang Shastri
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Yeshe Dhondup
MANAGING EDITOR

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ARTICLES

The 1913 Mongol-Tibet Treaty and the Dalai Lama's
Proclamation of Independence3-29
Lobsang Tenpa

Tibetan Astrology31-71
Michael Erlewine

Why was Gendün Chöphel Imprisoned?73-88
Kungo Tashi Palbar

CONTRIBUTORS 89

*Tibetan Astrology**

Michael Erlewine

I feel it necessary to start this discussion of Tibetan astrology by describing several concepts that readers will need to better understand this material. Please bear with me.

Most valid astrological techniques are the residue of a particular insight or astrological experience. After the initial fire of the original insight is gone (the realization), what remains is a practical technique or method to capture or recreate that experience on paper. Many of us use techniques of which we have never had realization and for which we have never been empowered. We are lucky if we get realization on even several of the many techniques that we use. That's just the way it is.

To realize a technique in the truest sense, we somehow have to become empowered in the actual experience. With the help of a book or teacher and a lot of concentration, sooner or later we hope to find our way to the experience itself and actually have that experience. At that point we can begin to use the technique in something more than a rote or mechanical fashion, for we have realized it. This is even more true when it comes to a whole new kind of astrology, such as that which the Tibetans are using. Tibet, the so-called spiritual and physical "roof of the world," has been the source for much inspiration to Westerners for over two centuries. More than just an East-West sort of thing, Tibetan astrology is inextricably bound to Tibetan Buddhism. With few exceptions, the primary practicing astrologers in Tibet were and are Buddhist monks. To learn something about one is to learn something about the other. You cannot skim the astrology off the top of the Tibetan Buddhism. So, to get to the astrology, you have to negotiate the Buddhist psychology in which it resides. Because of this fact, I feel it is important to give readers some idea of how I became interested in Tibetan astrology. Also, since it is impossible to separate Tibetan astrology from Tibetan Buddhism, it may be important for you to understand something about the Buddhism itself, and how it relates to the astrology.

My interest in all of this stretches back to the 1950s and the beat movement—Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsburg, etc. These writers helped to introduce Buddhism to many of us at that time. Writers like Allan Watts and D.T. Suzuki, who wrote and spoke on Buddhism, introduced a whole generation to the subject. In the late 50s and very early 60s, Buddhism appeared as one interesting philosophical view among many others, such as Existentialism and the beat movement itself.

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Buddhism at that time (of the Allan Watts variety) was very intellectual and philosophical—something to think about. Almost none of us made the connection that Buddhist thought was not just something else to think or philosophize about, but, rather a path or dharma, something to do—to put into action. This came much later.

It is important to make clear that Buddhism is not a religion in the ordinary sense. Although I have worked with it for many years, I have never considered myself as religious. What I am interested in is psychology—the human psyche. In fact, my interest in astrology itself can be traced to an interest in the psyche—how the mind and its experience work.

In the early 70s, Buddhism took the next step to being understood when the works of the Tibetan lama Chogyam Trungpa became available. His book *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* is the chief example of what I am pointing toward—a practical Buddhism. With Trungpa came the end of Tibetan Buddhism of the through-a-glass-darkly variety. Previous to Trungpa, most insight into the Buddhism of Tibet came through writers like Alexandra David-Neal, T. Lobsang Rampa, T. Evans-Wentz, and the writers on esoteric Buddhism like H.P. Blavatsky and C.W. Leadbeater. There was little or no mention of Tibetan astrology. These were Westerners who could not help but put their own spin on the subject. Trungpa ended that.

Chogyam Trungpa made it very clear that Buddhism was not something to think about, but a path, something very practical to do and put into practice. Buddhism was a way of handling our experience and this world—a dharma path. This came as almost total news to those of us brought up through the late 50s and 60s.

I met Chogyam Trungpa early in 1974 when I helped to bring him to Ann Arbor, Michigan to speak. From the moment of meeting him, suffice it to say that I got a very different take on Buddhism. Which leads me to the other main point that I must present before we can discuss Tibetan astrology, and that is meditation. Prior to meeting Trungpa, I had the (quite common) idea that meditation was a method to relax around, a way to get away from the chaos of day-to-day life—a form of stress management. I had never found the time nor interest for it.

No sooner had I met Trungpa than he took me into a room with him, closed the door, and proceeded to show me how to meditate, although he didn't call it that. At the time, I didn't believe I was able to grasp what was going on. It was only much later that I realized what happened on that day. What I experienced then were some real answers to questions that had always tortured me—questions about death, about letting go, things like that. Trungpa pointed out what awareness looked and acted like. I watched him enjoying and using the mind in a multitude of ways that I had never known as possibilities. He demonstrated that the mind

and awareness could be developed and practiced. Intuition, or true insight, could be developed.

Meditation has to do with developing intuition, learning to connect with ourselves, and the taking possession or advantage of our current situation—whatever it happens to be. From that day in 1974, I began to connect with myself and the explore the so-called outer world in a somewhat different way.

What I am getting at here is that the primary tool for learning astrology in the Tibetan system is not a set of ephemerides, a series of calculations, and research in books. Instead, it involves establishing this inner connectivity—call it intuition, meditation, mind practice, mind training, whatever.

Here in the West, learning astrology is often centered around learning the various correspondences between terms, like: Aries relates to Mars, relates to the Ascendant, relates to the first house, and so on. If you can't get into learning about astrological correspondences, then you are going to have real difficulty grasping classic western astrology. Well, in Tibetan astrology, the primary educational tool is learning to use your intuition in a direct and practical way. This is called mind practice or, most often, just meditation. If you approach the Tibetan lamas, you will not find easy access to their astrological teachings without this very basic mind training. It is not because these matters are in any way secret, but rather because we may lack the essential tool for grasping them—awareness and an active intuition. In this sense, they are what have been termed self-secret. Their sheer simplicity, openness, and directness is closed to us because of our own inherent confusion and complexity. What to do.

I can well remember my own first meeting with a Tibetan lama when I asked about their astrological tradition. I had just driven 800 miles during the coldest day of the year, and with my entire family. Having arrived at the top of a mountain in the dark of night, I was ushered into a small room for a very brief interview. I explained my interest in astrology, and the fact that I had worked for so very many years in this field. I was hoping somehow to be able to skip “Meditation 101” and enter one of the more advanced practices. What the lama said to me was that, although he could see that I had never harmed anyone with my astrology, still, in this area it was best for me to start at the very beginning point with meditation. He explained what I should do. And then he was gone.

We left and that night my family and myself were sheltered in a tiny motel room with one small wall heater. The night was bitter cold. It was in that moment that I had to decide to accept his advice and start at the very beginning or follow my pride and refuse to admit that, after all my years of spiritual work, I would have to go to that very first step to begin. I am forever grateful that I was able to admit that I knew nothing about mind practice and began at the beginning.

Mind Practice

As mentioned, mind practice is not much known here in the West. I mean, how many people do you know who practice using their mind anyway? Most of us assume that the mind is perfectly usable just as we find it, and doesn't require any practice. I know very few westerners who are aware that they are not aware of how to use the mind.

In the East, mind practice is not only acceptable, it is pretty much obligatory. This is true for countries like Tibet, Nepal, much of India, and even parts of China and Japan. Over there, the mind is considered by nature to be unruly and hard to manage. No one would think of trying to do much with it without considerable practice. Mind practice or mind preparation or training, as it is sometimes called, is standard fare in the Orient.

We might wonder why this style of mind practice has never caught on in North America. In part, this is due to our whole take on meditation and what we think that it is. Meditation in the West has come to mean something almost like relaxation therapy, a way to relax and get away from it all—a way to escape the worries of the world in the contemplation of some inner landscape.

Of course this is nothing like the Tibetan or Zen concepts of mind practice or mind preparation, which involve the intense use of the mind. It is unfortunate that this very active mind practice has also come under the general label of meditation here in the West. Having pointed this out, it may be helpful to clarify and describe what it is that the Tibetan Buddhists (and other groups too) do when they sit down on their cushions. In general, if you ask them what they are doing on their cushions, the answer will be that they are “practicing,” or they are “sitting.” Indeed, that is what takes place. They sit.

There are many Tibetan words for the different kinds of mind practice that are possible (scores), while in the West we have just the one word: meditation. What then is mind practice?

As pointed out, the most important difference between sitting practice (mind practice) and meditation as it is understood in this country, is that mind practice is anything but relaxing or passive. It is very active, involves intense concentration and patience, and is not something acquired overnight. The actual technique is quite simple, taking only a few minutes to learn. And it is worth getting this instruction from someone authorized to give it. In this way, you have an authentic connection handed down in an unbroken line reaching back at least 1500 years. Feel free to write me for a list of centers (Tibetan, Zen, Hindu, etc.) where you can get the instruction.

To wrap up my personal history on this subject: As an astrologer who was also now studying Buddhist psychology, I continued to be fascinated by Tibetan astrology. My reasoning went something along the lines of: if their psychology

was so powerful (which it indeed was), their astrology must also reflect this as well. I read through all of the various Buddhist scholarly works in which astrology was mentioned finding only an occasional few words and the odd diagram here or there. There was no sense of any comprehensive understanding.

I then met John Reynolds, an American who was studying Tibetan Buddhism and who also had an interest in Tibetan Astrology. He spoke and read Tibetan fluently. I set up a workshop here at Matrix and John came and gave a seminar on Tibetan astrology in the early 1980s. I learned a lot from meeting Reynolds, but most of all I remember John's words to me. He said that, in order to learn Tibetan astrology, you had to learn the Buddhist psychology around which it was based. He confided to me that the Buddhist psychology was much more interesting than the astrology and that he had become fascinated with that, leaving the astrology somewhat unfinished. "Interesting," said I.

My next step was to invite Nepalese Sange Wangchuk to come and reside at our center in 1985. Wangchuk, a former monk and skilled calligrapher and artist, was fluent in five languages, including Tibetan and even ancient Sanskrit. Today he is director of the National Library of Bhutan. Sange Wangchuk spent 2 1/2 years with us and, during that time, we translated a lot of Tibetan astrology from the original manuscripts. This really helped me fill in many of the blanks. But, like John Reynolds, I was becoming increasingly seduced by the Buddhist psychology at the expense of the astrology. There is no doubt about the fact that, if it is personal results you are interested in, the Tibetan Buddhist psychological teachings are the very essence of that of which astrologers dream. By this time, our center here in Big Rapids had become one of the primary centers in North America for the translation and transcription of Buddhist texts of the Karma Kagyu tradition. We have maintained a full-time staff on this subject since 1986. Or, as one Tibetan lama put it to me: "Michael, astrology is one of the limbs of the yoga, but not the root or trunk itself." The Buddhist psychological teachings themselves are the root, and these profound teachings are deserving of the respect they inspire. They have value because they help an individual orient himself within their current situation and begin to take action of a clarifying and creative nature. So, there you have my background. I continue to work on the development of clarity and intuition through various methods of mind practice or meditation. Like John Reynolds, I have traced the astrology back to the ground of Buddhist psychology out of which it arose. That psychology is a precious teaching.

I will now try to share with you some of the basic elements of Tibetan astrology. Of course, there is far too little room here to offer more than a brief snapshot of this fascinating subject. I apologize in advance to those scholars (who will one day make this subject very clear to all of us) for any mistakes in presentation that I may make.

Tibetan Astrology

The Tibetan system of astrology is a combination of Indian and Chinese methods, the greater and most essential (spiritual) part being taken from the Chinese, and with the technical element coming from the Indian system. The Indian or technical part (ephemerides, lunar tables, etc.) is called Kar-Tsi and the Chinese or spiritual part, is called Jung-Tsi.

The Tibetans, who are short on calculation ability, borrow whatever planetary tables they use from the Indians, and don't depend upon these planetary ephemerides for much of their system. They make great use of the 12-year cycle of the animal signs plus the five-fold element sequence as used in the various forms of Chinese astrology (Jung-Tsi). The Kar-Tsi came from the Indian system, along with the Kalachakra system. The quintessential portion of the Indian system of value to the Tibetans is the division of the lunar month into 30 equal parts, called tithis in the Indian system.

Tibetan astrology is lunar-based, with the Sun (and all the planets) taking a secondary position to the Moon. As proof of this, witness the fact that your Tibetan birthday is not your solar birthday (or yearly return), but the lunar phase-angle day on which you were born. Thus you would celebrate your birthday on that 25th (or whatever) day of the lunar month you were born in.

Astrologers in general seem to love to manipulate cycles and numbers. The Tibetans, even lacking planetary calculations, make up for it with the manipulation of the various cycles they do use. In Tibetan astrology, numbers are counted forward, backward, and around in many different combinations. It is complicated enough so that not everyone can do it. It requires an astrologer. In fact, it is ironic that astrology, East and West, seems to be just complicated enough that the average person can't do it for themselves and requires some expert to do it for them. Although my experience with the system is not that great, it is enough to assure me that the net result of the Tibetan calculation is quite similar in effect or portent to Western methods. In other words, the amount of information or life direction (if you will) is of the same caliber (and quantity) as similar material here in the West.

The chief exception to this generalization is the use of the lunar cycle in day-to-day life. It is here that the Tibetan system excels and has a great deal to offer Westerners, while here in the West the awareness of the lunar cycle has been lost or trivialized. It is interesting to note that, although few high lamas that I have met make much use of the cycle of the signs, elements, *parkhas* and *mewas* that I shall present (some do), they all seem to depend upon the cycle of the lunar days for creating their practice and teaching calendars. In other words, much of Tibetan astrology is considered non-essential or of secondary importance to the Buddhist practitioner. However, this opinion does not extend to the lunar cycle, which is accorded much attention.

The Lunar Cycle and Lunar Gaps

The phases of the Moon have been observed for ages. The Moon, from a Sanskrit term for measure, is still the primary means by which the majority of the people in the world (even in this 20th century!) measure time and the events in their own lives. Although measuring time and life by the Moon is ancient, it is not just some primitive sort of clock. The very sophisticated concept of lunar gaps springs from centuries of painstaking psychological observation by the lamas of Tibet, and the Hindu sages. They practice it today with the same vigor and intensity as they did a thousand years ago. Unlike many other traditions, where the line of successors (lineage) has been broken due to various events, the dharma and astrological tradition of Tibet remains pure and unbroken to this day.

Although much of the Tibetan dharma tradition requires dedication and intense practice, learning to use the Moon's phases and the concept of lunar gaps is easy to get into. The theory is simple. It involves the ongoing relationship between the Sun, the Moon, and the Earth—the monthly cycle of the phases of the Moon. We already know about the Moon cycle, and can even walk outside at night and see which lunar phase we are in.

This is not the place (and I am not the expert) to describe to you either the very complicated astronomical motions these three heavenly bodies produce, or the profound theories of what all of this motion means in a philosophical sense. What is quite accessible is the concept of lunar gaps.

As we know, the Moon cycle goes through its phases from New Moon to Full Moon, back to New Moon in a cycle of about one month, some 30 days. This is seen as an ongoing cycle of activity—endless in extent. It goes on forever. However, although the Moon cycle is unending, it does have distinct phases, like the Full Moon, New Moon, quarters, and so on. In Tibet and India, the monthly lunar cycle is divided into 30 parts called lunar days. There are 30 lunar days (cumulative 12-degree angular separations of the Sun and Moon) starting from the New Moon (considered the 30th day), counting through the waxing half of the Moon cycle to the Full Moon (start of the 15th day) and on around through the waning cycle, back to the New Moon again.

What is interesting about how the lamas (and most Hindus, too) view this 30-day cycle is that the 30 lunar days are not considered of equal importance. The monthly cycle has very definite points in it of increased importance—lunar gaps. It is at these lunar gaps or openings that it is possible to get special insight into different areas of our own life. In fact, the Tibetans take full advantage of these lunar gaps to perform very specific practices. That is, certain of the lunar days have proven themselves to be auspicious for particular kinds of activities.

In the East, they speak of mental obscurations that tend to cloud our minds, but that can sometimes clear up, just as the Sun comes out from behind the clouds. These moments of clarity are the gaps in the clouds. From a reading of the Eastern

literature on this subject, one gets the sense that (in general) life is perceived as being filled with the noise of our own problems (obscurations), making clear insight often difficult. These obscurations can be many and their accumulation amounts to the sum total of our ignorance—that which we ignore.

Therefore, in Eastern countries, these articulation points or windows in time/space (lunar gaps) are very much valued. In fact, the Eastern approach is to analyze the lunar cycle, in minute detail, in order to isolate these moments (gaps in time/space) where insight into our larger situation can be gained. Much of day-to-day practice in Eastern religions amounts to a scheduling of precise times for personal practice or activity built around the natural series of gaps that can be found in the continuous lunar cycle. In its own way, this is a very scientific approach. In the East, they have been astute observers of the mind for many centuries.

Here in the West, we are no stranger to clear days in our mind. We have those too! The only difference, is that we tend to believe that these so-called clear days appear randomly—every now and then. The more sophisticated (and ancient) psychological analysis of the East has found that these clear days are (for the most part) anything but random events. They have their own internal ordering, and often times this ordering can be associated with the phases of the Moon. In summary, there are times each month when it is more auspicious or appropriate to perform or be involved in one kind (or another) of activity. There come gaps in the general obscuration or cloudiness of our mind when we can see through the clouds—when penetrating insight is possible.

As noted, times when one can see without obscuration (see clearly) are very much valued in the Tibetan dharma tradition. These are viewed as real opportunities for insight and the subsequent development such insight generates. Knowing when and where to look for these insight gaps has been the subject of study and research in Tibet for centuries. And this is not just academic research. Lunar gaps are used to plan a wide variety of events in the Tibetan calendar, everything from finding a time to perform a simple healing ceremony to full scale empowerments.

Aside from knowing when these lunar gaps can be experienced, the other major thing to know about this subject is what to do when the gaps occur. As you might imagine, there are a wide range of practices, depending on the particular lunar gap (phase) and the personal needs of the practitioner.

However, in general, these lunar gap times are set aside for special observation. Tibetans observe these days with great attention and care. In fact, until recently in many Eastern countries, they didn't have Saturday and Sunday off. Instead, new and Full Moon days are considered holy days (holidays), and normal routines were suspended at these times. These days were set aside for observation.

This word “observation” is worth mentioning, for this is what takes place at these times. In the West, we might use the word insight or meditation. In Tibet

there are many words that come under the general concept of meditation. The word “observe” is a lot closer to what happens during these lunar gaps. Observe the nature of the day. Observe your mind at that time. Be alert, present, and set that time aside for just examining yourself, your mind, the time—what-have-you? It is while being present—observing these seed times—that the so-called lunar gap can present itself. Many great dharma teachers have pointed out the existence of gaps in our life, moments when clarity and real insight is possible.

And lest we get too far afield sitting there waiting for a gap in time or space to occur, let me restate: The gap that appears is a gap in our particular set of obscurations, our own cloudiness. When such a gap takes place, there can be an intense insight into some aspect of our situation, the effects of which stay with us for a long time. One moment of real insight or vision can take weeks or months to examine in retrospect. Each time we bring it to mind, it’s richness is such that it continues to be a source of inspiration. This is what lunar gaps are all about. At this point, it is hoped that you have some general idea of what lunar gaps are and how you might go about taking advantage of them. It remains to give you a schedule of when they will occur.

Below you will find a list of the major lunar days in the Tibetan practice calendar for the coming months. There are still further divisions that we have not included here, to keep this simple. Those of you who are interested can write us for more details. However, these are the days observed by most Tibetan lamas in one form or another.

These lunar opportunities are sometimes referred to as gaps or openings in the otherwise continuous stream of our lives—windows. They conceive of these gaps as articulation points, much like an elbow is where the arm is articulated. They are natural joints or gaps in time/space upon which time and space turn and through which it is sometimes possible to gain access to information about the larger, dynamic life process that already encapsulates us. Among other things, I have made a detailed lunar calendar available for many years. See the end of this article details how to obtain one.

Special Lunar Days

Dharma Protector Days—Both East and West lunar traditions agree that the 2 or 3 days preceding the moment of the New Moon can be difficult ones, which require special observation. In the West these days have been called the dark of the Moon, or devil’s days—days when the so-called darker forces are said to have power. Both traditions affirm that we sort of survive these final days each month. Check it out for yourself. The three days before New Moon can be a hard time. The East is in total agreement on this point, and the days prior to New Moon are set aside for invoking the fierce dharma protectors, those energies that ward off harm and protect us during the worst of times.

In particular, the 29th day (the day before New Moon) is called dharma protector day. It is a time given over to purification and preparation for the moment of New Moon. Ritual fasting, confession of errors, and the like are common practices. Purification Days—In a similar vein, the days just prior to the Full Moon (the 13th and 14th) are also days of purification, days in which the various guardian and protector deities are again invoked, but in a somewhat more restrained way. For example, the 14th day is often given over to fire *puja*—a ritual purification. In summary, during days prior to full and New Moons, there is some attempt at purification, both physical and mental, in preparation for those auspicious events.

Full and New Moons—It is clear from the literature that the times of the new and Full Moon are considered of great importance. These days are set aside for special rituals and worship. As pointed out, full and New Moon (full more than new) are times of collective worship and public confession. In many traditions, the monks and priests assemble for a day of special observance. In the East, the Full Moon celebration and the entire waxing lunar fortnight are oriented to the masculine element in consciousness, what are called the father-line deities. The New Moon and the waning fortnight are given over to the mother-line deities and the feminine element. The Full Moon completes the masculine, or active, waxing phase of the cycle, and the New Moon completes the feminine, waning phase of the month. To my knowledge, this kind of analysis does not exist in the West. It is quite clear from the Eastern teachings that the moments of full and New Moon are times when the various channels in the psychophysical body are somehow aligned. This is not to say the new or Full Moon days are days of peace and quiet. It is taught in the East that, although a new or Full Moon day may tend to be wild or hectic, any patience or forbearance we can muster at that time will be much rewarded. In other words, there can be deep insights available to us at these times.

Eclipses—According to these same teachings, an eclipse at the full or New Moon is even more auspicious. In the teachings it is said that, during these very special events, both male and female energies (channels) are in simultaneous alignment—the ultimate opportunity. The lunar cycle and its effects and opportunities have been analyzed in great detail in the Eastern teaching.

Feast Days—Aside from the new and Full Moon, the two most auspicious lunar days in the East are the 10th and the 25th. The 10th day (120° of angular separation), called Daka Day, is considered auspicious for invoking the father-line deities—the masculine. The 25th day (300° of angular separation), called Dakini Day, is given over to the feminine principle and the mother-line deities, in general. These two days, the 10th and the 25th, are formal feast days, days of observation when extra offerings are made and increased attention given to what is happening. There is some sense of celebration at these points in the month. In

many respects, these two days even rival the new and Full Moon days in importance. The fact is that these four days (new, full, 10th, 25th) are the primary auspicious days as practiced in many Eastern rituals.

Healing Days—There are many other days of lesser importance, which might also interest Western astrologers. Health and healing are important in Eastern ritual, and the 8th and 23rd days of the lunar month are auspicious for this purpose. It is these days that straddle the first and last lunar quarters. The 8th day (96° of separation) is often called Medicine Buddha Day. Again this occurs in the male, or father-line, half of the month. The 23rd day (276° of separation), occurring in the feminine half of the month, is dedicated to Tara practice. Tara is the female deity connected to health, long life, and healing in general.

More Protector days—Earlier we mentioned the days given over to purification, most prominently the 13th and the 29th. In addition, on a lesser scale, the 9th and the 19th days are also noted as days when the protector deities should be invoked and kept in mind. These, too, are days of purification. And there are more, still finer subdivisions that are made.

Major Elements of Tibetan Astrology

The manipulation of the animal signs, elements, parkhas, mewas, etc. (presented below) takes considerable skill in calculation and, as might be expected, even more expertise when it comes to interpretation. The net result is a somewhat complex system that does claim to explain the status quo, but, like its Western counterpart, allows so much interpretation that hard and fast conclusions can seldom be drawn. As far as I can determine, you can't predict the stock market with it.

In many ways, astrology (East and West) amounts to little more than a grand set of worry beads, the manipulation of which is somehow comforting to those of us who make use of it. One wonders, considering the amount of calculation involved (the work put into it), if the average astrologer comes out with more return for their time investment than they put into the effort. In other words, does the system work for us, or do we, in truth, end up working for the system. I am not at all pessimistic about all of this, but this is an area that has received very little comment. In the last analysis, it is a fact that we astrologers like to do this sort of thing.

There is another factor in Eastern astrology that deserves general comment. It has been the view of Western observers that the East has a tendency toward fatalism and resignation to what fate has delivered to them. I was interested to note that most of the Tibetan lamas and teachers that I met were not all that interested in astrology outside of using the lunar cycle to plan and time events.

To the Buddhist mind, personality makeup is not of great importance. For, no matter what that makeup, good or bad, the remedy remains the same: mind practice of one form or another. In fact, throughout the East, you do not find the interest

in personality psychology that we have here in the West. The reason is clear to anyone who has studied Eastern philosophy. They have no need to flirt with the deeper areas of the mind, but have long ago been introduced to them, and take them as a matter of course. Keep in mind that reincarnation is the accepted belief system in both India and Tibet and, for that matter, the greater part of the world. They have, as a standing belief, what we have as yet to accept—the continuity of consciousness.

Here in the West, this awareness of cycles is not self-evident to the majority. As astrologers, we attempt to bring it to the public's attention. Yet as a society, we have yet to come to such a conclusion, much less push toward a solution. Buddhist countries, long trained in the analysis of emotions and desires, have little interest in re-examining emotional and personality issues, which have been clarified in ancient times. Instead, the interest in expanding the awareness of the person (happy or sad) beyond such personal issues, and focusing on the root of our problems and sufferings is assumed. Everyone over there knows this from childhood. Any Western astrologer can easily check this out for himself by doing an astrological reading for an East Indian. They are not remotely interested in the psychological observations that fascinate us here in the West. Soul, spirit, unity, are already their old friends. Their response to our psychological pap is "Yes, yes, yes... please get on to something of importance, like exactly how many children will I have, and what will their sexes be." Or, "How much money will I make this year and when."

There is no point in hinting to a Tibetan or Hindu that consciousness may extend beyond this life or that he is one with the creative forces. That is already a given, a fact upon which they have depended all of their lives. The psychological crib out of which we Westerners are just learning to climb (when it comes to the mind), the continuity of consciousness, and all that these thoughts suggest is old news in India and Tibet.

The fact that the whole world is, in reality, our personal mandala and that everything that appears to us as a sign from the cosmos, may be a revelation to a New Yorker, but not so for a resident of Katmandu or Delhi. While here in this country we continue to explore our psychological infancy, this holds little interest for those from the East. With this said, let us look at some of the main elements of Tibetan astrology.

Outline of Major Tibetan Techniques

Here are several of the major calculation techniques used by the Tibetan astrologer. Space does not allow either a more general discussion or a point by point elaboration of many of these. At minimum, I will try to present enough of the bare-bone basics so that those of you interested in exploring the subject can do your own calculations.

Before we launch into the techniques that will be presented, I want to mention an area I won't be presenting here, due to space considerations: the Nakshatras or 28 lunar mansions. This technique has been taken directly from the Indian system, and I refer you to one of the many books on that subject. Since I use my own birth date in some examples, it was July 18, 1941.

0. Cosmic Tortoise Diagram

1. The Wheel of the Twelve Signs

- Century Birth Animal Table
- Sign Polarity
- Triangles (THUN-SUN)
- Opposites (PHUNG-SUN, DUN-ZUR)
- SHI-SEY
- Brief Sign Descriptions
- Sign Power

2. The Five Elements

- Relationship Table
- Good, Friends, Filial, Antagonistic

3. Major Life Factors

- Life Force
- Power
- Bodily Health
- Luck
- Soul

4. Tibetan Yearly Calendar

- Months of the Year
- Days of the Month
- Hour of the Day

5. The Eight Parkhas

- Four Good Directions
- Four Bad Directions
- Month's Direction
- Descending Parkhas
- Birth Parkha
- Gu-Mik (9th Spot)
- Dur-Mik (Death Spot)

6. The Nine Mewas

- The Magic Square
- Birth Mewa
- Descending Mewa
- Daily Mewa

- Nine Mewas Described
- 7. LOG-MEN (not turning back)
- 8. DEU
- 9. Day of the Week Cycles
- 10. Lunar Related Data
 - Lunar Day of the Month
 - Lunar Days for Travel
 - Losar
- 11. DAR-GHE
- 12. LO-KHAK
- 13. SHI-SHEY
- 14. The Seven Obstacles
- 15. The Four Mewa Obstacles

Turtle’s Head

Yellow	Earth	Dragon Hare Tiger Ox	<i>South</i> Fire Snake	<i>South</i> Red Hare	Sheep Monkey Bird Dog	Earth	Yellow
<i>East</i>	Wood					Iron	<i>West</i>
<i>East</i>	Green					White	<i>West</i>
Yellow	Earth		Mouse Water <i>North</i>	Pig Blue <i>North</i>		Earth	Yellow

Diagrams, like the above, are common in writings on Tibetan astrology. Often this diagram is shown drawn on the underside of what is called the Celestial Tortoise. This tortoise represents the universe of both China and Tibet. The upper shell is the dome of Heaven, while on the underside is inscribed the essential elements of the astrological mandala. The above diagram contains the wheel of animal signs, the elements, directions/colors.

The Wheel of the Twelve Signs

The wheel of the animal zodiac is ancient, arising somewhere in central Asia, and later incorporated by the Chinese. The calendar used by the Chinese is said to have entered Tibet in the year 642 AD by the Chinese Princess Kong-jo, who married the first Buddhist King of Tibet.

The Tibetan wheel of twelve animals, with its twelfefold division, reminds us of its Western counterpart, the zodiac. Unlike the West, where people's signs are determined by the solar calendar, in the East your sign is determined according to which year one is born in. The cycle of twelve animals rotates in strict succession from year to year. The order of the animals is Mouse, Ox, Tiger, Hare, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Bird, Dog, and Pig. Each animal sign has its own qualities, which are well-known to the general public. Here are some examples:

Find your birth year and animal sign:

Mouse	1900 1912 1924 1936 1948 1960 1972 1984 1996
Ox	1901 1913 1925 1937 1949 1961 1973 1985 1997
Tiger	1902 1914 1926 1938 1950 1962 1974 1986 1998
Hare	1903 1915 1927 1939 1951 1963 1975 1987 1999
Dragon	1904 1916 1928 1940 1952 1964 1976 1988 2000
Snake	1905 1917 1929 1941 1953 1965 1977 1989 2001
Horse	1906 1918 1930 1942 1954 1966 1978 1990 2002
Sheep	1907 1919 1931 1943 1955 1967 1979 1991 2003
Monkey	1908 1920 1932 1944 1956 1968 1980 1992 2004
Bird	1909 1921 1933 1945 1957 1969 1981 1993 2005
Dog	1910 1922 1934 1946 1958 1970 1982 1994 2006
Pig	1911 1923 1935 1947 1959 1971 1983 1995 2007

However, please note that these years are not measured from either your birthday or from January 1 of any year. Instead, they are measured from the beginning of the Tibetan new year, a fluctuating point that marks the New Moon that is nearest to the beginning of February. It is important to note that on occasion, the start of the Tibetan and Chinese New Years differ by an entire month!

The animal of one's birth year is central to both the Tibetan and Chinese systems of calculation, and is the most common form of counting time. The twelve-year animal cycle repeats itself from year to year. Just as we might inquire about a person's Sun sign, in the East they want to know what animal sign were you born under. There are male and female signs:

Sign Polarity

Male Animal Signs

Female Animal Signs

Mouse	Ox
Tiger	Hare
Dragon	Snake
Horse	Sheep
Monkey	Bird
Dog	Pig

Triangles (THUN-SUM), Opposites (Phung-Sum, DUN-ZUR) and SHI-SHEY

The Chinese call them the three friends, but the Tibetans call them the three destroyers. The triangles or Thun-Sum (three corners) are:

- 3 Friends = Pig Sheep Hare
- 3 Friends = Tiger Horse Dog
- 3 Friends = Mouse Dragon Monkey
- 3 Friends = Bird Ox Snake

DUN-ZUR

The worst or opposites (Dun-zur: which means 7th corner or opposite) are:

Sign	DUN-ZUR (Opposite Sign)
Horse	Mouse
Ox	Sheep
Tiger	Monkey
Hare	Bird
Dog	Dragon
Snake	Pig

SHI-SHEY

Shi-Shey (enemy of the 4th one): In addition the 4th sign over from any given sign (either way) is called Shi-Shey and that is bad too. The rest of the relationships of the signs are O.K. (such as triangles).

Sign	SHI-SHEY (4th Sign)
Snake	Monkey, Tiger
Horse	Bird, Hare
Sheep	Dog, Dragon
Monkey	Pig, Snake
Bird	Mouse, Horse
Dog	Ox, Sheep
Pig	Tiger, Monkey
Mouse	Hare, Bird
Ox	Dragon, Dog
Tiger	Snake, Pig
Hare	Horse, Mouse
Dragon	Sheep, Ox

Animal Signs

Each of the Tibetan signs, like our Western zodiac signs, has its own qualities. Here is a very brief description of the twelve signs as taken from some of the Tibetan manuscripts.

Mouse. The mouse is quiet. He is not friendly or outgoing and tends to be stable. He is not rough. Even though he does good to others, others don't seem to respond. On the outside, he is open and relaxed in appearance, but inside he is very strong and critical. Very open-mouthed, he says what he thinks. He is kind, but not generous. He misses the big opportunities, and takes the small ones. He is always searching.

Ox. The ox is a difficult person. He is hard to get to work, and is not obedient. He likes to sleep. He often exhibits bad behavior. While it is hard to change him, he is most often an agreeable person. However his slogan is "Don't mess with me!" He is very slow and doesn't care much if things are satisfactory or not. He postpones everything. He is good-tempered. He likes to eat and sleep like a bull.

Tiger. The tiger is brave, active and bright. Always proud and loyal to close relatives, he tends to have rough behavior and speech. He does a lot of thinking. He likes gambling and makes a good businessman.

Hare. “I am just for myself.” The hare is independent, and does not need or ask others for their help. “I can survive. There is much opportunity in the world to be enjoyed. I am satisfied with that.” He tends to be indirect, devious and possibly dishonest, but always skillful. He is stingy, but smiles and is generous on the surface. Possible diseases include those of the stomach and gall bladder.

Dragon. The dragon is neither brave nor active, but is good. He never does bad. “I am not very powerful, but nobody harms me.” He does not make much effort, but also does not procrastinate, or put things off. When the time comes, he does his duty. He has a short temper, but is good minded. He is talkative. He listens to others talk. He has trouble containing himself. He has less disease than some of the other signs but if he gets sick, it can be serious.

Snake. The snake has a bad temper, and is always burning his own mind-stream. However, he has a good heart and is very optimistic or forward minded. Even if others are jealous of him, no one has the power to put him down. He can, however, destroy himself. He may have a somewhat rough character, and can be mean. Once his mind is made up, he won’t change it. He tends to diseases of the stomach and liver.

Horse. The horse is said to have miraculous power and is capable of great effort. Even though 1000 enemies chase him, he cannot be defeated. His older life will be better than his youth. He listens to others. He likes horses. He is a fast walker and enjoys play. He has a self-sacrificing character and always helps others. He needs little sleep. His life has a lot of ups and downs.

Sheep. The sheep does not talk much and tends not to be too bright. He can be a rough character. He likes to eat. He causes others no harm, but does not sacrifice himself for them either. He is generally good tempered and good hearted. Always relaxed, he does not rush. He is not lazy, but can’t get things done on time. He does not show either like or dislike. He is a good provider.

Monkey. Monkeys are very smart, not very talkative and tend to have bad tempers. They have lightweight, weak bodies. They are not always open minded and are said to have “small” mind power. Not noted for their sense of responsibility, they like to play and enjoy themselves. Their words are not to be trusted and they talk, gossip and lie too much—surface oriented. They look clean but tend to eat dirty things. Very ambitious, they always have great plans. They like to praise themselves.

Bird. It is easy for the bird to lose his possessions, legacy, and inheritance, what-have-you? They are always advising others, but seldom take their own advice. Possessing a very strong sexual desire, they always need company. They like to be neat and clean, and don't require much sleep. They are prone to blindness. They love style, dressing up and tend to smile a lot. They enjoy walking and stylish movement. Good with friends.

Dog. The dog is proud, mean and somewhat wrathful. He can't seem to get kindness from others no matter how hard he tries. He is self-interested, does only for himself, and never for others. His mind is always filled with lots of thoughts. He tries to do things right, but they tend to turn out bad or wrong. He likes meat. He is a fast walker. Very sexual. A traveler. He is high or good minded, and elegant people tend to like him.

Pig. The pig is not bright. He likes to eat but is not concerned with what type of food. He eats everything. He likes yoga. He has good self-discipline. Can be greedy and often takes advantage of others. He does not benefit himself. He lies. He has a big stomach. He is good with the good people, and bad with the bad people. He seldom smiles and is often mean. He can be a rough character.

Power of the Signs

The signs have different power or importance as shown in the table below. By far, the most important are the first four, which are similar to what are called cardinal signs in Western astrology. These signs rule the four major directions as follows: Tiger (East), Pig (North), Monkey (West), and Snake (South).

Signs	Power
Tiger, Monkey, Pig, Snake	Best
Mouse, Horse, Bird, Hare	Next-best
Ox, Sheep, Dragon, Dog	Lowest

The Five Elements

The five elements are taken from the Chinese astrological system, for which there are a number of books and articles. Although somewhat similar to elements as used in western astrology, the five elements of Eastern astrology are much more defined and depended upon. They are a major factor in Tibetan astrology. Like the animals signs, the elements also rotate in strict sequence from year to year, but unlike the signs each element holds for two years before changing.

Thus the elements and signs rotate in combination, the total cycle taking sixty years.

- Wood (air): Long-life, beauty, good or increasing energy, mental energy, changeable, not-stable.
- Fire: Strong, instant, hot, warmth.
- Earth: Stable, strength, ground.
- Iron: Strong, cutting, direct, weapon, changing. (similar to earth)
- Water: Soft, fluid, clear-seeing, flowing, smooth. Often connected to the blood and emotional concerns.

Element	Color	Body	Function
Wood (Shing)	Green	Veins	Cause to Grow
Fire (me)	Red	Warmth, Heat	To Burn
Earth (SA)	Yellow	Flesh	Stabilize
Iron (Chak)	White	Bones	Hardening
Water (Chu)	Blue	Blood	Moistening

Each year is assigned an element. These elements rotate in a particular order. Each year's element is the son of the previous year's. In other words, the previous year is considered to be the mother of the following year. Another way to say the same thing is that the element for the current year is the son of the previous year.

Relationship Table:

The table shown below is read as follows: Wood is Mother of Fire, Fire is the Son of Wood and... Water is the enemy of Fire and Fire is Water's friend.

Mother	Wood is Mother of Fire	Wood	Fire	Earth	Iron	Water
Friend	Fire is Friend of Water	Fire	Water	Earth	Wood	Iron
Son	Fire is Son of Wood	Wood	Fire	Earth	Iron	Water
Enemy	Water is Enemy of Fire	Fire	Water	Earth	Wood	Iron

Element Relationship Pecking Order:

There are preferred relationships between the elements. Mother is the best because then you are the Son. Son is the next best. Friend is less important, but acceptable. Enemy is, as might be expected, not so good.

Element Togetherness:

Certain elements go (or do not go) well together. Earth and Water are good, while Wood, Iron and Fire (in combination) are not as good.

Good Relationship:

Water is the Mother of Wood
 Iron is the Mother of Water
 Earth is the Mother of Iron
 Fire is the Mother of Earth
 Wood is the Mother of Fire

Friendly or Beneficial Relationship:

Earth is the Friend of Wood
 Wood is the Friend of Iron
 Iron is the Friend of Fire
 Water is the Friend of Earth
 Fire is the Friend of Water

Neutral or Filial Relationship:

Fire is the Son of Wood
 Earth is the Son of Fire
 Iron is the Son of Earth
 Water is the Son of Iron
 Wood is the Son of Water

Antagonistic Relationship:

Iron is an Enemy of Wood
 Fire is an Enemy of Iron
 Water is an Enemy of Fire
 Earth is an Enemy of Water
 Wood is an Enemy of Earth

Major Life Factors

There are five major factors that are taken into consideration when examining the nature and qualities of a given calendar year. They are listed here in order of their importance:

Major Life Factors	Tibetan Name
Life Force (holder of the life)	(SOK)
Power	(WANG)
Bodily Health	(LÜ)
Luck	(LUNG TA)
Soul	(LA)

As regards these major elements, the life force is the most important of them, for both sexes. It represents the life strength or élan vital—how you hold your life. Then comes the power element, how you overcome obstacles, and achieve goals. This is of special interest for women. The function of power is spontaneous, instantaneous—you must have it now. Bodily health, physical health or sickness is important for all. The luck element, also called “wind horse,” is special for men, while soul, which is somewhat similar to the life force but more concerned with the emotional or psychological state, is not used very much. Here is how they are determined in relation to the current year:

Life Force:

The life force is determined according to the following table. The left-hand column is the animal for the current year, while the right-hand column is the element for that year’s life force:

Current Year Animal	Life Force Element
Snake, Horse	Fire
Hare, Tiger	Wood
Mouse, Pig	Water
Monkey, Bid	Iron
Dragon, Sheep	Earth
Ox, Dog	Earth

Power Element:

The Power element will always be identical to the element determined for the current year. For example, 1991 is the year of the Iron Sheep. Therefore the power element for 1991 will be iron.

Luck Element:

The luck element is determined according to the following table. The left-hand column is the animal for the current year, while the right-hand column is the element for that year’s luck: Note: there is no Earth element with luck.

Current Year Animal	Luck Element
Tiger, Horse, Dog	Iron
Pig, Sheep, Hare	Fire
Mouse, Dragon, Monkey	Wood
Ox, Snake, Bird	Iron

Bodily Health:

With Bodily Health, calculation is a little more complicated. First determine the key element:

Current Year Animal	Health Key Element
Mouse, Ox, Horse, Sheep	Wood as Key
Tiger, Hare, Bird, Monkey	Water as Key
Dog, Pig, Dragon, Snake	Iron as Key

Next, using this key element, take the Power Element (as calculated above, this will always be identical to the element determined for the current year) according to the following rules:

If Power Element is	Then: Bodily Health Element is
Son of Health Key Element	Water
Mother of Health Key Element	Wood
Enemy of Health Key Element	Earth
Friend of Health Key Element	Fire
Same Element Health Key Element	Iron

Soul Element:

The Soul Element is always the Mother of the Life Force Element. Use table A to determine this.

The Tibetan Calendar: The 12 Months of the Year

The months always start with the dragon month, which is the first month or Losar (Tibetan New Year), no matter what the year. Each month has an element which is calculated by taking the son of the year's element and making that element go with the first month's sign. Thus, 1988 is the earth dragon year, and the son of earth is iron, therefore the first month is the iron dragon month. Elements are used twice each, so the second month of the year will also be an iron month, and then two water months, and so on in rotation: Iron, Water, Wood, Fire, Earth... Iron, Water, etc. The beginning of the next year does not continue the rotation, but starts afresh.

It is interesting to note that in the earlier Tibetan system, which is still observed for certain calculations, the year started with the New Moon prior to the Winter Solstice rather than Losar. That moment began the first month, which always took the sign of the Tiger, with the other signs following in normal rotation. The elements also start (if I get this right) with the calculation of power element for the element of the current year. That power element is then used.

Keep in mind that male signs are Mouse, Tiger, Dragon, Horse, Monkey and Dog, while female signs are Ox, Hare, Snake, Sheep, Bird and Pig.

The Day of the Month's Sign and Element

Each day of the month depends on whether the month is a male (animal sign) or female month. For all months that are under a male sign, take the tiger for the first day of the month and proceed in strict sign rotation to the end of month. For female months, take the Monkey and precede is sign rotation. Either way, the rotation ends at the end of the month, and the next month's first day takes either the Tiger or Monkey as a starting point. The first day of the next month depends on the gender of animal sign, etc. As regards the element for each day, this is derived by taking the Son of the month's Element (as described above). However, in the case of days, elements are used singly and not by twos (as in the case of the months).

The Hour of the Day's Sign and Element

Start at sunrise and go for 12 hours by 2-hour sections. The first two hours after sunrise belong to the hare and each two-hour section follows in strict animal sign rotation. As for the 2-hour elements, take the son of the element for the day (described above) and use the elements in single rotation (one only, and not two each).

Sunrise: Sunrise is determined, when there are no exact calculations, as the moment when you can see the lines on the palm of your hand.

The I-Ching Parkhas

Taken from the I-Ching or Chinese Book of Changes, each day has a morning and evening parkha or trigram. Combined, these parkhas give a complete hexagram for that day that can be used to consult the I-Ching. There are eight Parkhas as part of Jung-tsi:

The Eight Parkhas (Trigrams from the I-Ching)

LI	Fire and South.
KHON	Earth (South-West)
DHA	Iron and West
KHEN	Sky and Earth (North-West)
KHAM	Water and North (Earth)
GIN	Mountain & Earth(North-East)
ZIN	Wood and East (Earth)
ZON	Wind and Earth (South-East)

Parkhas: Month's Direction

The triangle of Tiger, Horse and Dog start first day of month with LI. The triangle of Mouse, Dragon, and Monkey start first day of month with Kham. The triangle of Bird, Ox, and Snake start first day of month with Dha. The triangle of Pig, Sheep and Hare start first day of month with Zin. The Parkhas then follow in strict order, one for each day of the month.

Animal Signs for Month

Tiger, Horse, Dog

Mouse, Dragon, Monkey

Bird, Ox, Snake

Pig, sheep, Hare

Parkha for 1st Day of Month

LI, then KHON, DHA, etc.

KHAM, then GIN, ZIN, etc.

DHA, then KHEN, KHAM, etc.

ZIN, then ZON, LI, etc.

Descending Parkha (BAP-PAR)

The descending Parkha for the current year is counted differently for male and female persons. For males, start with the parkha LI and count clockwise, while for females start with the parkha KHAM and go counter-clockwise.

The count, in either case, is to what we will call the ‘agesign’ which means the number of years from birth to the current year, starting with the birth year as one. Thus my (Michael Erlewine born in 1941) agesign for 1988 is 48, and so on. Once the Descending parkha for the current year is determined, refer to the table below to determine the good and bad directions for that year. A look at the parkha for the current year gives us an idea as to what are the good and bad directions. Note: The descending parkha is counted from solstice to solstice of a given year. For example, I am 46 years old in 1988, so my parkha is Gin until solstice of 1987 at which time it turns into Zin.

The Eight Parkhas and the Directions

CHA-LÖN	PAL-KEY	DRE-GNA	PAL-KEY	CHA-LÖN	LÜ-CHEY	DRE-GNA	LÜ-CHEY	CHA-LÖN
NAM-MEN	ZÖN	LÜ-CHEY	SOG-TSO	LI	DRE-GNA	NÖ-PA	KHÖN	PAL-KEY
DÜ-CHÖ	SOG-TSO	NÖ-PA	NÖ-PA	NAM-MEN	DÜ-CHÖ	SOG-TSO	DÜ-CHÖ	NAM-MEN
NAM-MEN	SOG-TSO	NÖ-PA		SOUTH FIRE		LÜ-CHEY	DRE-GNA	PAL-KEY
CHA-LÖN	ZIN	DÜ-CHÖ	EAST WOOD		WEST IRON	DÜ-CHÖ	DHA	CHA-LÖN
LÜ-CHEY	PAL-KEY	DRE-GNA		WATER NORTH		NAM-MEN	NÖ-PA	SOG-TSO
DÜ-CHÖ	NÖ-PA	SOG-TSOT	SOG-SO	NAM-MEN	DÜ-CHÖ	NÖ-PA	DÜ-CHÖ	NAM-MEN
LÜ-CHEY	GIN	NAM-MEN	PAL-KEY	KHAM	NÖ-PA	DRE-GNA	KHEN	SOG-TSO
CHA-LÖN	DRE-GNA	PAL-KEY	DRE-GNA	CHA-LÖN	LÜ-CHEY	PAL-KEY	LÜ-CHEY	CHA-LÖN

Directions

Four Good Directions:

- NAM-MEN (sky healer) — the best one. Good for doctors.
- SOG-TSO (healthy life) — next best. Good for sleeping, point the head in this direction.
- PAL-KEY (generating, glorious)—3rd best, but a lower good. It is good to buy or obtain things from this direction.
- CHA-LÖN (bringing auspiciousness, prosperity)—4th good, least. Good for traveling.

Four Bad Directions:

- NÖ-PA (evil spirit)—least bad.
- DRE-GNA (five ghosts)—more bad.
- DÜ-CHÖ (devil-cutting)—even worse, strong negativity, cuts us.
- LU-CHEY (body destroying)—worst one (avoid this direction)

The four good directions are the good side or Zan-shi, while the bad side or four bad ones are Gnen-shi.

Birth Parkha

Also important is the birth parkha. To find the birth parkha, it is necessary to calculate the descending parkha for the mother of the individual for the year of the individual's birth. For example, my mother was born in 1917. Using the method described above, calculate her descending parkha for the year 1941... and that is my birth parkha which is said to give space directions for the entire life.

GU-MIK (9th Spot)

GU-MIK. The GU-MIK or 9th-eye spot is calculated as follows: From the birth sign, every 9th sign is GU-MIK. Thus with my birth sign as the snake, the year of the Ox will be my GU-MIK—not so good.

Parkha GU-MIK or 9th spot. With male persons, LI is the 9th spot or not so good for that year—marks a transition. With females, the same is true for KHAM. In addition, Mewa GU-MIK is when the birth mewa is same as current year's mewa. Again, not so good.

DUR-MIK (Death Spot)

DUR-MIK or “death spot” is not as strong as the name suggests. Still, however, it portends a bad year, and is calculated as follows:

- Signs Tiger and Hare, use descending Parkha KHON.
- Signs Horse and Snake, use descending Parkha KHEN.
- Signs Bird and Monkey, use descending Parkha GIN.

Signs Mouse, Pig, Ox, Sheep, Dog and Dragon, use descending Parkha ZON. If the descending Parkha of the current year is any of the above for the particular signs, then those signs have a year that is DUR-MIK — not so good.

The Nine Mewa

Mewa means “mole” or birth mark and the nine mewa stem from a system of numerology used for centuries by the Chinese. It indicates a karmic relation from life to life. There are 9 mewas, and they are often arranged in a so-called magic square that gives totals of 15, whichever way they are totaled up.

The Magic Square:

South East		South		South West
	4	9	2	
East	3	5	7	West
	8	1	6	
North East		North		North West

Nine Mewas

White
Black
Indigo
Green
Yellow
White
Red
White
Maroon

Elements

Iron
Water
Water
Wood
Earth
Iron
Fire
Iron
Fire

These nine mewa are counted backwards starting with the Wood-Mouse year (1,9,8,7,6, etc.). An entire circle consists of three 60-year cycles. The current major cycle began in 1864 and will end in 2044 ... (1924 and 1984 were turning points). The 180 year cycle counts backwards until the year before the Wood-Mouse year in the third cycle ... which is the Water Pig year. At that point, the

mewa for that year is made to be (2) Black ... thus making ready for the following year to be (1) White and the start of a new major cycle.

Any number can be put in the center of this diagram and the ascending numbers placed in the corresponding order.

The Nine Magic Squares

8	4	6	4	9	2	6	2	4
7	9	2	3	5	7	5	7	9
3	5	1	8	1	6	1	3	8
7	3	5	9	5	7	2	7	9
6	8	1	8	1	3	1	3	5
2	4	9	4	6	2	6	8	4
3	8	1	5	1	3	1	6	8
2	4	6	4	6	8	9	2	4
7	9	5	9	2	7	5	7	3

ZON	LI <i>South</i>			KHON
ZIN <i>East</i>	4	9	2	West DHA
	3	5	7	
	8	1	6	
GIN	North KHAM			KHEN

Birth Mewa

The birth mewa is calculated by counting backward using the current year's mewa in the center up to your agesign. For convenience, please refer to table (large table of years, Mewa, etc.) to determine your birth year mewa. Please remember that birth year here means the year as measured from the Tibetan New Year, which is (approximately) the New Moon nearest February 1st of the year. The result is the birth mewa. For example, I am (1941 birth) '5 Yellow'.

Current Year Mewa = Birth Mewa—If the current year's mewa is the same as your birth mewa, that is said to cause the current year to be a little difficult. This is also true for birth mewa and current year's descending mewa—if the same, then that year is not-so-good.

Descending Mewa

Another much used calculation is the Descending Mewa. To calculate your descending mewa, place your birth mewa in the center of the magic square and count from the center to the East (left) one number. Then, count counter-clockwise if your birth zodiac animal is a male sign and count clockwise if your birth zodiac animal is female Animal Zodiac sign. I am a Snake Animal Sign (Female), so I would count clockwise. Count to your Agesign with the first count (the center) counting as #1. The result is your descending mewa. When counting, always remember that in the Tibetan system you are one year of age at birth. So, always take your Western age and add one, and then count.

The meanings of the descending mewa for the current year are:

1, 8	Iron, Good
2	Black, Bad (worst one)
3	Blue (not-so-good)
4,5	Medium (5 is the astrologer)
7,9	Almost good

Good (in descending order of goodness): 1,8,6,4,5 (1 being best)

Bad (in descending order of badness): 2,3,9,7 (2 being worst)

Mewa Daily

You can also calculate a mewa for each day of the lunar month. The following refers to the first day of the zodiac animal month. For example, the first day of the snake month:

The mewa 2, 5 and 8 are ruled by the Tiger, Monkey, Pig and Snake. Start counting from (1) White.

The mewa 1, 4, and 7 are ruled by the Mouse, Horse, Bird and Hare. Start counting from (4) Green.

The mewa 3, 6 and 9 are ruled by the Ox, Sheep, Dog and Dragon. Start counting from (7) red.

These above mewa always occur with these signs. For the above signs, start counting with the indicated mewa... and count each day of the lunar month in a forward (1,2,3) direction. For example, the first day of a snake month would start with 1-White, and move forward.

The Nine Mewas (Karmic Relationships)

Here are some very rough translations as to the general meaning of the nine mewa. It is traditional that there is some birthmark associated with each mewa, a probable length of life, a specific dharma practice, and mantra for that mewa.

1 White

Length of life: 71 years. There will be four difficult times during the life.

Birthmark: Has a birth-mark or mole on the right side. Is left-handed.

Practice: The practice involves obtaining a Chenresik statue (loving kindness, compassion) and practice this sadhana.

Mantra: OM MANI PADME HUM

Either an only child, or only one child turns out useful and carries on the generation. He travels a lot. Good in social work, where others are benefited. If a male, then brave. If female then a strong one. Could have three children. Likes to move about here and there. Snakes are their protector. Difficult with children, meaning: not so good for the kids—things happen to them. Possessions and jobs are very unstable. He is bad tempered, but has a good mind. A difficult early life, but the longer the life the better it gets. He is a clean person physically and likes white things like milk, butter, etc.

2 Black

Length of life: 61 years. There will be three bad periods.

Birthmark: There is a birthmark on the right-hand or arm, the heartside or the neck.

Practice: The practice is that of Vajrapani, which is strength and the clearing of obstacles. Become like the vajra—indestructible. Get a statue of Vajrapani or a stupa.

Mantra: OM VAJRAPANI HUM

If the child is first born, it will be easy to care for him, an easy child. Is often sick when a child. He has nice speech, but a bad mind. He has a dark appearance, mean and horrible. Always sad. He tries to do good things, but no one likes him. If a monk or a member of the Bon religion, then he is a very strong practitioner. He likes meat and alcohol. He has many friends, which he loves but seldom has an opportunity to be with them—and thus no result. If sick when an adult, will be hard to cure.

3 Blue

Length of life: 50 years with three difficult periods.

Birthmark: On the calf of the left leg.

Practice: The suggested practice is that of Vajrasattva (dorje-sempa) practice. Vajrasattva purifies and removes the limitations, obstacles and imperfections of the mind.

Mantra: OM VAJRASATTVA HUM

He likes to sleep. He has a strong mind, but there is much instability in his life. He is a little bit greedy. At work, he is not able to concentrate, and tends to skip around. If male, he will talk less and if female will tend to be sad. He is difficult to change. Blame comes even if he does good things for others. He may have many wives (husbands) but no children. He will go to and die in another country. He may have paralysis.

4 Green

Length of Life: 65 years. There are four difficult periods.

Birthmark: On either thigh is a black circle birthmark.

Practice: The practice is that of Vajrapani, which is strength and the clearing of obstacles. Become like the vajra—indestructible. Get a statue of Vajrapani or a stupa.

Mantra: OM VAJRAPANI HUM

He should avoid funerals. Cleanliness is very important, else the nagas (snakes) give a bad disease. He likes to travel. He has a deep mind, but is sometimes bad. Perhaps difficulty having children. If he has property, then farmland. The life is unstable, with a lot of ups and downs. There is sadness sometimes. People gossip about him. He does good things but others get the credit. He does not like to be lower than others, but finds little opportunity to rise. Whatever he has inside, stays with him. The nagas (snakes) are his protector. He is a vegetarian with 4 children. No wedding.

5 Yellow

Length of Life: 50 years. There will be two difficult periods.

Birthmark: His birthmark is a certain nervousness.

Practice: The suggested practice is that of Shakyamuni Buddha called the diamond vehicle (Dorje Chopa) (Prajnaparamita), cutting the vajra.

Mantra: TADYATA OM MUNE MUNE MAHAMUNI SHAKYAMUNAYE
SWAHA

This is a dharma person. This is also the astrologer's mewa. A monk's monk. He was a monk in the last life, reborn into a noble family in this life. Here is a very devoted person, with a stable mind. Very intelligent and religious. Obedient to his parents, he follows their customs or carries on their traditions. He does not travel much, or go far from his birthplace. He has a protector coming from his ancestors, whom he has ignored, and who is thus a little bit angry. He has strong dreams because his protector is angry. He is hard to please. Before becoming a monk, he was a saint, also a normal dharma teacher. He talks a lot, but often misses the point. He is very smart, a quick thinker. Should be a religious person in this life. He is restless, moving here and there. He has very high expectations of others. He always helps others, but they become his enemies. They gossip about him. He has five children. He has wealth in the form of property, houses, land. He will live long if he is religious. He is virtuous and educated. His possessions can be somewhat unstable. If female, he gets more gossip from others. If he is angry, it is difficult to please him. He has a good and stable mind. Tends to diseases of the gall-bladder, heart attack.

6 White

Length of life: 70 years. There will be five difficult periods.

Birthmark: Calf of the left leg.

Practice: The practice suggested is that of the long-life (and purification) deity Vijaya Vsnisa (Tsuk Tor Nam Gyal Ma).

Mantra: OM AMRITAAYUR DADE SWAHA

He is intelligent. His mood and appearance are always changing. He travels a lot. If female, then will have nice speech, but the mind is not good. Receives protection from his own local deities. Possibly, he could be very poor. He will not be living near his birthplace, but instead, elsewhere. He will be able to build himself up greater than his parents. He is seldom sick, but if sick, he will be hard to cure. He has many relatives, none of whom offer him much help. There will be many enemies. He does good for others, but is still blamed. He will have 3 to five children. Children possibly handicapped. There is not much power in the family, but wife is powerful. He is quite bad-tempered.

7 Red

Length of Life: 80 years and there will be 4 difficult periods.

Birthmark: On the backside or chest.

Practice: The practice is that of tara (green Tara), and thus healing, protection, wealth and a good birth.

Mantra: OMTARE TUTTARE TURE SWAHA

If female, then she likes to sleep. If married, it will not last long. He likes to fight, has a strong body and a ruddy complexion. Possibly may succumb from a sudden disease. Could die from his love of meat and similar things. His generation always shows suicide and murder. Seven children. The life very unstable.

8 white

Length of Life: 50 years and there are 3 difficult periods.

Birthmark: On right cheek.

Practice: The suggested practice is that of Shakyamuni Buddha called the diamond vehicle (Dorje Chopa) (Prajnaparamita), cutting the vajra.

Mantra: TADYATA OMMUNE MUNE MAHAMUNI SHAKYAMUNAYE SWAHA

He should avoid dirty things, stay clean. There is protection by local deities. He could go to another place from where born. Pleasant but proud. Good hands for arts and crafts. Older life will be better than younger life. He is religious and virtuous. Could have 4-6 children. Elegant people like him. The bad people don't like him. Could have a tendency to gossip, causing bad relations.

9 Maroon

Length of Life: 73 years with five difficult periods.

Birthmark: On face, neck or left-leg.

Practice: Suggested practice is that of Manjushri, the development of the mind and intellect.

Mantra: OMARAPATSANADHI

An image of one holding 7 glorious flowers in hands. If he keeps flowers well, then will be a very rich man. Could be proud or greedy. His older life will be better than young life. Very brave. He may well live other than where born. Wealth includes cows, animals, livestock in general. Has to keep his wealth with care or obstacles could destroy it. This is a good mewa for females, but not for monks or Bon.

LOG-MEN (not turning back)

A term meaning not-turning-back or not-coming-back. Here again, this is calculated differently for male and female persons. For male persons, always start with the sign of the tiger and for the element, take the son of the birth Power element. For me the son of iron (my power element) is water, so start with tiger water and count up from there in the ascending order to the current age sign.

Remember each element is counted twice. So we have Tiger Water, Tiger Hare, and so on. The sign and element combination that corresponds to your agesign is the Log-men.

Female persons start with the Monkey sign and use the mother of their birth power element and count in reverse direction to the current agesign. That sign and element is their LOG-MEN.

For male persons, if LOG-MEN is the sign Dog then it is called NAM-GO (Door of the Sky), while if the sign is Pig then it is called SA-GO (Door of the Earth). If NAM-GO, then it is important to avoid climbing, high places, etc. for that year. If SA-GO, then avoid digging, foundation work, under ground and the like for that year.

For female persons, the sign of the Dragon marks NAM-GO and the sign of the Snake marks a SA-GO year.

Deu

This is a very integral part of the Tibetan astrology system, a means of awarding zeros "0" (good marks) or X's (bad marks) for the current year to your major elements: Life force, power, bodily health, luck and soul. This is also part of KEG-TSI which is the yearly calculation of the life obstacles.

It is somewhat complex, but well worth working out. To begin, compare your Major birth elements and those of the current year elements as follows. For example, using the power element as example:

If the current year's power element is:

Mother of my birth power	mark 000 (best rating)
Friend of my birth power	mark 00 (2nd best)
Son of my birth power	mark 0X (4th best)
Enemy of my birth power	mark XX (6th best/Least good)

If it is the same as my birth power then:

Water or Earth	Mark 0 (3rd best)
Fire, Iron or Wood	Mark X (5th best)

It is important to calculate these for all of the major elements for each year.

Days of Week

Sun	Sunday	Fire	South
Moon	Monday	Water	North
Mars	Tuesday	Fire	South
Mercury	Wednesday	Water	North
Jupiter	Thursday	Wood	East
Venus	Friday	Iron	West
Saturn	Saturday	Earth	S.E.,N.W.,S.W., N.E.
Rahu	All Days	All Elements	all directions

The day after the New Moon is the 1st day of the month and whatever day of the week it is colors the whole month with the tone or quality of the planet of that day (Sun for Sunday, etc.). Also, the son of the 1st day's element is equally powerful for that whole month. The mother of that element is medium powerful, and the friend or enemy is bad for that entire month.

Example: if Sunday is the first day of the month (as above) then every Sunday in that month is very powerful, but if Sunday is friend or enemy (or otherwise not very good), then it dampens the best day of the month.

Further, if the first day of the month falls on a Sunday, then the planet is Sun, and the element Fire. Therefore, the son of Fire is Earth. Earth is powerful for the month. The Mother of Fire is Wood, so Wood is medium powerful that month. The friend of Fire is Iron, and the enemy of Fire is Water. Fire and Water are bad for that month.

Day-of-the-Week Cycles

Depending upon the animal sign for the year of your birth, three days of the week will have a special significance for you. According to John Reynolds in his 1978 Tibetan Astrological Calendar, "Days which are best and good are considered to be auspicious for undertaking projects, for doing business and similar activities; while days which are bad are considered inauspicious for any activity at all. In addition, birth on a good or best day indicates long life, while birth on a bad day portends an early death."

Using the animal sign for the year of your birth, enter the following table:

Sign	Best	Good	Bad
Snake	Tues	Fri	Mon
Horse	Tues	Fri	Wed
Sheep	Fri	Mon	Thur

Monkey	Fri	Mon	Thurs
Bird	Fri	Thurs	Tues
Dog	Mon	Wed	Thurs
Pig	Wed	Tue	Sat
Mouse	Wed	Tue	Sat
Ox	Sat	Wes	Thurs
Tiger	Thurs	Sat	Fri
Hare	Thurs	Sat	Fri
Dragon	Sun	Wed	Thurs

Lunar Days of the Month

Certain days of the month are auspicious and inauspicious for a given person. There are three favorable days each month, called foundation days, power days, and success days. There are also three unfavorable days, called obstacle days, disturbance days, and enemy days. In general, it is advised to begin things and take care of important business on the favorable days, and avoid such enterprise on the unfavorable days. The numbers in this table refer to the lunar days of the month for each sign.

F=Foundation, P=Power, S=Success, O=Obstacles,
 D=Disturbance, E=Enemy

Animal	F	p	S	O	D	E
Snake	13	12	6	8	9	9
Horse	17	12	6	20	5	27
Sheep	8	1	2	20	5	27
Monkey	8	1	2	9	10	17
Bird	14	7	25	3	11	24
Dog	9	27	5	11	3	12
Pig	2	8	11	26	3	12
Mouse	20	6	3	26	10	23
Ox	17	14	12	12	18	5
Tiger	5	27	9	14	12	3
Hare	7	27	12	26	25	18
Dragon	3	12	17	8	9	11

According to John Reynolds in his 1978 Tibetan Astrological Calendar, “When the monthly and weekly cycles oppose each other on the same day, the former is the more powerful due to the planetary energies, but nonetheless, they act together.

If, during the monthly cycle, opposing forces manifest on the same lunar day, these two complement each other.”

Lunar Days 1, 2, 26 — Good for making offerings, requests of high personages, taking vows, religious practices, and in general, the obtaining of something desired.

Lunar Days 3, 11, 20, 23 — Excellent days for strong, firm actions; good for beginning construction or obtaining high offices.

Lunar Days 4, 13, 16, 25 — Days of quickness, clarity, skill and cleverness; indicative of success in competitions.

Lunar Days 5, 8, 17, 18 — Very bad reaction days; unethical activities will succeed, moral action will not.

Lunar Days 1, 9, 10, 19, 24 — Generally good for activities such as marriages, large purchases, collections, teaching, initiation, blessings, building and ceremonies in general.

Lunar Days 2, 15 — Barren. Many events will not occur. Neither good or bad for building, meditation practice and certain ceremonies. Nothing should be undertaken between midnight and 3 AM.

Lunar Days for Travel

According to John Reynolds in his 1978 Tibetan Astrological Calendar, certain lunar days are good (or not) for travel. Here is a list that John Reynolds offers:

1, 2, 3, 16, 17, 18	Generally Good
4, 19	Unsuccessful
5, 20	Good for business
6, 21	One should not travel.
7, 22	Fine for travel
8, 23	Disturbing for emotions
9, 24	Success in covering long distances.
10, 25	Fruitful travel.
11, 26	Spiritual
12, 27	Wisdom
13, 29	Activity benefits one.
15, 30	One should not travel

Tibetan New Year: LO-SAR

Losar (Tibetan New Year) is the nearest New Moon to February 1st. If there are two New Moons, then take the 2nd one. Losar is the first sunrise after the New Moon... the next day.

DAR-GHE (going up, increasing)

X	Worst (best of)	1) Ug-len (first breath)
X	Worst (best of)	2) Gnal-ney (conception)
0	Good (worst of)	3) Lue-Dzog (Body Complete, full term)
0	Good (worst of)	4) Tse-Pa (Birth)
00	Good (Medium)	5) True-Jay (Bathing the baby)
00	Good (Medium)	6) Goe-Gon (Putting on clothers)
000	Good (Best of)	7) Ley-Jey (Working)
000	Good (best of)	8) Gar-wa (Prime, full-filled)
XX	Bad (Medium)	9) Gue-Pa (Decaying)
XX	Bad (Medium)	10) Na-wa (Sick)
XXX	Worst (worst of)	11) Shi-wa (Death)
XXX	Worst (Worst of)12)	Dur-shug (Burial)

In the above, numbers 3 through 8 are the good ones and 9-12 and 1-2 are the bad ones. Numbers 3 & 4 are the worst of the good ones, 5 & 6 are medium good and 7 & 8 are the best of the good. Likewise, numbers 1 & 2 are the best of the worst, 9 & 10 are medium bad and 11 & 12 are the worst of the worst.

Notes: Father's death year sign, if same as current year, then not-so-good. If descending Parkha is the same for both husband and wife, not so good. This is true of family members in general.

LO-KHAK

You might expect that a year which has the same sign as your birth year would be luck or auspicious. Not in the Tibetan system. If your birth sign and the current year sign are the same (every 12 years) then this is an example of LO-KHAK, which is very inauspicious. For men, the year before a LO-KHAK (termed NANG-KHAK) is a little more difficult than the LO-KHAK itself, for women, it is the year after LO-KHAK (termed CHI-KHAK) that is difficult.

Birth and one year

12 to 13 years age

24 to 25 years of age

36 to 37 years of age

48 to 49 years of age

60 to 61 years of age

72 to 73 years of age

84 to 85 years of age

96 to 97 years of age

During a Lo-khak year, there are reputedly six months of particular danger when you are most vulnerable:

Bird Month	2nd half very bad
Dog Month	1st half very bad
Pig Month	Passable
Mouse Month	2nd half very bad
Ox Month	1st half very bad
Tiger Month	passable
Hare Month	2nd half very bad
Dragon Month	entire month very bad
Snake Month	1st half very bad
Horse Month	Passable
Sheep Month	2nd half very bad
Monkey Month	Entire month very bad
Bird Month	1st half very bad

If the current year sign is the 7th or opposite of the birth sign, this is called Dunzur and is also bad. If the current year is the 5th sign (i.e. Dragon-Monkey), then this is also not good. If the current year is same element as the birth element, then this too is not-so-good.

SHI-SHEY

SHI-SHEY refers to the signs that are four up and back from the birth-year sign. For example, my birth in 1941 in the year of the snake makes the Tiger and the Monkey signs fit this description (always counting from the birth sign as one). If the current year is either of these signs, then it is called SHI-SHEY — which is not so good.

Also, for the current year sign ... count four up and four back and the months of that year with the same sign are called “black months.” If these months are Tiger, Monkey, Pig or Snake then the whole month is black, but the first ten days are the worst, the 2nd ten days a little better, and the last ten days better still.

If the month signs are the Mouse, Horse, Bird and Hare, then the days of the month from 10th-20th are the bad ones. If the month signs are Ox, Sheep, Dog or Dragon, then the last 10 days of the month are bad. All days being calculated from the New Moon.

If the current year is Tiger, Monkey, Pig or Snake and if the year’s mewa is 2-Black, then the whole year is a black year.

The Seven Obstacles

Quite a bit is made of the so-called seven obstacles. Each of these eventualities affects the entire current year, from Losar to Losar. In the following list, the term Current Year Sign refers to the Animal Zodiac Sign for the current year.

- If Current Year Sign = Your Birth Year Sign
- If Current Year Sign = Opposite Your Birth Year Sign
- If Current Year Sign = Animal Sign Adjacent(either side) your Birth Year

Animal sign PLUS the same element as your birth year element. For example, Snake has Dragon and Horse on either side.

- If Current Year Sign = One of three Destroyers (Friends) (see tables given earlier)
- If Wife & Husband have same descending Parkha for the current year.
- If Current Year Animal Sign = Sign for the year Father or Grandfather Died
- If Descending Parkha = Birth Parkha

Four Mewa Obstacles

- Descending Mewa = Current Year Mewa
- Descending Mewa = Birth Mewa
- Descending Mewa = Two Black
- The Element of the Descending Mewa = Element of the Enemy of the Birth Mewa

Appendix A

References

Some material in this article is the result of personal discussions with a number of high lamas in the Karma Kagyu Lineage, including H.E. Tai Situ Rinpoche, H.E. Shamar Rinpoche, Ven. Thrangu Rinpoche, Ven. Khenpo Tsultrim Gyatso, Rinpoche, Ven. Bardor Tulku Rinpoche and, in particular, Ven. Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche.

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- Michael Erlewine can be reached at Matrix Software, 315 Marion Avenue, Big Rapids, MI 49307 Phone: 231-527-2600, FAX 231-527-2613
 Or: Compuserve 72662,144; Microsoft Network, M_Erlewine

Note to Appendix A — Tables for 1900 - 2025 of the main Tibetan astrological factors. Please note the following gives main factors for everyone, except where the calculation requires the use of an individual. In that case, Michael Erlewine (July 18, 1941) has been used, so that you have some example:

Year:	Year
Element:	Year Element for Everyone
Zodiac:	Zodiac for Everyone
Parkha:	Descending Parkha for M. Erlewine
Mewa:	Mewa for Everyone
Life Force:	Life Force for Everyone, Deu for M. Erlewine
Health:	Health for Everyone, Deu for M. Erlewine
Power:	Power for Everyone, Deu for M. Erlewine
Luck:	Luck for Everyone, Deu for M. Erlewine
Soul:	Soul for Everyone, Deu for M. Erlewine

Author's note

I must thank Noel Tyl for providing me the opportunity to make this material available. I have been sitting on much of this information for many years, yet I knew that others might like to know something about Tibetan astrology and carry on from there.

As you will read, my interest in this subject has been superseded by my interest in the psychology out of which it arises, and I have turned my attention there. My apologies for what is, by necessity, a brief and somewhat fragmented presentation. Astrology awaits a real scholar who will document the intricate details of Tibetan astrology and who will not just use it as a stepping stone to the Buddhist teachings. For me, the need for what the astrology pointed toward was more important than pursuing the astrology itself. My most sincere thanks to Khenpo Karthar, Rinpoche and the other Karma Kagyu lamas who answered my many questions, and to John Reynolds, and Sange Wangchuk.

The 1913 Mongol-Tibet Treaty and the Dalai Lama's Proclamation of Independence*

Lobsang Tenpa

Following the 1911 Chinese Revolution, which led to the downfall of the Qing Dynasty, the principal concern of both the nations of Tibet and Mongolia was how to keep their sovereignty intact. Furthermore, the initial decade after 1911 was focused on how to build the two newly declared independent nations. In order to remain separated from Han cultural influence, both Mongolia and Tibet started to mutually assist each other, as well as to promote and preserve the culture of Tibetan Buddhism. So, by the end of 1913, British India's Governor-General Lord Harding pointed out in his letter to the Secretary of State that "it would appear safer to count upon the existence of the agreement and bring it into the open" (Mehra, 1969:9). Thus, it was brought 'into the open' at the tripartite meeting of British India, China and Tibet in 1913-14 in Simla on equal terms. This paper discusses the genesis of various events that led to the signing of the 1913 treaty between Mongolia and Tibet and the 13th Dalai Lama's Proclamation of Tibetan Independence following the fall of the Qing dynasty. Additionally, the paper seeks to analyze the significance of the treaty in terms of international relations, as well as China and British India's responses to the treaty.

The Downfall of the Qing Dynasty and the Situation in Tibet

On October 10, 1911, the beginning of the Wuchang Uprising in China gradually turned into a revolution led by the Chinese students and intellectuals who returned from Japan and Europe, who believed in the republican ideology. The Revolution was named *Xinhai* or Chinese Revolution after the Chinese lunar calendar of Xinhai falling in the year of 1911.¹ The Revolution ended with the abdication of the Qing throne by Emperor Puyi, the last Manchu ruler, on February 12, 1912. Though the revolution was primarily against government corruption and its inability to deal with the intervention of foreign powers, scholars argue that the main cause was the Han Chinese resentment of the Qing government, which was dominated by the Manchus, an ethnic minority.

* I would like to thank Dr. Sharad K. Soni (JNU) for his revision of and critical suggestions for this article and Prof. (Dr.) Elliot Sperling for his yet to be published article on the same subject, which he provided to me for further research, along with an English translation of the original Tibetan copy, through personal email contact on 07/03/2009. An International Symposium on "1913 Treaty between Mongolia and Tibet" was held at Ulaanbaatar on 13th-14th Oct. 2010 and its monograph is yet to be published. Some of my analysis could be similar to the papers presented at the Symposium.

On January 1, 1912, with the establishment of the Nanjing Provisional Government of the Republic of China, Sun Yatsen announced the beginning of a formal era of the Republic of China and declared himself the first provisional president. After one month, on February 12, 1912, the Imperial abdication of Emperor Xuantong Puyi was announced through a formal edict mediated by Yuan Shikai. Yuan Shikai became the second provisional president of the Republic of China in Beijing after the resignation of Sun Yatsen from presidential status. Following formal recognition by the global community, President Yuan Shikai relocated the capital of the Republic of China from Nanjing to Beijing, and within a short period, Sun Yatsen lost his power. Yuan Shikai's assumption of power continued to promulgate the Qing policy of vassal dependencies and reasserted "imperialist sovereignty" over the Tibetan and Mongol regions. Melvyn Goldstein (1989:65) says, "Yuan Shikai's Government not only proclaimed Tibet to be a part of China but began to take steps to implement their views". Thus, Yuan Shikai further prevented the secession of other provinces from the Chinese centralized government after the downfall of the Qing Dynasty. Initially, the Han Chinese (Sun Yatsen) policy of a/the "republic" referred only to the eighteen provinces, whereas non-Han Chinese regions, such as Northeast China (Manchu), Outer and Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang (Chinese Turkestan), and Tibet, were excluded from the "republic".² Though Yuan Shikai reasserted "imperialist sovereignty" over these regions, Mongolia and Tibet were the first two nations to declare their independence. Later on, in the first half of the twentieth century, frontier regions like Tannu Uriankhai as Tannu Tuva, Northeast China (Manchu) as Manchukho and Xinjiang (Chinese Turkestan) as East Turkestan also declared their independence. These other regions were all, except Tannu Tuva which was annexed into the Soviet Union in 1944, reasserted into the People's Republic of China (Communist China).

In 1909 prior to the Chinese Revolution, the 13th Dalai Lama went into exile in India after General Zhao Er-feng's military campaign reached Lhasa. The Manchu Emperor once again annulled the title of Dalai Lama following the latter's exile to Urga (Ulan Baatar) in 1904. After spending more than two years in British India, particularly in Sikkim from 1909-1912, the Dalai Lama returned to Tibet at the end of 1912 and reached Lhasa in early January 1913.³ The Chinese Revolution in 1911 and the overthrowing of the Qing Dynasty provided the Tibetans an opportunity to expel the remaining Qing troops from Tibet. The troops mutinied against the General and later were defeated by the Tibetan armed forces following a month of fighting. Primary causes for the Chinese soldiers in Tibet to stage *en mass* revolts include the non-receipt of salaries and rations, and so forth. These internal problems led to the emergence of a faction between the *Ambans* Lien Yu and the military commander's soldiers. The mutiny amongst the Chinese troops in Tibet, particularly in Lhasa, Chumbi and Yatung, took the form of large-scale looting and killing. Tibetan soldiers under the commandship of Tsarong Dzasa insisted that Chinese troops should surrender or face defeat

(Tsarong, 2008). Thus, with the expulsion of the Qing troops (about three thousand Chinese troops and officers), as well as the Manchu Ambans, the 13th Dalai Lama went on to exercise a political authority not seen since the reign of the 5th Dalai Lama (Goldstein 1989:59).⁴ Prior to the 13th Dalai Lama's assumption of full power in Lhasa, the Mongol Agvan Dorjjeff was already in the capital of Outer Mongolia as the representative of the Dalai Lama and was involved in signing the "1913 Mongol-Tibetan Treaty" in Urga (Ulan Baatar).

1913 Mongol – Tibetan Treaty

On June 24, 1912, five months after the establishment of the Republic of China, the Dalai Lama left Kalimpong and headed towards Chumbi Valley. In early July at Phari, the diplomat Agvan Dorjjeff received the Dalai Lama with greetings from the other Mongol princess.⁵ However, Smith (1996: 181) argues that "Dorjiev's presence in Tibet now (was) uncomfortable for the Dalai Lama, who wished to rely upon British patronage and eliminated any suspicion of Tibetan intrigues with the Russians. Dorjiev was, therefore, entrusted by the Dalai Lama with powers to establish Tibetan relations with the newly independent (Outer) Mongolia." Mehra (1969: 20) while quoting from the official note exchanged between Sir Charles Bell and *Kalon* Lonchen Shatra during the 1913-14 Simla Conference regarding the meeting between the Dalai Lama and the diplomat Agvan Dorjjeff, constructed the following:

Mr. [later Sir] Charles Bell "to ask you whether" the Mongol-Tibetan treaty had been "authorized" by the Dalai Lama. In the reply to Bell, Lonchen stated that, "the Lama is said to have underlined, "the friendly relations between Tibet and Mongolia which existed like that of the teacher and his disciple". He [Dalai Lama] was keen too that these "should continue and that they [Tibet and Mongolia] should help each other for the benefit of the Buddhist religion."⁶

Scholars argue about this very statement of "should continue and should help each other for the benefit of the Buddhist religion," because it has given a broader authorization and power to Agvan to make a more formal and binding alliance with the Mongols (Mehra, 1969: 3). Thus, in early January 1913 while the Dalai Lama was entering Lhasa, the diplomat Agvan Dorjjeff formally concluded an agreement with the Mongols at Urga on January 11. Here, one can firmly say that the diplomat intentionally went to Urga to make a more binding treaty after meeting with the Dalai Lama in July 1912 at Phari, also with full authorization as the Tibetan plenipotentiary, according to the letter exchanged between Bell and Shatra shown in the quote above. The Tibetan leaders had been observed taking the same steps as the Mongol leaders did toward self-determination. It is, however,

yet to be established whether those initiatives were taken with the diplomat Agvan Dorjjeff's guidance. It is noteworthy that, before the declaration of Mongol independence, a delegation of Mongol princes went to St. Petersburg in August 1911 to ask for Russian protectorateship over Mongolia's independence. In the same manner, while the Dalai Lama was in India, Lonchen Shatra (the Tibetan Minister remained with the Dalai Lama in exile) made a similar request to the British in March 1912 (Bawden, 1989:189).

Moreover, the treaty was signed with full authorization by Agvan Dorjjeff. The Dalai Lama, while on his way to Lhasa, "must certainly have known of these developments in Urga and one would suspect, from Dorjjeff himself" regarding the Russian and Mongolian four-clause agreement with a detailed protocol of seventeen articles on November 3, 1912 (Mehra, 1969: 3). This agreement firmly stated that "the Imperial Russian Government shall assist Mongolia to maintain the autonomous regime" that Mongolia "has established", as well as "the right to have her national army, and to admit neither the presence of Chinese troops on her territory nor the colonization of her land by the Chinese."⁷ The third clause firmly stated that even "if the Mongolian Government finds it necessary to conclude a separate treaty with China or another foreign power, the new treaty shall in no case either infringe the clauses of the present agreement and of the protocol" (refer footnote no. 8). Thus, in the very same month following the Mongolian agreement with the Russians, the "*Tsongdue* or the National Assembly wrote to the Indian Governor-General that the country had broken off relations with Peking and would like all Chinese troops to be withdrawn from the land."⁸ There was not any reply to the *Tsongdue*'s communication to the Governor-General, which (it can be presumed) might ultimately have led Agvan Dorjjeff to rush to Urga to sign the 1913 Treaty with the Mongols. That, too, has given consideration to the third clause of the Russo-Mongolian agreement. On the other hand, before the Russian and Mongolian convention was signed on November 1912, the British memorandum presented to the Chinese Foreign Office in August 1912 stated that the British will not accept Tibet as "an equal footing with the provinces of China proper" in the presidential order of April 21, 1912. The memorandum says that:

His Majesty's Government, while they have formally recognized the suzerain rights of China in Thibet [Tibet], have never recognized, and are not prepared to recognize, the right of China to intervene actively in the internal administration of Thibet [Tibet], which should remain, as contemplated by the treaties, in the hands of the Thibetan [Tibetan] authorities.⁹

The British thought that if the convention between the Russians and Mongolians came into effect and would support the independence movement of the Mongols, Tibetans might also follow the example and ask Russia for support, which the British would not allow as they were anxious to secure India's northern border.

Despite British concern, the Tibetan-Mongol treaty was signed on January 11, 1913 at Urga. The Mongolian Government was represented by Lama Rabdan, the acting Foreign Minister, along with Damdinsurun, while the Tibetan Government was represented by the diplomat Agvan Dorjjeff along with Agvan Choinzin and Gendun Galsan. Out of the nine articles,¹⁰ the first two were mutual acknowledgements by the government heads of the independence and sovereignty to rule of each country. The articles started with the Dalai Lama stating that he “approves and recognises” the independent Mongol state ruled by the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu, and in the same way the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu “approves and recognises” the independent Tibetan state ruled by the Dalai Lama. The third point regarding Buddhism as the state religion was decided on the basis that it “will work by joint consideration for the well-being of the Buddhist faith”. In order to “work” together for the “well-being of the Buddhist faith” of both countries, the next clause focused on the “afford” to assist each other “against external dangers” whether internal or external. The next three articles (V, VI & VII) discussed “official” or “religious” travelling and “mutual trade” and guaranteed that transactions of credit were to be “allowed along with the knowledge and permission of official institutions”. The remaining two articles VIII and IX state that the two governments can “come to an agreement according to the circumstances then existing” by a supplement to the treaty by appointing “special plenipotentiaries”, while the treaty came into force without any procedure for the ratification from the “date of the signature itself.”

The existence of the treaty was occasionally considered questionable by some scholars and often put into doubt the authority of the Tibetan signatories (Smith, 1996:186).¹¹ Even the foremost Tibetologist at the time, Charles Bell, had cast doubt on the validity of the treaty (Bell, 2000:151). However, the existence of the text, since signed and authorized by the Dalai Lama, is noted in McKay saying that “the British were supplied with their first official copy of the treaty by the Russian Government” and that too in the initial time (McKay, 1997:55). Furthermore, the work on the biography of Agvan Dorjjeff by Snelling demonstrates that “the Dalai Lama invested Dorzchieff with plenipotentiary powers to negotiate and finalize a rapprochement between Mongolia and Tibet as sovereign states” (Snelling, 1993:150). The re-published form of the text of the Tibetan-Mongol treaty in the Mongolian language by the Mongolian Academy of Sciences in 1982 and the original text in the Tibetan language discovered in the Mongolian archives in 2007 are considered to be important documents in the

field of Tibetan studies. Thus, commenting on the re-surfacing of the original Tibetan text of the treaty and various versions of it, Sperling (2008) says the following:

The treaty was found in Mongolia. It was likely in the state archives (it bears the seal of the old foreign ministry); with copies beginning to circulate only last year (2007). No doubt the delicate political situation of Mongolia, for most of the 20th century (positioned as it was between the USSR and China) played a role in keeping the original version of the treaty inaccessible. Nevertheless, other versions of the treaty were available in English, Chinese and Mongol. There was even a Tibetan version, translated (like the Chinese version) from English (!), by Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa—and until the original Tibetan text appeared this was the only version available to Tibetan readers. The English version itself was a translation from Russian, and the Russian version in turn is assumed to have been based on an unofficial¹² Mongol rendering of the original. None of these other versions really match the full meaning of all parts of the original Tibetan text exactly, but the degree to which they come close to the sense of the original is surprising. To sum up, the chain of translation went from the Tibetan original to Mongol, then to Russian, then to English, and then from English separately to Chinese and (via Shakabpa) back into Tibetan (but as a different text than the original).¹³

Even then the British and Russia did not recognize the independence of either Tibet nor Mongolia at that time. Scholars have argued that recognising the independence of Mongolia and Tibet by others (excluding Russia and Britain), which nominally was under the control of a weak China after the fall of the Qing Dynasty, might give chances to be controlled by Western powers particularly Russia and the British. For example, (Outer) Mongolia, even after its independence in 1924, came under indirect control of Soviet Russia for more than seven decades. Thus, for Tibet and Mongolia, the declaration of independence, even after their mutual alliance and recognizing of each other, was ignored by almost all other countries. The Russians and British, particularly during that period, wished to improve their relations and, so, did not want to arouse suspicions with regard to the Tibet and Mongolia issue, which could have affected their interest in the regions (Smith, 1996:186).

However, before the conclusion of the Tibeto-Mongol treaty in 1913, Agvan Dorjiev informed IY Korostovets (the Russian diplomat who had negotiated the Russo-Mongolian Treaty) at Urga and the Russian Foreign Ministry in St. Petersburg about his proposal of a tripartite agreement on Tibet, which was

received without any favor. As quoted in Snelling (1993: 150), Korostovets related his meeting with Dorjiev in the following words:

The Dalai Lama wanted to break with China. He had already been proclaimed secular ruler, had appointed new ministers and wanted to enter into a new pact with Russia similar to the Russo-Mongolian one. The basis could be a mutual Russo-English protectorate over Tibet and the elimination of Chinese sovereignty. The conditions of the treaty would be as follows: Russia and England to get freedom of entry to Tibet; the Tibetan Government to consult Russian and English advisers and instructors on the organization of its financial and military systems. Russia to get the right of duty-free trade and a concession for exploiting the natural resources of the land. In exchange Russia to grant Tibet a financial loan, with its gold deposits as surety. Russia and England to provide arms for Tibet.

The Russians were much satisfied with the protectorate over Mongolia and replied that both the Russians and British were bound by the 1907 convention.¹⁴ The same reply was given to Lonchen Shatra by the British when Lonchen requested British protectorate over Tibet in March 1912. Moreover, “the Russians were undoubtedly aware that a joint protectorate over Tibet would be dominated by the British from their stronghold in India, while Russia had no common border with Tibet” (Smith, 1996: 187).

The 13th Dalai Lama’s Declaration of Independence

Soon after resuming his office, President Yuan Shikai asked the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu to retrace his declaration of independence and join the new initiative among “the five races: Chinese, Manchus, Mongols, Muhammadans and Tibetans” for the complete integrity of the territories to make a great state of the Republic of China. The concept of the unity of the five races for the integrity of the nation was that the “doctrine premised upon the belief that frontier peoples wanted only equality of treatment under Chinese administration, not freedom from Chinese control altogether” (Smith, 1996:183). But as “dependencies” of the Qing Empire, the territories of the Mongols and Tibetans were not “on a footing of equality with China proper”, according to the response the Great Khan, Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu to the Provisional President Yuan Shikai and continued:

The declaration of independence and autonomy was effected before the abdication of the Manchu Empire. Such proclamation has been made to the world, and I am not at liberty to make any alteration. If you insist on doing so, please consult with the neighboring country to prevent any objections that might arise.¹⁵

President Yuan Shikai made it clear that “dependencies” was the term used by the imperial court and would not be used anymore. He requested that the five races be “on a footing of equality with China proper,” on the grounds that the involvement of the neighboring countries in the frontier of China posed strategic threat to mainland China. He declared the following:

Now that the five races are joined in a democratic union, the term “dependencies” as used under the monarchy, must therefore cease to be used. For the future all administrative matters in connection with these territories (Tibet, Mongolia and Turkistan) will come within the sphere of internal administration. Until the local politics have all been brought into harmony, all matters in Mongolia, Tibet and Turkistan should be dealt with in accordance with existing procedures.¹⁶

But this presidential “order” from Yuan Shikai had not discouraged the Mongols and the Tibetans from the independence movement. As discussed in the previous pages, both countries mutually agreed to the treaty of friendship and alliance with each other in early January 1913, and subsequently, the 13th Dalai Lama declared the independence of Tibet on February 15, 1913 (see Appendix II). By the end of 1913, British India’s Governor-General, Lord Harding pointed out in his letter to the Secretary of State that “it would appear safer to count upon the existence of the agreement and bring it into the open.”¹⁷ Thus, it was brought “into the open” at the tripartite meeting of British India, China and Tibet during 1913-14 in Simla on equal terms, though Tibet was mentioned as a ‘special status’ in the agreement concluded in Delhi in July 1914. Therefore, Mehra (1969: 7) says, “even a cursory glance at its terms will bring out the fact that the treaty was an affirmation by the two states of their newly-won independence from a common yoke, with a clear pledge to support each other against such dangers as they may encounter.”

The most outstanding achievement of the 13th Dalai Lama’s proclamation of Independence on February 15, 1913 is “the Public statement of the Five Points of the Declaration of Tibetan Independence.” In his declaration of Independence, the 13th Dalai Lama mentioned that “the Chinese authorities in Szechwan and Yunnan endeavored to colonize our territory. They brought large numbers of troops into central Tibet on the pretext of policing the trade marts.” Thus, the proclamation delivered five points, and the statement asserted the re-establishment of the Tibetan Government and its future programs to be carried out. In the first two points, the focus was on peace and happiness apart from the mention about the religious institutions of the nation which “ultimately can be” maintained through the Buddhist doctrine. Hence, in order to preserve and promote

the doctrine, he had forbidden the monasteries and its administrators, “except for special persons,” to be indulged in “trade, loan money, deal in any kind of livestock, and/ or subjugate another’s subjects”. In the next two points, the focus was on the government rules and regulations, as well as on the officials, who should be dedicated to their duty in order to come out from the perceived backwardness of the nation, whereas in the past due to the “invasions of foreigners, our [Tibetan] people may have to face certain difficulties”. He further declared by reasserting the sovereignty of the nation that in order to “safeguard and maintain the independence of our country, one and all should voluntarily work hard” because “we are a small, religious, and independent nation” that is with “rich in natural resources; but not scientifically advanced like other lands.”

On the occasion of the declaration of Independence, the last point gave special concession to the common Tibetan people in the sense that the “land taxes will not be collected until three years have passed”. It further stated that afterward one would be required to pay taxes but “the land will belong to the cultivator”. This was also determined on the basis that “Tibet, although thinly populated, is an extensive country”. With these points, the Dalai Lama ordered that “this letter must be posted and proclaimed in every district of Tibet, and a copy kept in the records of the offices in every district”. Finally, ending the relationship between the Chinese and Tibetans the proclamation says, “I am now in the course of driving out the remnants of Chinese troops from Do Kham in eastern Tibet. Now, the Chinese intention of colonizing Tibet under the patron-priest relationship has faded like a rainbow in the sky”. But, instead of accusing the colonization by the Han Chinese on the Central Government’s policy of the Qing Dynasty in Peking, the Dalai Lama said in his declaration, “the Chinese authorities in Szechuan and Yunnan endeavored to colonize our territory”. That means “whether a diplomatic fiction or recognition of the effects of Chinese provincial autonomy is a matter for future research”, argues McKay (1997:12). Thus, after the fall of the Qing Dynasty, Tibet formally declared its independence with the Dalai Lama himself becoming the Head of State on February 15, 1913, and this event is commonly described by the Tibetan authorities as a Declaration of Independence (McKay, 2003c:11).¹⁸

Prior to the declaration, the Provisional President Yuan Shikai offered the Dalai Lama to reinstate his (Chinese) official titles, upon which the Dalai Lama responded that “he was not asking the Chinese for any ranks, as he intended to exercise both temporal and spiritual rule in Tibet”.¹⁹ Bell says, “the holy sovereign made clear his declaration of Tibetan independence” (Bell, 1998:155). In the case of the Mongols, they had already declared their independence on December 1, 1911 and Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu was formally enthroned as “the ruler of Mongolia and the Great Khan of the Empire” at the Great Khural called on

December 28, 1911 at Urga (Mehra, 1969: 2). Mehra (1969), citing from the Russian text on the declaration, utters the following lines:

Our Mongolia in its original founding was an individual state. Mongolia proclaims itself an independent state under a new Government endowed with authority to manage its affairs, independently of others. Mongols shall obey neither Manchu nor Chinese officials, whose administrative authority is completely abolished.²⁰

However, neither of the nations succeeded in gaining formal recognition from a third country. The fact remains that the end of the Qing Dynasty and the assumption of complete charge of the temporal and political affairs by the 13th Dalai Lama marked the exercising of full sovereign rights over the whole of Tibet. In so doing, he ended the vassal relations between the religious leader and the Manchu Emperor. Meanwhile as Yuan Shikai became Provisional President of the Republic of China and reasserted Chinese suzerainty/sovereignty over Tibet, as well as over Mongolia. Yuan Shikai's presidential decree enacted that the subjects of Mongols and Tibetans, etc. from then on would be on equal footing with the provinces of China proper, i.e., within the sphere of internal administration (Lamb, 1966:391). Yet this decree did not defer the signing of the 1913 friendship treaty between the Tibetans and Mongols.

The Significance of the 1913 Treaty and Neighbors' Response

Speaking about the importance of the 1913 Tibetan-Mongol Treaty, especially after the discovery of the original Tibetan text, Sperling (2008) says, "since the very existence of the treaty was sometimes called into question, its rediscovery has historical significance. The fact that it constitutes an official document wherein both Tibet and Mongolia recognize each other as independent in the wake of the collapse of the Qing Dynasty is central to its significance."²¹ Until recently, the treaty has been described by the terms "alleged", "legal validity of", "have come to be signed or sealed" and "the competence of the plenipotentiaries who signed it". Here, Mehra (1969: 8) argued that the Russians were not ignorant of the treaty, as barely a week later "the Russians reportedly concluded with the Mongols, in St. Petersburg, a convention which clearly brought out the fact that they (the Russians) were not ignorant of Urga's earlier deal with Lhasa". This was the first treaty between Mongolians and Tibetans, whereas, earlier such a treaty to cement the relationship did not arise.

An invisible recognition of the treaty, as mentioned earlier in the Governor-General's letter to the Secretary of State, London, was that Tibet was to "bring [it] into the open", which was done at the tripartite meeting of British India,

China and Tibet at Simla. In his proposed draft for the agreement, the British plenipotentiary Sir Henry McMahon stated:

Three Governments (British India, China and Tibet) recognise the special status of Tibet and the special mutual interest of Great Britain and China in the maintenance of peace and tranquility in that country, agree that Tibet shall be regarded as apart from all party and provincial politics of China.²²

In that very same memorandum, McMahon continued that the region “was clearly prejudicial to the interests of Great Britain, in spite of the fact that our geographical position and our extended frontier line forced upon us a closer relation with Tibet than could be claimed by any foreign power”. This reference to “any foreign power” certainly pointed to Russia because, after the Russo-Mongolia treaty in November 1912, Tibet had concluded a treaty with Mongolia in January 1913, which posed doubts among the British about the Russian initiatives behind the treaty of 1913. Thus, in order to reverse the 1907 Anglo-Russian Treaty on Tibet with a new clause on Tibet and to keep away from Russian influence, British India had called the Simla Conference on British terms with comparison to the Russian treaty with Mongolia. However, the Russians were not ready to accept Tibet, as in the case of Mongolia, in the context of the 1907 convention on Tibet, along with Afghanistan and Persia (see footnote no. 15). So, in order to allow the British to conclude the treaty with Tibet, the Russians asked for concession on Afghanistan and Persia, which the British were not ready to accept. Hence, the Simla convention was called by taking into consideration the Tibetan treaty with the Mongolian treaty in mind and understanding that the Tibetans have the power to make treaties on their own. The British thought it would be necessary to include China in order not to violate the 1907 agreement, in which Britain had agreed to “not directly negotiate with Tibet”. At this point, Smith (1996: 189-190) says the following:

The British moved the Chinese to negotiate by the threat to without British recognition of the Chinese Republic and by the implied threat to negotiate directly with Tibet, as Russia had negotiated with Mongolia. The renewed British interest in Tibet may have convinced the Chinese that they stood to lose Tibet to British influence, much as Mongolia rights as suzerain to negotiate over Tibet. China finally agreed to attend the negotiations, even though they protested Tibetan representation as an equal party.

Though the Chinese plenipotentiary was represented, he could not oppose the British terms and initiated the treaty. Later, the Chinese Government refused to ratify the Agreement and even disregarded the treaty for the reason that Tibet is regarded to be a part of China (Goldstein, 1989:75). These events did not prevent the British from taking Tibet under their control, which resulted the blockage of the implementation of the spirit of the ‘friendship alliance’ between Tibet and Mongolia, as well as in the re-introduction of a diplomatic relationship between Tibet and Russia. This policy of British India on Tibetan self-determination can be judged from McMahon’s introduction draft in the 1913-14 Simla Convention as following:

The Government of Great Britain and China recognise the right of the Government of Tibet to grant (and the Governments of Great Britain and China and their respective subjects hereby enjoy the right to undertake) concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, mining and other industrial enterprises in Tibet, but the Government of Tibet agrees that no such concessions shall be granted to any power except with the consent of the Governments which are parties to this Treaty.²³

As presented in the proposed draft by McMahon, Tibet had to forbid any relations with “any power”. In the meantime, while the Simla Convention was under way among Tibet, China and British India, the Russo-Chinese Declaration on (Outer) Mongolia as an autonomous region of China was signed on November 5, 1913.²⁴ The division of Mongolia into Outer and Inner had given an ample clue and provision for British India to exclude Russian and Chinese influence on Tibet with the same declaration of Outer and Inner Tibet. This creation of Outer and Inner Tibet was basically meant to keep the region away from Beijing’s control. But the division of the two culturally-bounded areas into outer and inner regions had completely blocked the clauses of the January 1913 agreement, especially the third article’s aims and objectives between the two nations, Mongolia and Tibet (refer to the treaty). This also resulted in the Chinese strategic win over the traditional “barbaric” people’s plan of forming Pan-Mongolism or Pan-Tibetanism to “Great” Pan-Buddhist State by the revolutionary Mongols and Tibetans. Thus, Mehra (1969: 11) says that the division of Tibet into Outer and Inner was a set-back for the Pan-Buddhist state conception in general and Tibeto-Mongol relations in particular:

The creation of Inner Tibet was important in its own right. Essentially it was designed to bring into being a Chinese buffer zone between autonomous Tibet and (outer) Mongolia that would make more difficult the conduct of Tibeto-Mongol relations as defined by the new compact between the two countries.

Though the Chinese officials declined to accept the treaty from the beginning, they did acknowledge that it was an internal arrangement between regions within one country. Sperling (2008) analyses the Chinese authors' views on the 1913 Treaty in the following manner:

Chinese writers have generally disparaged the treaty, though not all do so using the same terms. One Chinese language work takes pains to refer to the treaty as an "agreement," implying that it had no international validity. (The same lexicographical attitude is evident in the 17-Point Agreement of 1951, where the term "agreement" was used to show that the document in question represented an internal arrangement between parties within one sole country and was not to be construed as an international instrument.) Other Chinese writers, in disparaging the Tibet-Mongol Treaty, rely on the account of Charles Bell, who stated that the 13th Dalai Lama had explicitly neither sought the conclusion of such a document nor, afterwards, ratified it.²⁵

Nevertheless, the Chinese plenipotentiary did participate in the Simla Convention, at which one of the focal points was the contents of the 1913 Tibeto-Mongol Treaty. China, however, refused outright to accept the 1913 Tibeto-Mongol Treaty hoping to unilaterally re-impose Chinese control over Tibet and Mongolia in the near future. The bilateral treaties of both Mongolia and Tibet with Russia in 1912 and Britain in 1913-14 divided the regions of the Mongols and Tibetans into Outer and Inner areas and were in the direct interest of the British and Russians for their ambitious gains on trading and mining exploration. Besides, as discussed earlier, those treaties were a discouragement as well as a set-back, to the goal of Pan-Mongolism or Pan-Tibetanism to have a Pan-Buddhist state, which could be ethnically, culturally and geographically different from the "Han-nationalist" state of China.

Conclusion

In summary, following the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911, it was a tough struggle for the spiritual and temporal leaders of the Tibetans, as well as Mongols, to retain their newly gained independence from the Chinese. In their struggle for independence, the common people of both the regions participated in driving out the Chinese troops, especially in Tibet by Jensey Namgang Dzasa (later on Tsarong). Some leading aristocrats and prominent monks even provided support to the Chinese troops and did not help during their expulsion, especially the 9th Panchen Lama and his authorities in Shigatse (Goldstein, 1989: 89-138). With the declaration of independence by the 13th Dalai Lama and the 9th Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu, only the Lhasa and Urga regimes' recognised each other's independence according to the treaty of 1913. The treaty was exactly

what its appellation stated it to be, which was signed and sealed by representatives of Tibet and Mongolia. It is also to be noted that the discovery of the original Tibetan text has now removed terms like “alleged”, “not exist”, “classic case of disinformation” and “legal validity.”²⁶ Also the treaty was the first of its kind concluded between Mongolians and Tibetans, whereas earlier there was no such treaty to bind their relationship. Though the Republic of China did not accept the treaty, nor the declaration of independence, the words like “autonomous” or “dependencies” were removed by the Presidential order in 1912, which declared China to be the nation of five races along with same equality with China proper.

The Russo-Mongolian convention of 1912 and the Simla convention in 1913-14 had given a kind of protectorate state status to Mongolia and Tibet under Russia and Britain, respectively. Yet both countries remained under the legal status of *de facto* Independence - Mongolia up to 1924 and Tibet up to 1951. Even then, the signatory of the 1913 Tibeto-Mongol treaty, the diplomat Agvan Dorjjeff, enabled Tibet to become victim to geo-politics in the “Great Game”. Russians never considered him as a representative of the Dalai Lama but merely a spokesman for spiritual affairs, while the British and Chinese treated him as secret service to the Russians. All the previous correspondence by the Dalai Lama through Agvan Dorjjeff came under private correspondence to the Russians and was not considered as official documents. Thus, as mentioned earlier, both the countries’ declarations of independence were turned into *de facto* independence due to the pressure from neighboring states like British India, China and Russia. So, except the “1951 Agreement between China and Tibet on Seventeenth Point”, no treaty has ever been found in which Tibetans accepted or recognized the Chinese as the leaders of their country (Goldstein, 1989: 772). Even the Mongols had not signed any such treaty. Thus, the discovery (2007) of the original Tibetan text of the 1913 Tibeto-Mongol treaty shows the importance of Tibet and Mongolia as being two “independent” nations, but this text’s prospects in the present geo-political scenario cannot be predicted.²⁷ It can, however, be argued that the treaty cannot be dismissed as irrelevant in terms of time, nor from the perspective of international relations, because Tibet has always been in search of diplomatic recognition from the outside world as being separate from China.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I

THE TIBETAN TEXT OF THE TIBETO-MONGOL TREATY OF 1913²⁹

[Translation]

Both Tibet and Mongolia have each emerged from under the domination of the Manchu state. Having separated from China, Tibet and Mongolia have constituted themselves as independent nations. From early times up to the present both Tibet and Mongolia have had very close relations based on their identical esteem for the [Buddhist] Doctrine. Thus, for the sake of concluding a treaty in furtherance of yet greater firmness [in their relations], the foreign ministry [Tib. *ya-mon* < Ch. *yamen*; “government office”] officer and plenipotentiary invested, by order of the Great Emperor of the Mongolian Nation, with treaty-making powers, *Da blam-a Niāta Biligtü* [Tib. *Tā bla-ma Nyig-tha sbi-legs-thu*] Rabdan; and the secondary high minister, *J#angj^un Manglai Ba’atur Beyile* [Tib. *Cang-cun* (<Ch. *jiangjun*; “general”) *Lmang-las Dpa’-thur Dpal-li*] Damdingsürün; along with the plenipotentiary invested, by order of the precious Dalai Lama, Great Emperor of Tibet, with treaty-making powers, the Personal Attendant and Monk [of the Dalai Lama], Blo-bzang ngag-dbang; the Liason Officer [of the Dalai Lama], Ngag-dbang chos-‘dzin; the Cleric Official [attached to the Potala; i.e., under the Dalai Lama] and Manager of the [Dalai Lama’s] Urga Bank Holdings, Ye-shes rgya-mtsho; and the Assistant Secretary Dge’-dun skal-bzang have concluded a treaty as follows:

Article 1. The Mongols have established an independent state and on the 9th day of the 11th month honored the lord of the Yellow Hat doctrine, the Precious Rje-btsun dam-pa Qutuātu [Tib. *Hu-thog-thu*] as Great Lord and Emperor. The praise from Tibet’s Great Lord and Emperor, the precious Dalai Lama is firm and unchanging.

Article 2. The Tibetans have established an independent state and honored the victorious and powerful precious Dalai Lama as Great Lord and Emperor. The praise from Mongolia’s Great Lord and Emperor, the precious Rje-btsun dam-pa Qutuātu is firm and unchanging.

Article 3. In order that the precious doctrine of the Buddha spread undiminished, both two states must make every effort through consultations and discussions.

Article 4. Henceforth both Tibet and Mongolia shall afford each other aid and assistance against internal and external threats.

Article 5. Each side shall provide aid within their own territories to those travelling between them on religious or civil affairs or for religious or civil studies

Article 6. For the realization of the full potential of commerce between both Tibet and Mongolia in such things as the goods, livestock and skins that they produce, as well as in monetary exchanges, there shall be, as before, no obstructions.

Article 7. From now on, when loans are made, at the time they are handed over an office [Tib. *ya-mon*] seal should be requested. If it is sealed but not kept fixed there can be no grounds for petitioning the office in pursuit of the loan. Either party holding debts predating the conclusion of this treaty, for which there has been actual ____ [? *unclear*] are permitted to pursue those debts and get repayment. However, this is not the responsibility of one's own *Šabi* or *Qosiāun* [Tib. *Sha-spiHo-shon-rnams*; i.e., the monastic estate authorities or the banner authorities].

Article 8. Following the conclusion of this treaty, if there is an issue that requires an amendment the two states, Tibet and Mongolia, may convene joint discussions between their appointed plenipotentiaries.

Article 9. This treaty has been concluded, and from the time the seals are applied, firm and unchanging, it is, accordingly, set and fixed, sealed by the foreign ministry officer and plenipotentiary invested, on the part of the Great Lord and Emperor of the Mongolian Nation, with treaty-making powers, *Da blam-a Niāta Biligtii* Rabdan; and the secondary high minister, *J#ang^un Manglai Ba'atur Beyile* Damdingsürün; along with the seal [**The seal is affixed here**] of the minister-plenipotentiary appointed and invested by the precious and victoriously powerful Dalai Lama, Great Lord and Emperor of Tibet, with treaty-making powers, the Personal Attendant and Monk [of the Dalai Lama], *Blo-bzang ngag-dbang*; the seal [**The seal is affixed here**] of the Liaison Officer [of the Dalai Lama], *Ngag-dbang chos-'dzin*; the Cleric Official [attached to the Potala; i.e., under the Dalai Lama] and Manager of the [Dalai Lama's] Urga Bank Holdings, *Ye-shes rgya-mtsho*; and the Assistant Secretary *Dge'-dun skal-bzang*

The second throne year of the *Mong-bkur* king of the Mongols, the 4th day of the 12th month of the Water-Mouse Year [January 11, 1913].

APPENDIX I (A)

ALLEGED MONGOL-TIBETAN TREATY, 1913³⁰

[Said to have been signed at Urga in January 1913]

Whereas Mongolia and Tibet, having freed themselves from the Manchu dynasty and separated themselves from China, have become independent States, and whereas the two States have always professed one and the same religion, and to the end that their ancient mutual friendships may be strengthened: on the part of the Government of the Sovereign of the Mongolian people-Nikta Biliktu da Lama Rabdan, acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and Assistant Minister-General and Manlai Caatyr Bei-Tzu Damdinsurun; on the part of the Dalai Lama, ruler of Tibet-Gujir tsanshib Kanchen Lubsan- Agwan, donir Agwan Choinzin, Tshichamtso, manager of the bank, and Gendun-Galsan, secretary, have agreed on the following:

- Article 1.** The Dalai Lama, Sovereign of Tibet, approves of and acknowledges the formation of an independent Mongolian State, and the proclamation on the 9th day of the 11th month of the year of the Swine, of the master of the Yellow Faith Jebtsundampa Lama as the Sovereign of the land.
- Article 2.** The Sovereign of the Mongolian people Jebtsundampa Lama approves and acknowledges the formation of an independent State and the proclamation of the Dalai Lama as Sovereign of Tibet.
- Article 3.** Both States shall take measures, after mutual consideration, for the prosperity of the Buddhist faith.
- Article 4.** Both States, the Mongolian and the Tibetan, shall henceforth, for all time, afford each other aid against dangers from without and from within.
- Article 5.** Both States, each on its own territory, shall afford mutual aid to their subjects, traveling officially and privately on religious or on State business.
- Article 6.** Both States, the Mongolian and the Tibetan, shall, as formerly, carry on mutual trade in the produce of their lands-in goods, cattle, &c., and likewise open industrial institutions.

Article 7. Henceforth transactions on credit shall be allowed only with the knowledge and permission of official institutions; without such permission no claims shall be examined by Government Institutions. Should such agreements have been entered into before the conclusion of the present treaty, and should the parties thereto be unable to settle matters amicably, while the loss suffered is great, the payment of such debts may be enforced by the said institutions, but in no case shall the debts concern the Shabinars and Hoshuns. (Shabinars-people who depend from the Court of Hu-tuk-tu (Khutukhtu) and pay taxes to the Court Department) (Hoshuns-principality)

Article 8. Should it be necessary to supplement the articles of this treaty, the Mongolian and Tibetan Governments shall appoint special Plenipotentiaries, who shall come to an Agreement according to the circumstances then existing.

Article 9. The present treaty shall come into force on the date of the signature thereof.

Plenipotentiaries of the Mongolian Government: Acting Ministers of Foreign Affairs Biliktu da-Lama Rabdan and Assistant Minister-General and Manlai Caatyr Bei-Tzu Damdinsurun.

Plenipotentiaries of the Dalai Lama, Sovereign of Tibet: Gujir tsanshib Kanchen Lubsan-Agwan Choinzin, Tshichamtso, manager of the Bank of Tibet, and Gendun-Galsan, secretary.

According to the Mongolian chronology, on the 4th day of the 12th month of the second year of 'Him who is exalted by all'.

According to the chronology of Tibet, in the year of the Watermouse, on the same month and day.

APPENDIX I (B)

(Translation of the Tibetan text)³¹

**TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP AND ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF MONGOLIA
AND TIBET**

Concluded Between the Government of Mongolia and Tibet at Urga
29 December 1912 (11 January 1913)

Mongolia and Thibet, having freed themselves from the dynasty of the Manchus and separated from China, have formed their own independent States, and, having in view that both States from time immemorial have professed one and the same religion, with a view to strengthening their historic and mutual friendship the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nikta Biliktu Da-Lama Rabdan, and the Assistant Minister, General and Manlai baatyr beiseh Damdinsurun, as plenipotentiaries of the Government of the ruler of the Mongol people, and gudjir tsanshib kanchen-Lubsan-Agvan, donir Agvan Choinzin, director of the Bank Ishichjamtsu, and the clerk Gendun Galsan, as plenipotentiaries of the Dalai Lama, the ruler of Thibet, have made the following agreement.

Article 1. The ruler of Thibet, Dalai Lama, approves and recognizes the formation of an independent Mongol State, and the proclamation, in the year of the pig and the ninth day of the eleventh month, of Chjebzun Damba Lama of the yellow faith as ruler of the country.

Article 2. The ruler of the Mongol people, Chjebzun Damba Lama, approves and recognizes the formation of an independent (Thibetan) State and the proclamation of the Dalai Lama as ruler of Thibet.

Article 3. Both States will work by joint consideration for the well-being of the Buddhist faith.

Article 4. Both States, Mongolia and Thibet, from now and for all time will afford each other assistance against external and internal dangers.

Article 5. Each State within its own territory will afford assistance to the subjects of the other travelling officially or privately on affairs of religion or State.

Article 6. Both States, Mongolia and Thibet, as formerly, will carry on a reciprocal trade in the products of their respective countries in wares, cattle, &c., and will also open industrial establishments.

Article 7. From now the granting of credit to anyone will be permitted only with the knowledge and sanction of official institutions. Without such sanction Government institutions will not consider claims.

As regards contracts made previous to the conclusion of the present treaty, where serious loss is being incurred through the inability of the two parties to come to terms, such debts may be recovered by (Government) institutions, but in no case shall the debt concern “shabinars” or “khoshuns.”

Article 8. Should it prove necessary to supplement the articles of the present treaty, the Mongolian and Thibetan Governments must appoint special delegates, who will conclude such agreements as the conditions of the time shall demand.

Article 9. The present treaty shall come into force from the date of its signature.

Plenipotentiaries from the Mongolian Government for the conclusion of the treaty: Nikta Biliktu Da-Lama Rabdan, Minister for Foreign Affairs; and General and Manlai baatyr beiseh Damdinsurun, Assistant Minister.

Plenipotentiaries from the Dalai Lama, the ruler of Thibet, for the conclusion of the treaty: Gudjir tsanshib kanchen Lubsan-Agvan, Choinzin, the Director of the Bank of Thibet Ishichjamtsa, and the clerk, Gendun--Galsan.

Signed (by Mongol reckoning) in the fourth day of the twelfth month of the second year of the “Raised by the Many,” and by Thibetan reckoning on the same day and month of the year of the “water-mouse.”

APPENDIX II

TIBET DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE 1913

I, The Dalai Lama, most omniscient possessor of the Buddhist faith, whose title was conferred by the Lord Buddha's command from the glorious land of India, speak to you as follows:

I am speaking to all classes of Tibetan people. Lord Buddha, from the glorious country of India, prophesied that the reincarnations of Avalokitesvara, through successive rulers from the early religious kings to the present day, would look after the welfare of Tibet.

During the time of Genghis Khan and Altan Khan of the Mongols, the Ming dynasty of the Chinese, and the Ch'ing (Qing) dynasty of the Manchus, Tibet and China co-operated on the basis of benefactor and priest relationship. A few years ago, the Chinese authorities in Szechuan and Yunnan endeavoured to colonize our territory. They bought large numbers of troops into central Tibet on the pretext of policing the trade marts. I therefore, left Lhasa with my ministers for the Indo-Tibetan border, hoping to clarify to the Manchu Emperor by wire that the existing relationship between Tibet and China had been that of patron and priest and had not been based on the subordination of one to the other. There was no other choice for me but to cross the border, because Chinese troops were following with the intention of taking me alive or dead.

On my arrival in India, I dispatched several telegrams to the Emperor; but his reply to my demands was delayed by corrupt officials at Peking. Meanwhile, the Manchu Empire collapsed. The Tibetans were encouraged to expel the Chinese from central Tibet. I, too, returned safely to my rightful and sacred country, and I am now in the course of driving out the remnants of Chinese troops from Do Kham in eastern Tibet. Now, the Chinese intention of colonizing Tibet under the patron-priest relationship has faded like a rainbow in the sky. Having once again achieved for ourselves a period of happiness and peace, I have now allotted to all of you the following duties to be carried out without negligence:

1. Peace and happiness in this world can only be maintained by preserving the faith of Buddhism. It is, therefore, essential to preserve all Buddhist institutions in Tibet, such as the Jokhang temple and Ramoche in Lhasa, Samye, and Traduk in southern Tibet, and the three great monasteries, etc.
2. The various Buddhist sects in Tibet should be kept in a distinct and pure form. Buddhism should be taught, learned, and meditated upon properly. Except for special persons, the administrators of monasteries are forbidden

- to trade, loan money, deal in any kind of livestock, and/or subjugate another's subjects.
3. The Tibetan Government's civil and military officials, when collecting taxes or dealing with their subject citizens, should carry out their duties with fair and honest judgment so as to benefit the government without hurting the interests of the subject citizens. Some of the central government officials posted at Ngari Korsum in western Tibet, and Do Kham in eastern Tibet, are coercing their subject citizens to purchase commercial goods at high prices and have imposed transportation rights exceeding the limit permitted by the government. Houses, properties, and lands belonging to subject citizens have been confiscated on the pretext of minor breaches of the law. Furthermore, the amputation of citizens' limbs has been carried out as a form of punishment. Henceforth, such severe punishments are forbidden.
 4. Tibet is a country with rich natural resource; but it is not scientifically advanced like other lands. We are a small, religious, and independent nation. To keep up with the rest of the world, we must defend our country. In view of past invasions by foreigners, our people may have to face certain difficulties, which they must disregard. To safeguard and maintain the independence of our country, one and all should voluntarily work hard. Our subject citizens residing near the borders should be alert and keep the government informed by special messenger of any suspicious development. Our subjects must not create major clashes between two nations because of minor incidents.
 5. Tibet, although thinly populated is an extensive country. Some local officials and landholders are jealously obstructing other people from developing vacant lands even though they are not doing so themselves. People with such intentions are enemies of the state and our progress. From now on, no one is allowed to obstruct anyone else from cultivating whatever vacant lands are available. Land taxes will not be collected until three years have passed; after that the land cultivator will have to pay taxes to the government and to the landlord every year, proportionate to the rent. The land will belong to the cultivator.

Your duties to the government and to the people will have been achieved when you have executed all that I have said here. This letter must be posted and proclaimed in every district of Tibet, and a copy kept in the records of the offices in every district.

From the Potala Palace (Seal of the Dalai Lama)

(8th day of the month of the Water Ox year (1913)(February 15, 1913)

Notes

2. Revolutionary organizations like the *Revive China Society* and *Tongmenghui*, which largely operated in the Han-dominated provinces, advocated the anti-Manchu struggle on the basis of Han nationalism to “expel the Manchus and restore the Han Nationalism” in China. Although the anti-Manchu sentiment was highly used during the revolution, “harmony among five races” and “political and economic reforms” were stressed more in order to strengthen the Republic of China’s Central Government. Read Tuttle (2005) interesting work on Tibetan Buddhists’ contribution in the making of modern China.
3. The Han Chinese exclusion of non-Han people from the “republic” was first founded during the Wuchang Uprising in Hubei province with the use of an 18-star banner “Flag of the Iron Blood and Eighteen Stars.” The 18-stars represented the eighteen provinces settled by the Han Chinese. During the Shanghai revolutionaries’ assembly, this flag was proposed for the national flag but was rejected, and instead it was made the flag of the army. The flag of the “Five Races under One Union” became, henceforth, the national flag.
4. The 9th Panchen Lama’s relations or responses to the Dalai Lama were not good at that time. When the Dalai Lama was exiled in Mongolia and China during the British expedition, the Panchen Lama visited India. While the Dalai Lama was exiled in India during the Zhou Er-feng military campaign, the Panchen Lama was reported to be occupying the Dalai Lama’s quarters in Lhasa. Besides that, the Panchen Lama’s authorities did not help Lhasa’s authorities to expel Chinese troops from Shigatse after the 1911 revolution. For details see Goldstein, (1989: 62-63).
5. Shakabpa (1984: 249) mentioned that Chinese Buddhist soldiers were on the Tibetan side during the mutiny, and small traders and peasants were apparently not expelled from Tibet.
6. Agvan Dorjieff, the diplomat monk and ambassador of the 13th Dalai Lama, was a Russian subject of Buryatia and passed the highest degree of Geshe Lharampa in Tibetan Buddhist studies at Drepung Monastic University by the age of 35. Around 1898, he became the personal tutor to the Dalai Lama and a close advisor, as well as diplomat, but in the eyes of the British and Chinese, he was considered secret service to the Russians. For details, see Kleshov (1992) and Snelling (1993).
7. Cited in Mehra (1969: 20) from the Foreign, June 1914, Proceedings 151-157 Official Note: Page 2.
8. Official Documents (1916), “Protocol Annexed to Russo-Mongolian Agreement of October 21/November, 3, 1912” in *The American Journal of the International Law*, 10 (4): 241-246

9. This quote is taken from Mehra (1969: 3), but he has not mentioned any sources for this particular statement, though in the following lines he has noted that the communication “lacked some of the essential desiderate of a formal proclamation of independence and would be hard to accept as such” by the Governor-General of India.
10. Cited in Woodman(1969: 382) as Memorandum to Wai-chiao Pu, 17 August 1912.
11. The quotes given in the following lines were from the Treaty of 191. For detail of the Treaty, refer to the Appendixes I and I (A) & (B). Both the treaties contents are same. but some variations on the sentence formation are observable. The original Tibetan version is available, which was discovered in Mongolia, 2007.
12. Here, Smith (1996:186) says, “the validity is often questioned, mainly on grounds of the authority of Dorjiev to negotiate on behalf of Tibet. The fact that Dorjieff was a Russian citizen while ethnically Tibetan somewhat compromises his role; the treaty had some advantages to Russia in that it could be interpreted as extending Russia’s protectorate over Mongolia to encompass Tibet.”
13. Sperling in his email dated 10/12/2010 has revised this statement to reflect that, the unofficial Mongol version is no longer correct; Sperling went through an original Mongol version in 2009.
14. Thinley (2008) “Tibet-Mongolia Treaty of 1913, A proof of Tibet’s Independence: Interview with Prof. Elliot Sperling” online news <http://phayul.com/news/article.aspx?=-23205&0=1&c=5>
[Accessed: 2008/12/22]
15. See Appendix IX in Bell (2000) as “Convention between Great Britain and Russia, 1907, which was signed in St. Petersburg on the 18th/ 31st August 1907” on “Arrangement concerning Thibet.”
16. Cited in Mehra (1969: 5) from Aitchen K. Wu (1950: 42) “China and the Soviet Union” Methuen: London.
17. Cited in Mehra (1969: 6) from Foreign, Proceeding 36, sub-enclosure 2 on Presidential order: dated April 21, 1912. During the Republic of China, whole of China’s frontier were under the influence of Japan in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia; Russia in Outer Mongolia and Sinkiang; France in Yunnan and Britain in Tibet.
18. Cited in Mehra (1969: 9) from (Proceedings 154, Viceroy to Secretary of State, December 9, 1913), in Foreign, June 1914, Proceedings, 151-157, Office Note.
19. Goldstein (1989: 60) argues that “the Dalai Lama issued a proclamation to all his officials and subjects that unilaterally reaffirmed his total rule in

- Tibet” twenty-two days after his return to Lhasa. The question remains, when did the Dalai Lama reach Lhasa? Was it on 23/01/1913?
20. This information is mentioned only in Bell (1998: 155) and is apparently the only response from the Dalai Lama. Smith (1996:182) mentions that Sir Charles Bell was present in Lhasa during the time. Regarding President Yuan Shikai’s telegraph in which he apologizes for the excesses of the Chinese troops and “restoring” his title or rank, see Goldstein (1989: 59) cited from Tiechman (1922: 17-8).
 21. Cited in Mehra (1969: 1) from Peter SH Tang (1959: 301), *Russian and Soviet Policy in Manchuria and Outer Mongolia: 1911-31*, Durham: North Carolina from the Russian text, *Soizlev*, in *Novyj Vostok*, No.13 (1926).
 22. Thinley (2008) “Tibet-Mongolia Treaty of 1913, A proof of Tibet’s Independence: Interview with Prof. Elliot Sperling” online news <http://phayul.com/news/article.aspx?=-23205&0=1&c=5> [Accessed: 2008/12/22].
 23. Mehra (1969: 9) cited from McMahan “Final Memorandum by the British Plenipotentiary, Tibet Conference”, Foreign, May 1915, Proceeding, 36-50.
 24. Mehra (1969: 9) cited from McMahan “Final Memorandum by the British Plenipotentiary, Tibet Conference”, Foreign, May 1915, Proceeding, 36-50.
 25. Read Williams (1916) on “the Relations between China, Russia and Mongolia” and check the details of “the Russo-Chinese Agreement, 1913” in http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/1913Russo-ChineseAgreement.pdf.
 26. Thinley (2008) “Tibet-Mongolia Treaty of 1913, A proof of Tibet’s Independence: Interview with Prof. Elliot Sperling” online news <http://phayul.com/news/article.aspx?=-23205&0=1&c=5> [Accessed: 2008/12/22].
 27. Until the discovery of the original Tibetan text (2007), all the previous texts about the 1913 Treaty in major works, like M. C. van Walt van Praag’s (1987) “The Status of Tibet: History, Rights and Prospects in International Law” translated from the Tibetan version of Shakabpa (1976:633-35) “Bod kyi srid don rgyal rabs” (Political History of Tibet, Vol. II) and Charles Bell (2000) “Tibet Past and Present” [1924], mentioned that they reproduced the text from “pp. 10-13 of *With the Russians in Mongolia*, by Perry Ayscough and Otter Barry (John Lane),” which clearly mentioned the “alleged” treaty which was “said to have been” signed at Urga.
 28. Quoted from Prof. Sperling’s paper for the Institute of Asian Research, British Columbia University, Canada, as “*The Tibet-Mongol Treaty of 1913 and Its Significance*” on 14 March 2008 in the seminar “Tibet-Mongolia: Links in Religion and Medicine” with permission from the translator and author Prof. Elliot Sperling through email (07/03/2009). The original Tibetan text has been circulated since 2007 among Tibetologists, however I am

grateful to Prof. Elliot Sperling for providing me with the research paper, as well as the translation of the copy, which is yet to be published, through personal email contact on 07/03/2009.

29. Refer to footnote no. 28.
30. This text of the 1913 Treaty is reproduced from “Tibet Past and Present” authored by Charles Bell (2000) first published in 1924. In the notes for the treaty, the author mentioned that he reproduced it from “pp. 10-13 of *With the Russians in Mongolia*, by Perry Ayscough and Otter Barry (John Lane)” but there is no mention of the year in which the book was published. The author, Bell, clearly mentioned the “alleged” treaty, “said to have been” signed at Urga, in his reproduction text of the treaty (Bell, 2000:304).
31. This text of the 1913 Treaty is reproduced from M. C. van Walt van Praag’s (1987) “The Status of Tibet: History, Rights and Prospects in International Law”. The translation from the Tibetan version did not mention the phrases “alleged” or “said to have been”, as mentioned in other texts. This translated version is not from the original Tibetan document, which re-surfaced in 2007, but the “Tibetan version”, which is mentioned here, is from Shakabpa (1976:633-35) “Bod kyi srid don rgyal rabs” (Political History of Tibet, Vol. II).

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Why was Gendün Chöphel imprisoned?

Oral account by Tashi Palrab, Nangtseshag Prison Official¹

The Nangtseshag Office (*snang rtse shag gi las khungs*) functioned as the magistrate's court as well as the security office of Lhasa town. It handled various civil and criminal cases which arose within the town. If there were serious or important cases, the Kashag (Cabinet of Ministers) would summon the two magistrates (*mi dpon*) and give them appropriate instructions on how to deal with the matter. When Gendün Chöphel was arrested, Shagjang Surpa (*shag byang zur pa*) and I were the two magistrates. The Kashag summoned us and told us, "There is a man named Amdo Gendün Chöphel in Lhasa. Our government has strong suspicions about this person, so you must trace him and arrest him." We did not know Gendün Chöphel's whereabouts, so we replied that we would search for him. The Kashag further ordered us to find and arrest him that very day and seal his house. They said, "We have many reasons to arrest Gendün Chöphel, but we don't think it is necessary to tell you everything at the moment—we will let you know later. Gendün Chöphel is a great scholar, so he might ask the reasons for his arrest. In that case, you don't have to say much—just tell him that many counterfeit Tibetan 100-rupee currency notes are being found in Tibet. These fake notes have most probably come from India. It is he who has circulated them in Lhasa. So he is being arrested on this charge. This is not the real reason; there are other reasons."

As the heads of the Security Office of Lhasa we were *ex officio* the heads of the Lhasa Police Force. We went to the Lhasa police station located at Tromsigkhang (*khrom gzigs khang*). There were some policemen there. We asked them if they knew Gendün Chöphel. Some of them knew him and told us that he was staying at Wangden Pelbar, a building owned by the Kundeling family, near the Police Station. We sent some of them to see if he was there. They came back and reported to us that his room was locked and he had gone to Horkhang's residence.

Horkhang's son was a senior officer in the Bodyguard Regiment of the Tibetan army. He had always had an interest in learning poetry, and Gendün Chöphel used to go to his house to teach him. I sent the policemen to Horkhang's residence to check if he was there. They returned and said that they had been told he had come there in the morning and left with Mr. Horkhang for the Bodyguard Regiment at Norbulingka, and that he would return to his residence that evening.

We waited for him. We instructed the gatekeepers of the army camp to inform us when he left. At around three in the afternoon, we received a message that he had arrived at his house. We immediately sent two officers and a clerk to bring

* Translated by Yeshe Dhondup

him to the Nangtseshag, with a message that the two magistrates wanted to see him. He arrived within a short time. We told him that we had received an order from the Kashag to keep him in custody at the Nangtseshag for the time being. We explained to him that he was under suspicion of smuggling counterfeit 100-rupee Tibetan currency notes into Lhasa and that he would have to remain there for a few days for investigation. Gendün Chöphel responded,

I have done nothing to arouse suspicion. Except for a small house, I have nothing. But it's the government's order. You can keep me anywhere you like; I have to obey your orders. However, my little house will surely be searched. There is nothing special in it; there are many manuscripts, books and scraps of papers with notes, scattered all around, as I am writing a Tibetan history for the benefit of the people of Tibet. I have written notes even on cigarette wrappers. So please take care to leave those things the way they are, after searching the room. While enduring great hardship, I visited various places in India and collected ancient manuscripts on Tibet. I have copied all those that are authentic and made notes from all those that are important, using even empty cigarette cases. So I possess a large number of notes. You can examine them, but leave them where they are. I have always thought of doing something for Tibet; I have not been doing anything wrong. Everything will become clear after the investigation. Kindly tell this to your superiors. So today, I will do whatever you say.

We took him to Nangtseshag Prison, which had different types of cells. On the top floor, adjacent to the conference room, there was a small room used as a rest room for high officials. We kept him in that room. We did not handle him harshly, claiming that we had orders from the Kashag. After that, we reported the entire matter to the Kashag:

As per the Kashag's instruction, we made inquiries about the whereabouts of Gendün Chöphel. We learned that he is living at Wangden Pelbar's house. We did not find him there and we were told that he had gone to Horkhang's house to give tuition to Horkhang's son, who is an army officer. When we checked if he was there, he had just left for the Bodyguard Regiment at Norbulingka. After he returned to his residence, we called him to our office. We explained to him in detail why he was being arrested and taken into custody. He told us that he had committed no offences and explained what he was doing nowadays. He requested that if his room was searched, we should leave his papers scribbled with notes scattered everywhere in his room as they were after the examination. He is in our custody at the moment.

The Kashag said, “Well done. However, don’t allow him to have access to visitors or letters. You should assign your two prison guards, turn by turn, to guard him. It is totally wrong if you allow him to do whatever he likes, considering that he is in custody.”

Accordingly, we deployed two guards in shifts and instructed them not to allow anyone to visit Gendün Chöphel.

After about two weeks, the Kashag appointed an investigating committee to question him about the charges against him. The committee consisted of Dzasag Gyaltagpa (*dza sag rgyal stag pa*), the Junior Surkhang (*zur khang gi sku gzhon mda’ dpon*) who was an army leader in the rank of *dapön*, and a manager from the government’s treasury in Lhasa (*lha sa gnyer tshang pa*). The venue where they conducted the investigation was the government office known as the Treasury Office, located close to the Tsuglagkhang. The office was generally called “Lhogyü” (Southern Quarter) and it was the trial venue for VIP detainees. Gendün Chöphel was summoned and interrogated daily in that room. When we asked him what he had explained to the investigating committee, he replied, “I have nothing new to explain other than what I had told you before, but they are not satisfied. Just think.” With great frustration, he continued, “Whatever they say, even if they flay the skin off me, I have nothing more to say.”

Then after a gap of two days, we received an order to send him to the investigating committee. We sent him escorted by some guards. That trial session involved a very harsh cross-examination and he may have been given several floggings. When he returned to us, he looked extremely depressed. He told us that he was tortured during the trial. There was nothing that we could do. Strangely, through some karmic power my wife felt an immense sense of empathy towards him when she heard his name for the first time. So when I went home and told her that he had been tortured during the trial, she immediately prepared a special food and sent it to him.

Early the next morning I squeezed my head into the peephole of his cell and asked if he had been given physical punishment during the last session. He replied that he had been beaten. He said that even if they killed or beheaded him, he had nothing new to add to what he had already told us earlier. He added that he was very upset. I tried to console him, saying, “It does not matter. You should not worry. Sometimes such things happen. Since you have travelled to many foreign countries, it could arouse suspicion. Nothing bad will happen to you. Under our Tibetan law, everything will be investigated thoroughly and everything will ultimately become clear. If you have committed no offence to feel guilty about, no one can blacken your name. You shouldn’t worry.” I tried to cheer him up with these words. He thanked me profusely for my encouragement. After that, the investigating committee did not summon him again.

Later, when it was close to the Tibetan New Year, we transferred all the prisoners at Nangtseshag to the Shöl Office, as it was mandatory by law not to keep any prisoners at the Nangtseshag during the Tibetan New Year festival. Gendün Chöphel was also transferred. They were brought back to the Nangtseshag after the Great Mönlam Festival was over. He also returned to the Nangtseshag.

One day, while at Nangtseshag Prison, Gendün Chöphel became slightly ill. He told us that he was not well. Giving us a piece of paper which had the names of some medicines written on it in English, he asked us to bring them to him. We did not know English. Since it was a great risk for us to give him such medicines without the consent of the Kashag, we showed the slip to the Kashag and told them that Gendün Chöphel was not well and that he had asked us to bring him the medicines written on the slip. Far from giving us permission, they reprimanded us harshly, saying, “How did he get the pen and paper to write? We had instructed the two of you not to allow him to have access to either people or things. You have been very lenient with him. He has kept with him all the instruments with which he can do anything that he likes. This is a very serious matter.” (Kashöpa, Surkhang and Rampa were the cabinet ministers at that time.)

My colleague and I always performed our duties, such as guarding the prisoners, in accordance with the Kashag’s orders. We did not let anybody visit him in the prison secretly, openly or indirectly. We were not allowed to do so. However, since we had heard that some Indian medicines cause sudden death, we dared not give him the medicines. So unable to take the risk, we showed the slip given us by him to the Kashag; we did not do anything wrong. It was not that we did not guard him. Since we did not know English, we asked the Kashag. That we had been too lenient with him was not true.

Kashöpa reprimanded us severely, saying, “You two officers are giving Gendün Chöphel too much freedom—it is not right.” Just before we left, Surkhang said, “The two magistrates have come here only to consult us, as they were not able to decide themselves. They are right. There is nothing wrong in it. The slip is not a letter—it just contains the names of medicines. They are asking us whether they should give the medicines to him or not. There is no reason we should reprimand them. It’s alright.” He concluded the matter.

About three months later, we were called to the Kashag. The cabinet ministers told us that though Gendün Chöphel had been kept at Nangtseshag Prison, so far they had not gained any satisfactory information from him, despite the fact that the investigating committee had questioned him using both gentle and harsh methods. Therefore, he should be handed over to the Shöl Office for the time being. Accordingly, we sent Gendün Chöphel, escorted by our two guards, to the Shöl Office. There, he did not face any torture or cross-examination during his prison term.

Then, on the occasion of the enthronement ceremony of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, a general amnesty was granted to all prisoners in Tibet. Gendün Chöphel was also released on that day. He had spent three years in prison.

As soon as he was released, he came to my house and thanked me, saying, “You were quite lenient and kind to me during my stay at Nangtseshag Prison. I did not suffer injustice and unfair trials, nor did I hear or see a prisoner being harassed or tortured in the prison. I like you very much. I cannot repay your kindness in any way, but as I have a little knowledge, how about teaching you some texts?” I responded, “That would be very good. Although we did not know each other before, I knew from seeing you that you were not the kind of person who does bad things. My colleague and I both shared the same view. Therefore, although the Kashag had ordered us to be very strict with you, we were somewhat lenient. Now you have nothing to regret or fear.”

He then asked me about his manuscripts and documents. I forgot to mention one thing earlier. When Gendün Chöphel was at the Nangtseshag, the Kashag summoned the two of us and instructed us to bring all the documents and papers from Gendün Chöphel’s room to the Kashag. I said, “It is not going to be easy to bring all of them together in front of you, because he told us that he collected all those old manuscripts while travelling through many places in India, enduring great hardships, and he requested us to leave them as they were. If a single loose page is lost, he will not be able to complete his book. So, they might be very important. Shouldn’t we examine them and leave them there?” They said, “Okay then, go and examine the documents.”

We went to his room and examined all the documents. There was not a single suspicious document. There was a document containing the names of all the Tibetan government’s offices, including the Kashag. He had written the names of the officers and workers in each office. It carried the names of ministers of the Kashag, secretaries of the Tse Yigtsang Office, staff of the Lhasa Treasury and so forth. The rest of the writings contained matters relating to the country’s border issues, the White Stupa of China and so on. In terms of his belongings, he had two robes and a few shirts. There were four hundred Indian rupees under his mattress. The easiest document to take was the one containing the list of the Tibetan government’s offices and officials. So we took it and gave it to the Kashag. They asked us if we had seen any documents carrying the Russian Bolshevik logo. We replied that we had not found any such papers.

The Kashag then instructed us to bring the remaining documents as well. I expressed my concern over the risk of losing those documents, which might contain important matters helpful to our government in the future. The Kashag insisted that we bring them, saying that nothing would happen to them. So I took a big sack, put all the papers into it and took it to the Kashag. Later, (after his

release) when Gendün Chöphel came to my house and asked me about his manuscripts, I told him that we had collected all of them and given them to the Kashag. I told him, "We took great care not to lose even a single scrap of paper in the process. I put everything in a big sack. Although those papers are not in the same position that you had kept them in your house before, we did not lose even one of them. You should be able to complete your work now. I will request the Kashag to return the manuscripts, and I am sure that they will give them back, as those documents are for the purpose of academic writing. You should continue your work." He sadly said, "Now everything is over. Nothing can be done. Even if all the documents are there and the Kashag gives them to you, I have already lost my mind and I can never complete the work. Let them give those documents to anyone they like—I don't need them anymore. I just asked you about this matter as a friend. Now nothing can be done. It is a great disaster. I collected those documents while enduring great difficulties."

Not long after that he started to drink liquor regularly. As mine was a middle class family, neither too rich nor too poor, we always had liquor at our house to be served to guests. Gendün Chöphel used to address my wife as "Ama Katrinchen (Kind Mother)." Saying that he wanted to meet us often, he used to come to our house everyday and ask for liquor. When he was completely drunk, he would lie on a bed. We used to chat for hours. Once during one of our chats, he said, "It was not the Kashag's fault, I know the main culprit responsible for my imprisonment. When I asked him who he was, he answered that he would tell me later. A few days later, when he came to my house, I said, "Last time you promised to tell me the name of the person who caused your arrest. Please tell me who he was; it will be amusing to know. The person could not harm you much." He said:

Okay, the one who tried to "put a black hat on a white person"² was none other than the British diplomat Richardson³, who resides at Dekyilingka." He instigated the Kashag to act. The reason was that when I went to England (? *dbyin ji'i lung pa*) I translated a book in English. The translation was very good. As my English is very good, the British government asked me to stay and work for them, saying they would give me a good salary. I refused. From that day on they started to dislike me. Richardson is a British man and he asked me some questions earlier. I could judge from his facial expression that he hated me on sight. So he poisoned the minds of Kashöpa and Surkhang against me, and they in turn reported it to the Kashag. The Kashag arrested and imprisoned me on trumped up charges. It was all due to Richardson.

When I was in Kalimpong I met Pomdatsang's son Rabga. He studies traditional Tibetan subjects on his own, and also asks knowledgeable people to teach him. He is a very peculiar man. I stayed at his house for many days.

He told me that it would be of no use if I returned to Tibet. He asked me to stay there and he would give me a monthly stipend. You must have found 400 or 500 Indian rupees in my room.

I replied, “Yes, we found them, and we spent them for you. We two magistrates did not use them for our own purposes, nor did the government take them. Sometimes, I brought food to you from my house, and we gave some money to the two guards to buy you food.” He continued:

The money was sent to me by Rabga on a monthly basis. Our government does not like Pomda Rabga. The Kashag knew where the money came from, and therefore they attacked me. I have never done anything bad at any time in my life.

After that, his emotional crisis worsened day by day. After His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama assumed both spiritual and temporal leadership of Tibet, Gendün Chöpel was allocated a room in the building of the Department of Agriculture, located close to the Kashag. He was also granted a monthly salary. During his stay there, we repeatedly implored him to complete his unfinished book on Tibetan history, but he turned a deaf ear. He gathered some students and taught them at his house. He did nothing special apart from this. He had a very relation with the Samdrup Phodrang family. The late Kalon Samdrup Phodrang was a very learned man, and he looked after Gendün Chöpel very kindly. Sampho used to visit him very often and study scriptures with him. Although many people from all walks of life including government officials used to visit him occasionally, Samdrup Phodrang and my family were the closest to him. After he got a room and started receiving a monthly stipend, he once said to me, “Through the kindness of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, I am very happy now, but my mind is not sound.”

Gendün Chöpel’s arrest took place, probably in the seventh or eighth Tibetan month, towards the end of summer. He did not remain at Nangtseshag Prison for long, as he was soon moved to the Shöl Office. According to the law, in winter time all the prisoners at Nangtseshag had to be relocated to the Shöl Office. He was arrested alone and there were no co-accused with him. When we arrested him, we did not put handcuffs or restraints on him. At first we two magistrates waited for him at the police station at Tromsigkhang for a few hours. After that we went the Army Headquarters, from where we summoned him from Wangden Pelbar. When he came to us; he was wearing a burgundy woollen *chupa*. We explained to him the reasons why we had summoned him. Then we took him to the prison at Nangtseshag. There we had prison cells underground with very bad conditions for ordinary prisoners. We did not put him there; we kept him in a

room on the upper floor. We never handled him harshly. During the trial, he was given 25-30 floggings. We accompanied him everywhere and treated him like a normal man—we did not handcuff him or tie his hands with ropes.

During the trial, he was accused of acting as a Russian spy. I don't know what questions were asked by the investigating committee during the investigation. During one of the trial sessions, he was tortured and he looked very upset. The next day, I went to my office early and consoled him. I asked him what charges the investigating committee had made against him, and he seemed a bit confused and frustrated, as he recalled, "First, they told me that I have brought many counterfeit 100-rupee notes into Tibet. Secondly, they told me that I am a Russian spy. They asked me how I formed an alliance with the Russians. I told them what I told you and your colleague before—I have nothing else to say."

The investigating committee questioned him mildly for about four days. When he said nothing special, they reported to the Kashag that they had not got any significant information from him. Kashöpa ordered them to use harsh methods, saying there was no other option. It was only under the instruction of the Kashag that the investigating committee resorted to a harsh trial—it was not their own decision, because Surkhang Dapön, one of the members of the investigating committee, was very friendly with Gendün Chöphel.

Gendün Chöphel shared many of his personal stories with me during our conversations. One time he told me:

Before I was arrested, Kashöpa regarded me like his root lama (*rtsa ba'i bla ma*) and treated me very kindly. But later, influenced by others, he imprisoned me for no reason. He drove me mad. Both Surkhang and Kashöpa were responsible for this. One day, after my release, Kashöpa invited me to his house. First I declined. He again sent his servant to me again, with a request that I should visit his house that very day. So I went. When I arrived at his house, he came down the stairs to receive me. He said, "You faced great troubles in the recent past, and I was compelled to take such actions against you because the case concerned the country's security. We tried to be as gentle with you as we could." He pretended to have done this for my own good. I replied, "That does not matter—it might be my fate. I am totally innocent and have never sought help from outside people to do anything against my country. Whether you handled me gently or not, you have already made me mentally ill—you have transformed a normal person into an abnormal one." He insisted that I go into his house and stay for a while. I went in and he served me tea and liquor. I drank the liquor and ate some food. He told me that I should visit him whenever and for whatever I needed. I replied, "I will not stay in your house as I have my own house granted by

His Holiness. I came to your house today because you sent your servant twice to fetch me. If you call me again, I will have nothing to say to you and I would prefer not to come here. Today I stayed here for a while at your insistence. I have nothing to request from you in future.” I never went to his place again.

He then told me, “One day Surkhang invited me to his house and received me very warmly saying, “Venerable teacher, please come in.” He recollected:

They had arranged a very grand feast and there were many types of food and drink. After a while, he gave me a piece of paper and asked me to draw a beautiful picture on it. When asked what I should draw, he said I could draw whatever I wished, whether an image of the Buddha or anything else. I thought of drawing a good image of the Buddha. I put the paper on the table and took a pen. Then, while I was talking, I first drew a circle. Looking at the shape of the circle, I thought it would make a picture of an animal. As I drew further, it became a beautiful donkey. I told him that a strange picture had come out and showed it to him. He looked at it and remarked that it was beautiful. He did not ascribe any meaning to the picture. He suggested that it would look nice if there was a saddle on the animal. I said it was easy to draw a saddle and I drew one. I also drew a high-pointed hood-like hair-lock on the donkey’s head. Slowly the donkey began to look more spruced up. Then he suggested that a man be drawn near the donkey instead of leaving it alone. I said that it was very easy to draw a man. I drew a man on the donkey’s rear, instead of placing him in the normal position. His right hand was near the donkey’s bottom. From that I suddenly got a bad idea. I drew a chopping knife in his hand. When I showed him the completed picture, he burst out laughing, but he also seemed to be slightly uncomfortable. I had a funny thought about the picture. To me it seemed to symbolize the saying, “The shameless master kills and eats his donkey,” implying that they (who imprisoned him) initially treated me as a lama, but later arrested and imprisoned me.

Once he told me that Surkhang’s younger brother, who was a regimental leader (*mda’ dpon*) of the Drapchi Regiment, was very fond of him. He recalled,

He always calls me to his house. He does not ask anything about political issues. He asks me about religious topics. Although I am not able to teach as I used to do before, still I try to teach him as much as I can. He is a good man. Surkhang’s youngest brother is a monk official with the title “Tsedron Khenchung”. Though he always says he wants to learn scriptures, he is not learning anything from me. But still he gives me money and looks after me.

These two younger brothers are very kind to me. So I always go to Surkhang's residence. Every time I go there, they give me money, with which I buy groceries and other things.

Gendün Chöphel had a wife, a woman from Kham, whom he met during his stay at the Shöl Office. She was not a sophisticated lady. She only knew about cooking. She did not talk much. He told me that she was good at cooking and he gave her money to buy food ingredients. Sometimes I took foodstuffs to him. Although initially my family used to give him food and other daily necessities, later he refused to take them from us, saying he received enough from Surkhang and others.

He persuaded me several times to study some Buddhist texts with him. Although he was a really learned man, I procrastinated since I did not have any enthusiasm for studying the scriptures. I told him I was too lazy for such rigorous study. He advised me that I could just try studying the texts and I could stop it whenever I found it boring. As I was young, I had no interest in such things. I told him that all I wanted to learn was English. He suggested that I first study scriptures for at least a year, and only then would he teach me English. He advised me that I could learn English slowly. He said, "I also learned English this way. I had never been to school to learn English. First, do what I tell you. Learn do what I teach you. You can stop the lesson if ever you feel like going out or playing games. I will never force you to study. If you really want to learn English, you can learn it. For example, if you want to go to Chushül, you have to first walk through Kyangthang Nakha, then to Dhanbag. Then gradually passing through Trizam, you will finally reach Chushül. So there is no expressway to reach Chushül straightaway. So just do as I say—first learn the scriptural texts and I can guarantee that you will pick up English really well after that."

However, I never studied Buddhist texts with Gendün Chöphel. In those days, it was difficult to find the text called *gzhon nu zla med kyi rtogs brjod* (Tale of Prince Shönu Dhamé)⁴. I had one part of the text in the form of a roll, and the other part was with Ragashak. I kept the text on my altar. One day Gendün Chöphel asked me what it was. I told him it was a text called *gzhon nu zla med kyi rtogs brjod*. He said it was a very interesting story. I told him that I couldn't understand any of it despite having read it several times. He asked me not to worry at all. Then lying back on a pillow on the bed opposite me, he smoked a cigarette and drank some liquor, and asked me to read the text. I read the text paragraph by paragraph. The text was written in a poetic style, and he explained each line in detail. We repeated the entire process about three times. Later I read it myself three times, and I was able to understand the meaning a little bit. I asked him whenever I found a difficult point in it. I noted down all the difficult terms that I did not understand and asked him. I did this three times. This was the only textual

study that I ever did with Gendün Chöphel. During the lesson, when I read the text aloud, he would sometimes recite along with me from memory as if he was reading the text.

He used to drink heavily. He always had a bottle of liquor in his robes whenever he went out. One day I said to him, “Don’t drink so much liquor. Your health will deteriorate. Many people die due to drinking liquor. You can drink *chang*⁵ instead. I have *chang* at my house all the time, so you can drink it whenever you come to my house.”

I had a servant named Buné (*bu ne*), who had not much interest in religious teachings and lamas. It was through the sheer work of *karma* that he was very fond of Gendün Chöphel. Buné would come to my house to work, but would suddenly disappear even if he had not finished his work. When I asked him where he had been, he would say that he had been to Gendün Chöphel’s house to ask him if he needed anything. So I told Gendün Chöphel that he should quit drinking alcohol, and that even if he did not come to my house to drink, I would send him *chang* through Bune. He replied that he would never drink liquor again. I asked, “You mean you will not drink liquor from today? Are you serious?” He said, “Yes, I mean it.” When he left, he gave me a four-line verse and told me to read it. The verse read:

At the feet of the great official,
I, Gendün Chöphel, the most inferior man,
Swear by Songtsen Gampo that
I will never ever drink liquor again.

After that, he only drank *chang*, not liquor, until his last breath. When we met next time he told me that he had drunk no liquor since that very afternoon when he made the promise that he wouldn’t drink liquor again. He said, “From that day on after I pledged to you that I would never drink liquor, I completely stopped drinking alcohol.”

Sometimes he would visit temples and would ask me to accompany him. I used to go with him whenever he asked me. He would first approach the image of Avalokiteshvara. Climbing the stone steps, he would then go to Tsongkhapa’s temple and then to the Jowo chapel. After that he would go to Songtsen Gampo’s temple, and then say, “Our visit of worship is complete. Now let’s go back.” I would suggest that we offer *gser skyems*⁶ to the protectors Rudrani and Palden Lhamo in the upper chapels. He would say, “It is not necessary,” and would immediately leave through the southern gate. His house was right near there and he would ask me to go to his house. We would stay there for awhile and smoke cigarettes. When I left, I would ask him if he would like to come to my house the

next day. His routine reply would be, “May be, I’m not sure.” So he would occasionally come to my house.

Gendün Chöphel had many manuscripts, scriptural texts and books in his house. Most of them were his own works. There were many pieces of papers, rolls of Tibetan handmade papers and cigarette boxes on which he had written notes. When we handed them over to the Kashag, we put all of them in a large sack. Among them, there were ancient documents that were beyond our capacity to understand. Some of them looked very old, as if they had been unearthed from some ancient site. There were also Tibetan mantras. In the Kashag building many white sacks were found. They contained rejected petitions and were useless. The sack containing Gendün Chöphel’s documents was put in the same room. Whenever I went to the Kashag after his imprisonment, I would see the sack in that room.

I told Gendün Chöphel that his manuscripts and books were of no use to the Kashag and that I would request the Kashag to return them to him. I assured him that I would definitely get them back if he wanted. I asked him several times if he needed them. He always replied, “No, I don’t need them at all.” Everything was there intact; they had not been lost or destroyed by fire.

He did not have any black box. The weirdest thing is that he had a rubber model of a woman. He asked me not to tell others about it. He said, “I am not a monk anymore. But if I keep a wife, it will really interfere with my work. So I have brought this doll from India.” I did not tell anybody about this. Except that it did not breathe, the doll was a complete woman. It could be inflated to become a life-size doll whenever he wanted. He told me that he had reasons for keeping it. He explained, “I am not a monk. So sometimes I find it difficult to suppress my mind. If I keep a real woman as my wife, I will have to spend time with her talking and cooking, which will take away my precious time that otherwise could be used for writing. So I have kept this with me to avoid these problems.” When we went to ransack his house (after he was arrested), the doll was blown up. His house had two rooms and a small kitchen. He had drawn a white curtain across the door where he slept. While I remained outside examining the documents, Shagjang Surpa checked inside the room. He saw the dummy of a woman. Gendün Chöphel had painted a woman’s face on the doll and put a wig on its head that made it look like a Tibetan nomadic woman. Startled by the doll, Shagjang Surpa shouted, “My colleague, colleague! Come here, there is a strange thing here.” The reason is that he had never heard of such a thing before, let alone seen it. Though I had not personally seen before such things, I had heard about them. So I said, “These are common in foreign countries, so don’t be shocked.” I tore it into pieces and threw away the pieces.

In his house, there was nothing special, except for a few clothes, a table, a stool, some utensils and the rubber dummy of a woman. Except for the small

area where he slept, the whole room was covered with scraps of paper and books. There were books in English. There was a small notebook containing a translation from Sanskrit. In the “Conclusion” section of the book, there was a line that read: “As we know, there were many *panditas* (scholars) in India in the past, but there are none there nowadays. There is only one *pandita* in Lhasa and he is probably Gendün Chöphel.” The opening part of the text contained indecipherable scripts similar to those used for writing *mantras*. At the end of the book, there was a three-page translation done by Gendün Chöphel. After reading the translation, the cabinet ministers Kashöpa and Surkhangpa remarked, “It is amazing to see all these texts translated into only three pages! This shows that he is really a great writer. He is a true *pandita*.” They kept the book on their table, but all the remaining documents were kept in the sack.

As for Gendün Chöphel’s signature, it was very peculiar. To a Tibetan who did not know English, it had his full name in Tibetan, while for others who knew English but not Tibetan, it carried his name in English. It was really beautiful. He was also very skilled in drawing and painting. He had drawn very beautiful murals of a lion and a tiger at the entrance of the small guesthouse of Samdrup Phodrang. If somebody went there for the first time, the pictures would look like real animals. He was a really gifted artist. Later he pretended to call himself a mad man. However, he was as mentally vigorous as before, although he did not do any work.

Before he was allotted a house by the government after his release from prison, he stayed at the Kedung House, which was located behind the Samding House. At that time, he and Minyag Kyorpon (*mi nyag skyor dpon*), a young abbot of a Tantric college, who was said to be highly knowledgeable in scriptures, seemed to have engaged in an intense debate on scriptural topics through their correspondence. Later, the abbot failed to give prompt replies and he appeared to have lost ground. Gendün Chöphel recalled:

One day he came to my house with about eight learned monks from the Tantric College. He might have come because he had no answers to (the points I raised in letters. When I asked his purpose of the visit, he replied that he had a question to ask me. He explained that it was more convenient to talk to me personally instead of writing. ‘That’s fine,’ I said. He looked garish to me. He was tall and fat. He wore fine robes. He reacted strangely if not addressed in a respectful manner. I once invited him to my house to conduct an ablution ritual. His attendants asked me to burn incense to purify and cleanse the room before he took his seat. He was very pompous and acted in an exaggerated manner. I asked him what he wanted to ask me. He said that I was responsible for starting the debate through correspondence,

although it was actually he who started it. I asked him why he had brought the monks along with him, and he replied that they would ask me questions. I told them to ask me any questions they wished. I let them speak one by one, starting with the abbot, and remained silent until all of them had finished their questions. At the end I got up, taking a rosary in my hands, in a style typical of a debater in monastic debate sessions held in a monastic courtyard, and answered each of their questions one by one. I shut them up and sent them away. After that, they neither sent me any letters, nor did they come to my house again.

He had never talked this way before. He once told me, “At first glance the writings of Tibetan government officials give the impression that they are highly educated. But on closer observation I have found that they lack even basic writing skills. It is rare to find an official who is knowledgeable.”

Gendün Chöphel had deep faith in Trisur Rinpoche (Minyag Tongpon) of Drib Tsechokling. He said, “Trisur Rinpoche is truly a great lama. He is beyond description.”

He might have seen the writings of the Regent Taktra Rinpoche, because he praised the Rinpoche’s writings, saying they were excellent and that such perfect writings were rare. He said, “Kashöpa and Surkhang are just sharp-minded, and nothing more. Samdrup Phodrang is quite knowledgeable in literature and all his writings, from beginning to end, are remarkable. It is difficult to find an official who is really proficient in literature; most of them have merely learned the alphabet. Kungo Chokteng is also good in the art of writing. He is considered to be one of the best among the government staff in the field of literature. It would be good for you to study their writings. The majority of government officials know nothing.”

When he was in Shöl prison, he was kept like the rest of the prisoners and he received no special treatment as he did at Nangtseshag. But he was not handcuffed or bound by chains. Amgu Ngawang Dhondup (*am gug nga dbang don ’grub*), Drangtopa (*’brang stod pa*), who was a relative of Kashöpa, and fourth ranking Rimshi Sechungsé were Shöl prison officials at that time. Later when I asked Gendün Chöphel if they treated him well, he replied, “I don’t remember whether they treated me nicely or badly.” He was kept there for a long time, without being given any verdict on whether he was guilty or not. He was probably held there in order to ruin his life. Thanks to the enthronement ceremony of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama he was released. Without this event, he probably would have remained in prison for the rest of his life. At the time of his release, someone called Ngampo Tsadi (*rngam po tsha dhi*) was appointed a magistrate of Lhasa and his colleague was Shödrung Gogkhar (*sgog mkhar*).

Gendün Chöphel had been in Lhasa for more than three years before his arrest, but there were no negative rumours about him during those years. I think the Kashag arrested him at the instigation of Richardson, who resided at Dekyilingka Park, because Gendün Chöphel later told me that it was all due to Richardson. The Kashag acted rashly by listening to Richardson. The Kashag said that Gendün Chöphel was a Russian spy and had documents bearing the hammer & sickle logo of the USSR, although I never saw any of them at his residence. I am sure the Kashag must have wondered whether he had any such documents. We also had the same doubts at that time.

One day, sometime after his release, I asked Gendün Chöphel why he had made a list of Tibetan government offices and officials. He explained that he wrote the names of some government officials who he considered knowledgeable and good reference sources for his research works. He said that he had no other reasons besides that and that he had not sent or showed the list to anyone else. He lamented, “Even if you turn me inside out, this is all I have to say. If I don’t tell you, whom should I tell?” He said Horkhang’s son had helped him in the preparation of the list. Gendün Chöphel had a great respect for Horkhang’s son. He told me that Horkhang treated him nicely even after his release from the prison.

The money we found in his house was real Indian currency, known as Kingjor (probably King George). It was not British Sterling. The money was sent to him by Rabga. Later, when he became ill, I went to see him and gave him food and medicines. I asked him about his condition and whom he had consulted. He replied, “I am fine; I just feel lethargic and am not able go out for a walk. I have no other problems.” I asked him to tell me whatever he needed. I said, “My servant always goes to your house every day.” He replied, “Yes, yes, he always comes to see me.” I told him, “I have instructed my servant to care for you. You can tell him to bring you whatever you want. Since I have to stay at the Army Headquarters, I am not able to visit you very often.” To this he replied, “Don’t worry. I will get well very soon and will surely come to your office at the army headquarters. I have never been to the Army Headquarters. So I always ask your servant about you. He says you are sometimes at the army office and sometimes at home. If I get well I will visit you at your army office, and if not, I can come to your house.” After that, I did not get another chance to meet him again, and that was our last meeting.

On the eve of his death, he told my servant Buné that it was their last meeting. Buné said to me, “Strange! He came to me yesterday evening and told me such things.” I asked him about his illness. He said, “There is nothing serious and he had a good appetite.” I said, “It is doubtful. Isn’t he about to die?” He said, “I don’t think he will die, because he told me that he was fine.” I added, “It is doubtful. Since he is quite different from others, it could mean that he was about to die.” Buné replied that it was unlikely.

The next when I looked for Buné, he was nowhere to be seen. He must have gone to Gendün Chöphel's house early in the morning. I asked my wife if she had sent him somewhere to do a job, and she told me that she had not. Actually he had gone to Gendün Chöphel's house early in the morning. After a while, he came back with a gloomy face. I asked him what happened and where he had been. He said, "I went to the teacher's house. He is dead." I asked him if there were other people there and he replied that there was no one. I went to his house and asked his wife how he had died, and she replied, "He died this morning at sunrise. Before his death, he asked me to help him face eastward, though normally he faced south. So together we turned his face towards the east." Buné told me that when he entered his room, Gendün Chöphel was sitting erect with a pillow for back support. Some government officials of the Tibetan government who were his disciples conducted the funeral. My servant was also there to help them. He told me that only Gendün Chöphel's wife was there during his last hours. They saw him say his final prayers before he died. He did not take any medicine.

Gendün Chöphel once told me that the Chinese army camp in Lhasa requested him to work for them and said that they would give him a salary. He said, "As I am a famous person, the Chinese asked me to work for them and they told me that they would give me a salary. But I refused, saying that I had spent many years in prison and had become mentally ill. I added that I was useless to anyone and would not be able to work." After being released from prison, he did not do any work. His illness lasted for not more than a month and he passed away shortly after that.

Notes

1. The Tibetan version of this oral account by Tashi Palrab was published in the *dge 'dun chos' gyi rab 'byed zhabs btags ma* compiled by Kirti Rinpoche and published by Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, Dharamsala, in 1983.
2. To put a black hat on a white person (*mi dkarpo la zhwa mo nag po g.yog pa*) is a Tibetan proverb, meaning to put blame on an innocent person.
3. Hugh E. Richardson (1905–2000) was a British diplomat in Lhasa from 1936 to 1940 and again from 1946 to 1950, in the final years having become the diplomatic representative of the recently independent India. He was also a great Tibetologist.
4. It is a popular Tibetan fiction composed by Dokhar Shabdrung Tsering Wangyal in the eighteenth century.
5. Tibetan undistilled intoxicating drink, which is supposed to be less harmful than alcohol.
6. Golden beverage (usually *chang* and tea) offered to the gods for the success of a journey, enterprise, etc.