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”Exclusiveness and Openness: A study of Matrimonial Strategies in the Ganden Phodrang Aristocracy (1880-1959)”

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Contents

Articles

- Demographics, Development, and the Environment in Tibetan Areas (8 pages)
– Kenneth Bauer and Geoff Childs
- Tibetan Fertility Transitions: Comparisons with Europe, China, and India (21 pages)
– Geoff Childs
- Conflict between Nomadic Herders and Brown Bears in the Byang thang Region of Tibet (42 pages)
– Dawa Tsering and John D. Farrington
- Subsistence and Rural Livelihood Strategies in Tibet under Rapid Economic and Social Transition (49 pages)
– Andrew M. Fischer
- Biodiversity Conservation and Pastoralism on the Northwest Tibetan Plateau (Byang thang): Coexistence or Conflict? (21 pages)
– Joseph L. Fox, Ciren Yangzong, Kelsang Dhondup, Tsechoe Dorji and Camille Richard
- Nomads without Pastures? Globalization, Regionalization, and Livelihood Security of Nomads and Former Nomads in Northern Khams (40 pages)
– Andreas Gruschke
- Political Space and Socio-Economic Organization in the Lower Spiti Valley (Early Nineteenth to Late Twentieth Century) (34 pages)
– Christian Jahoda
- South Indian Tibetans: Development Dynamics in the Early Stages of the Tibetan Refugee Settlement Lugs zung bsam grub gling, Bylakuppe (31 pages)
– Jan Magnusson, Subramanya Nagarajarao and Geoff Childs
- Temporary Migrants in Lha sa in 2005 (42 pages)
– Ma Rong and Tanzen Lhundup
- Exclusiveness and Openness: A Study of Matrimonial Strategies in the Dga' Idan pho brang Aristocracy (1880-1959) (27 pages)
– Alice Travers

- The Mushrooming Fungi Market in Tibet Exemplified by *Cordyceps sinensis* and *Tricholoma matsutake* (47 pages)
– Daniel Winkler
- Interpreting Urbanization in Tibet: Administrative Scales and Discourses of Modernization (44 pages)
– Emily T. Yeh and Mark Henderson

Text Translation, Critical Edition, and Analysis

- The Sweet Sage and *The Four Yogas*: A Lost Mahāyoga Treatise from Dunhuang (67 pages)
– Sam van Schaik

A Note from the Field

- Population, Pasture Pressure, and School Education: Case Studies from Nag chu, TAR, PRC (21 pages)
– Beimatsho

Book Reviews

- Review of *A History of Modern Tibet, Volume 2: The Calm before the Storm, 1951-55*, by Melvyn C. Goldstein (10 pages)
– Matthew Akester
- Review of *Rulers on the Celestial Plain: Ecclesiastic and Secular Hegemony in Medieval Tibet. A Study of Tshal Gung-thang*, by Per K. Sørensen and Guntram Hazod, with Tsering Gyalbo (7 pages)
– Bryan J. Cuevas

Abstracts

Contributors to this Issue

Exclusiveness and Openness: A Study of Matrimonial Strategies in the Dga' ldan pho brang Aristocracy (1880-1959)

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Abstract: *This paper aims to consider what the salient features of marriage among the Tibetan aristocracy were (especially regarding polyandry, matrilineal marriage, and hypogamy) through a systematic analysis of a sample of 324 matrimonial unions and to evidence crucial points related to the question of the internal and external boundaries of the aristocratic group. Varied sources have been used to reconstruct the genealogies and the marriages of many noble families from 1880 to 1959. British archives, including the lists or the Who's Who and the diaries and correspondence of the British officers present in Tibet during the period, provided most of the information. Data was also collected through interviews with around seventy members of the aristocracy. Biographies and autobiographies, written by Tibetan noblemen and women, provided further data for study. Matrimonial strategies appear to be at the same time a means of distinction and of renewal of the aristocratic group.*

Introduction

From 1880 to 1959, the aristocracy (*sku drag*)¹ of the central government of Tibet (*dga' ldan pho brang*), under the authority of the Dalai Lama in Lha sa, was the most numerous and the most significant noble group of central Tibet in terms of

¹ This research is part of a prosopographical study of the central government of Tibet (*dga' ldan pho brang*) aristocracy, towards a doctorate in social history under the supervision of Professors Jean Duma (Nanterre-Paris X) and Heather Stoddard (Inalco). Prosopographical research investigates common background characteristics of a historical group. It aims to learn about patterns of relationships and activities through the study of collective biography, and proceeds by collecting and analyzing statistically relevant quantities of biographical data about a well-defined group of individuals. I would like to thank Heather Stoddard for her comments on this paper and Geoff Childs for reviewing my English.

influence and prestige.² It was mainly a hereditary administrative elite: its members passed hereditary estates on to each other and the possession of these estates was related to the compulsory holding of a charge by at least one member of the family, either in the army, or in the government, or in the territorial administration. The officials (*gzhung zhabs*) of the Tibetan government were divided into a monastic branch, whose members were called *rtse drung*, and a lay branch, whose members were known as *drung 'khor*. The monastic branch was recruited from all levels of society, whereas the lay branch was recruited almost exclusively among the aristocracy.

According to the abundant literature on the central government and its aristocracy, mainly produced by Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark,³ Luciano Petech,⁴ and Melvyn Goldstein,⁵ and according to my own research, the central government aristocracy comprised approximately 254 families. It consisted of various hierarchically arranged sub-groups: the *sde dpon*, four families who claimed to date back to the former kings and ministers of the Tibetan Empire (seventh to ninth centuries); the *yab gzhis*, the six ennobled families of the previous Dalai Lamas; the *mi drag*, approximately nineteen rich and politically influential families; and the *sger pa*, a term referring to all the other landowning families.⁶

Sources for conducting a historical demographic study are rare for the Tibetan population during the period under scrutiny. Without censuses providing precise information on the exact size of the group, it is hard to calculate simple features such as the marriage rate, to mention but one example.⁷ However, two authors

² The two other noble groups were: one linked to the administration of Bkra shis lhun po, under the authority of the Paṅ chen bla ma, and one linked to the administration of Sa skya, under the authority of the Sa skya hierarch (*khri chen*).

³ Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, *A Study of Polyandry* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1963).

⁴ Luciano Petech, *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet, 1728-1959*, Serie Orientale Roma 15 (Rome: ISMEO, 1973).

⁵ Melvyn C. Goldstein, "An Anthropological Study of the Tibetan Political System" (unpublished dissertation for doctorate in anthropology, University of Washington, 1968); *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951, The Demise of the Lamaist State* (2nd edition; New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1993); and other articles, see the bibliography.

⁶ Although the term *sger pa* technically means all the landowning families, when speaking of the Tibetan aristocracy, several written sources and my Tibetan informants use it to refer to the lesser aristocracy, the ones who do not own any higher title, as opposed to the first three subgroups, the *sde dpon*, the *yab gzhis*, and the *mi drag*. See also Blo bzang don grub sreg shing, "De snga'i bod sa gnas srid gzhung gi sku drag shod drung ngam sger pa ngo yod gang dran ming tho," in *Bod kyi lo rgyus rig gnas dpyad gzhi'i rgyu cha bdams bsgrigs* [Selection of Source Materials for the Study of Tibetan History and Culture] 23, ed. Bod rang skyong ljong srid gros lo rgyus rig gnas dpyad gzhi'i rgyu cha u yon lan khang (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2003), 182-85; and Dorje Yudon Yuthok, *The House of the Turquoise Roof* (New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1990), 31, 306.

⁷ If we consider only the period which is of interest for this study, several censuses of China have been conducted by the Manchu dynasty from 1909 to 1912, then by the Guomindang between 1932 and 1945, and by the People's Republic of China in 1953. Although most of these censuses provide figures for the Tibetan area, the results are not precise and their reliability has later been questioned, for example, Colin Mackerras, *China's Minorities. Integration and Modernization in the 20th century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 127, 241. Some censuses themselves specify that the figures are only estimates, for example, Tao Meng-Ho and Shih-ta Wang, "Population," in *The Chinese Year*

have broken new ground in this area by showing that some archival sources exist, like population and tax registers, which allow researchers to conduct studies on the history of Tibetan populations, by indirect demographic methods: Dieter Schuh published the first study in Tibetan demographic history, based on population registers from the Bkra shis bsam gtan gling Monastery's archives,⁸ and Geoff Childs studied a document entitled *Sa khyi lo'i skyid grong rgya dgu'i sgo khra them gan (The Earth Dog Year (1958) Household Contract Being a Census [of Land and People] in the Nine Divisions of sKyid grong District)*,⁹ which is a census of the Skyid grong district made in 1958, listing 2844 government taxpayers, namely *khral 'dzin, dud chung, and mi bogs*.

Because of the nature of the documents these authors have used, the aristocracy is not included. However, varied sources are available on this social group, which I have used to reconstruct the genealogies and the marriages of as many noble families as possible from 1880 to 1959. Quite a lot of information on this subject is obtainable from secondary sources, especially in Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark's book on polyandry and Luciano Petech's book, *The Aristocracy of Central Tibet*, and also in various travelers' accounts.¹⁰ Primary sources, both written and oral, have also been used. British archives, including the several lists in the *Who's Who* and the diaries and correspondence of the British officers present in Tibet during the period,¹¹ provided most of the information. Data was also collected through interviews with around seventy members of the aristocracy, in Europe, India, Tibet, and the United States.¹² Biographies and autobiographies, written by Tibetan noblemen and women both in English and Tibetan, provided further data for study.¹³

A fruitful use of these sources can be made from a demographic perspective.¹⁴ The use one can make of genealogies, literary sources, individuals' lists like *Who's*

Book, 1938-1939 Issue, Prepared from official Sources by the Council of International Affairs Chungking, Shanghai (2nd edition; Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1968), 35.

⁸ Dieter Schuh, *Das Archiv des Klosters bKra-shis-bsam-gtan-gling von sKyid-grong* (Bonn: VGH-Wissenschaftsverlag, 1988).

⁹ Geoff Childs, "The 1958 sKyid grong Census: Implications for the study of Tibetan Historical Demography," *The Tibet Journal* 25, no. 2 (2000): 29-41 and "Polyandry and population growth in a historical Tibetan society," *The History of the Family*, no. 8 (2003): 423-44.

¹⁰ See the bibliography.

¹¹ Various records from the India Office Records (British Library, L/P&S, series 7, 10, 11, 12, 20), the Foreign Office in London (The National Archives, series 371), and from the National Archives of India in New Delhi (series ExtIA and SecE) related to Tibet, and covering the period from 1898 to 1950, have been used for this study (diaries, letters, confidential reports, ten different *Lists of Leading Officials, Nobles and Personages* or *Who's Who*, etc.). These files alone have provided around seventy descriptions of marriages.

¹² Although only a few of them have been mentioned in this paper, when particular examples were related to their account, all of them have greatly contributed to the construction of genealogies and of the corpus of marriages. I would like to thank them all for their invaluable help.

¹³ See the bibliography.

¹⁴ Michel Cartier has shown how to exploit non-official sources, like prosopographical data drawn from the rich biographical literature of the Ming dynasty, in order to obtain data on the demographic structure, see Michel Cartier, "Nouvelles données sur la démographie chinoise à l'époque des Ming

Who, etc., in the demographic field has been emphasized by several authors like Michel Cartier and Scarlett Beauvalet-Boutouyrie.¹⁵ Although this kind of data does not allow one to conduct a proper historical demographic study,¹⁶ it does provide the opportunity to analyze the behavior of the aristocrats regarding marriage, which plays a key role in the history of the populations, and hence to investigate a major topic of social history. This paper aims to consider what the salient features of noble marriage were through a systematic analysis of a relatively large sample and to compare them with the data available in the literature and the discourse of the noble people themselves.

In Tibetan society marriage belonged to a broader scope of familial strategies aiming at the biological and social reproduction of the lineage, and at the maintaining or increasing of the noble house's wealth, rank, and prestige. As many authors have underlined,¹⁷ Tibetan society is a "house society" as defined by Claude Lévi-Strauss,¹⁸ and as further elaborated on by Pierre Bourdieu,¹⁹ where the importance of the house prevails over the kin group and the notion of residency over the one of descent.

Marriage was one of the key events that structured the relationship between the households in the aristocrats' group. These alliances were invested with symbolic and material weight, and had considerable social, economic, and political implications. As usual when dealing with social phenomena, it is necessary to take into account and to confront representations and practices which do not always accord with one another.²⁰ The discourse commonly held among the aristocracy evidences two related points: first, the endogamy principle, according to which a noble person should always seek another noble as a spouse, which would imply a

(1368-1644)," *Annales. Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, no. 6 (1973): 1342 and Michel Cartier, "La population de la Chine au fil des siècles," in *La Chine au seuil du XXI^e siècle. Questions de population, questions de société*, ed. Isabelle Attané (Paris: INED, 2002), 21-31. See also Scarlett Beauvalet-Boutouyrie, *La démographie de l'époque moderne* (Paris: Belin, 1999), 7.

¹⁵ Jacques Dupâquier, *Introduction à la démographie historique* (Paris: Gamma, 1974), 51.

¹⁶ The only quantitative data the sources allow to draw for the moment concern the age upon matrimony of the noblemen and women. According to Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, young noblemen and women were married around the age of twenty, see Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, *A Study of Polyandry*, 421. The data given in the corpus concur with this observation, with an average age upon marriage of twenty-three for the noblemen and eighteen for the noble women and an average difference of three years between the spouses.

¹⁷ Rolf A. Stein, *La civilisation tibétaine* (2nd edition; Paris: L'Asiathèque-Le Sycomore, 1981), 427; Barbara Nimri Aziz, "Some Notions of Descent and Residence in Tibetan Society," in *Contributions to the Anthropology of Nepal*, ed. Christoph von Führer-Haimendorf (Warminster: Aris & Philips, 1974), 27; Barbara Nimri Aziz, *Tibetan Frontier Families, Reflections of Three Generations from D'ing-ri* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978), 117.

¹⁸ Pierre Lamaison, "La notion de maison: entretien avec C. Lévi-Strauss," *Terrain*, no. 9 (1987): 34-39.

¹⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, "La maison ou le monde renversé," in *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2000), 61-82 [English version: "The Berber House or the World Reversed," *Social Science Information* 9, no. 2 (1970), 151-70].

²⁰ Robert Descimon, "Chercher de nouvelles voies pour interpréter les phénomènes nobiliaires dans la France moderne. La noblesse, 'essence' ou rapport social?" *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 46, no. 1 (1999): 1.

hermetically closed group; second, the idea that members of all the four different internal sub-units of the group would intermarry without discrimination, which highlights the unity and homogeneity of the aristocracy as a group. These two features were partly true of course. But it seems that they obfuscate a different reality, also structurally binary – a group which on the one hand could not escape internal hierarchical structuring through alliance, according to the very principle of homogamy, and which, on the other hand, had to renew itself by being more open than it would have liked to acknowledge.

In this paper some data on the behavior of the Tibetan aristocracy regarding marriage will be presented. I will then analyze marriage as a “distinction strategy” for and among the aristocracy. Lastly, I will consider marriage as a means for the renewal of a relatively closed social group.

The Constitution of a Corpus of Matrimonial Unions Involving Noblemen and Women

The data as described above provided details of 324 matrimonial unions involving noblemen or women.²¹ Before coming to the results, three methodological points should be discussed. First, it is difficult to define what exactly marriage is and where illegitimacy begins. To establish a distinction between an official matrimonial union and an informal lovers’ relationship, social scientists have suggested using several criteria such as sexual access,²² children’s affiliation, sharing food, residency, labor division, etc. Edmund Leach emphasized that there is no universal definition of marriage, so we should define marriage as a “bundle of rights” which includes several aspects and which can be sometimes used to establish a legal father for the children, or to give to the spouses exclusivity on sexual access over the other spouses. All the institutions called “marriage” do not have the same legal and social implications, and are very often linked to descent and residency rules.²³ In Tibet, marriage (*chang sa*, *’khrungs sa*, or *gnyen sgrig*) was indeed a legal institution: a written contract (*gnyen yig*) was almost always signed when members of the aristocracy got married,²⁴ in contrast to the rest of the society where no such contracts were required to legitimize a marriage. My sources do not, except for a few cases, allow one to assert the presence of this document. For this reason I had to rely on “reputation.” Only the official matrimonial unions, recognized as such by society, that is, individuals described as married couples by the sources, were taken into account in this study.

²¹ This corpus is not exhaustive; it only reflects the current state of my research.

²² Duran Bell, “Defining Marriage and Legitimacy,” *Current Anthropology* 38, no. 2 (1997): 237-53.

²³ Edmund Leach, “Polyandry, Inheritance and the Definition of Marriage,” in *Rethinking Anthropology* (London: The Athlone Press, 1961), 105-13.

²⁴ For a precise description of the wedding ceremony, see Sarat Chandra Das, “Marriage Customs of Tibet,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* 62 (1893): 8-19; and more recently Gsang bdag rdo rje rdo dgon and Dga’ ba pa sangs, *Bod kyi yul srol rnam bshad* [Explanations on Tibetan Customs] (Lha sa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 2004).

Secondly, it should be noted that the corpus is comprised of matrimonial unions between two individuals rather than of marriages. This means that several matrimonial unions sometimes constitute one marriage, or that, in the case where a woman was married polyandrously, two or more unions are counted. The corpus was established in this way for analytical and statistical purposes, although the notion which is meaningful in Tibetan society and which is studied in this paper is the one of marriage. First, from a Tibetan point of view a marriage with more than one husband and one wife is considered one marriage, even if another husband or wife joins the marriage or if a younger brother leaves the marriage at a later stage. Indeed, marriage in the Tibetan context is often a changing or evolving configuration. Marriage in a longitudinal study is therefore a difficult dimension to deal with. Secondly, if I had only listed marriages in the database, as marriage sometimes comprises several individuals, it would have been difficult to compare the social status between them. Therefore, I decided to introduce the auxiliary dimension of matrimonial unions, a union being a matrimonial link between exactly one man and one woman. But, we shall notice that this practical decision does not have much influence on the statistical figures presented here, as most of these matrimonial unions are in fact marriages, since the number of polygamous marriages is only fourteen.²⁵

Lastly, the question of the representativeness of my corpus arises. The higher-status families represented twenty-eight families and the remainder of the 226 were *sger pa* families. The sample provides a very accurate picture of the marriages among the higher-status aristocracy, since all the families belonging to it are present and their genealogies have been collected in almost every case. Concerning the *sger pa*, only ninety-two out of the 226 families are part of the corpus. As a matter of fact, the data available on the Tibetan aristocracy very frequently concerns the higher-status families, as they were the best-known people for the British officers who produced the archives. Moreover, the members of these higher-status families tended to write autobiographies more often than the other noble families. Fortunately, information on many *sger pa* families was gathered through interviews, which enable us to get quite an accurate image of this sub-group and their matrimonial practices. Yet, because of this imbalance, the information concerning the sub-groups has been treated independently.

Marriage Practices Among the Tibetan Aristocracy

We can try, first, to assess the real importance, within the aristocracy, of some “traditional” forms of the Tibetan marriage, such as polyandry (*khyo mang shug gcig*) and polygyny (*khyo gcig shug mang*), and of the marriage as an adoptive bridegroom or a matrilocally resident husband (*mag pa*).

²⁵ The difference between the number of matrimonial unions, 324, and the number of marriages, 307, is not significant.

As has been observed by several authors – among them Pedro Carrasco²⁶ and Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark – we can find in the central government aristocracy all the traditional Tibetan patterns of marriage: monogamy, polyandry (fraternal and non-fraternal, unigenerational and, very rarely, bigenerational), and polygyny (sororal and non-sororal, unigenerational and, very rarely, bigenerational). As in some other Tibetan social groups, the leading principle was the monomartial rule: one marital union per generation per family, as described by Melvyn Goldstein.²⁷ This rule was only an ideal towards which the families would tend. A number of reasons account for the presence of polyandry, the most obvious of which was the materialistic objective of “precluding the division of a family’s estate among its male coparceners and secondarily as a means of concentrating labours.”²⁸ Suffice it to say that, as Nellie Grent summarizes, “anthropologists regard polyandry amongst Tibetan as both a production and a reproduction strategy, intertwined with demographic, gender, political, ideological, and psychological issues.”²⁹

My corpus provides some interesting insights into three aspects of the noble marriage. According to the secondary sources, and mainly the work of Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, the practice of polygamy (polygyny but mainly polyandry)³⁰ was particularly widespread among the aristocracy. This author gives an estimate of 80 percent of the noble houses being polyandrous. However, in my corpus only eleven women were undoubtedly involved in polyandrous unions with noblemen, one with three husbands and ten with two.³¹ Regarding polygyny, which is known to be rare, only four men were involved in polygynous unions: three with two wives (in the Shan kha ba, Ka shod pa, and the Sa skya ruler families), and one with four wives (Tsha rong zla bzang dgra ’dul [1888-1959]). The Ka shod pa house was a rare example of a marriage being at the same time polyandrous and polygynous, that is, polygynandrous. The whole phenomenon of polygamy seems therefore very limited. It must be remembered that polyandry could only occur in families where there was more than one son reaching adult age. Sending

²⁶ Pedro Carrasco, *Land and Polity in Tibet* (2nd edition; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), 129.

²⁷ Melvyn C. Goldstein, “Stratification, Polyandry, and Family Structure in Central Tibet,” *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 27, no. 1 (1971): 71.

²⁸ See Melvyn C. Goldstein, “Pahari and Tibetan Polyandry Revisited,” in *Polyandry in India*, ed. Manis Kumar Raha and Palash Chandra Coomar (Delhi: Gian Publishing House, 1987), 200. For more on the economic rationales for practicing polyandry, see the works of Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, Melvyn Goldstein, Nancy Levine, Barbara Aziz, and Jacques Goody in the bibliography. For a very clear and comprehensive presentation of the bibliography and the debates regarding polyandry, see Nellie Grent, “Polyandry in Dharamsala: Plural-husband Marriage in a Tibetan Refugee Community in Northwest India,” in *Tibet, Self and the Tibetan Diaspora, Voices of Difference*, PIATS 2000, ed. P. Christiaan Klieger (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 105-38.

²⁹ Grent, “Polyandry in Dharamsala,” 109.

³⁰ See Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, *A Study of Polyandry*, 416.

³¹ A few other unions seemed to be polyandrous as well but when it was not clearly established they were not counted as such. Moreover, one of these eleven women married in polyandry with noblemen was a commoner, which reduces the number of noble women married polyandrously to ten.

a son to a monastery or to another family as an adoptive bridegroom dramatically reduces the possibilities for a family to be polyandrous.³² However, we should be aware of the likely under-representation of the polygamous matrimonial unions in my corpus for many reasons. First, polygamous unions were often informal³³ or unofficial,³⁴ and hence not recorded as such in the sources. Polygamous unions often went unacknowledged in sources produced by members of the nobility, such as biographies and autobiographies, and also in the interviews I have conducted. Second, it is very likely that, because of the general evolution of society during the first half of the twentieth century and maybe because of foreign influences in Tibet at the time, these polygamous practices were less common than in the past.³⁵

The second important aspect highlighted by the study of the corpus is the high proportion of adoptive-bridegroom marriages, as had been previously suggested by Luciano Petech and Chie Nakane.³⁶ There is much debate as to whether Tibetan society is mainly patrilineal,³⁷ or bilineal. Barbara Aziz has argued that Tibetan society was bilineal, except for the aristocracy and hereditary priests (*sngags pa*), which followed the patrilineal principle.³⁸ According to my sources, there was undeniably a strong ideal of patrilineality in the Tibetan aristocracy. Nevertheless, the practices often depart from this principle: although mainly patrilineal, the nobility also took into account the mother's side, and matrilocal marriage was often practiced.

The corpus provides descriptions of sixty-six adoptive-bridegroom matrimonial unions out of 324 unions, which represents 20 percent of all unions. To put it differently, 38 percent of the families present in the sample had taken an adoptive bridegroom at least once between 1880 and 1959. This figure corroborates data extracted from Luciano Petech's book on a smaller sample. Thirty-seven percent of the forty-three noble families described by him and who were still alive during the period under scrutiny had at least once recruited an heir through an

³² As Nancy Levine put it: "Where more than one brother lived at home and a formal marriage was contracted, polyandry occurred." See Nancy E. Levine, "The Demise of Marriage in Purang, Tibet: 1959-1990," in *Tibetan Studies*, PIATS 1992, volume 1, ed. Per Kvaerne (Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994), 470.

³³ In many cases, a younger brother would take part in the marriage and then would marry his own spouse without needing to divorce. See genealogies of the Tsha rong, Zur khang, and Shud khud pa families.

³⁴ As Nellie Grent underlines, some people married in a polyandrous union might not identify themselves as such. A woman would present her husbands as "her husband and his brother," see Grent, "Polyandry in Dharamsala," 108.

³⁵ Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark describes instances of women who refused to abide by this practice, see Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, *A Study of Polyandry*, 417.

³⁶ Petech, *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet*, 17, and Chie Nakane, "Networks of the Tibetan Aristocracy," *Toyo Bunka Kenkyujo Kiyo, The Memoirs of the Institute of Oriental Culture*, Fortieth Anniversary Issue 2, no. 87 (1981): 1-41.

³⁷ Melvyn Goldstein writes: "Tibetan society is basically patricentric in that polyandry is normally fraternal, residence is normally patrilocal, and inheritance is normally patrilineal" (Goldstein, "Pahari and Tibetan Polyandry Revisited," 200).

³⁸ Aziz, "Some Notions of Descent," 24.

adoptive-bridegroom marriage.³⁹ It is very likely that the real figure was higher, as marriages were not the main object of study of this author. According to my corpus, adoptive-bridegroom marriage was equally widespread in all four subgroups of the aristocracy.

It sometimes happened, as in the Tsha rong⁴⁰ and Bshad sgra⁴¹ families, that one adoptive bridegroom was recruited for several daughters (three in the first case, two in the second). Several adoptive bridegrooms could also be recruited into the same family. For example, the Zhol khang family took two adoptive bridegrooms from the Mdo zur family for its two younger daughters.⁴²

Interestingly, there were also cases when a family who already had a son gave him to another house and took an adoptive bridegroom for their daughter,⁴³ as happened in the Zur khang and Thon pa families. In the Zur khang family two elder sons were given as adoptive bridegrooms to other families, namely the Bkras gshongs and the Bshad sgra, and the Zur khang family took an adoptive bridegroom from the Lcang lo can family. He married Tshe brtan g.yu gron, a Zur khang daughter who had been previously married into the Khri smon family, but had come back to her parent's home after her husband passed away.⁴⁴ In the Thon pa family a son was given to another family as an adoptive bridegroom. An adoptive bridegroom from the Bde skyid gling family was then taken to become the Thon pa heir.⁴⁵

A family with their own heir could also take an adoptive bridegroom. In such cases the son of the family would assume government service, while the adoptive bridegroom became the one who stays on and manages the estate (*gzhis bzhuks*). But this solution proved to be quite risky. Apart from the case where the adoptive bridegroom was the brother of the wife given to the family's heir – which reinforced the cohesion of the successorial unit, as occurred in the Khro dga' bo and Smar lam

³⁹ His book concerns the forty-seven families who are the most influential from a political point of view between 1728 and 1959. Sixteen families resorted to adoptive-bridegroom marriage and, among these families, four of them twice.

⁴⁰ See IOR/L/P&S/7/156/P1131 and Yuthok, *The House of the Turquoise Roof*, 314. As he married also the widow of the deceased Tsha rong heir, he married altogether four wives.

⁴¹ See interview with Mr. Bshad sgra dga' ldan dpal 'byor, 2006, Lha sa, PRC.

⁴² See interview with Mr. Zhol khang bsod nams dar rgyas, 2006, Lha sa, PRC. According to Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, the recruiting of several adoptive bridegrooms for one daughter occurred very seldom in the aristocracy – except in the case where a second adoptive bridegroom had been recruited after the death of the first one – contrary to what happened in the commoners' families. Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, *A Study of Polyandry*, 418.

⁴³ This has been pointed out by Tsung-Lien Shen and Shen-Chi Liu in *Tibet and the Tibetans* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1953), 142. Interestingly, Luciano Petech writes: "Not seldom the lineage by mag-pa is parallel to the survival of the direct male descendance; sometimes mag-pa lineage overshadows the direct one, i.e., becomes the main branch of the family. Typical examples are found chiefly in the house bShad-sgra," see Petech, *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet*, 17.

⁴⁴ See Yuthok, *The House of the Turquoise Roof*, 32, 314.

⁴⁵ See Petech, *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet*, 69.

pa families⁴⁶ – it often happened that the heir and the adoptive bridegroom could not live together in harmony and this led to separations. Typically, the adoptive bridegroom left the family unit and began a new branch on a small estate, as was the case in the Glang mdun and Bshad sgra families.⁴⁷

Lastly, one of the salient marriage features among the Tibetan aristocracy was the practice of hypogamy: women were commonly married to men of inferior status.⁴⁸ Half of the matrimonial unions involving higher-status female aristocrats (the *sde dpon*, the *yab gzhis*, and the *mi drag*) were with male *sger pa* or with commoners, whereas only one third of the matrimonial unions involving higher-status male aristocrats were with female *sger pa* or commoners. If we consider the *sger pa* sub-group, 41 percent of men took female aristocrats as wives. In contrast, only 23 percent of female *sger pa* married men from the higher levels of the aristocracy. In summary, endogamy in every subgroup was the main principle that ruled matrimonial strategies for men, whereas for the women it was hypogamy which was prevalent in every subgroup.

There are certainly many reasons accounting for this practice of hypogamy. We can assume that it had certain benefits: the man brought political influence through his office and the woman prestige through her birth. These two factors were interrelated, since family prestige was of great help in gaining political influence, as Luciano Petech and Melvyn Goldstein have shown by highlighting that a few higher-status families shared most political power among themselves. A *sger pa* who received a bride from a *mi drag* family would certainly, even if he remained a *sger pa*, gain opportunities of access to more influential government offices. Hypogamy applied also in the case of the adoptive bridegroom, even if the more prevalent marriage pattern for an adoptive bridegroom was to get married in a group of the same level. But, when it happened it seemed to be a mechanism for social climbing as the men in most cases – and contrary to other men – gain the status of his wife. In my sample, nine men from the *sger pa* group were taken as adoptive bridegrooms in *mi drag* families and one in a *sde dpon* family, and seven commoners were taken as adoptive bridegrooms into *sger pa* or *mi drag* families.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Interviews with Mr. Khro dga' bo bkra shis, 2004, Darjeeling, and Mrs. Klu khang bsod nams bde skyid, 2005, Dharamsala, India.

⁴⁷ Interviews with Mr. Glang mdun dpal 'byor, 2006, and with Mr. Bshad sgra dga' ldan dpal 'byor, 2006, Lha sa, PRC.

⁴⁸ See Laurent S. Barry, Pierre Bonte et al., "Glossaire de la parenté," *L'Homme*, nos. 154-55 (2000): 726. The ego referred to is always a woman. Barbara N. Aziz stated that hypogamy is an ideal of Tibetan society and that it was particularly practiced by the aristocracy. Nevertheless, hypergamy would be preferred for second marriages as the family would not seek a prestige that they had already gained by the first marriage (Aziz, *Tibetan Frontier Families*, 161).

⁴⁹ See below for a discussion of ennoblement through matrilocal marriage. The reverse is also true, since there is a case where a *sger pa* married into a *mi drag* family as an adoptive bridegroom who was forbidden to use the title given to the sons of the higher-status aristocratic families (*sras rnam pa*), see *Who's Who in Tibet* (Calcutta, India: Government of India Press, 1949, IOR/L/P&S/20/D220/2, London), 59.

All these diverse examples of noble marriages aimed at the continuation of the lineage, which was crucial for the safeguarding of the privilege of nobility. Through marriage, the Tibetan aristocracy ensured its biological reproduction, but also its social reproduction. Marriage played a key strategic role in the ambitions of the noble lineages to hold and increase their prestige.

Marriage as a “Distinction Strategy” for and among the Tibetan Aristocracy

The observation that hypogamy was prevalent has put us on the track of what kind of social capital was at stake in marriage. The comparison of the social status of the spouses in my corpus of matrimonial links points to several strategies implemented by the Tibetan aristocracy.

The structure of marriage alliance in Tibetan society would be termed, according to Claude Lévi-Strauss’ theory, as “complex,” that is, the choice of a marriage partner is based on non-kin criteria.⁵⁰ In the past, anthropologists and sociologists used the terms “matrimonial rules.” About thirty years ago they started using the phrase “matrimonial strategies” for societies with complex alliance structures. This phrase emphasizes the fact that each marriage is but one choice among other possibilities, and that this choice is the result of very precise logics. In his article “Les stratégies matrimoniales dans le système de reproduction,” Pierre Bourdieu wrote:

Marriage is not the product of obedience to an ideal rule, but the consequence of a strategy which, by operating the deeply internalized principles of a particular tradition, can reproduce, unconsciously rather than consciously, such or such among the typical solutions that are explicitly named by this tradition.⁵¹

The central government aristocracy was a relatively closed social group because most of the marriages took place within the group itself. Indeed, among the 279 matrimonial unions involving noblemen of the central government of the corpus, 87 percent were established with women of this nobility. To a certain extent, it is true that members of the aristocracy intermarried with all other subgroups of noblemen and women, as Charles Bell noticed first,⁵² and as the testimonies of Tibetan aristocrats evidences. This is not surprising, as all the families of the central government aristocracy shared the same interrelated pillars of their identity: government service and the holding of estates.

⁵⁰ As opposed to elementary structures where a positive marriage rule exists, and the marriageable category is defined by kin status.

⁵¹ Pierre Bourdieu, “Les stratégies matrimoniales dans le système de reproduction,” *Annales Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, nos. 4-5 (1972): 1107.

⁵² Charles Bell, *The People of Tibet* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1992), 96. See also Aziz, *Tibetan Frontier Families*, 54: “Even minor families have access to the most exalted aristocrats through marriage; this is a recognition of a basically equal social status, the recognition of a common ku-gyü they share with each other.”

However, the disparity between lineages was huge in terms of wealth, number of estates, political influence, and prestige. As a matter of fact, the study of the corpus shows that the higher-status aristocrats mostly married among themselves. Yet the small number of these families, twenty-eight, would seem to represent a huge obstacle for the endogamy of this group; there was a very strong prohibition against marrying in the lineage of the father or the mother. In contrast to the small number of higher-status families, there was a large number of potentially available spouses in the 226 *sger pa* families. Nevertheless, in the corpus 63 percent of matrimonial unions involving higher-status men (the *sde dpon*, the *yab gzhis*, and the *mi drag*) were with women from these three subgroups. Because of the practice of hypogamy, far fewer (47 percent) women from higher-status families married men of similar rank, whereas 62 percent of the matrimonial unions involving female *sger pa* were with *sger pa* men. The rate of matrimonial unions taking place within the higher-status subgroups increases with the social position of noble individuals. According to the corpus again, 59 percent of the unions involving male *mi drag* were with higher-status female aristocrats (from the *sde dpon*, the *yab gzhis*, or the *mi drag* group), 66 percent for the male *yab gzhis* and 73 percent for the male *sde dpon*. A survey of all the marriages during that period in the genealogies of two *mi drag* families, the Tsha rong and the Phreng ring, yields even higher figures; three-fourths of the matrimonial unions were with members of the higher-status aristocracy.⁵³ Of course, the status of the spouse a noble house could afford to take in depended on the status associated with the house in general, but also on the personal achievements, mainly through government service, of its members at a certain point in time. Therefore, the pattern of matrimonial alliances expresses the social stratification inside the nobility and compounds the opposition between the twenty-eight higher-status families and the remainder of the aristocracy. At the same time, the striving for marrying as often as possible among themselves had to be balanced by some opening of the group so that it could renew itself.

Marriage as a Structural Means for the Renewal of a Relatively Closed Social Group

The central government aristocracy found a way to renew itself through marriage, among other means.⁵⁴ Most of the noblemen and women tried to marry somebody from the same social strata (*rigs*). Marrying outside the aristocracy carried with it some social stigma.⁵⁵ In some cases a noblewoman could live with a commoner,

⁵³ See Alice Travers, “La noblesse du Tibet central de 1895 à 1959: essai de définition d’un groupe social, stratégies matrimoniales et familiales” (unpublished dissertation for the DEA degree in History, University of Nanterre-Paris X, 2004).

⁵⁴ Other means are adoption and ennoblement.

⁵⁵ In the novel *Turquoise Headstone* (*Gtsug g.yu*), which takes place partly in the noble society, a saying shows the condemnation of misalliance by the nobility: “*seng phrug lus stobs chung yang seng ge’i rgyud/ ab sog ral pa rdzig kyang sgo khyi’i rgyud/ skye sa rus khungs med na spre’u yin/ rigs rus ’chol bar spyad na dud ’gro yin/*” or “Even if he is physically weak the young lion comes from the lion lineage/ Even if he has an imposing mane the apso still comes from a watchdog lineage/ He who is not born of a good lineage is a monkey/ He who is mistaken about his race [i.e., social category] is

but was not allowed to marry him.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, marriages of noblemen and women with outsiders to this group were not as infrequent as is usually assumed. Indeed, 9 percent of all matrimonial unions involving noblemen of the central government were established with female commoners and 4 percent of them with women of other noble groups, such as those of Bkra shis lhun po and the royal families of Sde dge and Sikkim (*'bras ljongs*). Similarly, 7 percent of noblewomen were married to commoners and 8 percent to other noble groups, such as Bkra shis lhun po, Sikkimese or Bhutanese noblemen, the royal family of Sde dge, or the hierarch of Sa skya. These figures are substantial. Interestingly, those matrimonial unions are to be found throughout the aristocracy, although they differ widely in nature from one group to the other.

Regarding marriages with outsiders to the group, women who belonged to the higher-status aristocracy were mostly given to prestigious foreign noblemen, such as the ruler of Sikkim and his family. Diplomatic stakes were important grounds for such alliances. In contrast, women from *sger pa* families who married out of their group were mostly given to noblemen related to the Bkra shis lhun po administration or to the hierarch of Sa skya, both of Tibet. These principles also held true for the inverse flow of brides from outsiders to male members of the central government aristocracy.

Furthermore, marriages with commoners depended a lot on the status of the persons involved. For example, among the twenty-five female commoners married to noblemen of the central government, the women belonging to common (*mi ser*) families, to clerk (*las drung*) families, or to religious families (such as hereditary priest families), were mostly given to male *sger pa* and in a few cases to male *mi drag*. Whereas men from the *sde dpon*, *yab gzhis* and, in one case, *mi drag* groups (in particular from Rag kha shag, Bsam grub pho brang, G.yu thog, and Nga phod families) sometimes departed from the endogamy rule, they only did so with daughters of very rich families from Khams in eastern Tibet. Such families like Spom mda' tshang, Sa 'du tshang, or Cha ma tshang, which were renowned merchants (*tshong pa*) in Lha sa, had many matrimonial links with the higher-status aristocracy.⁵⁷

The integration of elite families of commoners from central Tibet into the central government aristocracy, a subject that, to my knowledge, has not been discussed anywhere in the literature, is actually of great significance. A number of commoner families, who held small functions as clerks in the headquarters of a district

an animal," see Dpal 'byor, *Gtsug g.yu* [Turquoise Headstone] (2nd edition; Lha sa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 2003), 155-56.

⁵⁶ See Dorje Yudon Yuthok about her aunt from the Lha rgya ri family: "They were not allowed to marry because of the difference in their social status, but they lived together and had children just like any other married couple. They stayed in a guest house in Eh at the Lhagyari estate and their children were accepted into the family in a normal way. They remained together for the rest of their lives, but my aunt always had a little inferiority complex and seldom joined the family in festivities." Yuthok, *The House of the Turquoise Roof*, 151.

⁵⁷ Interviews with Mr. Sa 'du tshang rin chen, 2003, Rajpur, India, and with Mr. G.yu thog 'dod 'dul dbang phyug and Mrs. Cha ma tshang tshe ring chos ldan, 2006, Seattle, United States.

magistrate (*rdzong*) or in other government offices, or who held positions as low-ranking military officers (for example, the *zhal ngo*), had small estates (*gzhis ka*) which yet belonged to the government and were to this extent different from the hereditary estates (*pha gzhis*) that noble families held in exchange for their service to the government. Their function could be hereditary but was not compulsory. They were not considered government officials, nor were they allowed to wear the hair topknot worn by lay officials of the government (*spa cog*).⁵⁸ These landowners were not considered to belong to the nobility, but they seem to have supplied potential spouses, whether as brides or adoptive bridegrooms, for the *sger pas* mostly and more rarely for the higher-ranking noble families. For example, in the Glang mthong family, one son was married as an adoptive bridegroom into the clerk family Zhol med. In the following generation, two Zhol med sons were adopted into the Glang mthong family and subsequently married two daughters from another noble family, the Rma bya.⁵⁹ The head of the Zhwa sgab pa family married a daughter of a well-known hereditary priest family named Dngos grub gting. There are other occurrences of *sger pa* or *mi drag* families recruiting brides from high-status commoner families,⁶⁰ for example in the Zur khang zur pa, Shan kha ba, Lding bya, Smin skyid gling, Gnam dpon, Snar skyid, 'Od sbug rgya mtsho, and Ka shod pa families. In this way, the aristocracy was able to integrate individuals belonging to the elite strata of commoners or other noble groups outside of the central government.

The example of the Ka shod pa family is of particular interest because it represents integration by ennoblement. Most cases of ennoblement during the period were to be attributed to the assessment of the ruler, be it the Dalai Lama or the regent. Nevertheless, through marriage members of the aristocracy played an active role in the ennoblement process by choosing who they wanted to be part of their group. For example, in the case of the Ka shod pa family, two brothers married two daughters of the commoner family 'Brang stod pa, which belonged to the *sde dpon* family Rdo ring. The younger one, Mi 'gyur rdo rje, was given as an adoptive bridegroom to the 'Brang stod pa family. As such, he should have become himself a commoner. After having taken court action against the Rdo ring who wanted his wife to continue to work for them, he managed, through his being a *sger pa* and an adoptive bridegroom, to ennoble the family of his wife and start a new *sger pa* family.⁶¹

In most cases the process was the opposite: typically, a commoner would marry a noblewoman in an adoptive-bridegroom marriage and thereby obtain nobleman

⁵⁸ Interviews with Mr. Glang mthong zur pa blo bzang chos spel, 2005, Lhagyari, India, and Mr. Nor nang dge bshes, 2006, Seattle, United States.

⁵⁹ Interviews with Mrs. Glang mthong zur pa tsho brtan sgrol ma, 2003, and Mr. Glang mthong zur pa blo bzang chos spel, 2005, Dharamsala, India.

⁶⁰ As has been explained above, extramarital relationships are not taken into account, although they sometimes involved commoners.

⁶¹ Interviews with Mr. Ka shod pa 'jam dbyangs chos rgyal, 2006, London, United Kingdom, and Mr. Brag gdong bkraas gling dbang rdor, 2006, Lha sa, PRC.

status. Such occurrences are to be found in the Rma bya,⁶² 'Byor rgyas pa,⁶³ Ru thog,⁶⁴ and Tsha rong families.⁶⁵ This last example is well-known: Zla bzang dgra 'dul, who was ennobled by the thirteen Dalai Lama, was married as an adoptive bridegroom into the Tsha rong family in 1913. But in this particular instance, marriage confirmed the ennoblement and made integration into the group easier, but it was not its sole medium.

Conclusion

To conclude, the study of the corpus furnished an opportunity to check the accuracy of supposed typical features of the noble marital alliance. Contrary to what is sometimes found in the literature, the proportion of polyandrous marriage among the aristocracy proves to be quite low, whereas the proportion of matrilocal marriage appears to be very high. Beyond this statistical observation, it is regarding the social aspects of marriage in the aristocracy that the study of the corpus proved most fruitful. The prevalence of hypogamy was corroborated, and some crucial points relating to the question of the aristocracy's internal and external boundaries were brought to light. The recognition of membership fluidity through marriage gives us a better understanding of the central government aristocracy's identity as a social group. Marriage was indeed a means whereby the Tibetan aristocracy expressed its ambiguous nature. Two sets of contrasting features existed: on the one hand, its ideal of being a closely united social group and its search for prestige and domination worked within the group. On the other hand, the group was both exclusive and open. This second contrast should be seen as complementary rather than as contradictory, since it is only by allowing occasional marriages outside the group that the aristocracy could ensure respect for the endogamy rule.

⁶² Interview with Mrs. Rma bya don grub chos sgron, 2003, Dharamsala, India.

⁶³ *Who's Who in Tibet* (1949), 49.

⁶⁴ *Who's Who in Tibet* (1949), 102.

⁶⁵ *Who's Who in Tibet* (1949), 136; Yuthok, *The House of the Turquoise Roof*, 316; Petech, *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet*, 137; Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, *A Study of Polyandry*, 434.

Glossary

Note: these glossary entries are organized in Tibetan alphabetical order. All entries list the following information in this order: THL Extended Wylie transliteration of the term, THL Phonetic rendering of the term, the English translation, the Sanskrit equivalent, the Chinese equivalent, other equivalents such as Mongolian or Latin, associated dates, and the type of term.

Ka					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>ka shod pa</i>	Kashöpa				Clan
<i>ka shod pa 'jam dbyangs chos rgyal</i>	Kashöpa Jamyang Chögyel				Person
<i>ka shod pa mi 'gyur rdo rje</i>	Kashöpa Migyur Dorjé				Person
<i>klu khang bsod nams bde skyid</i>	Lukhang Sönam Dekyi				Person
<i>bkra shis bsam gtan gling</i>	Trashi Samtenling				Monastery
<i>bkra shis lhun po</i>	Trashi Lhünpo				Monastery
<i>bkra shis gshongs</i>	Treshong				Clan
<i>sku drag</i>	kudrak	aristocracy			Term
<i>skyid grong</i>	Kyidrong				Place
Kha					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>khams</i>	Kham				Place
<i>khyo gcig shug mang</i>	khyochik shukmang	polygyny			Term
<i>khyo mang shug gcig</i>	khyomang shukchik	polyandry			Term
<i>khral 'dzin</i>	trendzin	type of taxpayer			Term
<i>khri chen</i>	trichen	hierarch			Term
<i>khri smon</i>	Trimön				Clan
<i>khro dga' bo</i>	Trogawo				Clan
<i>khro dga' bo bkra shis</i>	Trogawo Trashi				Person
<i>'khrungs sa</i>	trungsa	marriage			Term
Ga					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>glang mthong</i>	Langtong				Clan
<i>glang mthong zur pa blo bzang chos spel</i>	Langtong Zurpa Lozang Chöpel				Person
<i>glang mthong zur pa tshe brtan sgrol ma</i>	Langtong Zurpa Tseten Drölma				Person
<i>glang mdun</i>	Langdün				Clan
<i>glang mdun dpal 'byor</i>	Langdün Penjor				Person
<i>dga' ldan pho brang</i>	Ganden Podrang	central government of Tibet			Organization

<i>dga' ba pa sangs</i>	Gawa Pasang				Author
<i>sger pa</i>	gerpa	landowner; common aristocratic family			Term
Nga					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>nga phod</i>	Ngapō				Clan
<i>ngag rgyun lo rgyus deb phreng</i>	Ngakgyün Logyü Deptreng	Oral History Series			Series
<i>dngos grub gting</i>	Ngödrupting				Clan
<i>sngags pa</i>	ngakpa	hereditary priest			Term
Ca					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>lcang lo can</i>	Changlochen				Clan
Cha					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>cha ma tshang</i>	Chamatsang				Clan
<i>cha ma tshang tshe ring chos ldan</i>	Chamatsang Tsering Chöden				Person
<i>chang sa</i>	changsa	marriage			Term
Nya					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>gnyen sgrig</i>	nyendrik	marriage			Term
<i>gnyen yig</i>	nyenyik	written contract of marriage			Term
Ta					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>bstan 'dzin don drub bsam grub pho brang</i>	Tenzin Döndrup Samdrup Podrang				Author
Tha					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>thon pa</i>	Tönpa				Clan
Da					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>dud chung</i>	düchung	type of taxpayer			Term
<i>de snga'i bod sa gnas srid gzhung gi sku drag shod drung ngam sger pa ngo yod gang dran ming tho</i>	Dengé Bösané Sizhunggi Kudrak Shödrunggam Gerpa Ngoyö Gangdren Mingto	List of the Names of the Lay Officials or Landowner Families of the Ancient Government of Tibet According to My Memory			Article
<i>drung 'khor</i>	drungkhor	lay official			Term
<i>bde skyid gling</i>	Dekyiling				Clan
<i>mdo zur</i>	Dozur				Clan
<i>rdo ring</i>	Doring				Clan

<i>lding bya</i>	Dingja				Clan
<i>sde dge</i>	Degé				Place
<i>sde dpon</i>	depön	title given to four aristocratic families who claim to date back to the former kings and ministers of the Tibetan Empire			Term
Na					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>nor nang dge bshes</i>	Nornang Geshé				Person
<i>gnam dpon</i>	Nampön				Clan
<i>snar skyid</i>	Narkyi				Clan
Pa					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>pan chen bla ma</i>	Penchen Lama	title of the hierarch of Trashi Lhünpo Monastery			Person
<i>dpal 'byor</i>	Penjor				Author
<i>dpal 'byor 'jigs med rnam gling</i>	Penjor Jikmé Namling				Author
<i>spa cog</i>	pachok	hair topknot worn by lay officials of the government			Term
<i>spom mda' tshang</i>	Pomdatsang				Clan
Pha					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>pha gzhis</i>	pakzhi	hereditary estate			Term
<i>phreng ring</i>	Trengring				Clan
<i>'phrin las rnam rgyal bde mkhar ba</i>	Trinlé Namgyel Dekharwa				Author
Ba					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>bod kyi yul srol rnam bshad</i>	Bökyi Yülsöl Namshé	<i>Explanations on Tibetan Customs</i>			Text
<i>bod kyi lo rgyus rig gnas dpyad gzhi'i rgyu cha bdams bsgrigs</i>	Bökyi Logyü Rikné Chezhi Gyucha Damdrik	<i>Selection of Source Materials for the Study of Tibetan History and Culture</i>			Text
<i>bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang</i>	Böjong Mimang Petrünkhang				Publisher
<i>bod rang skyong ljongs srid gros lo rgyus rig gnas dpyad gzhi'i rgyu cha u yon lan khang</i>	Bö Rangkyongjong Sidrö Logyü Rikné Chezhi Gyucha Uyön Lenkhang				Editor
<i>brag gdong bkras gling dbang rdor</i>	Drakdong Treling Wangdor				Person
<i>blo bzang don grub sreg shing</i>	Lozang Döndrup Sekshing				Author

'byor rgyas pa	Jorgyepa				Clan
'brang stod pa	Drangtöpa				Clan
'bras ljongs	Drenjong	Sikkim			Place
Ma					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
mag pa	makpa	adoptive bridegroom or matrilocally resident husband			Term
mi 'gyur rdo rje	Migyur Dorjé				Person
mi drag	midrak	title given to approximately nineteen rich and politically influential aristocratic families			Term
mi bogs	mibok	human lease			Term
mi tshe'i rba rlabs 'khrugs po	Mitsé Balap Trukpo	<i>The Agitated Waves of My Life</i>			Text
mi tshe'i lo rgyus dang 'brel yod sna tshogs	Mitsé Logyü Dang Dreljö Natsok	<i>History of My Life and Various Connected Things</i>			Text
mi rigs dpe skrun khang	Mirik Petrünkhang				Publisher
mi ser	miser	commoner			Term
rma bya	Maja				Clan
rma bya don grub chos sgron	Maja Döndrup Chödrön				Person
smar lam pa	Marlampa				Clan
smin skyid gling	Minkyiling				Clan
Tsa					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
gtsug g.yu	Tsukyu	<i>Turquoise Headstone</i>			Text
rtse drung	tsedrung	monk official			Term
rtsom rig sgyu rtsal deb phreng	Tsomrik Gyutsel Deptreng				Series
Tsha					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
tsha rong	Tsarong				Clan
tsha rong zla bzang dgra 'dul	Tsarong Dazang Drandül			1888-1959	Person
tshe britan g.yu gron	Tseten Yudrön				Person
tshe ring sgrol dkar g.yu thog	Tsering Drölkar Yutok				Author
tshong pa	tsongpa	merchant			Term

Dza					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>rdzong</i>	dzong	headquarters of a district magistrate			Term
Zha					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>zhal ngo</i>	zhelngo	low-ranking military officer			Term
<i>zhol khang</i>	Zhōlkhang				Clan
<i>zhol khang bsod nams dar rgyas</i>	Zhōlkhang Sōnam Dargyé				Person
<i>zhol med</i>	Zhōlmé				Clan
<i>zhwa sgab pa</i>	Zhagappa				Clan
<i>gzhis ka</i>	zhika	estate			Term
<i>gzhis bzhugs</i>	zhizhuk	one who stays on and manages the estate			Term
<i>gzhung zhabs</i>	zhungzhap	official			Term
Za					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>zur khang</i>	Zurkhang				Clan
<i>zur khang tshe brtan g.yu gron</i>	Zurkhang Tseten Yudrön				Person
<i>zur khang zur pa</i>	Zurkhang Zurpa				Clan
<i>zla bzang dgra 'dul</i>	Dazang Drandül				Person
'a					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>'od sbug rgya mtsho</i>	Öbuk Gyatso				Clan
Ya					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>yab gzhis</i>	yapzhi	title given to the ennobled families of the Dalai lamas			Term
<i>yab gzhis g.yu thog sa dbang dam pa bkra shis don grup mchog gi sku tshe 'i byung ba che long tsam ma bcos lhug par brjod pa bzhugs so</i>	<i>Yapzhi Yutok Sawang Dampa Trashī Dōndrup Chokgi Kutsé Jungwa Chelong Tsamma Chōlhukpar Jōpa Zhukso</i>	<i>A Spontaneous and Genuine Description of Some of the Life of the Excellent Cabinet Minister Yab gzhis G.yu thog Bkra shis don grup</i>			Text
<i>g.yu thog</i>	Yutok				Clan
<i>g.yu thog 'dod 'dul dbang phyug</i>	Yutok Dōndül Wangchuk				Person
Ra					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>rag kha shag</i>	Rakkhashak				Clan
<i>rigs</i>	rik	social strata			Term

<i>ru thog</i>	Rutok				Clan
La					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>las drung</i>	ledrung	clerk			Term
Sha					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>shan kha ba</i>	Shenkhawa				Clan
<i>shud khud pa</i>	Shükhüpa				Clan
<i>bshad sgra</i>	Shedra				Clan
<i>bshad sgra dga' ldan dpal 'byor</i>	Shedra Ganden Penjor				Person
Sa					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>sa skya</i>	Sakya				Monastery
<i>sa khyi lo'i skyid grong rgya dgu'i sgo khra them gan</i>	<i>Sakhyilö Kyidrong Gyagü Gotra Temgen</i>	<i>The Earth Dog Year (1958) Household Contract Being a Census [of Land and People] in the Nine Divisions of sKyid grong District</i>			Text
<i>sa 'du tshang</i>	Sandutsang				Clan
<i>sa 'du tshang rin chen</i>	Sandutsang Rinchen				Person
<i>sras rnam pa</i>	Senampa	title given to the sons of the higher-status aristocratic families			Term
<i>srid blon klu khang pa'i sku tshe'i mdzad rjes snying bsdus</i>	<i>Silön Lukhangpé Kutsé Dzejé Nyingdü</i>	<i>A Summary of the Achievements of Prime Minister Klu khang's Life</i>			Text
<i>gsang bdag rdo rje rdo dgon</i>	Sangdak Dorjé Dogön				Author
<i>bsam grub pho brang</i>	Samdrup Podrang				Clan
<i>bsam pho</i>	Sampo				Clan
Ha					
Wylie	Phonetics	English	Other	Dates	Type
<i>lha rgya ri</i>	Lhagyari				Clan
<i>lha sa</i>	Lhasa				Place

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