The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

A Historical Study

RAMESH K. DHUNGEL
About the Book

THE KINGDOM OF LO (MUSTANG)
A Historical Study

This book is a historical study of one of the prominent medieval kingdoms in the trans-Himalayan region of Nepal. The core territory of this kingdom is known today as 'Mustang' of North-western Nepal. This is the first effort of a Nepali scholar to sketch a full-fledged historical outline of the kingdom by employing both Nepali and Tibetan sources.

The book is based on several fieldworks conducted in Mustang and surrounding districts of western Nepal during 1982-84 and 1995. This research work has also utilized extensive published and unpublished archival sources, both in Nepali and Tibetan.
Dedicated to the late Dhanavajra Vajracharya, prominent epigraphist, Sanskritist and historian of Nepal, who inspired me to plunge into the quest of Nepali history in general and cultures, history and languages of the Himalayan region of Nepal in particular.
CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .............................................................. vii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .................................................. x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ................................................... xi
IMPORTANT POINTS FOR READERS ........................................ xiv

CHAPTERS
I INTRODUCTION ........................................................................ 1
   Field Work and Primary Sources ............................................. 6
   Physical Setting, Geographical Location ................................... 8
   Climate and Vegetation ....................................................... 13
   The People ........................................................................... 14
   Occupation ........................................................................... 16
   Major Settlements and Housing ............................................. 19
   Published Sources on Lo/Mustang and the Nepal Himalayas . 21
   Works on Lo/Mustang .......................................................... 25

II POLITICAL AND CULTURAL AFFILIATION WITH TIBET AND
   THE NGARI (MNGA'-'RIS) REGION ......................................... 41
   The Lo/Mustang Region Under the Early Tibetan Empire
     (Seventh through Tenth Century) ........................................... 43
   Lo/Mustang under Ngari (mNga'-ris skor-gsum), Khasa/Ya-tshe
     Kingdom, and Gung-thang (Tenth Through Fourteenth Century)
     .................................................................................... 47
   Lo Under the Khasa/Ya-tshe Kingdom of Western Nepal and the
     Gung-Thang Principality of Western Tibet (Twelfth through
     Fourteenth Centuries) ......................................................... 54
   The Fall of the Khasa/Ya-tshe Kingdom and Lo's Move Toward
     Independence from both the Khasa/Ya-tshe Kingdom and Gung-
     thang (Late Fourteenth through the First Half of the Fifteenth
     Century) ........................................................................ 67
III THE FOUNDATION, RISE, AND STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE OF THE KINGDOM OF LO/MUSTANG ........................................ 73

The Emergence of the Kingdom under King A-ma-dpal and His descendants (Early Fifteenth through Mid-Fifteenth Century) ........................................................................................................... 75

rDzong-dpon and Chos-rgyal A-ma-dpal (b. 1387 - d. 1447, Commissioner and First Independent Ruler of Lo/Mustang) ... 83

Lo/Mustang under Chos-rgyal A-mgon-bstan-'dzin-bzang-po and the Territorial Expansion of the Kingdom (1447 - Late Fifteenth Century) .................................................................................. 88

Lo/Mustang under Chos-rGyal bKra-shis-mgon and mGon-po-rgyal-ntshan (Late Fifteenth through the Mid-Sixteenth Century) ........................................................................................................ 92

Struggle for Existence (1540s-1788) ........................................ 99

King bSam-grub-dpal-'bar and his Attempt to Maintain Lo/Mustang's Independence .................................................... 105

Lo/Mustang after bSam-grub-dpal-'bar and the Age of Jumli Suzerainty ........................................................................ 109

IV LO/MUSTANG UNDER NEPAL (SINCE 1789) ......................... 117

King (sDe-pa or Raja) dBang-rgyal rdo-rje, His Policies and Achievements, and the Military Campaign of Gorkha (Nepal) ............................................................................................................ 119

State of Mustang under the Local Leadership of the Rajas After dBang-rgyal-rdo-rje (Since c. 1795) .............................. 128

Mustang's Position after Dependency to Nepal ......................... 139

V SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION ............................................. 147

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..................................................................... 157

APPENDICES ......................................................................... 183

i. Etymology of Place names .................................................. 185

ii. Nepali Documents ............................................................ 191

iii. Tibetan Documents .......................................................... 207

PHOTO PLATES AND FACSIMILES ....................................... 291

INDEX .................................................................................. 331
Most of the field data and the historical documents on which this study is based were collected during the years 1982-83 under a historical survey program that I conducted through the Research Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS), Tribhuvan University (TU). The project was funded by the Integrated Development and Research of Canada (IDRC). I thus, gratefully acknowledge the financial support provided for this purpose by the IDRC through CNAS. I would also like to express my gratitude to CNAS and TU for providing me the opportunity to conduct a historical survey on Mustang and granting me an extensive leave of absence to advance my study focusing on the same subject in the United States of America.

In the course of conducting the field survey of this research work, I have incurred debts to at least several hundred people from Mustang and elsewhere. The fieldwork for this research was conducted not only in Mustang but also in the neighboring districts of Manang, Myagdi, Baglung, and Parvat. Dozens of people from these districts either provided or helped me to collect historical documents. I want to thank all of them.

In Mustang, the most instrumental help I obtained was from Wangdi (dBang-dus) Lama and Dondup (Don-grub) Gurung of Lomanthang (Mon-thang). Wangdi Lama was my first Tibetan language teacher at CNAS, and he later worked as my assistant both for the fieldwork and for document processing and translation. Dondup Gurung assisted me through several months of fieldwork undertaken in the eastern (Shar-ri) and southern (south from Dar-lha pass to the Muktinath area) villages of Mustang. Surendra Bista, Gyacho (rGya-mtsho) Gurung (now a prominent Amchi), and Tenpa Gyalchen (bsTan-pa-rgyal-mtshan) Bista, of Lomanthang (mon-thang) also provided valuable assistance in the collection of historical documents.

The personal secretary and bilingual interpreter to the present Raja of Mustang, Chandra Bahadur Thakali showed heart-felt interest in my project and showed me hundreds of historical documents from the palace of Mustang. Similarly, Venerable mKhan-po rin-po-che Tashi Tenjin (bKra-shis-bstan-'dzijn) of Mon-thang-chos-sde monastery, venerable bCo-brgyad Khri-chen rin-po-che Ngag-dbang-thub-bstan-rgya-mtsho of the Mustang monasteries in Lumbini and Baudhanath, Kathamndu, Pema (Padma) Lama of Gar-phug also offered their valuable time to provide historical information, documents, and allowed me to conduct a survey of religious and cultural artifacts in and from Mustang. The Right Honorable Mustangi Raja 'Jig-med-dpal-bar Bista, Mr. Lobsang (Lo-bzang) Bista of Tsarang, Mr. Sherab Gurung of Jarkot, Mr. Laxmi P. Thakali of Thini, Mr. Sankarman
Sherchan, Mr. Govindaman Sherchan, Mr. Bishnu Hirachan, and Mr. Surendra Hirachan of Thak also extended their time and sincere interest towards my project and helped arrange access to documents of their respected areas. I owe a great deal of debt to each of these individuals.

I should not forget to acknowledge the warmest hospitality and encouragement I was offered by the present Rani Shaheba Sidol Palvar Bista (Srid-sgrol dpal-'bar) of Mustang. During my almost two month long historical survey in the palace of Mustang, under the direct supervision of the Rani Shaheba, I was offered lunch and tea almost every day. I can never forget the motherly concern demonstrated by the Rani shaheba, fixing tsampa (barley flour) and Tibetan tea for me as I did not know how to mix those things properly. My sincere thanks thus must go to her.

At CNAS, I owe a special debt to the late Dhanavajra Vajracarya, who provided guidelines and shared with me his experience and profound knowledge of Nepali history. Similarly, I also obtained help from Prof. Prayagraj Sharma (I should thank Prof. Sharma not only for his general help but also for his comments on my text), Prof. Dor Bahadur Bista, Dr. Navin K. Rai, Dr. Durga P. Ojha and Kumar Khadga Bikram Shah, then Executive Director of CNAS. So, I would like to express my thankfulness to each of them.

My colleagues at CNAS at that time, Rambahadur Chhetri, Jagarnan Gurung, Sudarshan Adhikari, and the project's administrative assistant Rekharaj Rai were also helpful during my historical research on Mustang. I should also thank them all for their help and good amity.

During my advanced study at Columbia University, I owe the deepest debt to Professor Theodore Riccardi Jr. (MEALAC Dept.) for his scholarly guidance, insight, and enthusiasm for this research work. I am also in debt to Professors Mark Van De Meiroop (MEALAC Dept.), Lobsang Jamspal (MEALAC/Religion Depts.), Gurindar Singh Mann (Religion Dept.), and Frances Pritchett (MEALAC Dept.) for their invaluable time and helpful comments and suggestions.

I should also thank my friends Michael Goldman Donallery, Sharon Houminer, David Thompson, David Mellins, Ben Wright, Kathi Maloney and Tara Niraula for their technical assistance and useful suggestions and comments on portions of the book. I should also acknowledge Dr. Susan Vankoski for helping me edit the text and Mathew Akester for editing Tibetan spellings. For preparing index, I thank Binaya Rana of Dept. of Buddhist Studies, T.U. Similarly, for the technical assistance, I should also express my thankfulness to Tagya Lama, Zhabs-drung Rinchen Palgor of
Mustang (for typing Tibetan texts), Anesh Shresthacharya of CNAS, Tribhuvan University (for formatting the entire text). I cannot forget the concern showed by the present Gyalchung (Junior Raja) of Mustang for the publication of this work. Thus my sincere gratitude also goes to Gyalchung Jigme S. Bista and his family.

Finally, if I did not express my thankfulness to my wife Bana for her deep compassion, patience, and hard work to support our family and my education during my research and study years in the United States, it would be a great injustice. Similarly, I should also thank my son Nripesh and daughter Bidushi for the help they provided and the patience they showed to me during the toughest period of my study and research.

If there are errors left, despite all the support and help I acknowledged above, I alone am responsible.

Ramesh K. Dhungel
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

MAPS

1. Nepal and Western Tibet ................................................................. 10
2. Kingdom of Lo/Mustang and the Areas under its Influence ......... 11

GENEALOGICAL CHARTS

1. Genealogy of Lo/Mustang Ruling Dynasty until Lo's Dependence to Nepal ................................................................. 77
2. Genealogy of Lo/Mustang Rajas after 1789 (the date of Lo's dependence to Nepal) ................................................................. 120
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS


doc.  document

docs.  documents

GDR  Tshe-dbang-nor-bu, Kah-thog-rig-'dzin (1698-1755), Bod-ri lha-btsad-po'i gung-thang du ji-Itar byung-ba'i (shul-deb gter-dwang-shel'phrul-gyi-me-long (Genealogy of Gung-thang Rulers, composed by the author in Lo in the year 1749)

GRGM  Tshe-dbang-nor-bu (1698-1755), Glo-bo rgyal-po la-gdams-pa'i-mgur, Selected Writings of Kah-thog-Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang-nor-bu. Darjiling: 1973


KGJ  Kun-dga'-grol-mchog, Jo-nang (c. 1507-1566), Dpal-lidan bla-ma 'Jam-pa'i dbyangs-kyi rnam-par thar-pa legs-bshad khyad-par-gsum-lidan. (Biography of Glo-bo mkhan-chen, a manuscript from Mustang)


Lo-Khen (a)  Mkhas-pa rnam-'jug-pa'i sgo'i rnam-par bshad-pa'i rig-gnas-gsal-byed, (a manuscript composed by Glo-bo mkhan-chen), Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, Vol. 43)

Lo-Khen (b)  Glo-bo mkhan-chen Bsod-nams-lhun-grub (1456-1532), Bka'-bum-gyi dkar-chag gsal-ba'i me-long (from Collected Works Vol. 3), New Delhi: 1977
Lo-khen (c) Bla-ma'i rnam-thar rin-chen phreng-ba, (Biography of Rgyal-tshab Kun-dga' dbang-phyug, a manuscript from Mustang)

Lo-Khen (d) Chos-rgyal-chen-po Bkra-shis-mgon gyi sa-skya'i dgongs-rdzogs kyi mchod-brjod (from Collected Works Vol. 3), New Delhi: 1977

Lo-Khen (e) Gzhi-khar gnang-ba'i phyag-dam zhal-shu-ma (from Collected Works Vol. 3), New Delhi: 1977

Lo-Khen (f) Mi-dbang Mgon-po rgyal-mtshan gyi dris-lan rgyal-sras bzhad-pa'i me-tog (from Collected Works Vol. 3), New Delhi: 1977

Lo-Khen (g) Rin-po-che Bde-legs rgya-mtsho'i brgyad-stong-pa'i dkar-chag (from Collected Works), New Delhi: 1977

Lo-Khen (h) Rje-btsun bla-ma'i rnam-par thar-pa ngo-mtshar rgya-mtsho, (autobiography of Glo-bo Mkhan-chen, a manuscript from Mustang)

MHR (Mustang History Report) Ramesh Dhungel's "Lo (Mustana) rajyako aitihasika rupa-rekha" (Historical Outline of the Kingdom of Lo (Mustang), text in Nepali, research report submitted to the Research Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University, Nepal, VE 2044 (1987)

NChB Dkon-mchog lhun-grub, Ngor-chen (1497-1557) [and Sangs-rgyas Phun-tshogs], Dam-pa'i chos-kyi 'byung-tshul legs-par bshad-pa bstan-pa'i rgya-mtshor 'jug-pa'i gru-chen, (History of Sa-skya Ngor-pa line of Tibetan Buddhism, also known as Ngor-chos-'byung), New Delhi: 1973


NSDR gNyas ston-pa'i gdung-rabs dang gdan-rabs (recent Tibetan publication)

PRR Padma 'phrin-las, Rdo-rgye-brag Rig-'dzin (II) (1640-1728), 'Dus-pa mdo-dbang-gyi bla-ma brgyud-pa'i rnam-thar ngo-mtshar dad-pa'i phreng-ba, (Biography of Lama Brgyud-pa), Leh: 1972

RCPT Bco-brgyad Khri-chen, Thub-bstan legs-bshad rgya-mtsho, Rin-chen phra-tshom and its Nepali version (Mustanako rajaitihasa), (Genealogical history of Mustang, manuscripts from Mustang palace)
List of Abbreviations


TsBN Brag-dkar rta-so Sprul-ku Rig-'dzin chos-kyi dban-phug (b. 1775), Dpal-rig-'dzin chen-po rdo-rje Tshe-dbang nor-bu'i zhabs-kyi rnam-par thar-pa'i cha-shas brjod-pa ngo-mtshar dad-pa'i rol-mtsho, (Biography of Tshe-dbang-nor-bu, a manuscript from the personal collection of Lama Pad-ma of Gar-phug dgon-pa, Mustang and a transcription from the library of Gene Smith, now at Trace Foundation, NewYork).

VE Vikrama Era, Nepal's official calendar system

SE Saka Era, an old calendar system once used in Nepal and some parts of India.

MS Manuscript.
FEW IMPORTANT POINTS FOR READERS

♦ In order to save time the initial numbering of historical documents, which was used in the report submitted to CNAS, Tribhuvan University is used for the citation of documents. The documents related for this book has new numbers but the old number of each documents has been given in parenthesis immediately after the new number.

♦ Since there is no separate section for sources, terms and names of different languages and cultural background under bibliography and index sections, only the English alphabetical order is used. There is no Tibetan order in this case.

♦ Having considered the importance of original sources in historical writing, wrong spelling of Tibetan and Nepali words and sentences in the documents is left as it is. In some cases, the correct form is given in parenthesis.

♦ In order to give priority, the order of importance and geographic location, no chronological order has been adopted under ‘document section’ of the book.

♦ Considering the importance of Photo-plates and facsimiles to general users of the book, mostly phonetic system is adopted in captioning.
Lo is a prosperous land adorned with the beauty of the Himalayan Mountains and sources of river jewels. This is a land blessed with the preaching of the second Buddha, Padmākara (Padmasaṃbhava), the excellent translator [Lo-tsa-ba], Rin-chen bzang-po, and the great lord of yoga, Mi-la ras-pa through various precepts of the teaching of Lord Buddha. The land of Lo arose from the lotus feet of great personalities such as [Ngor-chen] rDo-rje-'chang Kun-dga' bzang-po.

- Byams-pa dkar-chag, fol. 6
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This is a historical study of a kingdom, located in the trans-Himalayan region of western Nepal, popularly known today in Nepal as Mustang, and Lo in Tibet. The kingdom, still "remote" by most purposes today, remains a vibrant, and accessible center of western Tibetan culture. A small region situated along Nepal's border with Tibet, Lo/Mustang was once on one of the main north-south routes linking India, China, Nepal, and Tibet. Its location along the banks of Kāli Gandakī ensured that it was an important entrepot for trans-Himalayan trade from the fifteenth to the early twentieth century. During much of this period it flourished on the basis of this trade.\(^1\) Despite its importance for the study of Tibetan and other Himalayan cultures, few scholars have been able to focus upon Lo/Mustang itself. Nevertheless, there exists a wealth of local documents in Nepali and Tibetan which, taken together, reveal the chief stages of Lo's emergence and development, in the Himalayan region.

The study primarily employs detailed genealogical documents to show how Lo/Mustang emerged as a kingdom in 1440, and how key geographical, cultural, and political realities had earlier shaped its regional identity. On the one hand, Lo/Mustang remained a stronghold of classic western Tibetan Buddhist culture well into the 1700s. On the other hand, it was a definable, well-traveled, and even strategic trans-Himalayan way-station for traders. Its mercantile population facilitated this trans-Himalayan trade and gained a trans-regional visibility. Although at times it enjoyed some semblance of autonomy, it usually was subject to the designs of stronger neighbors who have shaped its borders. Still, by dint of its situation as a locus for trans-Himalayan trade, and its vigor as a center of Buddhist culture (or both), Lo/Mustang has remained an identifiable entity from at least the seventh century, up to its incorporation, in 1789, into the kingdom of Nepal, and into the present day. From the earliest sources available pertaining to Lo/Mustang (La-dvags rgyal-rabs, translated as 'Chronicles of Ladakh', Tun-huang Annals, and Deb-ther dkar-po, translated as 'White Annals'), we know

---

\(^1\) Although this kingdom was known by different names such as Lo, Lo-bo (written Glo bo or Blo bo in Tibetan), Mustang, Mastang, Monthang, Mosthang, the most popular and well established among them until Jurli's occupation of the upper Kāli Gandakī valley was Lo or Lo-bo. After the domination of Jurli in the lower Lo region, the name Mustang became dominant. After becoming a dependency of Nepal, Mustang became the official name of Lo. Thus, the name Lo/Mustang will be used throughout this dissertation.
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

that Tibetan influence was in full force by the seventh century. This was a time of rapid cultural and political change both in Tibet and South Asia. Later, as the early Tibetan empire disintegrated in the tenth century, the Lo/Mustang region came under the influence of a local power, the Gung-thang (Gung-thang) principality.2

During the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, Lo/Mustang came under the domination of the Khaśa/Ya-tshe kingdom (in Tibetan Ya-tshe or sometime Ya-rtse), whose center was in the Karnali basin and extended into western Tibet and the Kumaun-Garhwal region of present-day northern India.3 After the fall of the Khaśa/Ya-tshe kingdom, Lo/Mustang gradually emerged as a separate kingdom, finally proclaiming its independence in 1440. By the middle of the sixteenth century, however, Lo/Mustang formally came under the rule of the kingdom of Jurīḷā, one of the many successors of the Khaśa/Ya-tshe kingdom. By that time, the kingdom of Lo/Mustang was called "mustāṅg rājya", for it was dominated politically by the Indo-Aryan speaking Khaśas of Jurīḷā.4

The ethnic affinities of the people and authorities of Lo/Mustang with those of greater Tibet forged close links culturally and administratively. Lo/Mustang, however, was eventually incorporated into Nepal in 1789 just as the bāisi and caubisi states (twenty two and twenty four principalities) of western Nepal were incorporated, although Lo/Mustang continued to maintain its cultural identity. It adhered strictly to an agreement of dependence made with Nepal after the Gorkhali conquest of Jurīḷā in 1789, and became a dependent tributary of Nepal. From that time on, Lo/Mustang adapted to its dependent status until the implementation of the Dependent Principalities Act of 196[1](rājya rajaṭā aina 2017) of the government of Nepal, which officially abolished the four remaining dependent principalities of Nepal, one of which was Lo/Mustang. However, in its case, the "rājā"
Introduction

title, with some traditional rights, allowances, and honorary positions of rājā were left untouched.

Including the present rājā (king), Lo/Mustang has been ruled continuously by twenty-one generations of rulers of the same dynasty, known in Tibetan as rGyal-po, sDe-pa or in Nepali rājā. Constitutionally, the present rājā has no authority other than bearing the traditional title and receives a nominal monetary allowance and some recognition from His Majesty's Government of Nepal. In practice, however, he exercises power within the Tsho-bdun area of upper Mustang. Today, because of the sealing of Tibetan border by China and the total collapse of trans-Himalayan trade, Lo/Mustang became one of the most remote trans-Himalayan regions. In addition to this, the Lo/Mustang region has been affected by the lack of its natural resources.

The introductory chapter underway will discuss the physical setting of the Lo/Mustang region. This section establishes that Lo/Mustang was a region devoid of natural resources but blessed with an advantageous location, which was crucial during its centuries as a trans-Asian trade conduit. A brief statement about the history of Tibet and Nepal is also included in order to delineate the complexity of Lo/Mustang region on the Himalayan frontier. This section is followed by a description of the study's methodology. The study then proceeds to review the modern literature on the region. The record of academic production on Lo/Mustang is spotty. This dearth of reliable information has made Lo/Mustang a place not easily defined. This contrasts sharply with the growing popularization of the image of Lo/Mustang as a remote, pristine land at which tourists worldwide are now being exhorted to look.

The second chapter, called "Political and Cultural Affiliations With Tibet and the Ngari (mNga'-ris) Region," covers the history related to emergence of Lo/Mustang as a historical entity, beginning from the seventh century to the time of its independence in the year 1440. It covers early political, religious, and cultural foundations of the region, and describes its eventual inclusion within the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe kingdom and later, the Gung-thang principality of western Tibet.

The third chapter, "The Foundation, Rise, and Struggle for Existence of the Kingdom of Lo/Mustang" assesses events from the middle of the fifteenth century to the late eighteenth century, when Lo/Mustang was subjugated politically by Gorkha-Nepal. This chapter highlights the efforts of the rulers of Lo/Mustang toward achieving the independence and territorial integrity of their kingdom. Chapter Four, "Lo/Mustang Under

---

5 In practice, the Lo tsho-dun (Glo tsho-bdun) area of upper Mustang is still considered the traditional domain of the rājā of Mustang.
Gorkha-Nepal (since 1789)," discusses significant changes in the condition of Lo/Mustang as a distinct place, from its inclusion in Gorkha-Nepal up to the present time. In addition to a summary-conclusion, a bibliography and appendices supplement the study. An etymological discussion of Tibetan and other place names and selected historical documents are included in the appendix.

At this point, it is necessary to discuss the methodological approaches of the authors of previous works on Himalayan studies. Some anthropologists who have studied Tibetan religion and society have provoked criticism from Tibetologists, who accuse the anthropologists of gross errors stemming from a lack of Tibetan language skills (Snellgrove 1965). Criticisms of Haimendorf's work on Sherpas are instructive in this regard (Snellgrove 1965, Oppitz 1968). Certainly, criticism exchanged between "Tibetologists" and anthropologists is linked to differences in their working methods and skills. This difference may also be considered an epistemological one.

Generally, the aim of Tibetan-language scholars has been to study various aspects of culture such as history, myths, legends, art, and religious history of the Tibetan civilization. Their research works are therefore based on literary and other written documents and archaeological sources. By contrast, anthropologists and ethnographers have mainly used direct observational techniques for producing objective and synchronic accounts of given communities. Some prominent Himalayan anthropologists believe that actual socio-cultural practices may be at variance with textual content (Ortner 1989). Himalayan studies in Nepal have come to include and integrate, both Tibetological and anthropological methodologies (Oppitz 1968). Employing this approach, scholars use literary and documentary evidence for historical analysis and community observation and field data for the study of cultural practices (Oppitz: ibid., Cooke 1985: 303-310). Some anthropologists have also called attention to the importance of this method in their works on myths, legends, and oral traditions of Tibetan communities in Himalayan Nepal (Vinding and Gauchan 1977, Levine 1976).

FIELD WORK AND PRIMARY SOURCES

Major field work for the present research was done in 1982 and 1983 between April and September of both years. In 1982, the field research covered the area between Kagbeni and the Tibetan border. During this first

---

6 The project was sponsored by the Research Center for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS), Tribhuvan University, Nepal and the author of this work was the researcher working for the university. As a outcome of this research a seven volume detailed report in Nepali was submitted to CNAS.
field study, the researcher spent approximately nine weeks exclusively in Lo/Mustang palace reading, copying, and photographing old government documents related to Tibet, Nepal, and Lo/Mustang itself. After that, he spent four additional months visiting historical forts, temples, monasteries, palaces, caves, and other historical monuments and conducting interviews, viewing historical documents and literary sources of political and socio-religious importance from virtually every Lo/Mustang village. Repeating this approach, the second year's fieldwork covered the area between Muktināth and Thāk. This second year's field survey also covered the neighboring Districts of Parvat, Bāglung, Myāgdi, and Manang. Another very brief supplementary field work of upper Mustang and the Bāragāun area was done in 1995.

Among the documents collected in the field work, about thirty per cent are from upper Lo, and rest from lower Lo and surrounding districts. About ninety per cent of the documents collected from the upper Lo region are written in Tibetan, and only ten per cent in Nepali language. However, in the lower Lo and Thāk area, about seventy percent documents are Nepali and only thirty percent Tibetan. Among the Nepali documents collected from Lo/Mustang, more than a dozen are royal orders from the rulers of Juinla and Parvat. Documents from the Tibetan government and influential Lamas were found mainly in upper Lo and some were found in Thāk, Pāchīgaun and Bāragāun areas of lower Lo. Some of the documents also concern agreements on regional political and trade issues. The work of collecting historical documents was also supplemented by an archival survey at the Foreign Ministry archives (old jaisī kothā) of Nepal.

The field study included the work collecting important historical manuscripts such as biographies (rNam-thar) of religious personalities, accounts relating to monasteries, shrines, forts, palaces, villages, main cultural and religious objects and other written governmental, social, and religious documents. In addition to biographical literature and government documents, the field study also covered the work of consulting old written records of Lo/Mustang such as dKar-chag (official account), Bemschag (account similar to dKar-chag), phyag-yig (royal orders), phyag-tham (royal orders), Deb-yig (a register or information or record book), mChings-yig (an official agreement), 'Gan-rgya (responsibility or promise letter with official seal), Srol-deb (written record related to tradition and custom compiled in a book form), bKa'-'rgya-ma (formal order of a ruler or administrator), sProd-yig (document related to financial, trade or other account), bCa'-yig (document related to rules and regulation approved or given by an official or a king), Khral-deb (tax register), and Molla or Mol-gtam (royal genealogy).

The field research mainly applied the methods of identification, copying, and content analysis of historical documents. The documents collected in the
field research in Tibetan and old Nepali languages. Most of the Nepali documents are written in old Jumli, Parvate, and Gorkhali-Nepali and concern government orders or administrative correspondence.

Work with documents was supplemented by informal open-ended interviews with learned monks, religious personalities, and other key informants, such as the Glo rgyal-po and rgyal-mo (rājā=king and Rānī=queen), social workers such as Am-chi (traditional medical practitioners), rTsis-pa (astronomers), lHa-bris-pa (painters and artists), and heads of households (Drun-g-pa) of the traditional administrative authorities like sGo-pa, sDe-pa, rGan-pa, sPyi-khyab-pa, Khri-thog-pa etc., mainly in the upper Lo areas. In almost every village, special meetings with traditional village assemblies resulted in their granting permission to examine village records and document boxes.

PHYSICAL SETTING

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Lo/Mustang is located in the trans-Himalayan portion of the upper Kālī Gaṇḍakī valley in northwestern Nepal. The upper Lo or the Lo-tsho-dun area covers an area of approximately 780 square miles. The Annapūrṇa and Dhaulagiri mountain ranges separate this area from the cis-Himalayan mountain regions of Nepal. Most of the villages dominated by Lo-pa culture are located in the north of these mountain ranges at about eighty-four degrees latitude, and between 2400 and 4500 meters above sea level.

Since the history of Lo/Mustang is directly linked with the history of both Nepal and Tibet, two powerful kingdoms in the Himalayan region, a brief historical statement about these countries would be helpful for better understanding of the historical picture of Lo/Mustang.

Although Tibet is now within the political boundary of China, for more than a millennium and half, it was either a strong empire or at least a semi-independent kingdom. Tibetan lanGu-ge, religion, and culture are still considered to be the inspiring sources for the Himalayan peoples of Northern Nepal, including the Lo/Mustang region. Tibet's dated history begins from sixth century A. D. with its strong ruler, Srong-btsan sgam-po (c. 569-650), who was able to consolidate Tibet into a strong empire in Asia. King Srong-btsan was the first Tibetan ruler to bring Tibet into the international scene. This early political picture of Tibet remained for about three centuries.

The southern territory of Tibet during the reigns of Srong-btsan and his successors included the southern most remote settlements of the Himalayas. Its boundary line curved down from west to east including upper parts of present-day Kashmir, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Assam. Although
Lo/Mustang now belongs politically to Nepal, it falls within the southwest frontiers of Tibetan cultural boundary line. In the tenth century, because of
the internal conflicts between the Bon and Buddhist aristocrats, the early Tibetan empire disintegrated, causing the emergence of numerous principalities within the ancient territory of Tibet. Among the three major political regions of the early Tibetan empire (mNga’-ris skor-gsum, dBus, and gTsang), the mNga’-ris skor-gsum was the collective name for the three major political districts of western Tibet popularly known as Mar-yul (the Ladakh region), Gu-ge-Pu-rang (the Mānsarobara and Kailāśa regions), and Mang-yul (the Gung-thang region).

After the political disintegration of Tibet in the early tenth century, the Lo/Mustang region became one of the southern most frontier districts of Ngari (mNga’-ris). Then, from time to time, the major powers of Ngari were able to claim and maintain their domination up to the Lo/Mustang region. These dominating powers of Ngari included the rulers of Gu-ge, Gung-thang, and Ya-tshe. Among these three, the Ya-tshe, also known as the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe kingdom, emerged in the twelfth century in the northwestern corner of present-day Nepal. Until the fall of the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe rulers of the Karnaḷ region and the rulers of Gung-thang during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, this political situation remained in the southern frontier region of western Tibet and the high Himalayan region of western Nepal.

Although Nepal has a history of about two thousand years or more, the political picture of modern Nepal was drawn only after the Gorkhali conquest of the Kathmandu Valley in 1769. Gorkha’s campaign of consolidating mountain kingdoms was stopped only after the Anglo-Nepal war of 1814. Until then, the political territory of Nepal was not clearly defined. Although during the reign of the Licchavi rulers (c. third to ninth century A. D.), Nepal’s territory was expanded up to the Koshi region in the east and the Gandaki region in the west, the fall of the Licchavi dynasty in the center caused a greater political disintegration of the Ancient Kingdom of Nepal. Consequently, different petty principalities emerged within and around the Kathmandu valley. By the thirteenth century, a powerful ruling dynasty known as 'Malla' appeared in the valley and for about three hundred years it ruled the Kathmandu valley and the surrounding areas as an undivided political entity. In the late fifteenth century, this kingdom was divided into three branches: Kantipur, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur. Similarly, different powers appeared in both eastern and western regions of Nepal. The major kingdoms in eastern and western regions with their powerful ruling dynasties such as the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe, Karnaḷa, and Sena emerged, developed and declined. After the disintegration of the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe and Sena kingdoms, and the total fall of the Karnaḷas, many principalities collectively known as bāisi and caubisi in western Nepal and dozens of others in central and eastern Nepal also emerged. Finally, launching its ambitious military
campaign, the Kingdom of Gorkha consolidated the entire territory between the river Tista in the east and the river Satlaj in the west within a fifty years time.

During their most ambitious military campaign, the Gorkhali rulers were also able to consolidate the entire territory up to the northern Himalayan frontiers of Tibet. During the process of consolidating the high Himalayan frontier settlements, the Gorkhali force was able to bring a couple of important trans-Himalayan Tibetan cultural areas under its control. Lo/Mustang was one of them.

Although Lo/Mustang now lies within the political boundary of Nepal, the area inhabited and dominated by the Lo-pa people and their culture had not been included within the territory of Nepal until 1789. Until around that time, other major high Himalayan settlements of present-day Nepal, such as Dolpo, Manāṅg, Nubri, Nar, Nyishang were not incorporated either. Even after the consolidation of these high Himalayan settlements into Nepal, socially and culturally, they were not considered a part of mainstream Nepali territory until very recent times. They were rather called by a general term bhot, a popular Nepali name for Tibet, such as mustān bhot, manān bhot, chārkā bhot.

During the medieval period of Nepali history (between tenth and eighteenth century A. D.), as a result of the complex nature of the rise and fall of the major medieval kingdoms and the emergence of more than fifty petty principalities within the territory of present-day Nepal, Nepal's territory was not defined clearly. In earlier times, the Malla kingdom of the Kathmandu valley, Khasa/Ya-tshe kingdom of the Karnālī region, Karnāṭa kingdom of Tirahut or Simraungarh, Sena kingdoms of Palpa and Makawanpur were the dominating forces in Nepal. Among these medieval forces, the Khaśa/Ya-tshe has left a deep and enduring influence in political and social history of modern Nepal. It is pertinent that the present-day linguafranca of Nepal originated and developed under the influence of the Khaśa/Ya-tshe rulers. The Khaśa/Ya-tshe rulers have also left their profound influence on the political and cultural history of western Tibet.

CLIMATE AND VEGETATION

Most of Lo/Mustang lies in the trans-Himalayan region and does not have the humid monsoon climate of the rest of Nepal. Consequently, Lo/Mustang is dry: there is not enough rainfall to support regular and sustained crops. even in the summer season, and only an occasional drizzle can be seen in the summer months of June, July, and August. It is one of the coldest areas in Nepal. In the winter season, Mustang's temperature drops up to -20 to -30 degree celsius and in summer, it remains between 10 to 0 degree celsius.
Because of the intensity of the sun, the strong winds that blow northwards through the narrow passage between the two giant mountain ranges, and the lack of rainfall, Lo/Mustang today is virtually barren. Some lower river valleys produce some vegetation, and are cultivated through traditional irrigation systems. As Lo/Mustang receives lots of winter snow every year, its mountains and valleys are often covered with snow, and the melting of the snows in summer helps water the alpine mountains and aids the production of grasses.

Local traditions present a different picture of the past. According to these sources, until around the sixteenth century, most of Lo/Mustang had an abundance of water from the surrounding snow-covered mountains, diverse vegetation, and dense forests from which the Lo-pa people built monumental structures, such as the majestic Buddhist monasteries of Byams-pa and Thub-chen, and great palaces like bKra-shis dge-'phel of Monthang and bSam-grub dge-'phel of Tsarang (MHR doc. 20, tib., Byams-pa dkar-chag: fol. 6, KGJ: 7a-7b). Although the exact cause of this great difference is not known, it can be guessed that climatic change may have adversely affected the natural resources of the Lo/Mustang region.

THE PEOPLE

Although greater ‘Lo/Mustang today is settled by a mix of Lo-pa, Bāragāünle, Pañcghāünle, and Thākālī people, the Lo tsho-dun area of upper Lo/Mustang is inhabited mainly by Lo-pa people, who are culturally, linguistically, and ethnically similar to the people of western and central Tibet. Historical sources show that the people from rDzong-kha, gZhis-kar-rtse), Gyangtse (rGyal rts), Lhasa, Kuti, Gu-ge (Zhang-zhung), Pu-rang (sPu-rang or Pu-hrang) and even Kham (mDo-khams) migrated to Lo/Mustang at different times and blended into the Lo-pa culture (MHR: 291-293, docs. 105-106 Nepali, Snellgrove 1967: 91-92, TR 2b-3a). Until the late eighteenth century, some of the settlements, such as Khar-rag, Bod-grub-pa (near Gelung village), Chungjung (cung-chung), Samdzong (bSam-rdzong), Chodzong (Chos-rdzong), and Dar-chog in upper Lo, were still known as settlements of Tibetan migrants (MHR: 292, doc. Beins-chag 3: 85a-b). Migration of 'Brog-pa (Tibetan nomads) and Na-ka (descendants of nomadic and sedentary Tibetans) to Lo/Mustang was a frequent phenomenon even until the nineteenth century (MHR: 292).

Lo-pa society is composed of three main classes of people: SKU-drag-pa (ruling class), Phal-pa (ordinary working class), and mGar-pa (outcast or low

---

7 Etymological explanation of names Lo, Lo-bo, Monthang, Mustang, Se-rib, Lo-smad (lower-Lo), Kag-Baragaun, Thag or Thaksatsae, Sum-po or Thini-Panchgaun is given in the appendix.
class). In addition to these, there is a small but significant migrant group in Moonthang known as the Thehu-thare (a new Tibetan migrant community known after their old family name or identity); this group is situated between the Phal-pa and mGar-pa socially. Among those groups of nomadic origin from the northern reaches of Lo/Mustang, the Na-ka community is considered higher in status than the 'Brog-pa. However, three classes—the thehu-thare, naka, and 'Brog-pa—are usually treated today as one class wedged between the Phal-pa and mGar-pa; (that is, between ordinary working classes and the lower to outcast classes). The traditional drinking bowl known as Phuru is one of the signal objects whose use reveals the difference in status among various classes. According to the Lo-pa tradition, in public festivals and meetings, a single Phuru (a drinking bowl) is used among the people of equal status (which means that a Phuru used by a low ranking person can't be passed to a person belonging to a higher status). In general terms, the Lo-pa people recognize the critical distinctions by calling it a tradition of Kha-thug and Kha-mi-thug. 

The lower Lo/Mustang region, including Kāg-Bāragāun, Thini-Pānchgāun, and Thāk is ethnically more complex. Linguistically, the people of Dzär-dzong, Kāg, Phen-lag, Brag-dkar rdzong, Klu-brag are similar to the Lo-pas of upper Lo, whereas inhabitants of Chuk, Te, Tangbe, Chelep, rGyadkar, Thini-Pānchgāun, Thāk etc. are distinctly different. No detailed study on the languages and cultures of the entire Lo/Mustang region (both upper and lower) has been attempted. Nevertheless, on the basis of simple observation, the ancestors of a large segment of Mustang's current population—Thakalis, Thini-Pānchgāunles, and the inhabitants of the above-mentioned five villages of Bāragāun (lower Lo)—apparently migrated not directly from Tibet, but from other high-mountain regions of Nepal. As with other Lo-pas today, they also belong to the same broader Tibetan civilization.

Although Thakalis and Thini-Pānchgāunles have now been deeply influenced by the middle hill culture of Nepal, most Bāragāunles and Lo-pas of upper Lo still actively follow the old Tibetan tradition, including Buddhism and to a more limited extent, the original shamanistic Bon religion. However, it must be mentioned that the dominant religion in the entire Lo/Mustang region today is indeed Tibetan Buddhism of the Sa-skya-pa line. Since Lo/Mustang is one of the few remaining centers of classic Tibetan civilization, no monasteries of the newest reformed sect of dGe-

8 These two terms together can be translated unofficially as "toucing of (food by) mouth is accepted or not accepted." This is an old Tibetan tradition and it does not have any link with the Nepali "pāni calne and nacalne" tradition.

9 Hajime Kitamura has done a preliminarily work on Lo dialects based on his field study done only in lower Lo (Kitamura 1977).

---

Introduction 15
lugs-pa can be found there. Just as in Tibet before the Chinese occupation, religious practice is the major focus of life of the people of Lo/Mustang. Old palaces, Buddhist monasteries, and temples are dominating structures in each village. Similarly, in terms of social hierarchy, after the ruler and his close relatives, Buddhist scholars and monks are always considered higher than the lay people. Contrary to earlier Buddhist practice, however, no low-class mGar-pa people in Lo/Mustang are allowed to be ordained as monks in Lo. This discriminatory tradition was not originated in Lo/Mustang but borrowed from Tibet.

**Occupations**

Until the Chinese annexation of Tibet in 1950, North-south trade was a crucial source of income for the people of Lo/Mustang. Animal husbandry and single-season agriculture, however, were never disturbed and have continued to sustain the people of Mustang until today.

Transit trade favored Lo/Mustang for centuries because the Kālī Gaṇḍakī river valley was one of the important trade routes connecting Tibet, western Nepal, and northern India. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, Monthang, the capital of Lo/Mustang was a center of a salt-collection industry in Nepal (MHR: 411, doc. 262 Nepali). Monopoly of Lo/Mustang in the transit trade of the upper Kālī Gaṇḍakī valley, nonetheless, was frequently disturbed in the seventeenth century by the presence of Jumlā in lower Lo. The main trade and customs centers of the Kagbenī and Thāk areas were lost to Jumlā and Parvat, and Lo-pas' freedom of transit trade were severely curtailed by the eighteenth century (MHR: 412). Toward the early nineteenth century, the Thakali traders of Thāk became very powerful and controlled both transit trade and the main government customs apparatus in the region (MHR: 424-25, Haimendorf 1975: 142-146). The Lo/Mustang rulers, nevertheless, procured the traditional privilege of collecting extra duty (in kinds and or cash) at the custom centers of Thāk and Kāk (MHR: 425-427, docs. 10, 12, 17, 22, 37, 39-40, 42 Nepali).

The most important enduring form of trade pursued by Lo-pas until the nineteenth century was bartering grain for Tibetan salt. Besides that, other goods such as hot pepper, turmeric, onion, cooking oil, honey, tobacco, copper and brass wares, wooden and tin boxes, wood and other wooden objects, bamboo and bamboo objects, ropes, brooms, and cotton cloth, were bartered in Lo, for Tibetan salt, sNam-bu (woollen cloth), Gos-chen (woollen robes), horses, wild lambs, various kinds of leather, musk, gold, Chinese tea, precious and semi-precious stones, Himalayan goats and lambs, Chinese silk, yak tail, herbal medicines, etc. (MHR: 427, doc. 7 Tibetan, Haimendorf 1975: 184, 186-87).
Because Lo/Mustang in the fifteenth century controlled the areas between the river gTsang-po and the Ghasa region of the lower Thākkholā, it occupied a strategic position accessing two distinct geographic regions, western Tibet and the middle hills of western Nepal. Relatively low passes (not higher than 15000 feet) between the Tibetan border and the capital of Lo/Mustang and comparatively easy trail access to the southern hill areas along the Kālī Gandakī river, enabled Lo-pas to transport goods between Tibet and the lower hill areas around Dānā and Benī. Although Lo-pas could not maintain their leadership in this transit trade after the seventeenth century, they were the leading trading people before that time. Since there is no mention of the Thāg area as having been a strategic trade center in the earlier days of the history of Lo/Mustang, it can be assumed that the area between Thini and Dānā was not very important from the point of view of trading activities, population density, and regional power. However, the Lar-dzong (sMad-kyi lha-khang) area is noted to be one of the minor meeting points for north-south trade (Snellgrove 1967: 7).

The important entrepot of Tukche in Thāg was developed only in the nineteenth century. Historical documents refer to either Dānā or Kāg as major trade or custom centers of lower Lo in earlier times (MHR doc. 4. 7. 21 Tibetan, Gauchan VE 2037: 11-17). In those days, possibly, Kagbenī was the final destination for traders from the lower hills, and Dānā for the traders from Lo/Mustang. For Tibetan traders, the capital of Lo, Monthang, may have always been the most frequent southern destination. Since the lower hill area beyond the limits of Kāg and Thāg was not climatically suitable for Tibetan traders, they seldom descended all the way down even to Kāg and Dānā. However, because of geographic location of Lo/Mustang, its people were fully adapted to travelling back and forth between Dānā and the Tibetan border.

The second important economic resource of the people of Lo/Mustang was animal husbandry. Lo-pas' livelihood is still based equally on the herding of domestic animals such as the Yak, Dzo, Ba-lang (cow), horse, mule, donkey, goat, and lamb. Since Lo-pas have always had very limited arable land, individual or family property was calculated mainly on the basis of livestock holding. Lo/Mustang was an important place for producing and trading good quality horses, so much so that a portion of yearly tribute from Lo/Mustang to Jumla and Nepal included five horses. Just as in Tibet, Lo-pas use their livestock for many purposes including transportation, wool, leather, meat, dairy, fertilizer, fuel (from dung), and above all as medium of wealth or exchange.

---

10 In old days, Dānā was popularly known as Liphum among the Tibetan-speaking people of the upper Kālī Gandakī valley (MHR doc. 7 Tibetan).
Although the scope and importance of animal husbandry in Lo/Mustang has diminished now, the old system of collective care of animals by rotation is still in practice.\footnote{The size of the livestock supply in Lo/Mustang has been utterly diminished after the close of Tibetan border by China. However, thousands of domestic animals can still be seen in each major settlement in upper Lo. Grazing of yaks and mDzo in the northern mountain areas of upper Mustang and the return of animals (horse, mule, Ba-lang, sheep, goat, donkey etc.) to the village of Monthang at dusk is still an interesting sight for an outsider.} Lo/Mustang has some alpine pastures of its own in the surrounding mountain areas, that is not enough to support a large number of animals. Thus, every year, a large number of animals from Lo/Mustang are still being taken for grazing to the frontier regions of Tibet. For this purpose, agreements were also made between Lo/Mustang and local Tibetan authorities. Similarly, permission letters were acquired from Tibetan authorities for particular times, occasions, and sometime even for a certain person or community (MHR docs. 8, 13, 31, 37, 82 Tibetan). After the inclusion of Lo/Mustang into Nepal as a dependent principality, the issue of the access of Lo/Mustang to Tibetan grazing lands became one of the perennial topics of talks between Nepal and Tibet (MHR docs. 31, 37 Tibetan).

The third important occupation of the people of Lo/Mustang has been agriculture. Although agriculture is the permanent source of livelihood, not even fifty per cent of Lo-pas have enough farming land to support themselves. Although David Jackson describes Lo/Mustang as a place of abundant agricultural lands and water for irrigation (1984: 2), on the contrary, in upper Lo, we find the opposite. Because of lack of rain and overuse by animals and humans, vegetation in upper Lo seems to have diminished in the last couple of centuries. This desertification process continues today. Scarcity of firewood is a major problem in Lo/Mustang and this has been the major cause of gradual desertification. Consequently, small streams deepened and irrigation became very difficult. Once cultivated lands and once flourishing settlements were abandoned. Such abandoned settlements, forts, and lands can be seen everywhere in Lo/Mustang, especially in the area north of Samar. Settlements and agricultural lands with easy access to irrigation are also undergoing the effects of floods from melted glacier lakes located to the north. Such incidents in the Lo/Mustang region occurred almost a couple of times in the century. The western (Tsho-nub) and eastern (Tsho-shar) districts of upper Lo/Mustang are comparatively better in terms of irrigation but have suffered repeatedly from such glacier floods.\footnote{One such devastating floods washed away most of the settlements and agricultural fields of the Tsho-shar area in 1982 while I was conducting field research. About a century ago, the Tsho-nub area was also washed away almost entirely, including an old ‘Brug-pa monastic center near Namashung.} Nevertheless, Lo-pas grow some barley, buckwheat
(Uwa), and peas in summer by employing at least a millennium-old method of agriculture i. e. using wooden plough, yoke and other equipment, Yak or Jo-pa.

**MAJOR SETTLEMENTS AND HOUSING**

In the present discussion, we have been focussing on two main subdivisions of Lo: upper and lower (Glo-bo-stod and Glo-bo-smad). This is the historic division, which both Tibetan and local writers have generally followed (GDR: 7b. Jackson 1984: 6, 9). Later, after the Jumla's occupation of lower Lo, upper Lo itself was divided into two major political districts known as Dhar-lha-yos and Dhar-lha-smad (districts south and north from Dhar-lha) (MHR: 127). Within the 780 square miles of the Lo-tsho-dun (seven districts) of upper Lo, there are three major settlements. Monthang (the capital of Lo/Mustang), Tsarang (old headquarters), and Gami. Besides these three, there is another important settlement in upper Lo known as Gelung, which was sometimes considered as part of upper Lo's traditional Lo-tsho-dun area and sometimes, viewed as a different political jurisdiction known as Tsho-bar (middle region). Although the Lo-tsho-dun area now is inhabited by about seven thousand people, at the height of Jumli suppression in Lo/Mustang, its total number of taxpaying households was only 437 (MHR doc. Bems-chag 3: 84a-b). Because of frequent external attacks and economic exploitation, life in Lo/Mustang had become very tough and a big number of Lo-pa people were compelled to move to Tibet. In this process, numerous small settlements in upper Lo were totally abandoned.  

Monthang, the capital, which dates from the fifteenth century, is located about five hours horse ride (about 18 km) south of the Tibetan border, at an elevation of 3700 meters above sea level. This town now accommodates about two hundred households, including one five-story palace, some Buddhist Stupas, and four major Buddhist monasteries and temples. Divided into five different administrative units, Monthang is a settlement of very compact houses built of pressed mud. Streets inside the settlement are very narrow with frequent turns. Since practice of polyandry was popular in

---

13 On the basis of this figure, and the approximate number of non-taxpaying ruling class Sku-drag-pa families, it can be assumed that the Lo-tsho-dun area contained only about 500 households and about 3000 people altogether.

A tax document of 1751 records the total tax-paying households from each village of the Lo-tsho-dun area of upper Lo, which is as follows: Gami 56, Tsarang 63, Mon-thang 62, Brag-mar 15, Dhu 19, Yar-ra 18, Grong 9, Dhe 16, Tangye 15, Namgyal 14, Phug-phag 15, Khar-nag 10, Ngyamdo 12, Bragkyab 16, Cen 17, Samdjong 7, Nhenyol 4, Darchog 25, Khestod 10, Sag-song 5. The tax document of Lo also records that the entire Lo-tsho-dun area grew by only twenty households in sixty years (MHR doc. Bems-chag 3: 85a).

14 In the summer of 1981, our research team counted 187 households inside the walled township of Monthang.
Lo/Mustang, population growth was controlled naturally. Thus, from the earliest time to the present day, the population of Monthang seems to have increased very slowly. However, from time to time, migratory activity in Lo/Mustang was common, and that affected the size of population. As a capital town, Monthang always has had a relatively larger ruling class population. Around the eighteenth century, when Lo/Mustang was under pressure from Jumli, tax-paying households in Monthang were only 62, which is even smaller than the number of households in Tsarang, the second biggest settlement in Lo/Mustang (MHR doc. Bems-chag 3: 84a-b).

Monasteries, temples, palaces, and forts are the dominant structures in Lo/Mustang. The walled capital town of Monthang is dominated by a fifteenth century palace, locally known as bKra-shis dge- Phel, two almost five hundred year old Buddhist temples of Byams-pa and Thub-chen, and monastic buildings that belonged to the Monthangchos-sde monastery. The ruling class of sKu-drag-pa and a couple of other Phal-pa families also live in relatively large houses but which are not as big as the palace, temples, and monastic buildings. More than one thousand people now live inside the walled town of the capital of Lo/Mustang, using a single gate.

Tsarang is the second most important and second largest settlement in Lo/Mustang. It is located thirteen kilometers south of Monthang at 3500 meters above sea level. Tsarang accommodates about one hundred households, a couple of monastic buildings, a four-hundred year old five-story fort palace, and several other structures of religious and cultural importance. The housing and settlement pattern looks the same as in Monthang, except that Tsarang does not now have a wall surrounding it. With few exceptions, the same compact houses and narrow streets are characteristic of the settlement pattern in the entire Lo/Mustang region, including Thâg and lower Lo.

Although Tsarang was the main settlement and headquarters of Lo/Mustang before its independence, during the Jumli military suppression it became the target of their attack. Because of such pressure, perhaps, the population of Tsarang sharply declined. A record of 1751 shows only sixty-three taxpaying households living in Tsarang at that time, though it excludes ruling class families (MHR doc. Bems-chag 3: 84a-b).

The third major settlement in Lo/Mustang is Gami (sGad-smad) village, which is located about 11 kilometers south of Tsarang at 3520 meters above sea level. Like Tsarang, it accommodates a partially ruined sixteenth century palace, a monastery, and close to one hundred households. Gami is recorded as having had only fifty-six tax-paying households in the eighteenth century (MHR doc. Bems-chag 3: 84a-b). Settlement patterns and houses look the same as the other two settlements. Like Monthang, Gami was also surrounded by a strong compact mud wall, though it can be seen now only in
few places as ruins. Like Tsarang, Gami palace was used as the occasional residence of Lo/Mustang rulers. It was also a residence of the local governors (sDe-pa), i.e. the king's brothers or nephews.

Although politically, it does not belong to the Lo-tsho-dun area, Gelung (dGe-lung) is the fourth important settlement of upper Lo. It is located between Gami and lower Lo (about six kilometers south of Gami) at 3500 meters above sea level. There is not much difference in size and settlement patterns between Gelung and Gami. However, during and after the Jumli supremacy in the Lo/Mustang region, Gelung was separated from Lo/Mustang. Consequently, even today, there is confusion as to whether or not this region should be under the authority of the ruler (rājā) of Lo/Mustang. The old palace and forts of this village have totally collapsed. However, culturally, linguistically, and ethnically Gelung can not be separated from the Lo-tsho-dun area.

Today, the major settlements in lower Lo are: Dzar (‘Dzar). Dzong (rDzong), Chuk (Tshug), Tetang (Te-tang). Tangbe (Tang-be). Kag (sKag). Thini, Jomsom (rDzong-gsar-ma), Marphag (dMar-phag). Tukche (Gru-rtse), and Kobang (Ko-mangs). These settlements are located between 2400 and 3600 meters above sea level. Since the district headquarters (Jomsom) of present day Mustang and the old transit trade entrepot (the Thāg region) of the upper Kālī Gaṇḍakī valley are located in lower Lo, the population density in this area now is higher than upper Lo. However, settlements and housing patterns in the area between Jomsom and Samar look the same as upper Lo. Settlements in the Thāg region, however, appear to have been influenced by the style of urban bazaars (two lines of houses with small stores and shops) of the middle hills of Nepal. Use of stone and wood for building houses and other structures is common in the Thāg region. even though the old compact mud style of Lo/Mustang is still in use alongside it. However, the Pānchgāun and Bāragāun (villages between Marphag and Samar) have still maintained only the old compact mud style. Jomsom bazaar is the exception of it because since the 1980s it has been highly influenced by the modern world, including housing styles.

PUBLISHED SOURCES ON LO/MUSTANG AND NEPAL HIMALAYA

The history of scientific research on the history and culture of the high Himalayan regions of Nepal is not more than five decades old. Although this research was started by "Tibetologists", most of the research work in the Nepal Himalayas in the seventies and eighties shows the domination of anthropologists from Europe and America. The number of "Tibetologists" working in the Himalayan regions of Nepal remains small.
Prior to the 1950s, research in the Nepal Himalayas was limited because Nepal was not open to foreign researchers. Only a few orientalists and British colonial strategists were able to do some work, mainly based in the Kathmandu valley. Even at the height of British imperialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in South Asia, Nepal's northern Himalayan region was almost entirely shielded from the activities of foreigners. Usually foreigners were not allowed to go outside of the Kathmandu valley. At the same time, however, this does not mean that British agents in India were not interested in strategically important information about the region. In Nepal, they focused mainly on central political power and the cultures and history of the people of the Kathmandu valley and the middle hills. The British strategists saw that the middle hill people of Nepal were the source of Nepal's central political agency and were also a source of mercenary soldiers for their empire. Therefore, the ethnographic informations collected by British officials/explorers were centered mainly on the middle hill people.

European scholars carried out some noteworthy general exploratory works on Nepal. The works of Kirkpatrick (1811), Hamilton (1819), Hodgson (1819), Smith (1852), Montgomerie (1875), Oldfield (1880, 1882) are the pioneering works. These works provide information on politics, natural resources, trans-Himalayan trade and commerce, important places, routes, forts, and other points relating to defense considerations. Atkinson also studied the Himalayan regions, which included Kumaun-Garhwal of India, bordering areas of western Tibet, and far western Nepal (1882-1886). Atkinson's focus was not on Nepal, but his work on northern India covered some areas of far western Nepal. This is important for the study of the Khaṣā/Ya-tshe domination in Kumaun, Garhwal, and northwestern Nepal. Since the Khaṣā/Ya-tshe kingdom was the leading power in the western Himalayan region during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. Atkinson's study of the history and culture of those areas is useful. Similarly, on the basis of his brief journey to Lo/Mustang S. Hedin has referred to the name Lo and its ruler Lo rgyal-po, and included a brief description of his encounter with the local people (1909: 77-82, 1916-1922 Vol. II: 115, 320; Vol. III: 153). From his description, it appears that he crossed the Kora pass (Kora-la) at the Tibetan border and entered into the Tsho-shar area of upper Lo to reach the capital of Lo, called Monthang. Hedin describes Lo/Mustang as an old principality in the Tibetan frontier dominated by Lamaistic culture and Tibetan dialect (ibid.). Furthermore, he included a brief story about the subjugation of Lo/Mustang by Gorkha, and names a few other places en route such as Namashung and Nyanyul (ibid.).

Most of those early colonial works were written according to the interest and the sponsorship of British government in India. In his recent book
entitled *Lords of Human Kind*, Victor Kiernan captures this idea. Discussing British colonial writers' attitude to South Asia he notes that "the British were bound to see the local history from a standpoint of their own" (1995: 70). The accounts of explorers, as such, have influenced the flavor of the many less-than-rigorous investigations of the Himalayas available today. European explorers have apparently followed a common "romantic orientalist trope" (Riccardi 1995: seminar paper). We know that the works of the early colonial writers were suited to the interests of the British Empire in the region. Ekai Kawaguchi's work had a similar basis (Kawaguchi 1909), showing that the orientalist perspective is not necessarily confined to "Westerners". A Buddhist scholar trained in both Japanese and English, he assumed the role of a romantic, impressionistic explorer and adventurer and tried to link Tibetan Buddhism to Japanese Buddhism, as the early European missionaries had done with Christianity in Tibet and China. Like most orientalist scholars of that time, he saw the Lo-pa society from his particular Japanese Buddhist perspective and even denigrated the Lo-pas and Tibetans, remarking that they are "dirty" (Kawaguchi 1909). Hedin, Francke, and Roerich are prominent European explorers and philologists working in the field of Tibetan studies (Hedin 1909, 1916-1922, Francke 1926, Roerich 1949). Their works in Tibet (claimed to be discovery, adventure, and exploration) and other areas of the Tibetan cultural world were also designed, either directly or indirectly, to provide raw materials for stylized orientalist academic industries in Europe.

It was only after the Chinese annexation of Tibet and the opening of Nepal to the outside world in 1951 that both "Tibetologists" and anthropologists of Europe and America began to study the northern Himalayan areas of Nepal. The romantic fascination of "western" scholars

---

15 The speculations of a famous Jesuit Father, Antonio de Andrade, concerning Tibetan Buddhism supports such an idea. Of de Andrade, his chronicler, John MacGregor, writes "...He [Father Antonio] saw in Tibetan worship a recognition of the Trinity of God. The tunics and miters worn by Tibetan Lamas could, with some imagination, be compared with the robes of Christian priests, and elements of baptism, confession, and communion seemed to have been present in Lamaism" (MacGregor 1970: 15). Most of European missionaries' writings were based on such a clearly culturally biased attitude. Either they had to establish their speculative and imaginary idea of Christian universalism as operating in a particular region, or to criticize the traditions and cultures of the "East" (Feigon 1996: 14-19, Kiernan 1995: 64-69). Similar kinds of speculative statements on regions comprising modern-day Nepal can be found in the reports of Christian missionaries such as Father Desideri and Father Giuseppe in the eighteenth century (Regmi 1965, Fillippi 1937, Giusepppe 1801).

16 Although in general, research work in Nepal was restricted until the 1950s, special permission was given to the British writers from time to time. General accounts and research work on Nepal by Kirkpatrick (1811), Hamilton (1819), Smith (1832), Montgomerie (1875), Oldfield (1880), Bental (1883, 1886, 1903, 1905-1906, Landon 1928, Wright (1877) etc.
with Tibet and Himalayan subject matter entered Nepal studies, and the northern frontier region of Nepal began to be viewed as an alternative location for Tibetan studies. In the 1950s, a few scholars, who belonged to European orientalist schools, led this work.

The first to study the history and cultures of the Himalayan regions of Nepal in the 1950s was Giuseppe Tucci, a scholar of Buddhism and Sanskrit and Tibetan languages. Tucci remarked that his trips to Nepal before 1952 were almost incidental to his eight explorations of Tibet (Tucci 1977: xiii). But those explorations enabled him to realize the importance and the need for exploratory and research work in Nepal, particularly to acquire further knowledge of its Tibetan and Indic cultures (Tucci 1977: xiii). Tucci, as a pioneer of Himalayan studies in Nepal, performed some remarkable explorations particularly in northwestern Nepal, Junilā, Dolpo, and Mustang (Tucci 1956, 1962, 1977). At practically the same time, Tucci's student from Britain, David Snellgrove, followed suit with the publication of several books and articles (Snellgrove 1961, 1965, 1967a and b, 1976, 1979). His works mainly concern Dolpo, Mustang and the Manāṅg areas of northwestern Nepal.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the number of anthropologists working in the Himalayan regions of Nepal became many times greater than the number of Tibetologists. C. Von Furer Haimendorf was the first scholar to work in the field of Himalayan anthropology in Nepal. Apart from ethnographic works such as that of Haimendorf on the Sherpas (1964), anthropologists in Nepal have mainly concentrated on rituals, religious and social values, and myths and legends relating to the history of various high-Himalayan people of Tibetan origin. Sherpas of Solukhumbu and Helambu, Nyingpas of Humla, the Thakali of Thākkholā, and various people of Nar (sNar), Nyishang (sNes-shang), Ma-nang, Bāragāun, Dol-po, and Limi are the Himalayan peoples mainly studied by foreign scholars between the 1960s (Haimendorf 1964, 1966, 1975, Jest 1964-65, Cooke 1985, Ortner 1978, 1989, Levine 1976, 1988, Oppitz 1968, Heide 1988, James Fisher 1986, 1990, William Fisher 1987).

Influential Tibetologists who have continued to contribute to the history and cultures of northern Nepal and western Tibet after Tucci and Snellgrove include Michael Aris (1975, 1979), Michel Peissel (1969, 1975), David Jackson (1976/77, 1978, 1979, 1984). Of these, Peissel's and Jackson's works have focused on Lo/Mustang. Aris's important works on the Nub-ri resulted from such permission. A French scholar, Sylvain Levi, was also allowed to conduct research in Nepal in 1898 (Levi 1905-1908).

17 The early European orientalist and colonial authors who have written about Nepal were not even concerned with Mustang's old name, Lo or Lo-bo. They have referred to the Nepali name Mustang and the Nepali title of its local ruler, rājā only in various corrupted
and Ku-tang area deal with Tibetan historical documents, which include canonical treatises on Buddhist religion, biographies of local Lamas, records relating to the founding of monasteries, monastic orders and injunctions, official records, or hymns and mantras (in xylographic or inscribed form) relating to different Buddhist deities (1975).

**WORKS ON LO/MUSTANG**

*Tucci:* Tucci made a short visit to upper Mustang up to the capital of the old Kingdom of Lo, Monthang. Snellgrove, on the other hand, traveled through the upper Kāli Gāndākī valley up to Tsarang, the second major settlement in Mustang. From Tsarang he turned his exploratory journey towards Dolpo area in the west. Tucci brought to light some of the historical events and genealogical information related to Lo/Mustang and its early rulers; he did not provide a focused view. Using local documents, including monastic regulation records (*bCa'-yig*), description written on walls (with painting) of Thub-chen and Byams-pa gtsug-lag-khang temples and his personal field observations, he published three works on northwestern Nepal, including Lo/Mustang (Tucci 1953, 1956, and 1962). Besides these three, other Tucci publications discuss the history and cultures of this region (Tucci 1966, 1973). Among the three most prominent works, *Journey to Mustang* (1953) is an exploratory travelogue of his journey beginning from Kathmandu to Monthang and from Monthang to India via Palpa and the Nepal’s Tarai. The other book by Tucci is *Nepal: The Discovery of Malla* (1962). It focuses on the early history of the Kaṇālī region of western Nepal and provides a few cross-references on the history of Lo. The book entitled *Preliminary Report on Two Scientific Expeditions in Nepal* (1956), is an excellent introductory historical survey of the Khaśa/Ya-tshe kingdom, Jurilā, and Lo/Mustang. However, here also, Tucci does not focus his study on Lo/Mustang but on the Jurilā area. His description of the history of Lo/Mustang is only peripheral. His contribution to the study of Lo/Mustang is based mainly on Tibetan texts collected earlier from Tibet such as *Deb-ther dmar-po gyar-ma*

spellings (Kirkpatrick 1811, Hamilton 1819, Smith 1852: 53-54. Montgomerie 1875: 355-360, Oldfield 1880 Vol. I: 8, 175). The first foreign writer to identify this land with its traditional Tibetan name, Lo, was Ekai Kawaguchi, who used both the Nepali name as "the state of Mustang" and the Tibetan name as "the province of Lo" (Kawaguchi 1909). Similarly, the first European explorer to introduce Mustang with its Tibetan name, Lo and its ruler with his original Tibetan title, Glo rgyal-po, is Sven Hedin (1909: 77-82). Prior to the publication of these two books in 1909, the name Lo or Lo-bo was known to some European orientalist scholars who were working on original Tibetan written documents and texts from Tibet and Ladakh. However, they were not able to identify Lo with the present day Mustang (Francke 1972, Bacot 1940-46, Roerich 1976).

If we look critically at the objectives and activities of Tucci through his published works, we would be able to show that he is also an adventure-driven European antiquarian. Tucci himself has written of acquiring various antique objects, including religious and historical texts (Tucci 1956: 14, 30, 117 etc.). He proudly tells of his discovery and journey to the Himalayas as the continuation of the tradition of Italian missionaries of the eighteenth century, who in fact, were attempting to undermine the values and customs of the "East" (Tucci 1953). Thus, for Tucci, these exploratory journeys were an adventure, even a romantic one. While describing the objective of his work in the oriental field he says: "I never saw myself as a lonely pilgrim in a foreign land, but imagined that I had with me all the Italians who still possess the restless spirit of adventure---the spirit which keeps on driving us forward in the footsteps of Dante's Ulysses, in the almost desperate desire to know new people..." [emphasis mine]" (1982: xvi). He managed to travel throughout the Himalayas as one of the most privileged and sophisticated European of explorers, receiving special treatment as if he were a royal guest.

On the one hand, while conducting such explorations, Tucci always enjoyed the services of a large number of local people as his servants, porters, and cooks. On the other hand, he was grabbing cultural objects belonging to the same people, in the name of discovery. Tucci himself claims that all such investigations were done in the name of "new people" and their cultures. He has even claimed that his work of exploration is not based on any personal or chauvinistic purpose. However, his statement is consistently opposed by his reference to adventure among those so-called "new people." No wonder: for a European orientalist, even the oldest human civilization can be a "new" one, if it has not already been exposed to European industrial media and markets.

If indeed, such works are not motivated by any personal interest, one could ask why Tucci claims that "They [his works on so-called discoveries] bring prestige to the country which carries them out" (Tucci 1982: XVI). One could also ask why he did not develop or establish curatorial institutions locally, in the same country or region where those cultural and historical objects could be collected, processed, and preserved while maintaining their intrinsic value, instead of throwing them onto European markets, where supply and demand set their new value. Still, Tucci complains of local Nepali people's suspicion toward foreigners like him (Tucci 1956: 152). One can also wonder why he did not discuss his beliefs about the preservation of significant objects with the people involved, and try to enlist them in the effort. Apparently, Tucci would rather claim himself to be a grand
discoverer or a sole authority on and preserver of the "other," or "otherness." The body of Tucci's work, seminal as it is, must be viewed in light of his vaunted commitment to enhancing the prestige of his country.

Snellgrove: In the early 1950s another European "Tibetologist", David Snellgrove, took interest in studying the Buddhist traditions of Dolpo, Lo/Mustang, and the surrounding areas. Consequently, he published three books and one article in this field (Snellgrove 1957, 1961, 1967a, 1967b). His first book, *Buddhist Himalaya*, was the product of his visit to Nepal in 1954 (Snellgrove 1957). In this work, he focused his narrative on Tibetan Buddhism and its penetration in the Himalayan regions, relating its origin and development in India and its subsequent spread through Nepal and Kashmir. This publication was followed by *Himalayan Pilgrimage* (Snellgrove 1961), which describes his seven-month journey covering the northern regions of Dolpa (*Dol-po*), Mustang (*Lo*) and to as far as the Manāṅ valley, Nubri, and the Kutang areas in the upper Budhī Gandākī basin. In the preface of his next book entitled *Four Lamas of Dol-po*, Snellgrove claims that the *Himalayan Pilgrimage* is a general survey of all the Tibetan-speaking Buddhist regions of northwestern Nepal, drawing special attention to Dolpo (Snellgrove 1967a: viii). In many respects, this book is a fascinating travelogue providing a bird's eye picture of the region. He has provided information concerning the condition of Tibetan Buddhism, religious objects such as Buddhist paintings, manuscripts, and *mChod-rten*. The only weakness of this book is the one sided emphasis on Buddhism and the exclusion of a general study of the history and people of the area.

So far as the historical exploration of Lo/Mustang is concerned, Snellgrove at least intended to draw a general political picture of the region but not adequate for a reliable history. His analysis has rather misled other chroniclers. He told a story based upon hearsay. About the origin of the Lo/Mustang ruling line he writes. "The present dynasty only dates from the end of the eighteenth century, the time of the Gorkha-Tibetan wars. when a younger son of the Gorkha rājā was sent to this part of the frontier as general commanding. He established himself as a ruler and married a Tibetan wife" (Snellgrove 1961: 196).

Written sources available in Mustang, however, categorically refute Snellgrove's statement. Still, despite his errors, Snellgrove's identifying the

---

18 Different kinds of fables and stories attributed to Janga Bahadur and his so-called visit to Lo/Mustang during the Nepal-Tibet war of 1855 are popular in upper Mustang. However, it was Captain Ambarsing Rana (a relative of Janga Bahadur Rana), who as a leader of a Nepali army battalion had visited Lo/Mustang on his way to attack Tibet from the direction of rDzong-kha (MHR doc. 18-19, Nepali). No single record is found to tell about Janga Bahadur's visit to Lo/Mustang.
present Dolpa and Mustang regions of Nepal with ancient Dol-po and Lo of the Ngari (mNga'-ris) province of western Tibet is a valuable contribution.

Snellgrove's third and most useful book for the construction of the history of the region is *Four Lamas of Dolpo* (Snellgrove 1967). Although it focuses on the biographies on Lamas of Dolpo, it also elucidates those Lamas' connection with the people of Lo/Mustang and Se-rib (lower Lo). Promoting the usefulness of this book, Snellgrove writes, "Their (Lamas of Dolpo) relations with the ruling families of Lo/Mustang and the kings of Juinlā are of considerable historical interest" (1967: ix). By citing these biographical sources and reviewing the work done previously by Tucci, Snellgrove attempts to sketch the history of Lo/Mustang but with limited success. Some of the useful information he brought to light concerns the dependency of Lo/Mustang within the old Ngari region of western Tibet, disputes with Juinlā, and the history of Buddhist monasteries and religious activities in the Lo/Mustang region. However, Snellgrove has narrowed the scope of his study by focusing only on the field of Buddhism. Unlike Tucci, Snellgrove seems comparatively restrained and never uses grandiose and romanticizing terms such as "discovery", "successful expedition", "adventure", "lost world", "new people", etc. Also unlike Tucci, Snellgrove is interested only in Buddhism but not in drawing a general historical picture of the society. While discussing the cause of the destruction of Buddhist monasteries of northern Nepal, he relies on imagination and writes, "... monasteries [of the Himalayan regions of Nepal] were destroyed and villages impoverished, but the conquerors [Gorkhali kings] stayed nowhere long enough in sufficient numbers to disturb the established order" (Snellgrove 1961: xii). Even though the Gorkhali rulers were aggressive conquerors in earlier times, they never intervened and destroyed the Buddhist order. They rather had established special relationships with the Lamas and Gompas of northern Nepal by giving large donation of land grants, and inviting different incarnate and tantric Lamas to their palaces (Dhungel 1989: 171-179).

**Michel Peissel:** Peissel, a French adventurist and ethnographer at-large is the first to write books and articles devoted fully on Lo/Mustang. He is also the first European to interview the Lo/Mustang ruler (father of the present rāja), intending to investigate the history of Lo/Mustang, the land, and its people.

Peissel's work was the first to highlight the importance of the political history of the kingdom of Lo/Mustang. It is also the first attempt to discuss the connection between Mustang's present rāja and the first independent rulers of the kingdom of Lo/Mustang, A-ma-dpal and his son, A-mgon-bzang-po. Peissel also has corrected some of Snellgrove's earlier misconceptions about the origin of the ruling dynasty of Lo/Mustang.
Although the Garphug Molla (a manuscript related to an oratorical tradition of Lo/Mustang collected by Peissel from a Lama of Garphug monastery of Mustang), which Peissel has highlighted as his "wonderful discovery." has now been deemed a forged copy, Peissel has nonetheless informed the world of the existence of a historical source known as Molla. This revelation eventually opened the door for finding an original Molla document such as the Tsarang Molla, which was first published by David Jackson in 1984 (1984: 157-170). Thus, we now know that the Molla is a document, which is unique to the historical traditions of Lo/Mustang.


Peissel's style itself is confusing, because he presents many anecdotes apparently critiquing colonial and orientalist scholars. At the same time, he romanticizes Tibetan and Himalayan subject matter. Showing his support for the Tibetan cause, he writes, "In the meantime, in Tibet proper, death was rampant, as the nation stood alone, fighting China. Communism was liberating central Tibet, apparently from itself, while at Oxford--as elsewhere--few people cared that a lonely civilization was falling victim to a political fury engendered by an European School of Thought" (Peissel 1967: 24). Yet, contrary to his own critique of European nationalism, Peissel shows a similar tendency, conveying romantic excitement in his disquisitions on Himalayan cultures. Even the titles of Peissel's books show this approach to his subject matter. The first edition of his book on Mustang is called Mustang, The Forbidden Kingdom, Exploring a Lost Himalayan Land (1967). He produced another reprint edition of essentially the same work by changing the title to Mustang: A Lost Tibetan Kingdom. Adopting the same romantic theme as other European orientalists, Peissel writes:

What I saw was beyond description--as were the emotions that flooded me as I stood in the howling wind that raced through the narrow corridor.

---

19 Peissel claims that he found the Molla through the help of a young Lo-pa named Pemba Gyaltsen (bsTan-pa rgyal-mtshan) (1967: 249-250). During my 1981-82 fieldwork in Mustang, I asked bsTan-pa (not Pemba as Peissel introduces him) about the Molla which Peissel claimed that he bought from bsTan-pa. bsTan-pa explained that the Molla he sold to Peissel was not the original one, but a forged copy prepared by him and a Lama, including some information from Namgyal Molla and local legends. In comparison to the Tsarang Molla, the Namgyal Molla and other Mollas of Mustang are neither reliable nor updated sources on the genealogical history of the rulers of Lo (MHR docs. 27-31).

20 This edition was banned by His Majesty's Government of Nepal for political reasons, particularly because of the Tibet-biased narration and the title itself.
At first, I could not believe my eyes, and felt like the incredulous medieval travelers looking for the first time at Rome. Not even my wildest flights of imagination could have pictured what lay before me. It seemed that I, too was living a legend, the age-old legend that has haunted the mind of man for generations and that in our times of modern stress has increased as a form of escapism: the legend of a lost city- of a lost fortress hidden in the folds of the Himalayas- of a Shangri-la, the paradise lost, the land where ageless men thrive beyond the borders of our busy, unromantic world, a place where time hangs frozen upon an enclosed secret universe.

I now felt that this was a land far more impressive than I had been led to believe, and one that surely held many valuable secrets. Here in Mustang, I now felt, existed a world even older than Tibet... I had found this closed universe, and the mythical fortress of a lost planet; for there a lunar landscape of barren crests, with jagged contours, stood, serene, majestic, and awe-inspiring the great mass of a fortified town (Peissel 1967: 110-111, 115).

This passage exemplifies the rhetoric and fiction common in Peissel's work presented in the name of discovery. While Peissel was waxing poetic about a strikingly beautiful land, the people inhabiting it were, and still are today, dying of chronic tuberculosis, a situation probably exacerbated by inadequate nutrition and an overall poor infrastructure. Still, Peissel compares his so-called discovered land to paradise. Instead of analyzing the subject matter within the strictures of any discipline, he seeks to mystify it. Peissel believes that his study of the Himalayas is a romantic addition to his experience of a so-called "secret universe."

Peissel has titled his books and articles in such a popular orientalist manner: they include The Story of an Extraordinary Adventure on the Roof of the World (1975), Himalayan Continent Secret (1977), and "Remote Realm in Nepal" (1965). Like many unscrupulous European antiquarians and agents of the modern museum industry, Peissel has appropriated cultural and historical objects from the people of his area of study (1967: 246-47, 258).

David Jackson: After the first mention of a document called Molla of Mustang in 1966 by Peissel, other versions (sometime even more verifiable) have been reported by another scholar of Tibetan language and culture, David Jackson. Jackson has written two articles on the early history of Lo/Mustang and one book on the Molla itself with the help of the Tsarang Molla, Lo dung-rab (Glo gdung-rabs), and Tibetan literary sources (Jackson
Jackson's close and critical study of the Mollas (1979, 1984) has established their worth as historical source material for the construction of the early history of Lo/Mustang to an extent that no other single document has done. Although Jackson has never been to the north of Kāgbeni, he has attempted to sketch at least a preliminary outline on the early history of Lo/Mustang. Besides Mollas, Gdüng-rabs, his sources also include local Tibetan materials accessed earlier by Tucci and Snellgrove. His first contribution in this area is an article on the early history of Lo/Mustang and Ngari (Jackson 1977: 39-55). A year later, he published another article dealing with the history of lower Lo, known historically as Se-rib or Glo-smad (Jackson 1978: 195-227). After the publication of these two articles, he turned his focus to the Mollas, about which he produced his Master's thesis (1979), then, finally, a book named The Mollas of Mustang (Jackson 1984).

Although Jackson states that his works on Lo/Mustang are just the beginning of an investigation, using evidence of several important local traditions, he has demonstrated a sincerity and rigor unusual thus far. Jackson is the first scholar to work on old Tibetan literature in Nepal and to emphasize the historical and cultural importance of Lo/Mustang as a distinct entity. Highlighting the limitations and main goal of his work on the Mollas of Mustang, Jackson writes:

Though its [Lo's] history is now more accessible than ever before--thanks to the survival of various writings- much more research remains to be done on Lo, past and present. This book being an investigation of only a few facts of local traditions is just a small beginning. Ultimately, what we would like to see is a systematic survey of the major buildings, artworks, books, and other important artifacts that survive in Mustang. Though such a project would disperse some of the romantic haze that still clings to the mountain principalities, it would also certainly establish the cultural and historical importance of Lo-Mustang in the eyes of the world (Jackson 1984: xii).

---

21 The Glo-gdum-rabs is a seventeenth century manuscript related to the genealogical information of the Lo ruling line. Jackson says that he has a copy of the Glo-gdum-rabs. No copy of this document was available for the present research. However, in his Mollas of Mustang, Jackson summarizes the historical information given in the Gdum-rabs (Jackson 1984: 114-132). Jackson also promises to publish this document in future but has not been published yet (ibid.: 115). During my fieldwork in 1982, one manuscript copy of the Tsarang Molla was made available to me, which now is in the Research Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS), Tribhuvan University, Nepal. A xerox copy is also with me.
Although Jackson's work is fragmentary, he admits frankly that much has yet to be done to complete a systematic study on Lo/Mustang. His own work, however, is very disciplined and useful. Almost eight years after the publication of his first two articles, Jackson acknowledges their weakness as "early and imperfect essays" (1984: 9). His works lack the use of local Nepali and Jumli sources. He has become dependent on biographical and other sources of a panegyric character particularly related to the rulers and princely Lamas of Mustang. He surprises his readers by denying the need for standard field observation and collection of written sources dealing with political and local socio-economic activities.

Regarding whether a visit to upper Mustang is essential for historical research on Lo/Mustang. Jackson writes, "I did not consider this to be an impossible handicap... I could also see that many valuable historical sources were available outside Mustang" (Jackson 1984: x). This question evokes methodological and even epistemological issues. It may be possible to write or publish a fragmentary work without conducting standard fieldwork, but a comprehensive research work is impossible without it. In this matter, Jackson claims he is content to compare his work with the works of earlier explorers and travelers. This is not a fair comparison, because those early scholars' objectives were oriented toward general exploration, but not toward the disciplined scholarly research.

Lo/Mustang. Most of them relate either exploratory journeys to the Lo/Mustang region at large, or cover a specific regional subject matter. Similarly, some of these works have covered this region not as their main focus of study, but with the intention of collecting useful and important information concerning more general Tibetan and Himalayan subject matter.

Scholars of Tibetan studies such as Luciano Petech, A. H. Francke, E. G. Smith, and Roberto Vitali have made supplementary contributions to the study of the history of Lo/Mustang. Luciano Petech, in his long article concerning the history of western Tibet and the Kantali region of northwestern Nepal, also explores the various historical facts of Lo/Mustang (Petech 1980: 85-110). Similarly, Francke's work on Ladakhi chronicles also throws some light onto Lo's past (Francke 1926 pt. I: 230). Another scholar of Tibetan studies, Gene Smith, has made an important contribution to the study of the literary traditions of Lo/Mustang. Although his works do not focus on Lo/Mustang, Smith has commanded the attention of scholars of Tibetan studies by highlighting the importance and prospect of historical research in Mustang. He has written introductions and prefaces to Tibetan-language reprints of some of the old literary works collected from upper Mustang. These texts are related to the religious and literary personalities of Lo/Mustang and western Tibet (Smith 1969, 1970a, 1970b, 1973). Smith illuminates the history of some of the leading Buddhist scholars of Lo/Mustang who were famous not only in their land but also in Tibet. They were Glo-bo mkhan-chen bSod-nams lhun-grub (1456-1532), Glo-bo Lo-tsa-ba Shes-rab rin-chen (thirteenth century), mNga'-ris-Padma-dbang-grgal (1487-1542), and his younger brother Rig-'dzin Legs-Idan bdud-joms rdo-rje (1500-1577). With the help of literary evidence, he sketches a general picture of the history of Lo/Mustang in his "Preface to Glo-bo-mkhan-chen ..." (1970a: 2). He asserts that the rise of Gorkhas was one of the two major factors of Buddhist and economic decline in the kingdom of Lo/Mustang. This assumption however, is not supported by local sources. Local sources show a different picture of Lo/Mustang, particularly after the establishment of its dependency on Nepal. Lo's fortune had been totally destroyed earlier, first by the Khaša/Ya-tshe kingdom and later by the state of Junlā, and to some extent even by Parvat (Jackson 1978: 222-224. Shrestha 1976 72-76, MHR: 217-221, 263-66. docs. 4, 6, 7, 27 Tse-drangs Molla, Khral-gyi bems-chag 1-3 Tibetan, and docs. 1-3, 272-273 Nepali) Contrary to Smith's assumption, after the incorporation of Lo/Mustang into Nepal, at least for a couple of generations, it became able to exercise more local power along with control over north-south trade.

Although it has focused on the history of Gu-gc and Pu-rang (Pu-hrang or sPu-rang), Vitali's recent work based on Tibetan chronicles and biographical literature has also highlighted the early history of Lo/Mustang and produced
a general picture of relationships among neighboring kingdoms (Vitali 1996).

After the restoration of democracy in Nepal in 1990, and the opening of Lo/Mustang (north from Kāgbenī) to foreigners in 1992, thousands of tourists, development activists, and scholars visited this region. But until today, only a few travelogues, coffee-table books, and one religious propaganda-based video documentary have been published. We also should mention about a dozen travel articles in different magazines and papers such as National Geographic (Caputo 1997: 115-128), and Readers Digest (Raffaele 1997: 144-157). One of such travelogues is the work of Manjushree Thapa (Thapa 1992). Although she claims that she has sorted out fact from fiction in her travel-book (1992: 137), it does not contain any historical and cultural facts about the kingdom of Lo/Mustang. With the exception of some stories related to her bikase encounter with the people of different villages of Lo/Mustang (both upper and lower), dealing with mini-electricity projects and monumental restoration plans, not much can be learned from this work. Thapa's three page narration about the status of Mustang and its general historical background is not supported by proper evidence (1992: 122, 124).

In 1995, Barbara Crossette, an American journalist, published a book entitled So Close to Heaven: The Vanishing Buddhist Kingdoms of the Himalayas. She has devoted part of a long chapter called "Buddhist Nepal" to the kingdom of Lo/Mustang. But she is unsuccessful in presenting any argument in the acceptable analytical manner. She includes a summary of Manjushree Thapa's work (Crossette 1995: 145-147). She has completely ignored the history of the rise, development, and fall of the Khaša/Ya-tshe kingdom (a Buddhist kingdom) in the Himalayas, which dominated a vast territory including northwestern Nepal, the Kumaun-Garhwal region of India, western Tibet. This kingdom has left a direct and profound impact in the Ngari region of Tibet, Lo/Mustang, and even to the formation of Nepal as an independent Himalayan kingdom. Regarding the history of Lo/Mustang she writes:

In upper Mustang, the Buddhist kingdom of Lo, with its walled capital, Lo Manthang, broke free of Tibet in the fourteenth century, reached its height about a hundred years later on the strength and income of trade with Tibet, and enjoyed an independent existence for nearly four hundred years. Although the

---

22 So-called modern or western-style development activity is generally called bikas in Nepal. Thus the word bikase can be translated as things or activities related to modern western style development.
kings of Mustang had lost all their residual powers and the formal use of titles in the 1950s, Mustang was a wild card as late as the 1960s... (Crossette 1995: 146)

Although Crossette's book, taken in its entirety, is a problematics of discourse on culture and politics, our purpose here is not to offer a critical review of the whole book but to focus only on her chapter devoted on Lo/Mustang. None of her assertions can be verified with historical facts, neither those concerning the date of the emergence of Lo/Mustang, nor those about its independent existence.

Now, let us discuss briefly three other very similar recent publications, whose intent is basically to capture a picturesque panorama of the Lo/Mustang region, or to highlight the so-called mysteries related to authors' romantic imagination (Miller, et. al. 1994, Boeye and Marullo 1995, Matthiessen and Laird 1995). Among these, the earlier two, The Last Forbidden Kingdom, Mustang: Land of Tibetan Buddhism (Boeye and Marullo 1995) and Mustang: The Hidden Kingdom (a video documentary by Miller and others 1994), are more problematic works. For example, showing their romantic passion or sympathy for Tibetan Buddhism, Boeye and Marullo write:

In practice, these men (Nepalis from the middle hills) are neither physically nor culturally adapted to the mountains of Mustang. They have little respect for Buddhist customs, and antagonize both trekkers and villagers (Boeye and Marullo 1995: 130).

Despite ever more pervasive pressure from Kathmandu to take shelter under the cultural umbrella of Nepal's Hindu majority, Mustang still remains staunchly Buddhist; its people retaining their Tibetan identity and customs (ibid: 8).

In fact, the real effect was more insidious: with the new schools stressing Hindu ideology, and an influx of police and aid workers from the low lands, the government was aiming to draw the Tibetan Buddhists of Lo into the Nepalese mainstream (Ibid: 22-23).

Nepalese police force stationed in Lo Manthang in an effort to pull the Lo-pas into the Hindu mainstream (Ibid: 46).

It is difficult to agree with these statements because not all Nepalis from the middle hills and the Kathmandu valley are necessarily Hindus. For example, different ethnic communities of Nepal such as Gurung, Tamang, Kirati, Magar and a portion of Newar are Buddhists. Historical sources clearly indicate that a Newar artists and scholars from the Kathmandu valley
were involved in writing Buddhist scriptures and making cultural and religious objects in Lo/Mustang (MHR docs. 16, 17). Historical tradition and practice prevailed in the temple of muktināth (Chen-re-sik in Tibetan), where Tibetan Buddhist nuns and Brahmin priests worship the same idol together is an example of religious coexistence in the Lo/Mustang region. In reality, the small number of poor low-ranking police or school teachers stationed in upper Mustang, do not have much influence there, where the rājā and other religious and cultural institutions still have a pervasive influence on traditional order. Modern school system in Nepal is playing a very influential role in bringing "western" consumer culture into Nepal rather than strengthening the Hindu traditional order. Thus, contrary to the statements of Boeye and Marullo, the Lo-pa society is under a threat of the influence of the modern consumer culture. Western style hotels and restaurants are being opened and cultural objects are constantly disappearing from the monasteries of Mustang.

In order to draw a general picture of the kingdom of Lo/Mustang, Boeye and Marullo include several independent chapters entitled "The Land of Lo," "King and Commoners," and "Epilogue: Into the Future" (1995: 6-33, 46-49 126-133). However, about eighty per cent of Marullo's description in these chapters is a collection of hearsay and self-indulgent interpretation. Besides some examples mentioned above, a couple of similar examples would suffice to prove their ignorance and idiosyncratic interpretations:

Although Mustang had become a protectorate of Ladakh at the end of the sixteenth century, Jumlā's rulers remained undeterred. Such was their persistence that they even tried to ransom the Lo-pa queen. In 1719, the king of Mustang had arranged to marry a Ladakh princess but on her way to Lo Manthang for the wedding she was captured by Jumlān bandits and imprisoned at KāgBenī. Although her husband sent his finest warriors to free her, their efforts failed, and she was forced to remain incarcerated for many months, until troops from Ladakh and Parbat came to her rescue.

...Just forty years later (since 1740), Jumlā itself was obliterated by Prithivi Narayan Shah—the first of the great Gorkha kings who united Nepal. Despite its strategic position, Mustang was largely ignored by the Gorkhas. The treaty of 1802, which demanded annual tribute in exchange for protection, allowed the kingdom to retain a large measure of autonomy (Boeye and Marullo 1995: 20).

In fact, disputes between Jumlā and Mustang were a common phenomenon during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The incident assumed by Marullo to be just a 'ransom of Ladakhi princes' by the Jumlis,
was actually a major dispute that occurred in 1723. According to a Ladakhi document, the father of the king of Lo/Mustang violated an agreement, and about forty dignitaries including the king's father and queen mother (not the new royal bride) were captured and detained by the Jumli army in Kāg fort (Francke 1972: 230).  

Similarly, the Gorkhali conquest of Jumlā and the incorporation of Lo/Mustang occurred in 1789, not during the reign of Prithvinarayan Shah, who died fifteen years before this incident. Marullo's argument about the so-called treaty of 1802 and Mustang's annual tribute to Nepal are also speculative stories, because Lo/Mustang king dBang-rgyal rdo-rje had already agreed to pay yearly tribute to Nepal in exactly the same amount that Jumlā collected from Lo/Mustang until 1788 (Yogi VE 2022: 55, MHR docs 1-3, 45).

Not surprisingly, one can also find a lack of proper knowledge and sincerity in the recent video documentary work on Lo/Mustang. The narrator of this work is Harrison Ford, a celebrated Hollywood actor, famed for making movies imagining the east in fabulous and grotesque ways (specifically, the popular Indiana Jones). The main theme of this recent production is the religious missionary journey of a high-ranking Lama of the Dalai Lama's dGe-lugs-pa school to Mustang. But it seems that this project was designed particularly to romanticize Lo/Mustang and make propaganda in support of the "campaign for free Tibet." The other problematic issue behind this grand project of cultural politics is the potential to foment ethnic strife in Nepal. For example, the screenplay narrated by Ford states: "Mustang faces a difficult future despite the visit of Rinpoche, this last outpost of Tibetan culture may have been engulfed by Hindu nationalism."

Let us examine the situation; Lo/Mustang came under the Hindu rulers of Nepal in 1789. It has remained one of the most intact Buddhist cultural centers, which has been an engaging romantic imaginary location for "western" travelers and even for celebrities. First of all, we have to understand that the Hindus of Nepal and other Himalayan regions are distinct from Hindus of India. One could ask why, if the Hindu rulers of Nepal have intended to destroy or endanger the Buddhist cultures of Lo/Mustang or of other Himalayan regions of Nepal, have these cultures remained so well preserved for over two centuries? The other important issue involves the pervasive influence on Lo/Mustang of the Sa-skya-pa line of Tibetan Buddhism. Most of the monasteries in Lo/Mustang still belong to this line, and the entire history of the kingdom is pervaded with the ideals of Ngor and Sa-skya monasteries in Tibet. Researchers in Tibetan studies now wonder why these modern celebrities of the "west", and even the Dalai

---

23 A detailed discussion on this incident is included later in chapter three.
Lama, do not want to encourage a celebrated Sakya Lama or even Sakya abbot to visit Lo/Mustang for the promotion of Lo's Sakya-pa tradition of Buddhist culture. Lo-pa culture is in fact, struggling against the industrial consumer culture. The irony is that even in this video documentary, a young Lo-pa (father of one of the two Lo-pa boys, selected by the rāja of Lo/Mustang and approved later by the envoy of the Dalai Lama to be taken to Dharamshala for Buddhist education) is wearing a tee shirt bearing the image of American pop star Michael Jackson. One can doubt whether Harrison Ford, Tony Miller or other members of the video production team were able to find any such evidence of Hindu mass culture in Lo/Mustang. It does not mean that there is no Hindu influence in Mustang at all, but Hindu influence is way less than the pervasiveness of the consumer's culture in Lo/Mustang today.

Regarding the book by Matthiessen and Laird, one may be surprised by the title, *East of Lo Monthang in the Land of Mustang* (1995). The actual content, text, and photographs included in this book show that the authors have attempted to cover the entire Lo/Mustang region. Although this book claims to be a work of non-fiction, Matthiessen is unable to sketch even a general reliable outline of the history and culture of Lo/Mustang. This work is simply a collection of good photographs. Laird introduces himself as an ethnographer and writer but does not observe Lo-pa society according to any standard ethnographic method. It is ironic that they have not used research-based books or articles already published in this field.24 Similarly, regarding serfdom, Matthiessen and Laird write, "though serfdom was formally abolished in 1956, the villages still supply some unpaid labor for the raja's field and other community duties" (1995:16). It is difficult to understand what they are trying to say by "the abolition of serfdom". One wonders whether they were referring to the abolition of the old *jhara* and *bethi* system of Nepal, or trying to indicate something else. In 1961, the Government of Nepal formally abolished the petty principalities of Nepal, leaving four rājās, including the rāja of Lo/Mustang, as traditional titleholders by passing an act known as *rañyarñautā aina-2017* (Nepal

---

24 Researchers of Tibetan studies may also question their spelling of Tibetan place names. Matthiessen and Laird seem so naive, in fact, that they do not even capture the Tibetan spelling of the old name of the Kingdom of Lo (*Glo* or *Blo*) and its capital, about which David Jackson has already published several works (Jackson: 1976/77, 1978, 1984). Matthiessen and Laird assume that the old name Lo was derived from *lHo* (south). They also do not know that the name Mustang was derived from the Tibetan words *smon* and *thang*. Both of these spellings and the title of the book itself are thus very confusing. Likewise, they think the name Mustang is a British corruption of the name of the region's capital (Matthiessen and Laird 1995: 86). In fact, it was corrupted earlier by the Jumlis and Parvates to deny recognition to Lo as an independent Kingdom (for further etymological description related to place names of the Lo region see appendix).
Gazette [extraordinary], Vol. X, No. 30: 14-16). Until that date, some local rulers of western Nepal were free to execute their own local rules concerning the traditional system of free labor.

It seems that most of the narratives in Matthiessen and Laird's book, at least in spirit, are borrowed from the works of Michel Peissel (1967) and Toni Hagen (1961). Both of these books are impressionistic and very preliminary. Therefore, as with other pictorial books, this too provides fine photography but little else.

Some reliable historical information can be found in Haimendorf's *Himalayan Traders* (1975), Dhungel's two articles on Muktināth (1988a and 1988b), Dahal's *Muktksatra* (1988), Kshatri's *mustāng digdarsana* (1989), Panta and Pierce's *Administrative Documents* (1989). Of these, the works of Dahal, Dhungel, Kshetri, Panta and Pierce are helpful particularly regarding Nepali government documents from the lower Mustang area. Haimendorf's *Himalayan Traders* has good coverage of the history of the Thak-Dan Custom Office and the north-south trade activity in Mustang.

Four major research reports of the Mustang Integrated Research Program at CNAS, Tribhuvan University, submitted by a research team in 1986-87, constitute the only extensive research work done on Lo/Mustang (upper) to date. CNAS's research has covered the four major areas, economy (published), anthropology, history, and cultural heritage (published). The author of this book did the history section of this project.

In summary, one cannot say that published sources on Lo/Mustang are few. To date, however, there are only a handful of books and articles, or even portions of such, which can be considered as rigorous academic work.

---

25 The historical data that I collected for that project is used for the present book.
CHAPTER TWO

POLITICAL AND CULTURAL AFFILIATIONS WITH TIBET AND THE NGARI (MNGA’-RIS) REGION
CHAPTER TWO

POLITICAL AND CULTURAL AFFILIATIONS WITH TIBET AND THE NGARI (MNGA’-RIS) REGION

THE LO/MUSTANG REGION UNDER THE EARLY TIBETAN EMPIRE (SEVENTH THROUGH TENTH CENTURY)

According to Chinese, Tibetan, and Ladakhi sources, the history of the Lo/Mustang region dates back to the seventh century A.D. The chronicles of Ladakhi (La-dwags rgyal-rabs), for example, indicate that the Lo/Mustang region, together with the Zhang-zhung (later Gu-ge) area of Ngari (mNga’-ris) in western Tibet, was an object of Tibetan emperor Srong-btsan sgam-po’s territorial ambition (Francke 1926: 32, Petech 1939: 51, Jackson 1976: 40, Das 1983: 1066). The White Annals (Deb-ther dkar-po) refers to another incident of Tibetan recapture of Lo/Mustang during the reign of king Mang-srong, the grandson of Srong-btsan. in the water-mouse year (676 A.D.) (Gedun Chos-’phel 1978: 83). In order to recapture Lo/Mustang and the gTsang-rkya region, a Tibetan minister known as mGar, was commissioned by the king (ibid). Thus, for about sixty or seventy years, the Lo/Mustang region, including lower Lo, seems to have remained under Tibetan rule. After the untimely death of the Tibetan emperor Dus-srong in 705, the southwestern frontier regions, including Lo/Mustang, began to revolt against the Tibetan authority. Not long after the death of Dus-srong, lower Lo demanded its independence (Bacot and others 1940-1946: 41). The confrontation between Tibet and lower Lo (se-rib) lasted about five years. Finally, Tibet used its army to bring the area back under its control. In 709, the local ruler of lower Lo was captured by the Tibetan army and the entire Lo/Mustang region was once again subdued by Tibet (ibid.: 42). Since a Ladakhi source clearly indicates that both upper and lower Lo were under the political influence of Tibet, the revolt may have been organized jointly by the rulers of upper and lower Lo.

The records found at Dun-huang, the Silk Route trading center, also describe the Tibetan expansion up to the Zhang-zhung frontier of western Tibet; the areas taken also included Lo/Mustang (Bacot and others 1940-1946: 29-30, Francke 1926 pt. II: 83). The Dun-huang source refers to lower Lo in particular as one of the newly conquered southwestern frontier areas of the Tibetan empire (Stein 1972: 60, Bacot and others 1940-46: 42 n.3).1

---

1 Se-rib (Se-rib) is the ancient name of the lower Lo region, which has also been called Baragaun, Kag-Baragaun, and Muktiksetra. At one time, this region included the entire area
Some earlier Chinese literary sources identify this region as Sili (hsi-li) and describe it as a place with a climate warmer than Tibet (Pelliot 1912: 357-85, Jackson 1978:199). A Tibetan biographical source dated 1241, *Mar-lung-pa rnam-thar*, confirms Se-rib to be the area including and surrounding Muktináth in lower Lo. The source describes how a Mongol army headed by Bhara-dandur of Ya-tshe (the upper Kārālī region) reached the Muktináth area in lower Lo during a military campaign in the early eleventh century (Kun-dga'-rin-chen and Byang-chub'-bum 15a-15b).

The name Se-rib was used widely until the thirteenth century (Jackson 1978: 200-205). After the thirteenth century, however, only a few sporadic references to this name can be found. One such example is the reference given in the biography of Lama Cho-kyab palzang (Chos-skyabs dpal-bzang, 1536-1625) of Dolpo, in which Se-rib is listed together with three main districts of the Kingdom of Lo/Mustang, Tsarang (rTse-drangs or rTsa-drangs), Gami (Gad-smad), and Gelung (dGe-lung) (Snellgrove 1967: 166-167). Similarly, another Dolpo Lama, Sonam Wangchuk (bSod-nams dbang-phyug 1720-1791) describes Se-rib as a place very close to Lo/Mustang (Snellgrove 1967: 250-252). This may be the last reference to the name Se-rib found in the historical sources.

Prior to the seventh century, the Lo/Mustang region was under the influence of the pre-Buddhist, shamanistic Bon tradition of Zhang-zhung (Dpal-lidan tshul-khrim 1972: 568-583, Jackson 1978: 198-200). Bon literary sources also indicate that in ancient times, Lo/Mustang (both upper and lower), Dolpo (Dol-po), and Tshero (Tshad-ro, probably present-day Chairo village in Thak) were included in the southern reaches of Zhang-zhung of Thak, Pānchgāun, and Baragaun. Thus, in the preceding chapter, the term "lower Lo" was adopted as the standard place name. However, when original source material is cited, the name "Se-rib" is also included. Similarly, in most recent histories, current names such as "Kag-Baragāun," Thini-Pānchgāun," and "Thak" have been used. The etymological description of place names is given in the appendix.

According to *Mar-lung-pa rnam-thar*, the Mongol (Sog-po) army under Bhara-dandur's leadership reached as far as lower hill areas of Nguri such as Se-rib. Around the early eleventh century, the Mongol Bhara-dandur ruled Ya-tshe, or the upper Kārālī region (Kun-dga'-rin-chen and Byang-chub'-bum 15a-15b, Vitali 1996: 287). The tentative date of this event can be calculated on the basis of the meeting between Āchārya Atīśādiparīkara and Lochabu Sherab (Lo-tsa-bu Shes-rab), the son of Thon Kunga gyatso (Thon Kun-dga' rgya-mtsho) of the Marlungpa family of a place known as To (sTod) in 1045. At that time, Āchārya Atīśa was traveling to the U (dbUs) and Tsang (gTsang) region (Kun-dga'-rin-chen and Byang-chub'-bum 19a, Vitali 1996: 287).

Since there is a description of Lama Cho-kyab palzang's quick trips (one or two days' stay in each) to Gami, Gelung, and Se-rib from Tsarang, the Se-rib region would be none other than the area south of Gelung.

According to the biography of Lama Sonam (bSod-nams), there was a conflict between two high-ranking teaching Lamas (dGe-bshes) of upper Lo and Se-rib. The dispute caused a war between upper Lo and Se-rib. Finally, the dispute was settled by removing both Lamas following a meeting of religious representatives from eighteen villages of Lo/Mustang and Se-rib.
Besides the description provided by Bon literary sources, there are two other indicators that identify Lo/Mustang as one of the bordering regions of Zhang-zhung. These are: (a) the absence of any identifiable major power in the region between the center of Zhang-zhung and Lo/Mustang, and (b) the abundance of pre-Buddhist Bon elements in Lo-pa society and the identification of dozens of ancient Bon sites in upper Lo (MHR: 327-28, 372-374). As an important center of Bon religion and culture, Zhang-zhung must have wielded political and cultural influence over its frontiers, which included Lo/Mustang and Dolpo.

The enduring popular legend (believed to be collected by Lama Urgyen Lingpa in the fourteenth century) about the revered Buddhist Tantric from India, Padmasambhava, his eighth-century visit to Lo/Mustang, and his subjugation of the local demoness, may be linked to the fall of Zhang-zhung's Bon influence and the advent of Tibetan Buddhism in the upper Lo region. We know that the annexations of Zhang-zhung (the most popular center of Bon religion) and areas adjacent to Tibet, had largely been completed by the eighth century A.D. (Jackson 1977: 39-41). Historical sources and legends mentioned above suggest that the Lo/Mustang region had already been inhabited by the followers of Bon religion, who possibly migrated from different parts of Zhang-zhung and central Tibet. We also know that as early as the seventh and eighth centuries the Lo/Mustang region had a distinctive local identity. Tibet's defeat of lower Lo in 709 may have revived its supremacy in the region. The signal change in Lo/Mustang, which followed the Tibetan conquest, was the introduction of Buddhism and the eventual replacement of the earlier Bon order.

After the aforementioned conquest, Tibet maintained its influence in Lo/Mustang for more than two centuries. The early Tibetan empire, expanded and strengthened by Srong-btsan-sgam-po in the seventh century, expanded further through the reign of his sixth descendant, the famous religious king Tri-song de-tsen (Khri-srong-lde-btsan, b.c. 711, d. 780). This early Tibetan kingdom remained integrated and powerful until the reign of king Ralpa-chen (Ral-pa-can, b. c.806, d. c.836). After the assassination of the anti-Buddhist king Langdar-ma (Glang-dar-ma) in 901, the Tibetan empire disintegrated (Richardson 1984: 29-30).

In addition to the historical sources mentioned above, several other literary sources, as well as a popular local tradition, augment the early history of the Lo/Mustang region (MHR doc. 20 Tibetan). Among them, the biographical literature concerning Padmasambhava, an eighth-century Buddhist tantric, is important in this regard. These sources are popularly known as Padma bka'-thang, Mani-bka'-hum, Padma-thang-yig or Padma bka'-chems (bKra-shis stobs-rgyal n. d., O-rgyan gling-pa 1987. Douglas and Bays 1878, Tucci 1956: 14-15, Vostrikov 1970: 32-49).

Other sources on early Lo/Mustang are Tibetan pilgrim guidebooks describing Padmasambhava's visit to the region and his religious services
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

there (Tucci 1956: 10-11, Jackson 1976: 41, Padma bka'i thang, cantos 60, 62). The guidebook Chu mig brgyad sku-tshab gter-nga mu-le gangs gu-ru gsang phug sos kyi dkar-chag gsal ba'i me-long ngo-mtshar can rnams mentions several religious sites in the lower Lo region, which are still believed to have been visited and blessed by Padmasambhava (Tucci 1956: 11). These include Thak, Baragün, and Dol-po (the bhar-rong khola area). Most of these sources deal mainly with the spiritual activities of Padmasambhava in Tibet, which include the services of founding Buddhist centers and subduing anti-Buddhist elements in the Lo/Mustang region (Tucci 1956:11-12). It is commonly believed that after Padmasambhava subdued the local demoness, he founded the Lo Gekar (Glo-bo dge-dkar) monastery in upper Lo, where he concealed some of the important tantric Buddhist texts (bKra-shis stobs-rgyal 1967: 344, Jackson 1976/77: 50 and notes 9-10, Das 1983: 525, Padma bka'i thang, cantos: 60, 62, Douglas and Bays 1978 pt. II: 374, 385).

A careful examination of literary sources, popular legends, and the historical geography of Padmasambhava's journeys, including his journey to Lo/Mustang, all produce historical evidence. As the Lo/Mustang region was one of the important centers of Bon religion, a need existed for a powerful and magical tantric master like Padmasambhava to bring the Bon priests and followers under control and replace the Bon religion with tantric Buddhism. The stories about Padmasambhava's victory over the demoness and his concealment of the Buddhist tantric texts in Lo/Mustang describe both the conflict between Bon and Buddhist people and the eventual victory of Buddhist doctrine over Bon belief. Thus, these Padmasambhava stories may be interpreted more generally as Padmasambhava's Buddhist mission to establish a long-lasting Buddhist influence in Lo/Mustang.

It is also widely believed that the Lo Gekar (present-day Gar Gonpa) area in Lo/Mustang is the first among the forty-nine Tibetan Buddhist pilgrimage spots where concealed textual treasures of Buddhism were unearthed (Das 1983: 525). Padmasambhava's biography tells us that the Lo Gekar

---

5 The existence of legends about Padmasambhava's activities in most of the major historical Tibetan settlements is not an uncommon phenomenon. Position of Padmasambhava in Tibetan Buddhism is possibly even loftier than that of lord Siva or Sārikkara in Hinduism. Thus, at the outset, the most difficult task of a historian of Tibetan culture and society is to determine the historicity of Padmasambhava from amidst the many myths and legends identified with him. After the long and painstaking efforts of a handful of historians and philologists, the historicity of this Buddhist tantric guru has been tentatively established. From such historical and philological works, it appears that the historical figure, Padmasambhava of India, visited Tibet in the middle of the eighth century and founded Tibet's first Buddhist monastery, bSam-yas, around 779 (Roerich 1976: 43-44, Richardson 1962: 31). This tantric master of India is believed to have been invited by the Tibetan King Khri-srong lde-btsan, and arrived in Tibet after traveling through Nepal and Mang-yul in c. 749 (Roerich 1976: 44-43, bKra-shis stobs-rgyal pp. 332-335, Padma bka'i thang-yig, canto 62, Douglas and Bays 1978 pt. II: 362-370).
monastery was founded by Padmasambhava earlier than the foundation of the famous bSam-yas monastery in Tibet (ibid. Canto: 62). The legend also claims that the first construction work on the Samye monastery was repeatedly obstructed by local demons (nāgas), who attacked from the Mal-dro (Mal-gro) and Lo/Mustang regions until Padmasambhava subdued them (ibid. Canto 62, MHR: 14-15). Padmasambhava reached Lhasa in the year 747 and went on to play an important role in establishing an enduring tradition of tantric Buddhist doctrine in Tibet. He ultimately succeeded in gaining the support of the Tibetan authorities and people for establishing Samye, the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet, in 779. Considering the description of the Padma bka'-thang and the local tradition of Lo/Mustang, Padmasambhava's first visit to Lo/Mustang can be dated to 746 or 747, around the time he arrived in Lhasa. Supporting the veracity of the legend, the Lo Gekar monastery still exists with virtually its original name. Local sources of later times such as the seventeenth-century text of Byams-pa dkar-chag still refer to Padmasambhava's visit to Lo/Mustang (MHR doc. 20 Tibetan, doc. 16 Tibetan in the appendix).

After the disintegration of the Tibetan empire in the early tenth century, numerous principalities and feudatories emerged throughout Tibet (Richardson 1984: 29-30). Among them, major powers such as Zhang-zhung (known as Gu-ge by the tenth and eleventh centuries), Pu-rang (sPu-rang or Pu-hrang), and Gung-thang (Gung-thang) in Mang-yul were able to maintain their full independence in western Tibet. Lo/Mustang, as a comparatively smaller and less populated frontier region, could not immediately emerge as an independent kingdom. For about three hundred years (spanning the tenth through the twelfth centuries), Lo/Mustang was controlled by Gu-ge, except for several short-lived Ladakhi invasions.6

Lo/Mustang under Ngari, Khaša/Ya-tshe Kingdom, and Gung-thang (Tenth through Fourteenth Century)

The persecution of those who followed Buddhism, especially that of the Tibetan king Glag-dar-ma and his eventual assassination by Buddhists brought more than a century-long dark age to central Tibet (Jackson 1976/77: 43). Still, its Buddhist legacy did not disappear from Tibet as a whole; it developed further in the western Tibetan region of Ngari (Petech 1980: 86-88). The major cultural and political center of this region was Zhang-zhung (the latter-day Gu-ge). Besides this region, several other important Tibetan cultural and political centers existed in western Tibet, including Pu-rang, Mangyul (Gung-thang area), Maryul (Ladakh), and Ya-

---

6 King lHa-chen utpala (1080-1110) was the first Ladakhi ruler to penetrate most of Ngari, including both upper and lower Lo up to Mukintinath (Chu-la-me-bar rdo-la-me-bar sa-la-me-bar) (Francke 1972: 96, Jackson 1977: 42-43).
tshe (the Sirñjā area of the upper Karnālī region in western Nepal). Among these centers, Gung-thang was the meeting point of two Tibetan cultural areas—the more recently influenced area in the west (Ngari) and the older one in the center of traditional Tibet (dBus and gTsang). The far western areas of the gtsang region, however, including Gung-thang, Dzongkha (rDzong-dkar), and Kyirong (sKyid-grong) were considered lower or eastern bordering districts of Ngari as well (GDR: title page). The Lo/Mustang region (along with most of Dolpo and Manāṅg) was also known to be part of lower or eastern Ngari (mNga'-ris smad) (KGJ: 7a, TR: 3a, PRR: 723).

The new name Ngari (mNga'-ris) refers to the Tibetan conquest of this region; the precise meaning of mNga'-ris is "region under control" or "subjects under the control of a king" (Chos-phel 1979: 24-25, Jamspal 1985: 152-153). This etymological reference suggests that the name Ngari was established only after the central Tibetan conquest of Zhang-zhung and the surrounding areas of western Tibet. In later times, this Tibetan term became the predominant name for a huge area of western Tibet covering the entire territory between Maryul (Ladakh) in the west and Mangyul (Gung-thang) in the east.

After the Bon rebellion in Lhasa and the assassination of king Langdarma (Glang-dar-ma) by Buddhists, the Ngari region, particularly the Gu-ge and Pu-rang areas, adopted the early Buddhist traditions of central Tibet. About a century after the disintegration of Tibet, under the leadership of the ruler of Gu-ge, the Ngari region began a most ambitious project for reviving Buddhism in Tibet in response to the spread of Islam in India and particularly to incidents of Tugluq attacks on monasteries in Northern India (Petech 1980: 85-88). The early tenth-century political disintegration of Tibet did not completely destroy its ancient ruling line; rather, divided it into many branches, creating a large number of principalities under the control of the descendants of these early Tibetan rulers, their relatives, and even their powerful ministers (ibid.).

By the middle of the tenth century, one of the descendants of the old dynasty through Langdarma’s legitimate son, Namde-o-sung (gNam-lde 'od-srung), gained control of a major portion of Ngari. King Tashigon (bKra-shis-mgon) of Pu-rang, as he was known, played an important role in consolidating the political power of almost all of Ngari (Roerich 1976: 37). It is widely believed that the Lo/Mustang and Dolpo regions of present-day Nepal were among the important centers of King Tashi-gon's domain (NKZP Vol. 9: 113, Jackson 1976/77: 41).

---

7 Although King Kyi-de nyi-ma gon (sKyid-lde nyi-ma mgon) was the first to escape from central Tibet to settle in Ngari, King Tashi-gon (bKra-shis-mgon) was one of the first of Langdarma's great-grandsons to establish his strong rule in Ngari, or the old Zhang-zhung region.
At that time, there were three or four major political centers in Ngari, namely Maryul (Ladakh), Gu-ge, Pu-rang, and Mangyul (Gung-thang). All these political centers one of the major powers in lower Central Asia, including most of western Tibet and all of Ladakh (Tucci 1956: 73). This was the time at which the lost prestige of the old Tibetan dynasty was restored in western Tibet.

The descendants of Tashi-gon, Lha-lama Yeshe-o and his nephew Jyangchub-o, worked strenuously to restore Buddhism in western Tibet. As rulers, they invited the most renowned Buddhist luminary of the time, Ācārya Atiśadīpaṇikara, of Vikramāsīlāmahāvihāra in northern India, into Tibet (Dhungel 1986: 183-185, Chattopadhyay 1981: 414-420). Upon Atiśa's arrival in Gu-ge in the year 1042, the "Buddhist renaissance," as some scholars have called it, initiated under the leadership of the scholar Rinchen zangpo (Rin-chen bzang-po, 958-1055), gathered even more momentum in western Tibet. For about three years the Ācārya promoted Buddhism in and around Gu-ge and Pu-rang. Eventually, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, these two areas of Ngari became the major centers of the Buddhist resurgence. During this period, the great monasteries such as Tholing (Tho-gling) flourished, and newer ones were established. Also, great Sanskrit translators, such as Rinchen zangpo, had the opportunity to receive an important degree of spiritual instructions from Ācārya Atiśa (Tucci 1988: 74). Although the Qarluq Turks aggressively threatened western Tibet, the Buddhist rulers of Gu-ge and Pu-rang were not discouraged from restoring Buddhism in Tibet (Tucci 1956: 106). King Yeshe-o (Ye-shes-'od) of Gu-ge chose to sacrifice his life for the re-establishing of Buddhism in his land. This king did not even wish to be released from his imprisonment by the Qarluq Turks. Instead, he instructed his nephew, Jyangchub-o, then the acting ruler of Gu-ge, to use the gold collected to pay his ransom for inviting leading Buddhist Panditas of India and Nepal. This included Ācārya Atiśadīpaṇikara (Chattopadhyay 1981: 414-15), Roerich 1976: 244-45, Dhungel 1986: 182-84).

As one of the bordering provinces of Ngari not far from Gu-ge and Pu-rang, Lo/Mustang also participated in the activities of Buddhist revitalization in western Tibet. During his three-year stay in the Ngari region Atiśa managed to train dozens of Tibetan disciples in Buddhist scholarship (Roerich 1976: 262, MHR: 15). Lama Tonpa yang-rab (sTon-pa yang-rab) of Lo/Mustang was one of them (ibid.). Eventually, this Lo/Mustang Lama was able to earn fame as one of the greatest scholars of western Tibet. Today, local people of Lo/Mustang believe that Ācārya Atiśa (also called Jo-bo-rje

---

8 Lha-lama Yeshe-o (lha-bla-ma ye-shes-'od), ruler of Gu-ge, was later captured by the Qarluq Turks. Afterward, his nephew, the governor of Pu-rang, became Gu-ge's acting ruler.

9 Because of the nature of sources available to us covering the period between tenth and fourteenth centuries, the study focuses mainly on the activities of religious personalities.
or Dīpaśākara sṛjñāna) himself paid a visit to Lo/Mustang with his Lo-pa disciple, Tonpa yang-rab. The geography of Atiśa's pilgrimage in western Tibet substantiates this legend because Atiśa travelled to and from Gu-ge via Gung-thang, and Lo/Mustang is situated between these two settlements (Roerich 1976: 254).

In addition to Atiśa's contacts with Lo/Mustang and the visits he probably paid to the area, local Lo officials had many opportunities to invite nearly every prominent Indian Buddhist scholar and the great Tibetan Lamas during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries.

Other important scholars to visit Lo/Mustang during the eleventh century included Lama Sangye (Sangs-rgyas), Tulku Lato marpo (sPrul-ku La-stod dmar-po), Lotsaba Rinchen zangpo (Lo-tsa-ba Rin-chen bzang-po, 958-1055), and the Yogi Lama Milarepa (Mi-la-ras-pa, 1040-1123). Lama Sangye of Tibet is acknowledged as the discoverer of the first textual treasure (gTer-ma) near the Lo Gekar monastery in Lo/Mustang (Roerich 1976: 68-69, Jackson 1976: 42, 51). Tulku Lato Marpo, or Dampa Marpo (Dam-pa dmar-po), a contemporary of Marpa Lotsaba (Mar-pa lo-tsa-ba, 1012-1099), paid a visit to both upper and lower Lo in the early eleventh century during the Qarluq Turks' invasions (Roerich 1976: 1025-1029). It is held that this Lama demonstrated his talent for archery by shooting an arrow at the Qarluq enemy, which pierced through a large boulder (ibid.). This incredible-sounding legend reveals that (a) the Lo/Mustang region was becoming an important Buddhist center in western Tibet and (b) that the Qarluq Turks attacked the Buddhist rulers of the Ngari region of western Tibet, even marching their army as far as the Lo/Mustang region to destroy Tibetan Buddhist centers. The most esteemed translator and Buddhist scholar, Rinchen zangpo of western Tibet, and the Yogi Lama Milarepa also visited and sermonized the people of Lo/Mustang, reinforcing various Buddhist precepts (MHR doc. 20 Tibetan, Byams-pa dkar-chag fol. 6, Rus-pa'i-rgyan-can 1981: 365-369). Milarepa visited Lo/Mustang on his pilgrimage to Kailāśa-Māṇaśarovara, spending one year there. On his departure, the Lo/Mustang-pa people, both men and women, traveled with the great Lama up to the northern frontier area of Lo/Mustang, known as Korala (Ko-ra-lha) (Rus-pa'i-rgyan-can 1981: 365-369).

10 Lama Sangye's (sangs-rgyas) discoveries were found in the capital of a pillar of the old Gekar (dGe-dkar or locally known today as Lo Gekar or Gar gonpa) monastery and also beneath a rock in the vicinity of the monastery. These Terma (gTer-ma) texts included the Buddhist sutras originally translated from Chinese. One of the terma texts from Lo/Mustang is rTsa-gsun-r-dn'l-sgruh, which is still in common use in Nepal (Jackson 1976: 51, note 19).

11 Based on the description given in the Mar-lung-pa rnam-thar, we can tell that this must refer to the same invasion discussed earlier, because the Turks were also sometime known in Tibet as Sog-po. At that time, the local Sog-po ruler, Bhara dandur of the upper Karnālī and western Tibetan region, was a powerful military strategist who had invaded many Tibetan frontier areas, including upper and lower Lo (Kun-dga'-rin-chen and Byang-chub-bum: 15a-15b, Vitali 1996: 287).
We are also told of a visit to Lo/Mustang by one of the major disciples of Sa-chen Kun dga' snying po (1092-1158). This was Lama Rong-gom (Rong-gom) of Tibet, who also resided at the Samdup-ling (bSam-'grub-gling monastery) in upper Lo, probably for several years (Jackson 1976: 43, 52). This source indicates that by the middle of the twelfth century, the Sakya tradition had already established a special link to Lo/Mustang and achieved a level of influence within it.

An early thirteenth-century reference describes a renowned Buddhist scholar’s visit to Lo/Mustang; this was the Mahāpaññita Śākyasirīphadra (1127-1125) of Kashmir, who was the reigning dominant figure in Indian Buddhism. On his return journey to Kashmir from Tibet in the year 1212, by way of Gung-thang, he visited Lo/Mustang with a number of his Tibetan disciples. While in Lo/Mustang, he conducted several religious services and instructed his main disciple, Thophu Lotsaba (Khro-phu lo-tsa-ba), to confer upon the local monastic institutions most of the gold he had collected as donations in Tibet (Roerich 1976: 1071). After remaining in Lo/Mustang indefinitely, he returned to Kashmir, crossing the mountain passes of the Tsharka (Tshar-kha) area of Dolpo; Thophu Lotsaba had escorted him up to a nearby mountain pass (Roerich 1976: 1071).12 It is believed that Thophu Lotsaba, the Mahāpaññita’s favorite and primary Tibetan disciple, also performed religious services in the region (ibid.). For several centuries, Buddhist scholars of Tibet, India, and Nepal continued to make pilgrimages to Lo/Mustang. Nevertheless, references also describe the activities of Lo’s own, native scholars, who were famed abroad during these centuries.13

Thirteenth-century documents indicate that Lama Sherab Rinchen (Shes-rab rin-chen), a member of upper Lo’s elite-class family, was a learned master of the Vajrayāna school of Buddhism in Tibet. Popularly known in Tibet as Lobo Lotsaba (Glo-bo lo-tsa-ba), Lama Sherab was one of the finest and most respected scholars and translators of his time (Smith 1970: 2-4). A disciple of Sakya pandita and also a religious preceptor of Sakya Phagpa (’phags-pa) of Tibet (Jackson 1976: 45-46, 54), he had received the teachings of raktyamantaka (gShin-rje-gshed-dmar-po) from a Nepali scholar named Darpaña (Roerich 1976: 1046). Lama Sherab Rinchen had worked with a famous scholar of Simjā (Ya-tshe) named Pāṇḍita Jayānanda in several translation projects concerning tantra and astrology (Jackson 1976: 45, 55). Pāṇḍita Jayānanda was once associated with Chag Lotsaba Choje-pal (Chags lo-tsa-ba Chos-rje-dpal, 1197-1265), a very prominent Buddhist translator and scholar in Tibet (ibid.). From the fact that Sherab had worked with  

12 Because no mountain pass in the north leads west, this must refer to the unnamed pass located southwest of Tsarang, the second largest township in Lo/Mustang.

13 Lo/Mustang’s native scholars such as Lobo Khchen (Glo-bo mkhan-chen bSod-nams lhun-grub, 1456-1532), Ngari Penchen (mNga'-ris pan-chen Padma-dbang-rgyal, 1487-1542) are among these prominent figures. Activities of such Buddhist scholars of Lo/Mustang, including these two, will be discussed in the next chapter.
Jayānanda, it can safely be assumed that he may have seen or even worked with Chag Lotsaba as well. This assumption is supported by a reference to the association of Chag Lotsaba and Sherab rinchen as scholars and devotees of raktayamantaka, who was both their guardian deity and subject of specialization of study (Roerich 1976: 379, 1046). On the basis of these references it can be said that the thirteenth century was the important age of direct participation of Lo/Mustang on the later Buddhist translation movement in Tibet.

Around the same time, the Digung-pa ('Bri-gung-pa) monastery of Gyangdhak (rGyang-grags) in the Kailāśa-Mānasārovara area established close contacts with the people of Himalayan frontier districts, including Lo/Mustang (Jackson 1977: 33, 44, 1978: 213, n. 66). Even centuries later, a nineteenth-century Drigung literary source recounts the establishment of a branch of the Drigung Monastery in lower Lo’s Chumig gyatsa (Chu-mig-brgya-rtsa or present-day Muktināth) area (ibid.). This late reference states that around the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Kagyu-pa (bKa’-rgyud-pa) line of Tibetan Buddhism was flourishing in the Lo/Mustang region. Yogi Lama Milarepa’s yearlong stay in Lo/Mustang in the eleventh century must have influenced the Kagyu tradition in and around the upper and lower Lo/Mustang region. Quite possibly, the thirteenth-century activities of the Digung Kagyu (‘Bri-gung bka’-rgyud) line throughout the Ngari region and including Lo/Mustang was a renewal of the older link already established by Mi-la-ras-pa in the late eleventh or the early twelfth centuries. It is also possible that the Lopa followers of the Digung Kagyu tradition of the Gyangdhak monastery promoted such activities in Lo/Mustang.

Another important aspect of the history of Lo/Mustang between the tenth and thirteenth centuries is the resurgence of Bon culture. The Lo/Mustang region had been influenced by Zhang-zhung/Gu-ge, which was one of the prominent centers of old Bon religion until Tibetan expansion into the Ngari region. Despite Buddhism’s important successes in Lo/Mustang, the deeply rooted Bon order was not completely eradicated. After the disintegration of the Tibetan empire in the early tenth century, the Bon religion began to regain its influence in the entire Ngari region, including Lo/Mustang and Dolpo. While Buddhism was declining during and after Langdarma’s misrule, prominent Bon scholars were invited by the rulers of Pu-rang, Zhang (Men-zhangs), and lower Lo (Se-rib) to reinvigorate the Bon religion in their respective domains. Bonpo masters rigorously devoted themselves to reestablishing Bon by traveling extensively in and around Ngari (Jackson 1978: 200-201). The first Bon master to visit and work in lower Lo was Sangye (Sangs-rgyas or Klu-skar-rgyal), who was known as the main adversary of the great Buddhist translator Rinchen Zangpo of Tibet (Jackson 1978: 201). This Bon master has been identified as Shenchchen Luga (gShen-chchen klu-ga’, 996-1035) of Tsang (Smith 1970 vol. 80: 6 n. 13).
Although the Bon religion was not established in the lower Lo region until the eleventh century, it was already well rooted in the upper Lo region even before the advent of Buddhism in that area. In the eleventh century, the lower Lo region became an important center of Ya-ngal (Yan-ngal) Bon (Jackson 1978: 202-203). In the second half of the twelfth century, a place in lower Lo known as Ludhak (Klu-brag), near the present-day Kāgbeni, became one of the main Bon pilgrimage centers (Jackson 1978: 202-203). Prominent Bon figures who devoted considerable time and effort in promoting Bon religion and culture were Nyel Thulme zigpo (sNyel-thul-med-zhi-g-po), Ludhakpa Tashi gyalchen (Klu-brag-pa bKra-shis rgyal-mtshan, 1119-c.1203), Nyelton Thulme zigpo (sNyel-ston-khrul-med-zhi-g-po), Lobpon Gyalchen-bum (Slob-spon rGyal-mtshan-bum), and Duchen Tshulthim Gyalchen (Bru-chen Tshul-khrims rgyal-mtshan, 1239-c. 1302) (Jackson 1978: 204-206). Among them, Ludhakpa Tashi gyalchen remained the most important figure. He founded a large and well-managed, Bon monastery in Ludhak or Lubrak (Klu-brag), where about fifty monks were gathered within one year (Snellgrove 1967: 4 n. 4. Jackson 1978: 205). Ludhakpa was well educated, having received instruction from at least half a dozen high-ranking Bon scholars, including his older brother and his father Yangton (Yang-ston, 1077-1141), who was one of the most prominent Bon scholars of his time. Ludhakpa’s main fields of expertise were tantra, known as rDzogs-chen snyan-brgyud and medicine (dPal-ldan tshul-khrims 1972 vol. II: 344.2). Ludhakpa’s father had visited upper Lo and extensively studied the transmission of the Zhang-zhung snyan-brgyud with another Bon master of Tibet. Rongom Togme zigpo (Rong-sgom rTogs-med zhi-g-po), as this master was known, was one of the most prominent Bon figures to work extensively in the upper Lo region. Yangton had also corresponded with Nyel Thulme zigpo, a Bon scholar of lower Lo (Jackson 1978: 203-4).

Duchen Chulthim gyalchen (Bru-chen Tshul-khrims rgyal-mtshan, 1239-1302) was another great Bon master and also one of the most prominent figures to work in the lower Lo region. At the invitation of his first disciple, Lobpon Gyalchen-bum, a Bon scholar of Lubrak. Duchen Chulthim visited lower Lo, performed religious services, and promoted tantric teachings (Namdak 1972: 442.7). Besides working at Lubrak, this Bon master traveled to many other important Bon centers of the three regions of Ngari, including upper Lo, Dolpo, lower Lo, Pu-rang, Limi (li-mi), and northern nomadic areas (dPal-ldan-tshul-khrims 1972: 470.2). In the lower Lo region, in addition to teaching at Lubrak, he spent about nine years living in various places such as Tinyug (Ti-snyug, present-day Tiri, near Kāgbeni), the seat of Lama Nyelton Thulme (sNyel-ston khrul-med zhi-g-po) (Namdak 1972: 442.7). In upper Lo, he visited various Bon monasteries and settlements such as Donkya (gDong-skya) and Jyibakhar (Byi-ba mkhar, now Byi-phug
rdzong area) (ibid.). After twelve years of service in the Ngari region, including both upper and lower Lo, and Dolpo, Duchen returned to his home, Yeru Wensakha (g.Yas-ru dBen-sa-kha) in Tsang. He then recognized these three locales as the ones where he had accomplished his goals. His biographer even states that this Bon master claimed to have laid the foundations of the Bon doctrine in Lo/Mustang, lower Lo (Se-rib), and Dolpo by establishing a Bon monastery (at Pag-gling in lower Lo) and initiating 543 disciples from throughout the three areas (Namdak 1972: 452.1). Thus, after the decline of Buddhism in Tibet in the late ninth or the early tenth century, the Lo/Mustang region, together with the neighboring districts of Dolpo and Limi, came under the direct influence of the resurgent Bon religion and culture of western Tibet for several centuries.

Buddhist scholars of the time were also working hard to reclaim and extend their doctrinal influence into Lo/Mustang, and they largely succeeded. After the establishment of direct cultural and political contacts between Lo/Mustang and Gung-thang in the thirteenth century, the entire Lo/Mustang region was newly influenced by the Buddhist tradition. Only a few places, such as Lubrak, were relinquished to the ancient Bon tradition. Still, many cultural elements of Bon tradition in Lo/Mustang persisted. Even today, the role of old Bon tradition in Lo/pa society is very strong, although most Lo-pas claim to be Buddhist (Peissel 1967: 66, 217). Dozens of old monuments and historical sites of Bon centers in both upper and lower Lo remain and some of the older settlements in what were lower Lo and Dolpo still preserve the Bon tradition. Today, in upper Lo, only a few households identify with Bon. Still, the tradition of religious pilgrimage in the Lo/Mustang region, observed by both Buddhist and Bon scholars from Tibet and by Buddhists from India and Nepal, evidently continued into subsequent centuries as well (MHR: 15-16).

LO UNDER THE KHAŚA/YA–TSHE KINGDOM OF WESTERN NEPAL AND THE GUNG–THANG PRINCIPALITY OF WESTERN TIBET (TWELFTH THROUGH FOURTEENTH CENTURIES)

Between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, the entire Lo/Mustang region was under the political domination of either the Khaśa/Ya-tshe...
kingdom or the principality of Gung-thang. The cultural and political dominance of Gu-ge and Pu-rang in Ngari declined after the early twelfth century. Regional competition erupted between the three major kingdoms of western Tibet—Maryul (Ladakh), Gu-ge, and Gung-thang (Mangyul). These kingdoms were established by the three main branches of the old Tibetan ruling line. Tibetan royal dominance in Maryul (Ladakh) in the far western frontier region of Ngari, was established by Palgyigon (dPal-gyi mgon), the older brother of the famous Gu-ge ruler, Tashi-gon (bKra-shis-mgon) (Petech 1980: 85-87). Around the beginning of the twelfth century, during the reign of king Lhachen Utpal (lHa-chan utpal) (a descendant of dPal-gyi-mgon), this kingdom grew stronger. Gu-ge, as a major power center of Ngari, weakened in comparison to Ladakh to the west and Gung-thang to the east of Ngari. As a result, the adjacent Lo/Mustang region became a target of conquest for these two stronger powers. Although Ladakh was aggressively expanding its territory, Gung-thang's supremacy over the Lo/Mustang region was eventually carried more influence and was long-lasting. Nonetheless, Ladakh did not miss a single opportunity to mobilize its army along the southeastern frontier areas. The chronicles (rGyal-rabs) of Ladakh tell of a twelfth-century Ladakhi conquest of Lo/Mustang and the entire territory between Pu-rang and Lo/Mustang during the reign of lHa-chan utpal (Francke 1926: Vol. I, Tibetan text: 36, English tr.: 96). According to this source, Ladakh expanded its conquest at least as far as the Chu-la me'-bar (Muktinâth) area of lower Lo (ibid.). Therefore, it can be assumed that Ladakh must have fought armed conflicts against Gung-thang in order to conquer Lo/Mustang and the surrounding areas, because the Lo/Mustang region at that time was one of Gung-thang's far southwestern frontiers (GDR: 7b). The Gung-thang principality in Mangyul was identified as one of the regions of greater Ngari because the Gung-thang rulers were also descended from the same old Tibetan royal line (ibid.). The Gung-thang kings descended directly from bKra-shis brtsegs-pa-dpal, the uncle of the Gu-ge King Tashi-gon. Although in earlier times, Gung-thang was a small provincial state, by the end of the twelfth century, it had gained independent status under the leadership of its local ruler lHa-mchog-lde (GDR: 2b).

Due to this weakening of Gu-ge and Pu-rang in the twelfth century, there emerged a new and strong political order in the center of Ngari. This new order ultimately ended the old ruling line of Gu-ge and came to dominate Lo/Mustang for some two hundred years. Although the origin of this new ruling line is not quite clear, the founder of this dynasty, according to both Tibetan and Nepali sources, was Nāgarāja or Nāgadeva (Kun-dga' rdo-rje, DMR: 19b-20a, Tucci: 1962: 43, 49-50, 65-71, Petech 1980: 86-102, Adhikary 1988: 22-23, 33-39). Later, this dynasty was known as the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe, or the Calla/Malla (ibid.) Most non-Tibetan sources found in Nepal and India have acknowledged these rulers as the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe or Khâsiya kings (Vajracarya VE 2028: 11-15, Bihari 1913-1914: 30, Adhikary
In the beginning of their rule in the twelfth century, the Khaṣas were established as the succeeding ruling dynasty of Gu-ge and Pu-rang in western Tibet (Tucci 1956: 51-60, Roerich 1976: 37). Later, when king Tsangchuyug-de (bTsang-phug-lde), the son of Nāgarājā, moved his capital to Ya-tshe or Sirīnjā, these rulers also came to be known as the Ya-tshe or Ya-tshe-pa kings.18

The very emergence of this dynasty as the strongest power in Ngari, and its military campaigns, seems to have played an important role in influencing the history of western Tibet and the Himalayan regions of Nepal and India. After the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe emergence, the formerly ascendant powers of Ngari's eastern and western frontier regions, Ladakh and Gung-thang, retreated. King Krācalla (Grags-pa-lde of Tibetan sources) is the first recorded Khaṣa/Ya-tshe ruler to subdue the Lo/Mustang region from his capital at Sirīnjā (mNga'-ris-rgyal-rabs of Ngag-dbang-grags-pa: 78-79, Vitali 1996: 446). It is recorded that king Kraicalla, while capturing the major north-south trade "doors" (brJe-sgo) of the entire western Himalayan region, brought the Lo/Mustang region, up to Muktināṭh, under his control, even appointing one of his sons as commissioner (ibid.)

Because of the absence of another stronger power between Gung-thang (Mangyul) and Ladakh (Maryul), most of the western Tibetan feudatories, including Kumaun, Garhwal, and the western Himalayan districts of Nepal, came under the supreme jurisdiction of these Khaṣa/Ya-tshe rulers. Even the Nepal valley (Kathmandu and surrounding areas) had been attacked at least seven times by these Khaṣa/Ya-tshe rulers between 1288 and 1334 (Adhikary 1988: 46 Gopālarājavarnāvali: 26-27, 40, 43-44, 46, 48). After establishing their capital in Sirīnjā, these Khaṣa/Ya-tshe rulers divided their kingdom into two major administrative divisions, Jadān (the high Himalayan region settled by the Tibetan speaking people) and Khaṣān (lower hill areas settled by non Tibetan speaking people) (Vajracarya VE 2028: 11).19

Beginning in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, Gung-thang (Mangyul) began to expand its territory and grew stronger again in the Ngari region. A violent rivalry for regional power then erupted between the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe kingdom and Gung-thang. A war broke out during the reigns of the Gung-thang king mGon-po-lde and the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe king Krācalla

---

18 This region has become identified with Sirīnjā of the Karnāīi region of Nepal. Ya-tshe (ya-tshe or ya-rtshe) is an old Tibetan name for the upper Karnāī region; in Tibet, the region's rulers were always known as the Ya-tshe-pa. Before the founding of the Khaṣa capital in Sirīnjā, this area was ruled by one of the Mongol or Turk chieftains known as Sog-po (or Hor) Bhara dan-dur (kun-dga'-rin-chen and byang-chub-'bum: 15a-b). The biographical source cited has clearly introduced Sog-po Bhara dan-dur as the ruler of Ya-tshe, who was able to capture the entire Tibetan frontier area, including the Lo/Mustang and Manāng area (Ibid.).

19 According to a seventeenth century royal order of King Sāhibān Malla of Parvat, the Thak-Pāncghāun area of lower Lo was still known by the old geographic term, Khaṣān (Khasāntapradeśa) (MHR doc. 272, 273 Nepali).
in the year 1235, which lasted for about four years (Kun-dga' -rin-chen and Byang-chub -bum: 10a-140b, Vitali 1996: 447). Ultimately, the Khasa/Ya-tshe army crushed Gung-thang, compelling its ruler to flee to Kyirong (sKyid -grong), near the Nepali border. Ultimately, he was killed there by the Khasa/Ya-tshe army (GDR 1749: 3a). At that time, the Khasa/Ya-tshe kingdom was strong and unchallenged in the entire territory, covering Ngari, the western Himalayan hill districts of Kumaun and Garhwal, and western Nepal. About twelve years prior to this KhaSa/Ya-tshe-Gung-thang war, Khasa/Ya-tshe king Kriicalla had already conquered the territory of Kumaun and Garhwal and appointed local rulers (Adhikary 19811: 40). This was also the period in which Lo/Mustang and the Khasa/Ya-tshe kingdom were closely linked through religious and cultural activities (Jackson 1976: 45-55).

The important translation activity of Pəndita Jayänanda of Sinjā and lotsa -ba shes-rab rin-chen of Lo were commissioned around this time. It is important to note again that the Lo region and its surrounding areas were already under the political and cultural domination of Gu -ge, from which the KhaSa rulers had begun their military campaign in western Tibet and the western Himalayan region, and had proven to be the actual successors of the old Tibetan ruling line of Gu -ge.

The dominance of the KhaSa/Ya-tshe kingdom in and around Ngari would have remained undisturbed if matrimonial relationships between the ruling family of Gung-thang and the Khon house of Sakya (Sa-skya) had not been established in the thirteenth century (GDR: 3a, SDR: 285, NChB: 251, Jackson 1977: 52). After the establishment of matrimonial relationships between Gung-thang royal family and Khon family, with the help of Sakya Khon rulers and the influence of the Mongols, Gung-thang successfully attacked the KhaSa/Ya-tshe forces and regained power in the region and brought back the territories lost earlier to the Khasas. Gung-thang did not miss even a single opportunity to take revenge on the KhaSa/Ya-tshe rulers for Gung-thang's destruction and the demise of its king (Jackson 1976/77: 44-46).

In this context, it is important to know that around this time, the Sakya Khon family gained both religious and political power in Tibet through their relationship with the Mongols. The Mongol power in the region had already reached its peak by the early thirteenth century, and Tibetans were also familiar with the results of Mongol power in Central Asia. Eventually, the Tibetan fear of a possible Mongol attack was realized, when the Mongol forces of Koden threatened Tibet in 1240. Sakya Pəndita Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan (1182-1251) was thus commissioned and sent to negotiate with the Mongol authorities. The most learned and influential Buddhist leader of his time in Tibet, he managed to convince the Mongol authorities to spare Tibet and ultimately received an official recognition from the Mongol ruler as the
official spiritual representative of Tibet to the court of the Mongols (Jackson 1976/77: 45-46).

Although regaining local power from the Khasa was a remarkable achievement for Gung-thang, the crucial position already occupied by the Khasa/Ya-tshe kingdom in western Tibet, western Nepal, Kumaun, and Garhwal could not be eroded by this small local defeat. The first peak of the Khasa expansion remained unchallenged until around the end of the thirteenth century (Adhikary 1988: 46-48). It appears that Gung-thang's counterattack against the Khasas was confined only to the core territory of Gung-thang. It also appears that this second Khasa-Gung-thang war was fought during the reign of King Aśokacalla.

Still, with the help of the Sakya Khon clan in Tibet, Gung-thang was able not only to regain its lost power and glory but also play an important role in obstructing the Khasa/Ya-tshe kingdom's aims toward eastern expansion. Even at the height of Aśokacalla's reign (c.1250-1278), the Khasa/Ya-tshe army was prevented from crossing the upper Kāli Gandakī valley.20 Therefore, it can be assumed that the eastern border of the Khasa kingdom during the reign of Aśokacalla must have comprised the lower or southern hill areas of the Kāli Gandakī valley. The Khasa kingdom did not reach as far as the Tibetan frontier areas, including both upper and lower Lo, Nar, Nyeshang, Manāng, Nubri, and Rui; Gung-thang was able to claim these Tibetan settlements as its frontier provinces. Gung-thang remained closer to the Sakya family and through them, to the court of the great Mongols of China. The recognition of Sakya Pāṇḍita Kunga gyalchen as the spiritual ruler of Tibet by the Mongol lord Koden was strengthened by the gestures of Sakya Phagpa Lodo gyalchen ('Phags-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan, 1235-1280), a nephew of Sakya Pāṇḍita. Sakya Pandita Kunga gyalchen had also been favored by other Mongol leaders, and ultimately by the great Mongol Emperor Kubalai Khan. Eventually, Kubalai recognized Sakya Phagpa, the nephew, as the "Imperial Preceptor" and Tibet as his hereditary donation for their service to the Mongol imperial court. Kubalai's recognition made Gung-thang the most powerful center in Ngari because the rulers of Gung-thang were among the closest relatives of the Sakya rulers of Tibet. Phagpa

---

20 Aśokacalla was the most powerful ruler of the Nāgarāja (i.e., Khaša/Ya-tshe) dynasty. He was one of the most successful conquerors in the region and controlled a powerful force known as the sarvagaminivahini, a body of armed forces equipped with all sorts moving things viz. soldiers, chariots, horses, elephants etc. (Atkinson 1974: 111-112). He also regained his hereditary suzerainty over the Gu-ge, Pu-rang, and Gangri (Gangs-ri or Kailāś) regions to the northwest of his kingdom. Although he could not maintain the traditional control over Gung-thang and its surrounding eastern areas attained by his father, Aśokacalla was able to subdue hundreds of new principalities in the west and make his kingdom the strongest in the entire Himalayan region (Adhikary 1988: 41-42). Thus, he was known as the supreme ruler (rājadhīraja) of sapādalakṣaśikharadeśa, a kingdom of one hundred and twenty-five thousand mountain regions (Bihari 1913/14: 30).
was formally appointed ruler of Tibet by Kubalai Khan in the year 1260 (Shakabpa 1967: 65).

King Bumde-gon ('Bum-ldes-mgon, 1253-1280), successor of Gung-thang king Tashi tsegpapal (bKra-shis brtsegs-pa-dpal), is acknowledged by some local Tibetan sources as the most powerful and successful ruler in Gung-thang's history. His power and fortune was derived from the blessings of Sakya Phagpa and the Mongols. Thus, during this era of Sakya and Mongol support, most of Ngari, including Lo/Mustang, Dolpo, Nyeshang and Manang came under the subjugation of Gung-thang (GDR: 7b). It was at that time, with the intention of protecting the newly regained and conquered areas of his kingdom that the Gung-thang king Bumde-gon ('Bum-ldes-mgon) founded a dozen forts at different strategic points (ibid.). These forts were in upper, middle, and lower Lo, Dolpo, Manang, Gu-ge, Pu-rang, Lato (Lasdöd, both north and south), the Nubri area (northern bordering areas of present day Manang and Gorkha districts of Nepal), and in Kyirong were among them (ibid.). Of these, the Lo/Mustang (both upper and lower), Dolpo, Gru (lower Thakholā and near by areas of present day Myāgdi district), and bZang-brgyud-pa (?) were considered newly conquered territories of Gung-thang. 21

As the Gung-thang rulers were able through their Sakya Khon relatives to extend their contact with the great Mongol power of China, Gung-thang's overlordship in most of western Tibet became unchallenged. In the later years, king Bumde-gon attempted to please the Mongol authorities and win their favored recognition directly. Consequently, one of the two sons of Bumde-gon was invited by the Mongol Emperor on an official visit to China. Similarly, the next king of Gung-thang, Thi-de bum (Khri-ldes-bum, b. 1268), also visited China and won the favor of the Mongol emperor, who helped him establish his rule over a large territory of Ngari, including the thirteen major districts of western Tibet (Jackson 1978: 211-212, GDR: 5b). In 1307, this king became one of the Mongol's most favored partners in Tibet (Jackson 176/77: 45). By that time, Thi-de bum also developed a relationship with the Sakya rulers of Tibet by marrying a daughter of one of the major Sakya ruling elites, Zangpo-pal (bZang-po-dpal, 1262-1324). This was the third generation to continue a matrimonial relationship between the ruling dynasty of Gung-thang and the Sakya Khon family.

In the early fourteenth century, the entire Lo/Mustang region was virtually a part of Gung-thang and an important center of Sakya thought. By the middle of the thirteenth century, having crossed Garhwal, the Khañas reached the Sutlaj valley in the southwest and the provinces of Gu-ge and Tsaparang in the northwest (Adhikary 19888: 34). Still, the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe

21 The statement concerning the newly conquered areas in the original text is Ral-gris bcad-pa'i sde and it is translated as "the regions carved out by the sword (conquered)" (GDR: 5b).
forces were prevented from expanding eastward by the allied forces of Gung-thang, Sakya, and the Mongols. Since the entire area of Lo/Mustang, some parts of Parvat (Gru in Tibetan) and even Dolpo were newly captured by Gung-thang, there was a need to construct strong garrisons to protect these occupied territories. As a result, we can surmise that due to Gung-thang's strong presence in the area the Khaša/Ya-tshe army was blocked, at least temporarily, from crossing into the upper Kāli Gaṇḍākī valley. Therefore, the eastern frontier of the Khaša kingdom at that time was confined to the west of the Kāli Gaṇḍākī valley. The force of the Khaša kingdom was thus directed to western hill areas of Garhwal and reclaimed with their ancestral domain in western Tibet (the Gu-ge, Pu-rang and, Mt. Kailāśa or ņangs-ri regions). During the reign of king Aśokacalla (c. 1251-1280), the Khaša force captured these areas and enlarged the Khaša/Ya-tshe empire (Adhikary 1988: 41-43).

After the death of Aśokacalla, the Khaša force under the command of his son Jitāri Malla (Dzi-dar-smal of Tibetan sources) was diverted towards the east but most probably advanced along the lower or southern middle hill areas. Until that time, the upper Kāli Gaṇḍākī and upper Marsyāṅgdi valleys, including the areas between Dolpo and Kyirong, remained under the control of Gung-thang (GDR: 5b, Jackson 1978: 211-212). Despite controlling the high Himalayan regions near Gung-thang, the Khaša army was able to invade the Nepal (Kathmandu) Valley. King Jitāri Malla was the first to invade the Nepal valley three times, in the years 1288, 1289, and 1290 (Gopālavārinsāvali: 26, 40). Thus, we can assume that the Khašas, after the reign of Aśokacalla, were not satisfied to confine themselves to the western territory. Rather, they expanded their conquest towards the east, this time mainly through the middle hills of the Gaṇḍākī region. Until this time, Lo and the surrounding areas of Dolpo and Nyeshang valley must have remained under Gung-thang's control. By the beginning of the fourteenth century, particularly after around 1315 to 1320, Gung-thang's power was in decline because by that time, Sakya rule in Tibet had been weakened by the challenge of the Digung-pa order and several other groups. Consequently, in 1290, the Sakya authorities were forced to ask for the Mongols' assistance in bringing their internal situation under control. In fact, by that time, the Sakya power in Tibet was in a state of gradual decline and it was too weak to provide continuous support to Gung-thang. Because by the end of the thirteenth century, Sakya rule in Tibet had been challenged by the Digung-pa order and several other groups. Consequently, in 1290, the Sakya authorities were forced to ask for the Mongols' assistance in bringing their internal situation under control. In fact, by that time, the Sakya power in Tibet was in

---

22 Generally, the Kingdom of Parvat was known as Gru in Lo/Mustang and Tibet. Some parts of Gru probably comprised the southern frontier areas of lower Lo, which includes Thagkhola, Dānā, and the Beni areas and was once ruled by the kings of Parvat.
a state of gradual decline and it was too weak to provide continuous support to Gung-thang.

The Khasa/Ya-tshe rulers on the other hand, were aggressively expanding their conquests towards the east. They were able to access the Nepal (Kathmandu) Valley. In 1313, more than two decades after Jitārī Malla's destructive invasions of 1288-1280, another Khasa/Ya-tshe king, Ripu Malla, is recorded to have entered the Nepal Valley (Gopālarājavarānśāvalī: 26, 27, 40, 43).23

King Āditya Malla (reign c. 1314-1328) was the next Khasa/Ya-tshe ruler to invade the Nepal valley, in two different years, 1321 and 1328 (Gopālarājavarānśāvalī: 27, 46). In these campaigns, the Khasa/Ya-tshe armies were directed to march through the high Himalayan frontier regions (Khanal VE 2030: 1-3). Because the Khasa/Ya-tshe army crossed Nubri (Nub-ri) and Tshum valleys several times, we can glean that most of the Himalayan districts of the upper Gāndaki region, including Lo/Mustang, Dolpo, Manāng, Nyishang, Nubri, Rui, and Tshum were reoccupied by the Khasa/Ya-tshe rulers.24 Āditya Malla's 1321 inscription also describes the Khaṣa/Yashe army's common practice of two-way travel through the Nubri or the present-day Athāraśayakholā region.25

This time, The Khaṣa force was advanced along the lower or middle hill areas. We are told by Tibetan sources that the Sakya power in Tibet had not fully declined but was still comparatively strong. Its rapid weakening had begun only after the division in 1327 of the titles and seals of the Sakya among four branches of the family (SDR: 300, 305). We also know that the long-standing relationship between the Gung-thang ruling family and the Sakya leaders had not ended. Here, the question arises as to why even at the height of their power, the Khaṣas were not able to subdue these eastern Himalayan districts. Also, what enabled them to recapture these territories

---

23 The lower hill districts of the Gāndaki region were already annexed to the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe kingdom during the reign of Jitārī Malla. A document (kanakapatra) from Junila states that the Kāṣkikot (near Pokhara) area was one of the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe kingdom's eastern districts until 1360s (Tucci 1956: 109, 112). This time, the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe force was advanced along the middle hills.

24 Several crucial documents describe this and strongly suggest this interpretation. The first of these is the copper plate inscription of Āditya Malla dated SE 1243 (1321) and the other is a copperplate inscription of Purya Malla dated SE 1250 (1328) (Khanal 1973: 1-3, 9-10). Both of these inscriptions were issued to protect a Buddhist monastery known as Tagbaisgonpa (original Tibetan Itag-pai ??) in the upper Būddhi Gāndaki valley near the Tibetan border. In these inscriptions, army generals and other officials of the Khaṣa kingdom, assigned in order to conquer the eastern territories, are directed by the king not to disturb the monastery. As far as the inscription of Āditya Malla is concerned, the king himself is said to have been a donor (Dārapati) to the monastery (Khanal VE 2030: 1-3).

25 The original text of this portion of the inscription says "Do not harm the monastery during the army operation [in the east] or when returning after the invasion" (स्टक आउदा-जोङ्दा गुम्मा घच्छ नक्य).
later? To answer these questions, we must observe the relationship between the Sakya monastery and the Khaśa rulers. As a powerful successor to the kings of Gu-ge and Pu-rang, the Khaśa rulers had supported the old Digung-pa line of Buddhism. They presumably were known as the enemies of the rising Mongol power in western Tibet. Some Tibetan chronicles have presented a different version of Aśokacalla's land grant of forty-two (in some chronicles forty-four) villages to Vajrāśana or Bodhgayā (in Tibetan, rDo-rje-gdan). According to these chronicles, those forty-two villages were originally offered to Vajrāśana by Emperor Aśoka of Magadha during the third century B.C. and later seized by the Mongol (Mugal?) rulers known as Sogpo (Sog-po) in Tibetan chronicles. Therefore, king Aśokacalla of Khaśa kingdom had to purchase those villages in order to offer the regular yearly income from those villages to Vajrāśana (Tucci 1956: 55). Thus, even from this story, we learn that the Khaśa rulers of earlier time did not enjoy an easy relationship with the Mongols. By the time of Jitāri Mall's reign the situation and intention of the Khaśa rulers had changed. The Khaśa began seeking better relations with the Sakya rulers of Tibet, with the particular intent of gaining territory in the east. King Jitāri thus decided to send his second son, Āditya, to the Sakya Monastery to study Buddhism, and through that link, to establish a good relation with Tibet's Sakya rulers (Tucci 1956: 68, Roerich 1976: 605, Francke 1972: 169).

Still, this was only the beginning of the Sakya-Khaśa relationship. King Jitāri must have successfully expanded his conquests further in the east, presumably deploying his army through the middle hills, and may have captured the areas up to Nuwākoṭ; he is recorded to have invaded the Nepal (Kathmandu) Valley three times and collected tribute (Gopālvarṇaśāvali: 26, 40). Yet, he ws not able to resume control over the Lo region and other surrounding areas. These were lost earlier to Gung-thang during this father's reign while the main Khaśa force was aggressively engaged in conquering the western territory.

After studying at the Sakya monastery, Āditya Malla returned to Simjā (Ya-tshe) and by marrying, abandoned his monkhood and assumed the ancestral throne of the Khaśa kingdom (Adhikary 1988: 43-44). His reign (c. 1315-1328) inaugurated the second phase of the Khaśas' territorial expansion. His father Jitāri and elder brother Akṣaya both died while he was at Sakya and the succession to the throne had gone to the family of Jitāri's brother. Some historians also argued that an internal dispute for the succession erupted (Adhikary 1988: 43-44, Vajracarya VE 2028: 35-40), but available sources do not support this interpretation. We are sure that the Khaśa kingdom weakened during the reigns of Ānanda, Rīpu, and Sarṅgrāma Malla (c. 1300-1314/15). Because of his study at Sakya monastery, king Āditya Malla was considered a disciple of the Sakya, the spiritual head of Tibet. Through this connection, he was able to handle the
critical situation on the Tibetan frontier by mollifying the Sakya authorities of Tibet and the local religious personalities of the newly conquered northeastern territories.

A copperplate inscription of Aditya Malla, dated 1328, issued to Lama Tashi-gapa (bKra-shis dga'-pa) of Tagbai (rtag-ba'i?) monastery of the Nubri area (once considered an integral part of Gung-thang), somewhat clarifies this matter.26

This inscription establishes that the eastern Himalayan settlements of Nepal and the nearby frontier regions of Tibet, including the entire territory between Lo/Mustang and Kyirong, were re-conquered by Aditya Malla. This was the territory once usurped by Gung-thang from the Khasa/Ya-tshe rulers with the help of Sakya and Mongol powers during the reign of Aditya's grandfather, Asokacalla. Most of this territory, including Nar, Nyeshang, Nubri, and Kyirong was considered a part of Gung-thang's integral or core territory. In this inscription, king Aditya Malla claims to be the destroyer of his enemies and a protector and donor to the monasteries (thana=devasthana). Through this inscribed royal order, king Aditya Malla instructed his army and other officials assigned to the military operation in the east not harm the monastery during wartime. Perhaps, one can infer that the king was attempting to please the Tibetan-speaking people of his domain. He also demonstrated his attachment to the Tibetan people by establishing a new tradition of issuing bilingual (Khasa=old Nepali and Tibetan) orders (Khanal VE 2030: 1-3).

King Aditya Malla was the first Khasa ruler to retain most of the newly conquered eastern territories. During his first incursion into the Nepal (Kathmandu) Valley, he pressured the rulers of the eastern regions, including the kings of Kathmandu, to agree to pay a yearly tribute (Gopālavarṇāvali: 27, 44, 48). This king retained control over the conquered areas in the east by deploying his army often (Gopālavarṇāvali: ibid., Khanal VE 2030: 1-3). For example, in the year 1328, he recaptured the areas around the Nepal Valley, including Nuwākot, and demanded that the new ruler of Kathmandu pay yearly tribute to the Khasa kingdom according to an agreement the former Khasa ruler Jitārī had reached earlier with Kathmandu's previous rulers (Gopālavarṇāvali: 27, 46).

This time, since Aditya was able to issue his orders up to the areas near Kyirong, it can be inferred that the Khasa army successfully challenged Gung-thang and maintained its overlordship in most of the northeastern border settlements between Kyirong and Dolpo. Furthermore, Aditya Malla

---

26 This monastery and the area occupied by it had been part of unified Nepal after the Betrawati Treaty signed between Nepal and Tibet in 1792. Again, after the China-Nepal border agreement of 1962, this area has been incorporated into the territory of the People's Republic of China.
may also have dominated Lo and its vicinity, including the Dolpo, Nar, Nyeshang, Manang, Tshum, Nubri, and Rui areas.

In the middle of the fourteenth century, the Sakya ruling line in Tibet was seriously weakened by such internal disputes. More than two decades after these internal disputes began, Jyangchub Gyalchen (Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan) of Phagmo-dru (Phag-mo-gru) finally acquired the ruling and other honorary titles of the Sakya-pa political order. But the Mongol patrons of the Sakya rulers themselves were not able to maintain their once-unchallenged power in the region. Although the Mongol authorities recognized the Sakya chief of Phagmo-dru as the head of the Sakya-pa line and ruler of Tibet, they did so only to continue the earlier established tradition. By that time, neither the Mongols nor the Sakya-pas were in a position to control all of Tibet. Gung-thang no longer relied upon any meaningful help from Sakya; between Gung-thang and the Sakya head of Phagmo-dru, only their formal traditional alliance remained. On the other hand, the Gung-thang royal house itself had become very close to the Mongol court, and was given a prestigious honorary official title, Tabunsha (Ta-dsun-sha) by the Mongol imperial administration in China (SDR: 449, GDR: 449).

Leaving most of its southern areas in the hands of the Khasas, the entire Ngari region of western Tibet was disintegrating. The Sakya's seat at Phagmoru was too distant and weak to control the western territories, and the Ngari region was so vast that even at the height of Sakya power in Tibet, it was not fully included in Sakya rulers' direct jurisdiction. Even Gung-thang was excluded from the direct administration of the Sakya rulers (Tucci 1949 Vol. II: 681, n.52). However, because of Mongol support and the Sakya's dominating power in Tibet, the rulers of Gung-thang benefited for about half a century through their matrimonial relationship established with the Sakya Khon family. After the rise of Āditya Malla, the Khasa kingdom also became one of the favored allies of the Sakya rulers of Tibet. As former monk of Sakya monastery, king Āditya was considered a disciple of the Sakya head. Thus, Gung-thang's long time monopoly in winning special favor from the Sakya rulers was ended.

The Khasa/Ya-tshe king Āditya Malla died in 1328, immediately after his second successful raid in the east, which included the Nepal (Kathmandu) Valley (Adhikary 1988: 44). Āditya Mala further strengthened the relationship established with the Sakya monastery by sending his grandsom, Pratāp Malla, to take the vows of a monk and study Buddhism there (Tucci 1956: 68). Because of Muslim invasions and their anti-Buddhism and anti-Hindu activities in northern India, the study of Buddhism, particularly of the Tibetan Sakya line, became especially popular among the traditional ruling elites of the region for several reasons. First, the Sakyas emphasized the study of  Hevajratantra, which teaches tantric techniques for destroying enemies. Second, for the Khaśa rulers, Buddhism worked (a) to attract the
Tibetan people by using their faith and knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism to promote an image of an ideal monarch, and (b) to win the support of the highly respected and powerful spiritual ruling family of Tibet. King Āditya was able to maintain productive relationships with key religious personalities and with people of Tibetan descent living within his domain.

Dated historical sources acknowledge Punya Malla (bSod-nams-lde of Tibetan sources) of Pu-rang as king Āditya Malla's successor (Tucci 1956: 48). As the husband of Āditya Malla's daughter, he was invited to assume the throne of the Khasa/Ya-tshe rulers because king Āditya's son had died and his grandson was a monk at Sakya (Tucci 1956: 48). Punya Malla (reign 1328-1338) and his son Prthvi Malla (reign 1338-c. 1360/65) were among the most successful rulers of the Khasa/Ya-tshe kingdom. Taken together their reigns marked another phase of the height of the Khasa/Ya-tshe kingdom in the region. Since Punya Malla himself was the local ruler of Pu-rang, he had no difficulty handling border disputes with Gung-thang (Tucci 1956: 50-60). He also maintained a cordial relationship with the Sakya monastery established by his father-in-law, Āditya Malla. Āditya Malla's grandson, Pratāpa Malla, had already accepted monkhood at Sakya and had therefore relinquished his right to the throne of Khaśa. Thus, the customary role of a dānāpatimaharājā (a great donor king) had been properly played by Punya Malla together with his wife, princess Šakunamālā. The Red Annals (Deb-ther dmar-po) of Tibet tells of a Khaśa king ordained at the Sakya monastery and of the other king within the same family who assumed the role of dānāpati, offering a golden umbrella (chatra) to decorate the religious throne (dharmāśana or Chos-khri in Tibetan) of Sakya Paṇḍita (Kun-dga' rdo-rje 1961: Fol. 20.6). This dānāpati King and the royal monk must be Punya Malla and Pratāpa Malla respectively. Pratāpa Malla thus appears to have been a celibate monk who spent most of his life at Sakya (Tucci 1956: 68).

As Punya Malla also issued a copperplate inscription dedicating and guaranteeing protection to the Tagbai monastery, we can assume that he continued to maintain the Khaśa/Ya-tshe kingdom's supremacy over the Himalayan regions once captured by Gung-thang. It appears that the major portion of the Khaśa/Ya-tshe army assigned earlier by Āditya Malla to

---

27 The Dullu pillar inscription of Prthvi Malla introduces Punya Malla as the descendant of a garīlā dynasty.

One known and available record describes King Āditya Malla's invasion of the Kathmandu Valley in the year 1328. On the other hand, we also see King Punya Malla issuing orders as an independent ruler of the Khaśa/Ya-tshe kingdom in the same year (Khanal VE 2030: 9-10). Two other names, Kalyāna Malla (son of Āditya Malla) and Pratāpa Malla (son of Kalyāna Malla) are also listed on the dynastic list of the Khaśa rulers. But it appears that neither of them became king. It can be assumed that Kalyāna Malla died during his father's lifetime. So far as Pratāpa Malla is concerned, a Tibetan source indicates that he was a monk at the Sakya monastery in Tibet.
conquer and secure the eastern territories had not returned to Simjā until Punya Malla was king. As a result, he issued another order for protecting the same monastery from the threat of his army assigned to the east (Khanal: VE 2030: 8-10).

In the year 1334, Punya Malla re-invaded the Nepal Valley to subdue the entire eastern territories once again. This time, his Khaśa/Ya-tshe force was detained for about six months in and around the Nepal Valley (Gopālarājavarṇaśavlī: 48). On the basis of information obtained from the Gopālarājavarṇaśavlī and the inscriptions of Punya Malla and his son, we can tell that the Khaśa/Ya-tshe kingdom once again became a powerful empire in the Himalayan region (Adhikary 1988: appendices B-18-B-22, Gopālarājavarṇaśavlī: 46). Although the historical geography of the Khaśa/Ya-tshe kingdom refutes Punya Malla's claim of that he ruled a vast portion of the Indian subcontinent, his domain certainly included the entire territory between Garhwal and the Kathmandu Valley in the middle hills and between Pu-rang and Kyirong in the high Himalayan regions (Yogi VE 2022: 762, Adhikary 1988: appendix B-20). The Lo/Mustang region was thus under Punya Malla's rule.

Punya Malla was succeeded by his son Prthvī Malla (1338-1360/65), who was also a very successful ruler. Historical evidence of his control up to the Kāśī (Pokhara) area shows that he was able to maintain most of the territories conquered by his father and maternal grandfather. A written record known as the kanakapatria, found in Jumlā, identifies Kāśīkot (near Pokhara valley) as part of Prthvī Malla's domain (Tucci 1956: 109, 112). Like his father, he became a dānāpatai, and maintained a traditional relationship with the Sakya monastery. A Tibetan chronicle elaborately describes king Prthvī Malla and his Prime Minister, Yaśovarman (dPal-ldan grags-pa), offering gifts along with golden pinnacle and religious services to the eleven-headed Avalokitesvara (spyan-ras-gzigs) in Lhasa (Tucci 1956: 56).

Until around 1360 to 1365, much of Gung-thang's southern territories, including Lo/Mustang, remained under the control of the Khaśa/Ya-tshe. Gung-thang proper (or greater Gung-thang) was growing weak. The Sakya authorities in Tibet could no longer assist Gung-thang because they themselves were not strong enough to maintain their traditional hereditary power (SDR: 300, 305, Tucci 1949 vol. II: 681, n. 52, Jackson 1977: 46-47). Furthermore, the Khaśa/Ya-tshe rulers had also developed a new intimate relationship with the Sakya monastery. This alliance was established through the tradition of sending Khaśa/Ya-tshe crown princes to the Sakya

---

28 In an order (kanakapatria) dated SE 1259 (1337), Punya Malla claims that he was able to collect taxes from states as far as Kokarna, Kāśī, Lāṭṭa, Muraḷa, Kerala, Dahala, Anga, Banga, Kalinga, Mithilā, Gurjāra, Jālandhara, Andréa, Nēpāla (Kathmandu valley), etc. (Yogi VE 2022: 762).
monastery to study Buddhism, as well as through the king's role as a dānāpati to the monastery. Therefore, we can assume that the Sakya authorities at that time were acting as mediators between the rulers of Gung-thang and the Khaša/Ya-tshe kingdom. By the 1340s, having lost most of its western and southern territory again to the Khaša/Ya-tshe rulers, Gung-thang had contracted into the limited local precincts of Zongkha (rDzong-kha). This situation apparently lasted until the final years of the reign of King Prthvī Malla (c. 1360/65). Only after Prthvī Malla's reign was it possible for Gung-thang to reassert its influence over the lost southern and southwestern areas, including Lo/Mustang, Pu-rang, Dolpo, Manāṅg, Nubri, and most probably Kyirong.

It can be assumed that Gung-thang must have recaptured at least some of the western and southern areas lost earlier to the Khaša/Ya-tshe and which included Lo/Mustang. This must have occurred following the sudden collapse of the Khaša/Ya-tshe kingdom, around the late 1360s (Tucci 1956: 46-49, Adhikary 1988: 53-57).

THE FALL OF THE KHAŠA/YA-TSHE KINGDOM AND LO'S MOVE TOWARD INDEPENDENCE FROM BOTH THE KHAŠA/YA-TSHE KINGDOM AND GUNG-THANG (LATE FOURTEENTH THROUGH THE FIRST HALF OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY)

An inscription of Prthvī Malla tells that he actively ruled from his summer palace in Dullu until the year 1358 (Yogi VE 2013: 69-71). About nine years later, in the year 1367, we find a king named Sūrya Malla issuing orders from Siṃjā, the old capital of the Khaša/Ya-tshe kingdom (Adhikary 1988: appendix B-33). From the titles and panegyrics mentioned in the inscription, we learn that this king was far less powerful than the earlier Khaša/Ya-tshe rulers, as the titles that adorned the names of the Khaša/Ya-tshe rulers Puṇya Malla and Prthvī Malla (such as paramabhattāraka, paramesvara) are not present among the more modest ones designating Sūrya Malla (ibid.). On the other hand, beginning with the reign of Prthvī Malla, two ministers from the same family, Devavarman and Yaśovarman, were active and powerful in the Khaša/Ya-tshe administration. Although the ancestors of these men had entered the Khaša/Ya-tshe court as early as king Aṣokacalla's time, they were not granted ministerial positions as their family right until around 1350 (Adhikary 1988: appendices B-15-B22).

---

29. Different historical sources show that Varman, Vrahma, Vārma, Vamana or even Bamma and Bam are interchangeable.
30. Aṣokacalla's Bodhgaya inscription of 1255 is the earliest reference to the Varman family, which includes the name of his minister (patra) Trailokyaavrahuna (Bihari 1913-14: 29).
We know from different sources that king Prithvi Malla was always assisted by his chief minister (mahānātya) Yasovarman, who was also known by his Tibetan name dPal-lidan grags-pa (Tucci 1956: 45-46, 55-56, 60). Besides being the chief minister to the central administration of the Khasa/Ya-tshe kingdom, he was also distinguished as mahānandalesvara, a title usually reserved for the local ruler of an important provincial state (Adhikary 1988: appendix B-23). Another of Prithvi Malla's important ministers from the Varman family was Devavarman, who may have been the younger brother of Yasovarman (Tucci 1956:45, Yogi VE 2013: 45, Adhikary 1988 appendix B-28). As Prithvi Malla retired without producing an heir, his chief minister Yasovarman became the de facto ruler of the Khasa/Ya-tshe kingdom. From the nature of his highly respected position mentioned in the inscription of 1354, and also from the fact that he was so close to the king, it can be inferred that he was a close relative of the ruling family, probably a brother-in-law of Prithvi Malla. Descendants of Yasovarman and Devavarman had maintained their ancestral positions, including the titles of amātya (minister), mahānātya (chief minister), mandalika (district or zonal governor), mahāmandalika (governor of a larger territory or a minister of higher or special status), etc. (Adhikary 1988: 55-57, appendices B-23-B-24, B-29, B-33-42). At least fourteen or fifteen officials and ministers of the Varman family, working under the administration of later Malla rulers, Sūrya and Abhaya Malla, are mentioned. Among them, Malayavarman and Medinīvarman even claimed to be independent rulers (Adhikary 1988: appendices B-38, B-40, B-42).

The lack of male progeny in the main ruling lineage produced a power conflict inside the Khasa/Ya-tshe administration. Local rulers and governors of different suzerain states began to claim independence. At the apex of the Khasa's power in the region, the Khasa/Ya-tshe kingdom was comprised of many smaller provincial states (about fifty in western Nepal only), governed locally by their own hereditary rulers. Those states were successfully subjugated by the strong military force of the Khasa/Ya-tshe kingdom and brought into tributary status. But when Prithvi Malla retired and the central administration of the Khasa/Ya-tshe kingdom was shaken by a power struggle afterward, various male descendants of the former Malla rulers, including the powerful Varman ministers, apparently claimed the right to the throne. This complicated struggle eventually led to the disintegration of the Khasa/Ya-tshe kingdom and the emergence of smaller powers in the region.

After the 1360s, when the Khasa/Ya-tshe kingdom could no longer maintain control over its powerful feudatories, even the small state of Doti (situated in the core territory of the Khasa/Yashe kingdom) rose to challenge its Khasa/Ya-tshe authorities and demanded independence (Adhikary 1988: 54, 58). Therefore, the Gu-ge region of western Tibet, which was much stronger and even more likely to succeed in such a bid, must surely have also
challenged the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe rulers. The new rulers of Sirinjä (Ya-tshe) also lost possession of all the territory between Lo/Mustang and Kyirong in the east. Thus, Gung-thang once again regained suzerainty over most of the south and southwestern territories of Ngari. Gung-thang only regained its lost territories, however, because of Khaṣa/Ya-tshe’s decline, and not because of any resurgence in its own internal strength.

We know that Sakya power in Tibet was faded after the Sakya Phagpa’s death or murder in 1280, and the subsequent assumption of Tibet’s rule by Tai Situ Jyangchub Gyalchen (Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan, b.1302-1364), the revolutionary governor of Nedong in 1358 (Shakabpa 1967: 81). Similarly, in the year 1368, the Mongol (Yuan) ruling line of China was overthrown and formally replaced by the Ming dynasty (Shakabpa 1967: 73). Gung-thang, therefore, lost its two major traditional sources of strength. Still, even though Gung-thang lost its traditional support, it maintained its independence because it was never included among Tibet’s thirteen traditional myriarchies (Khri-skor), or provisionally hereditary local rulerships granted by the central power. Gung-thang remained outside of Jyangchub’s Tibetan consolidation and new administrative reforms.

Much of the history of Gung-thang at this time is not known. Still, it is unlikely that Gung-thang, as one of the southern frontier regions, could have remained completely unaffected by Jyangchub’s political activities. At the very least, Gung-thang must have maintained its independence. On the other hand, by the late 1350s or early 1360s (Shakabpa 1967: 81-82), the Gu-ge or Kailaša-Maṇḍaravara portion of the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe kingdom’s territory was lost (temporarily) to Jyangchub’s consolidated administration, and The Khaṣas/Ya-tshe’s capital, Sirinjä, had utterly declined. The very existence of the kingdom was at risk. Gung-thang, on the other hand, remaining independent from Tibet and comparatively stronger in the frontier region, was able to recover its lost territories from the weak successors of Sirinjä’s Khaṣa/Ya-tshe rulers, who were badly divided by power politics and court intrigues. Without missing a single opportunity, around 1370, when king Sonam-de (bSod-nams-lde, 1371-1404) occupied Gung-thang’s throne.

31 At that time, the local commissioners of Lo/Mustang, Sherab Lama (Shes-rab bla-ma) and his son Chokyöngbum (Chos-skyon-bum, were working for Gung-thang (Tsarang Molla 8a-8b, Lo-Khen-h: 1b, GDR: 14a, 16a, Tucci 1971: 170). At precisely the same time, Lo/Mustang stopped paying tribute to Simja, and King Malavagman, also known as Gagani of Sirinjä, had to deploy his army in order to collect the tribute from Lo/Mustang, which was overdue by more than twelve years (Yatri VE 2039: 61). Finally, in order to reclaim the Lo/Mustang region, Sirinjä had to relinquish the Pu-rang region to Gung-thang (Nepal VE 2042: 361, MHR: 91).

32 Jyangchub Gyelchen reformed his administration by dividing Tibet into numerous administrative districts (rDzong) and then appointing new commissioners to each of those. Under his rule, most of the Tibetan feudatories were consolidated and Tibet was made a strong state of a vast territory, which included most of the Upper Ngari, U, and Tsang regions.
Gung-thang began to reclaim its lost territories between Pu-rang and Kyirong, including Lo/Mustang, Dolpo, and Manāng (Jackson 1977: 48).

It was during Gung-thang's recapture of the aforementioned southwestern territories that the family of the future ruling dynasty of Lo/Mustang established themselves in and around the Lo/Mustang area as Gung-thang's regional army commanders, and later, as its governors (rdzong-dpon). Both the father and grandfather of Lo's first independent king, Ama-pal (A-ma-dpal), were Gung-thang's army generals and commissioners for the Lo/Mustang region (Tsarang Molla: 8a-8b, GDR: 16a). Nevertheless, the successors of Prthví Malla, the last Khaśa/Ya-tshe Malla king, also tried to preserve their territories in western Tibet, including the Pu-rang region in the west, the Nar, Nyeshang, and Manāng valleys in the east, and Lo/Mustang and Dolpo in between. Despite political complications at court in Siṅjā, the later Siṃjāpāti rulers (successors of the Khaśa/Ya-tshe or Malla), maintained their hold over the territory between Pu-rang and Dolpo for at least several decades. However, Lo/Mustang and the more eastern Himalayan and Tibetan frontier regions were probably retaken by Gung-thang.

Although this period has produced no reliable known sources, traditions recorded even much later recount important incidents. An eighteenth-century Nepali document from the Foreign Ministry Archives (old jaisī koṭhā) describes a dispute between Gung-thang and the later Siṃjāpāti rulers over the possession of Lo/Mustang and Pu-rang (Nepal VE 2042: 361). According to this source, the dispute was finally settled with a bilateral agreement between Gung-thang and Siṃjā, in which both parties agreed to exchange the two territories. Accordingly, Pu-rang (the ITag-la-mkhar area) was ceded to Gung-thang and in return, the Lo/Mustang region was returned to the Siṃjāpāti rulers. This exchange indicates that by around the late fourteenth century Pu-rang in western Tibet was still controlled by the later rulers of Siṃjā, whereas the Lo/Mustang region was still nominally under the authority of Gung-thang.

Until around 1360, the Khaśa/Ya-tshe rulers controlled the Lo/Mustang region and many other eastern districts. After the fall of the Khaśa/Ya-tshe (Malla) rulers, Gung-thang recaptured a vast frontier territory of the Khaśa/Ya-tshe kingdom, including Lo/Mustang. The Siṃjāpāti rulers were too weak to bring these areas back under their control. Instead, they agreed to relinquish their traditional hold over Pu-rang-Taglakhar (ITag-la-mkhar) in exchange for Lo/Mustang. The Siṃjāpāti rulers, both the later Mallas (Sūrya Malla and Abhaya Malla) and the Varmans, were becoming weaker because of internal conflicts among courtiers and between the provincial governors (Adhikary 1988: 58-59).

33 अधि सिजापति राजाका पालामा ताक्ताखार भोटलाई दिइ मस्तां जुम्लामा गरायाको... (Nepal VE 2042: 361, MHR: 91).
After Malayavarman (c. 1375-1392), the remaining territory of the old Khaṣa/Ya-tshe kingdom was divided into a number of small principalities under the local authority of Malayavarman's sons and Balirāja, who was probably Malayavarman's son-in-law (ibid.). Consequently, the Simjāpati rulers lost control of eastern districts, including Dolpo and Lo/Mustang. It was at that time that local commissioners in Lo/Mustang began to enjoy near-autonomous regional power. Ultimately, in 1440, Ama-pal, the third hereditary commissioner of Lo/Mustang, declared his domain to be an independent kingdom (MHR doc. 29 Tibetan, Tsarang Molla 8b-9a). Ama-pal and his ancestors had been formally appointed by the rulers of Gung-thang. Yet because of the rulers' own military tactics and the weakening of Gung-thang and the fall of Ya-tshe (Simjā), Ama-pal was able to declare Lo's independence. Likewise, by the early fourteenth century, the central power of Gung-thang was threatened by one of its own local governors, Zhangpa (Men-zhang-pa) of the bordering western area of Gung-thang (Vitali 1996: 484-485). The sudden fall of the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe rulers and the rapid disintegration of their kingdom produced a very unsettled situation in the region, and consequently no more than three decades elapsed before the Simjā Khaṣa/Ya-tshe powers collapsed totally at the eve of the fifteenth century.

By the early 1400s, a new and comparatively stronger power emerged in Junilā as an independent kingdom, which at first overshadowed the old Khaṣa/Ya-tshe capital of Simjā and eventually consolidated the entire territory between Taglakhar and Dolpo under the leadership of Balirāja, one of Malayavarman's successors. This signaled the extinction of the old Khaṣa/Ya-tshe kingdom by the year 1404 (Adhikary 1988: 59, appendix B-13). Out of this shattered political situation eventually emerged the bāisi-caubisi (twenty two-twenty four) principalities in the Karnālī and Gaṅḍakī regions of Nepal, which included the kingdom of Junilā. As one of the major successors of the Simjāpati Varman rulers, Balirāja and his descendants may have ruled the territory between Pu-rang and Dolpo and may also have sought to control the Lo/Mustang region immediately after Junilā's emergence. Junilā, however, was too new a state, and, until around the mid-sixteenth century, was not politically mature enough to subdue and control all the lands between itself and the upper Kālī Gaṅḍakī valley to the east.

Toward the end of the fourteenth century, a power vacuum occurred in the region, and it was especially pronounced after the fall of the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe (Malla) dynasty in Simjā and the Menzhangpa's challenge in Gung-thang. This vacuum ultimately led to the emergence of Lo/Mustang as a separate kingdom. The kingdom of Lo/Mustang emerged concurrently with the formation of the bāisi and caubisi principalities in western Nepal, following the fall of Simjā (Ya-tshe). Although the late-fourteenth century commissioners of Lo/Mustang were originally appointed by the rulers of
Gung-thang, they were well acquainted with the historical agreement signed between Gung-thang and the Sinjäpati rulers, exchanging the territories of Lo/Mustang and Pu-rang.

An account known as the rājā gaganirājako vijaya yātā, translated as King Gaganirājā's Victorious Expedition, originally written in Khaśa language (old Nepali) in 1393, tells an interesting story of an attempt to collect a twelve-years' overdue tribute from Lo/Mustang by the Sinjäpati ruler Malayavarmana, also known as Gaganirājā (Yatri VE 2039: 61, MHR: 218). The local commissioners of Lo/Mustang knew that it was no longer a part of Gung-thang, although it was culturally closer to Gung-thang than to Sinjā. Still, at that time, Gung-thang's traditional supremacy over Lo/Mustang was only symbolic, as Gung-thang had already relinquished control of the Lo/Mustang to Sinjā in exchange for Pu-rang, and its power was also being challenged by the Zhangpa. The dominant cause of the emergence of Lo/Mustang as an independent kingdom was the fall of Sinjā and the disintegration of the Khaśa/Ya-tshe kingdom. Both the Kingdom of Lo/Mustang, as it came to be known, and Lo/Mustang as a cultural area, were emerging as a single inheritor of old Ngari, Gu-ge, Khaśa/Ya-tshe, and Gung-thang traditions and history.

It seems that the name of the local ruler of Lo/Mustang in the account is a corrupted one. Presumably, the non-Tibetan writer from the court of Simjā was not able to understand the Tibetan name properly and mistakenly wrote the name cyām-cu-rāj bhōtyā (च्याम-चु राज भोट्या). A commissioner (rDzong-dpon) named Ponchang Chokyong (dPon-chang chos-skyong) was apparently the local ruler of Lo/Mustang that time. As a result, it is possible that the Tibetan name, particularly the chang-cho portion of it was corrupted by the author of this account as cyam-cu or cyam-co (च्याम-चु or च्याम-चो). The Nepali words rājā and bhōtyā are used for the words "king" and "Tibetan" respectively. It appears, therefore, that the Khaśa writer of this account intended to identify the local ruler of Lo Mustang as a Tibetan king (bhōtyā rājā).
CHAPTER THREE

THE FOUNDATION, RISE, AND STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE OF THE KINGDOM OF LO/MUSTANG
CHAPTER THREE
THE FOUNDATION, RISE, AND STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE OF THE
KINGDOM OF LO/MUSTANG

THE EMERGENCE OF THE KINGDOM UNDER KING A-MA-DPAL AND HIS
DESCENDANTS (EARLY FIFTEENTH THROUGH MID-FIFTEENTH CENTURY)

The kingdom of Lo/Mustang emerged in the same historical context and at
the same time as the bāisi-caubisi (twenty-two-twenty-four) principalities in
western Nepal. The sudden collapse and disintegration of the Khaṣa/Ya-
tshe kingdom was followed by the rise of the kingdom of Lo/Mustang in the
upper Kāli Gandākī region. The neighboring Tibetan principality of Gung-
thaṅg had weakened, meanwhile, because of internal disputes and a lack of
support from its greater allies, the Mongol (Yuan) power of China and the
Sa-skya rulers of Tibet. Lo/Mustang became an independent kingdom only
in 1440, even though its local governors had been seeking independence
from Sirmā and Gung-thang since the late fourteenth century. A descriptive,
official historical account (dKar-chag) of a local monastery of Mustang
known as Byams-pa or Byams-chen Tsug-lag khang, has helped enormously
to identify the exact date at which A-ma-dpal, then the commissioner
(rDzong-dpon) recognized earlier by the rulers of Gung-thang, founded the
independent kingdom of Lo/Mustang.

Because of the sudden collapse of the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe or Malla dynasty in
Sirmā in the 1360s, the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe kingdom could no longer maintain its
traditional supremacy in its eastern frontier regions. Consequently, Gung-
thaṅg once again reclaimed its western territories previously lost to the
Khaṣas, including Lo/Mustang. Still, the successors of the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe
kings (later, called the Sirmājāpati rulers, after the capital at Sirmā) were not
willing to lose their territories along the upper Kāli Gandākī valley frontier.
Instead, they launched several military expeditions and demanded yearly
tribute from the rulers of Lo/Mustang. The rulers of Sirmā even surrendered
the lTag-la-mkhar area of their kingdom’s western frontier in order to
maintain their supremacy in the Lo/Mustang region. For this purpose, the
Sirmā rulers cultivated a cordial relationship with the Ngor monastery in

---

1 After the disintegration of the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe kingdom of the Kamālī region in the
late fourteenth century, dozens of smaller principalities were emerged in western Nepal. By
the seventeenth century, the total number of such principalities became over fifty. Among
them, the major twenty-two were from the Kamālī and Mahākālī region and twenty-four
from the Gandākī region. They were collectively known as bāisi and caubisi states. Jumla,
Doti, Parvat, Palpa, Lamjung, and Kaski were the dominating bāisi-caubisi states (Regmi
Tibet, which at that time, enjoyed profound religious and cultural influence in Lo/Mustang (Tucci 1956: 14-15).
GENEALOGY OF LO RULING DYNASTY

A

- dMag-dpon Shres-rab bla-ma, Gung-thang's commissioner to Lo (sixth successor of the dynasty of Nam-Iha Mi-je Gung-rgyal)

B

1

- (a) Khri-dpon Byir-ma
- (b) dPon-po Tshang-chos-skyong-'bum (Gung-thang's commissioner to Lo)

- (a) Mi-dpon bKra-shis-bzang-po
- (b) rDzong-dpon and Chos-rgyal A-ma-dpal bzang-po rgyal-mtshan
  b. 1387 com. 1425 k. 1440 d. 1447

2

- (a) Chos-rgyal A-mgon bzang-po or bKra-shis bzang-po
  b. 1419 k. 1447 d. c. 1482 or after
- (b) dMag-dpon Don-yod-rdo-rje or Amoghavajra
  b.c. 1421 d. 1482
- (c) A-phan or Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan (monk, zhabs-drung)
  b. 1456 d. 1532
- (d) A-rgyal or Rin-chen-bzang-po (monk)

3

- (a) A-ham or Chos-rgyal bKra-shis-mgon-dpal-dzang-po or Tshang-chen-bKra-shis-mgon
  b.c. 1445 k. 1482 d. between 1512-1514
- (b) sDe-pa A-mchog-seng-ge-rdo-rje-brtan-pa
- (c) mNyams-med-bSod-nams lhun-grub (Glo-bo-mkhan-chen, monk, zhabs-drung)
  b. 1456 d. 1532
- (d) sDe-pa bDe-legs-rgya-mtsho'i dpal-mnga'-ba

4

- (a) Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan (monk, zhabs-drung)
- (b) A-ham Grags-pa-mtha'-yas or Mgon-po rgyal-mtshan
  k.c. 1513
- (c) sDe-pa and rGyal-po brTan-pa'i-rgyal-mtsho

5

- (a) Khri-thog-pa bKra-shis stob-rgyas or bKra-shis stog-rgyal
- (b) Sde-pa Kun-dga'-blo-gros
- (c) bSod-nams-dpal-bar (monk)

   Sde-pa A-drung or 'Jam-dbyangs-rin-chen rgyal-mchan-dpal-bzang-po (former monk)

6

- (a) Chos-rgyal or A-ham rGya-hor dpal-bzang
- (b) sDe-pa and A-ham-rGyal-po bKra-shis-'od-bar or bSod-nams-bkra-shis
  d.c. 1580
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

(sons of 6-b)

7

(a) Jams-dbyangs-pa (monk zhabsdrung)

(b) A-ham-Don-grub-rdo-rje k.c. 1580-1594

(c) sDe-pa Rab-brtan or 'O-Lo d. 1590

8

(a) A-ham bSam-grub-rdo-rje k.c. 1594-1609/10

(b) bSod-nams-dpal-byor-bzang-po (monk, zhabs-drung)

A-ham or A-mgon bSam-grub-rab-brtan phyog-tham-cad-las-rham-par-rgyal-ba k.c. 1609/10-1655

9

(a) Phun-tshogs-rab-brtan (former monk and zhabs-drung) b. 1635 d. 1685

(b) Jam-dbyangs Bsam-dpal-'dzin-dbang-po (monk, zhabs-drung)

(c) A-ham or Sa-dbang bSam-grub-dpal-bar b.c. 1639 k. 1656-1710

(d) Mi-dbang A-mchog-brtan-pa or Brtan-pa'i-rdo-rje (joint ruler)

A-ham Tshe-dbang-lhun-grub/Phun-tshogs-gtsug-rgyan nor-bu or A-mgon Tshe-dbang-bsam-grub k.c. 1711-1723 d. 1725

10

(a) A-ham bKra-shis-nam-rgyal k.c. 1720 d. bet. 1727-1729

(b) No name available but known as zhabs-drung sprul pa'i-sku (incarnate monk and zhabs-drung)

(c) Zhur

(d) Chos

(e) Kha-shas

Probable nicknames of Illegitimate sons

11

12

(a) A-mgon bSod-nams-bsTan-'dzin dbang-rgyal b.c. 1717/18 k. bet. 1727-29 c. 1760

(b) Kun-dga'-chi-med-dpal-'dren-bzang-mo or dpal-'dren-dbang-mo also known as mChog-sprul-rje-btsun-[zhabs] drung (incarnate nun)

A-ham or Chos-rgyal DBang-rgyal-rdo-rje, recognized as the raja of Mustang in 1789 by King Rana Bahadur Shah of Nepal b.c. 1738 k.c. 1750 r. 1789-c. 1795

Note: For generations after 14, please refer to chapter 4.
A famous Šiṃjēpatī King, Malayavarman, also known as Hastirāja or Gaganirāja, is recorded to have worked hard to revive Šiṃjē's lost prestige, but the local governors of the western territory originally appointed by Gung-thang's rulers had gained additional power because of Šiṃjē's already diminished position.

Upon their arrival in Lo/Mustang, these ambitious governors sought to create their own feudatory state in the Lo/Mustang region by further supporting Gung-thang, and thereby subduing Pu-rang and other western Tibetan areas. The Lo/Mustang region was their location of choice for establishing their hereditary rule. A-ma-dpal's father and grandfather had both made Lo/Mustang their regional headquarters, and after launching several military expeditions on behalf of Gung-thang, they recaptured large territories in western Tibet, including Pu-rang. Their service to the Gung-thang rulers helped secure their possession of the Lo/Mustang region, which had formally been given over to Šiṃjē as part of the Šiṃjē-Gung-thang agreement of the 1370s or 1380s. These local governors of Lo/Mustang were cognizant of the virtual power vacuum in the region that followed the collapse of Šiṃjē and the emergence of Jumla in the early 1400s. Gung-thang's rulers, on the other hand, were also aware that they were recapturing lost territories not with their own internal military strength but with the aid of the powerful commissioners of Lo/Mustang. Gung-thang, therefore, had nothing to lose by recognizing Lo/Mustang as the hereditary feudatory of A-ma-dpal's ancestors; by doing so, rather, the rulers of Gung-thang also gained strong military support in western Tibet.

Still, by the late fourteenth through the early fifteenth century, the small vassal states and provinces of the upper Kāli Gaṇḍakī and upper Kānñālī regions previously subdued by the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe rulers had, for all practical purposes, grown somewhat independent. Having witnessed all these events, the local commissioners of Lo/Mustang were well prepared for announcing Lo's independence. Even the first commissioner of Lo/Mustang, Shes-rab bla-ma, a military commander of Gung-thang for the western territory, was able to exercise his authority virtually like an independent ruler. He had almost no obligation to Gung-thang except to placate the Šiṃjē rulers. This was his main strategy for avoiding an invasion of Lo/Mustang. It is possible that because of cultural and ethnic differences, the Šiṃjēpatī rulers of the late fourteenth century were content to accept Lo/Mustang as a tributary province or state, and not to push for conquest or integration. The rulers even recognized Lo's local commissioners as provincial rulers by calling them mastāngi bhotyā rāja (Yatri VE 2039: 61). The Šiṃjēpatis and their predecessors, the Khaṣa/Ya-tshe rulers, seldom tried to appoint Khaṣa commissioners to the Lo/Mustang region because it was settled by people of Tibetan descent with a distinct culture and different traditions. As a result,
the main interest of the Sirjäpati was limited to maintaining the formal suzerainty of Sirjä in Lo/Mustang and collecting yearly tribute and the revenues from custom duties from the north-south trade route. The first well-known commissioner of Lo/Mustang, Shes-rab bla-ma, is believed to have come from the family of Gung-thang's military chief (dMag-dpon) named Byir-ma, who had been appointed provincial governor of the Mt. Kailash area in mNga'-ris and had successfully governed the regional territory under Gung-thang kings during the late thirteenth century (GDR: 14a, 16a). Shes-rab bla ma was commissioned by Gung-thang to control the western Tibetan territories, including Lo/Mustang, and was very successful. In return for faithful and courageous service in recapturing the western territories, the king of Gung-thang officially recognized him as the zonal commissioner of Lo/Mustang (Tucci 1971: 170, Tsarang Molla: 8a-8b, Lo-Khen-h: 1b). The local sources affirm that Shes-rab bla-ma was Lo's first recorded local ruler and that he nurtured a favourable situation for his descendents to establish an independent kingdom in Lo/Mustang. During his own time, he enjoyed semi-independent authority over both upper and lower Lo and set the stage for his family rule there. In order to secure his family fortune in Lo/Mustang, shes-rab developed a special relationship with the local ruler of Zhang (Men-zhang), in Tibet near Gung-thang, during the early days of his career. Shes-rab bla-ma is also acknowledged in some sources as the minister of Zhang and Bla. In Glo gdung-rabs (geneology of Lo/Mustang,), he is described as an ally of the Zhang-pa rulers during their conflict with Shi-sa-pa, another local power under Gung-thang (Jackson 1984:153).2 However, the Tsarang Molla (oratorical or oral tradition of Lo/Mustang originally transcribed in the sixteenth century and later updated and preserved in the Tsarang monastery) supplies evidence that after Gung-thang's conquest of Lo/Mustang under Shes-rab bla ma's military leadership, he had to break his old alliance with the Zhang-pa. Furthermore, the Molla tells of a war between these two noble families (Tsarang Molla: 8a-8b). According to the biography of Bla-ma Chos-legs (Chos-legs rnam-thar), the Zhang-pas were able to capture the whole of Gung-thang and the throne of the Gung-thang king (Vitali 1996: 484-85). However, both the Glo gdung-rab and the Tsarang Molla, portray the Glo-pa chiefs (Shes-rab bla-ma and

---

2 A biographical text known as Chos-legs rnam-thar describes the family of Shes-rab bla-ma of Lo/Mustang as subordinates of the Zhang-pa chiefs of Gung-thang in earlier times, who then, became their chief enemies by the time of Lo's independence (dPal-ldan bla-ma dam-pa: 22a, 26a-28a). A new theory has also appeared that a Zhang-pa chief had ultimately been able to occupy the main throne of the Gung-thang king and the force of Zhang-pa was finally destroyed in a war with the Lo/Mustang army in 1441 (Vitali 1996: 478, 483-85). An inscription collected during the present research from the Byams-pa temple of Lo Montlang acknowledges the Gung-thang king and princes to have been among the sponsors of several paintings in Lo/Mustang dated around the same time (MHR doc. 17 Tibetan). This suggests that until around 1441, relations between the rulers of Lo/Mustang and Gung-thang were cordial.
his descendants) and the Zhang-pa chiefs as powerful working under the nominal control of Gung-thang kings. Despite Shes-rab bla-ma's solid triumph in that conflict, until the independence of Lo/Mustang, the Zhang-pa nobles retained some control over several monastic institutions, forts, and villages in the upper Lo region, including the Namgyal monastery to which the Glo-pa had provided sanctuary to Zhangpa in earlier times (dpal-ladan bla-ma dam-pa: 14a, Lo-Khen-h: 6a, Jackson 1978: 215-216, Vitali 1996: 478, 484-485). These activities of Shes-rab bla-ma occurred in or just before the 1380s, when he was close to retirement.

Shes-rab bla-ma's descendents maintained their overlordship of the Lo/Mustang region into the fifteenth century. His younger son, Chos-skyong-'bum, succeeded him sometime in the 1380s (Tsarang Molla: 8b). He is said to have solidified his authority in the region. In the 1390s, this noble general had led the allied forces of Gung-thang and Lo/Mustang to reconquer Pu-rang and the surrounding areas. As a reward for this service, the Gung-thang ruler, bSod-nams-lde (1371-1404), officially recognized Chos-skyong's local rule in Lo/Mustang, Dol-po, and surrounding areas (GDR: 16a, Jackson 1978: 214). In addition to Lo/Mustang (both upper and lower), the eastern neighboring districts of Nar (sNar), Nyishang (sNye-shang), Manâng (Ma-nang), Phug, and Nub-ri were most likely also included within Chos-skyong's new domain. Those areas were physically closer to Lo/Mustang and very often ruled by the forces to the west. For example, in earlier times, areas as far as Kyirong, were often controlled by Khasa/Ya-tshe rulers and their successors.

From the aforementioned historical events, it appears that for about three decades, from the 1370s through about 1405, a dispute raged between the Sirinjâpati rulers and commissioners of Lo/Mustang over Pu-rang, Dol-po, Lo/Mustang, and the eastern areas, including Nar, Nyishang, Manâng, Nub-ri and Rui. The dispute ended only about fifty years after the collapse of Sirinjâ's power in the 1350s or 1360s, with the emergence of the kingdom of Jumla under the leadership of a new ruler known as Balirâja. Balirâja was one of the closest relatives, perhaps a son-in-law, of the last Sirinjâpati king, Medinivarman (also known as Jagati or Jagatibum). Balirâja shared the Sirinjâ power with Medini until the beginning of the fifteenth century. A copperplate inscription of Balirâja dated SE 1322 (1400 A. D.) states that he acquired a portion of the remaining territory of the domain of the Sirinjâpati rulers. This inscription is the first known acknowledgement of Balirâja as a king (Sanskrit, śrī nipa) of the eastern territory of the old kingdom of Sirinjâ (Adhikary 1988: Appendix B-43). On the other hand, a different copperplate

---

3 S. C. Das has identified Zhang with modern-day Shangs, near bKra-shis lhun-po (Das 1983: 1065) but it is not quite clear whether these Zhang-pas were from the Shangs of that day. Citing the description of the biography of Bla-ma Chos-legs, Roberto Vitali describes Zhang-pa as the ruling family of Byang in western Tibet (Vitali 1996: 484).
inscription dated VE 1461 (1404) acknowledges Medinivarman as the supreme king of kings of forty-four vassal states in the region and Balirāja as a secondary ruler. Taken together, these two inscriptions indicate that Balirāja had acquired a certain portion of the kingdom as a hereditary gift from the main Simājapati ruler Medini but that at the same time, he was also assisting Medini as a de facto ruler of Simāja. As stated earlier, the former king of Simāja, Malayavarman, also known as Gaganirāja, attempted to collect yearly tribute from Lo/Mustang until 1393 (Yatri VE 2039: 61). This source goes on to explain how in the 1370s, under the local rule of Shes-rab bla-ma, Lo/Mustang had agreed to become a nominal tributary state of Simāja. This concession might have occurred in order to obtain the return of the lTag-la mkhar region near Pu-rang to Gung-thang. However, only a couple of years after the date of this agreement, Shes-rab bla-ma broke its terms by denying yearly tribute to Simāja. In return for violating the agreement, the Simāja ruler Malayavarman revoked Gung-thang’s permission to control the lTag-la-mkhar region. Later, in the 1380s, after the death of Shes-rab bla-ma, his son Chos-skyong ‘bum recaptured the entire Pu-rang region, again on Gung-thang’s behalf. Afterward, Chos-skyong was recognized by the king of Gung-thang as the hereditary governor of Lo/Mustang and its surrounding territories. The king of Simāja then took aggressive action, and invaded Lo/Mustang with a well-armed force, bringing its governor back under Simāja’s control and forcing him to agree to pay the yearly tribute which had been overdue since his father’s time, from 1371 to 1393 (Yatri VE 2039: 61-62, MHR: 219-224).

This was Simāja’s final claim over the Lo/Mustang region as its tributary state. Written and local oral historical sources confirm that the next and last Simājapati ruler, Medini, was not able to maintain the inheritance from his father (Malla VE 2033: 42-43). He was a modestly effective ruler but not as successful. Still, Medini was also overshadowed by that most ambitious and manipulative de-facto ruler, Balirāja. By the time of Medini and Balirāja’s official joint rule, Simāja was so weak that it could no longer maintain its traditional supremacy over Lo/Mustang and Pu-rang. Although Medini’s weak rule from the Simāja palace had lasted until about 1404 or 1405, Balirāja had already begun to proclaim himself independent ruler of an eastern portion of the kingdom. He even dared to assume a royal title, much higher than any ever claimed by Medini. The inscriptional sources related to Medini have acknowledged him as a powerful provincial ruler (pratāpamandeleśvara), but the inscription of Balirāja introduces him as the glorious king (sṛī nṛṛpa) of Jumla (Adhikary 1988: appendices B-42, B-43).

Hence, it is certain that after the late 1390s, Lo’s local ruler, Chos-skyong-‘bum, was still a provincial governor (rDzong-dpon) under the nominal authority of the Gung-thang ruler. Still, the local ruler of Lo/Mustang, having gained much more power in the region, began to
consider himself the unchallenged ruler of Lo/Mustang and its traditional domain.

A-MA-DPAL (B. 1387–D. 1447, COMMISSIONER (RDZONG-DPON) AND FIRST INDEPENDENT RULER (CHOS-RGYAL) OF LO/MUSTANG

As a result of the sudden collapse of Sihja and the demeaning positions of Gung-thang and Zhang-pa (Men-zhang), the local commissioners of Lo/Mustang gained additional strength. In fact, after the final fall of Sihja, Lo's position become so strong that even A-ma-dpal's father could have plausibly made a bid for the independence of Lo/Mustang. Nevertheless, anticipating possible alliances among or between Zhang-pa, Gung-thang, Tso-tsho-bar-pa, and other minor local powers of western Tibet against Lo/Mustang, did not take such great risk at that time. Rather, he chose to demonstrate his traditional symbolic loyalty to Gung-thang and thereby enjoy his almost absolute authority in Lo/Mustang and its expanded areas.

After the death of his father, A-ma-dpal inherited the title of rdZong-dpon, becoming the hereditary local ruler of Lo/Mustang in about 1425 (Jackson 1984: 133). A document known as the Byams-pa dkar-chag, the formal or official account of the temple of Maitreya supplies important information about the dates of six major historical events in the history of the kingdom of Lo/Mustang. Among them, A-ma-dpal's birth and death (1387 and 1447), completion of the construction of the royal palace of Monthang, and A-ma-dpal's declaration of Lo's independence in 1440 are important early markers of the political history of Lo/Mustang (MHR doc. 20 Tibetan, Gurung 1986: 216-217, 219, 222). This dKar-chag indicates that A-ma-dpal was fifty-three years old and had fifteen years' of experience in local rule when he finally challenged the Zhangpa power of Gung-thang and declared the full independence of Lo/Mustang. Immediately after that, he constructed a new palace known as bKra-shis dge-'phel in sMon-thang (renamed as Lo Monthang) and transferred the old headquarters of Lo/Mustang from Tsarang, declaring Monthang to be the official capital (rGyal-sa) of the kingdom of Lo/Mustang (MHR: 30).

When he was recognized as the commissioner of Lo/Mustang by the Gung-thang king in 1425, A-ma-dpal was already mature and astute enough

---

4 Although A-ma-dpal was his well-established and commonly acknowledged name, it is believed that his original name was dBang-phug yon-tan (RCTP). The complete name, A-ma-dpal bzang-po rgyal-mtshan, was conferred by Kun-dpal bzang-po, the founder of Ngor after A-ma-dpal's ordination (MHR doc. 20 Tibetan, Jackson 1984: 119, Glo gdung-rahbs).

5 Two other important palaces and forts, Phred-mkhar and Byi-ba mkhar, now known as Byi-phug rdzong, existed near Lo manthang. These served as administrative centers prior to the establishment of the new capital in sMon-thang proper (Vitali 1996: 484-483, no. 817, dPal-ladan bla-ma dam-pa: 22a, 24a, 26a, 27b). These centers however, were mostly associated with bon-po people at least until that time.
to handle Lo's provincial administration. Although he was too young to have witnessed the military activities of his grandfather, A-ma-dpal had certainly heard first-hand stories about those exploits. He definitely would have experienced the tremendous military successes of his father, who was actually fabled to be as strong as the war god, Ge-sar (Tsarang Molla 8b, Jackson 1984 153 n. 9). A-ma-dpal, therefore, was well acquainted with the geopolitical situation of Lo/Mustang. Still, it took fourteen years for him to bring about the independence of Lo/Mustang, largely owing to his enmity with the Zhang-pa ruler. Although the Zhang-pa authorities were long-time allies of the Lo/Mustang ruling family, they apparently resisted A-ma-dpal's authority, and later that of his descendants. Subsequently, A-ma-dpal and his Lo/Mustang force fought and defeated the Zhang-pa army in 1440 (Vitali 1996: 485).7

A-ma-dpal had no dispute with the main rulers of Gung-thang over Lo's independence in 1440--it was granted rather willingly. However, he clashed with Zhang-pa chiefs, who in earlier times were among Lo's local chieftains under Gung-thang jurisdiction. According to the biography of Bla-ma Chos-legs, Lo/Mustang defeated and destroyed the Zhang-pa army of Gung-thang in 1441 (although this must refer to the Lo/Mustang-Zhang-pa war of 1440), including its chief and generals (Vitali 1996: 485). A passage written on the wall of the Jyampa temple in Monthang however, indicates that the rulers of Gung-thang--and Lo/Mustang had maintained a cordial relationship until 1447 (MHR doc. 17 Tibetan). Some important frescoes of this temple were also officially sponsored by the king, queen, and princess of Gung-thang just before the consecration ceremony of the temple in 1447 (ibid.).

On the other hand, Gung-thang's central power was so weak by that time that the recently founded kingdom of Jumla in the west was awaiting an opportunity to extend its territory in the east. In Lo/Mustang, A-ma-dpal was

---

6 A-ma-dpal was thirty-eight years old when he advanced to the position of Lo's Commissioner.

7 Vitali calculates the date of the Glo-pa-Zhang-pa war to be 1441. But there is also a possibility that the date given in the Chos-legs nmam-thar is either miscalculated or the writer of the rNam-thar himself confused the exact date of the incident because the account (dKar-chag) of Byams-pa temple confirms the date of A-ma-dpal's victory over Zhang-pa and the official announcement of the independence of Lo/Mustang to 1440 (MHR doc. 20 Tibetan).

8 When Lo/Mustang declared its independence, A-ma-dpal was known as rDzong-dpon of Lo/Mustang (Tucci 1956: 2o, MHR: doc. 18 Tibetan). The local rulers who preceded A-ma-dpal were also known by similar titles, such as dPon-tshang, Khri-dpon, dPon-dbang, sDe-pa, dPon-chen etc. (Deb-ther dmar-po gsar-ma: 39a, Tucci 1956: 170, Jackson 1984: 118-120, 200, MHR doc. 17 Tibetan). Only a handful of documents from later times acknowledge A-ma-dpal as Chos-rgyal (skt. Dharmarāja), or independent ruler, after A-ma-dpal, however, the royal titles, including Chos-rgyal, A-ham, A-mgon, Sa-dbang, Mi-dpon, seem to have been conferred more freely. A-ma-dpal probably held the title of rDzong-dpon as head of a provincial state in earlier times. After Lo's emergence as a sovereign kingdom, however, his officials and subjects addressed him Chos-rgyal, a common Tibetan title for an independent ruler.
enjoying high regard of the people of Lo, as he and his ancestors had worked diligently to make Lo/Mustang a prosperous, safe, and peaceful place.

Immediately after the independence of Lo/Mustang, A-ma-dpal sought to extend its territory. A-ma-dpal's forces conquered areas of western Tibet, including Gu-ge and Pu-rang (Jackson 1978: 216, TR: 1.2, MHR: 33). These areas of western Tibet had been taken earlier by his father Chos-skyong 'bum on Gung-thang's behalf. After A-ma-dpal gained more power in the region and became an independent ruler, he probably conquered those areas in order to expand the territory of Lo/Mustang, and Lo/Mustang alone-- and not for the prestige of any other ruling entity.

According to a variety of sources, A-ma-dpal and the royal line he produced soon emerged as powerful leaders within their realm. The autobiography of Bla-ma bsTan-'dzin-ras-pa reports that both A-ma-dpal and his son were able to appoint and remove the governors of the dKar-dum fort, which was then the administrative center of Pu-rang and Gu-ge, and that A-ma-dpal appointed Rab-brtan mgon-po, one of the most trusted officials of his court, as the first governor at dKar-dum. Other sources acknowledge A-ma-dpal as a powerful myriarch of mNga'-ris (Tsarang Molla: 9a, Jackson 1978: 217, notes 79-80), and in the south, A-ma-dpal extended his territory to the region bordering Thag (present-day Thakkhola). He also appointed a close official of his court as a regional commissioner (Khri-thog-pa) to administer this southern territory, lower Lo from a fort near Muktináth (TR: 2b-3a). According to the Glo gdung-rabz, A-ma-dpal was able to subdue 'Ko' (main territory of Lo/Mustang), the southern villages of lowland Mon people, perhaps the villages south of Thakkhola and the dol-po area. From the late 1100s through the 1360s, except the 'Ko' region, most of the southern areas were controlled by the Khaśas and settled increasingly by people of non-Tibetan origins (Jackson 1984: 154 note 18).

Seemingly, A-ma-dpal successfully expanded his kingdom's territory up to the Gu-ge-Pu-rang region in the west and down to the bordering hill areas of lower Thakkhola in the south. The Dolpo region in the west had already been annexed by the Lo/Mustang rulers during the governorship of A-ma-

---

9 After serving six years as governor, Rab-brtan mgon-po was discharged and eventually executed by the king (probably A-ma-dpal's son, A-mgon bzang-po), for allegedly having an illicit relationship with the queen of Lo/Mustang (probably the queen mother) (Jackson 1978: 216, TR: 1.2, MHR: 33). Jackson also refers to a serious conflict between the ministers and the king of Lo/Mustang during the reign of A-ma-dpal's son, in which several other ministers and their family members were suppressed and killed. Rab-brtan was the son of dPon-drung Khro-rgyal rdo-rje of sKye-kya sgang, whose family people were summoned earlier by A-ma-dpal from Gu-ge (TR 2b-3a, Jackson 1978: 217). Bla ma bsTan-'dzin ras-pa's family and the governors of lower Lo were known as the descendents or relatives of dPon-drung Khro-rgyal rdo-rje. Local historical sources confer on them the title of Khro-rgyal. The governors of lower Lo were also widely known as Khri-thog-pa.

10 The Tsarang Molla acknowledges A-mgon bzang-po as the subduer of Mon, Ko and Dol.
dpal's father and brought under Lo's jurisdiction. Textual documents of the northern frontier of A-ma-dpal's domain are incomplete where available at all. However, people of Mustang argue that the northern border of Lo/Mustang under A-ma-dpal included the areas up to Gro-shod and the gTsang-po river. A biographical work of Milarepa asserts that a place called gTso tsho-bar, halfway between Ko-ra-la (a pass at the present border of Mustang and Tibet) and the Tsang-po river was a part of Lo/Mustang even before Lo's independence (Rus-pa'i rgyan-can 1981: 368-369). The biography of Bla-ma Chos-legs also recounts the Lo's final defeat of the Tsho tsho-bar people around 1446 (Vitali 1996: 485-486). Although two of A-ma-dpal's sons actively participated in this war with gTso tsho-bar, A-ma-dpal must have claimed the historical supremacy of Lo/Mustang over those areas even earlier; the princes were probably enlisted to help retain them. Since the biography of Lama Chos-legs describes this war and Lo's defeat of gTso tsho-bar as the "final" one, Lo/Mustang had probably defeated the gTso tsho-bar army at least several times before. Even though he was an independent ruler only for six years, A-ma-dpal's reign has been described as the age of Lo's administrative development, as well as its apex of religious and cultural development. He was the only king in Lo's history to be venerated by his people as the incarnation of a Bodhisattva, particularly because of his tremendous efforts to promote Buddhist belief and culture in Lo/Mustang (Tsarang Molla: 8b, 9b). A-ma-dpal received religious instruction from Ngor-chen Kun-dga' bzang-po, first abbot of the Ngor monastery and was even ordained a monk in 1427 (KZNT 1983: 537-538). He also received important assistance from his skillful chief minister (bKa'-blon) Tshe-dbang bzang-po. This king sponsored the founding of the new Thub-bstan bshad-1'grub dar-rgyas-gling monastery in Lo's old headquarters, Tsarang, which has remained Lo's most active religious and educational center from the time of its independence to the present. As the Tsarang Molla asserts that this monastery accommodated more than two thousand monks for lodging, study, worship, and prayer, it was probably a major center of religious activity and learning (Tsarang Molla: 8a-9b). A-ma-dpal also founded a great monastery inside the fort-palace of mKha'-spyod-rdzong near sMon-thang (MHR doc. 1 Tibet).

Even before becoming the first independent ruler of Lo/Mustang, A-ma-dpal sponsored several other projects involving the construction or

11 In Chos-legs nam-thar Glo-pa people are referred to as sMos-thang-pa, which surprisingly resembles the present name 'Mustang.'

12 To augment the scholarly and pastoral gifts of his chief spiritual guru, Ngor-chen Kun-dga' bzang-po, A-ma-dpal also invited to Lo/Mustang 'gig mkhann-po Rutnasrî, a former Lama of Bumoche ('Bum-mo-che), and the Lamas mKhan-po Rin-chen bSod-nams of Piti (sPi ti), mKhan-chen Chos-nyid-seng-ge of Gu-ge, Chos-rje rin-po-che of sPü-rang, Bo-dong Phyogs-las nam-rgyal (b.1366-1447), and the Sa-skya pan-chen Lama (Lo-Khen-h: 6a, Tucci 1956: 19, Jackson 1978: 216).
The Foundation, Rise, and Struggle for Existence...

renovation of Buddhist monasteries. In the 1430s the old Namgyal (rNam-rgyal) monastery of the western district (Tsho-nub) of upper Lo was re-built under A-ma-dpal's sponsorship (KZNT: 238.6, Jackson 1978: 216 n.77). During this time, Ngor-chen Kun-dga' bzang-po visited Lo/Mustang for a second time, at A-ma-dpal's invitation. Several years earlier, mkhan-po Ratnaśri had been invited to become the head of the Namgyal monastery by A-ma-dpal (Lo-Khen-h: 6a, Jackson 1978: 215-16).

A-ma-dpal achieved several administrative reforms through creating important positions to which he appointed competent and trustworthy noblemen of Lo/Mustang. A-ma-dpal also promoted immigration (particularly from different parts of Tibet) and founded several new settlements and forts. As external tributes and levies on trade fed a strong local economy, A-ma-dpal was able to release his subjects from taxes. Consequently, significant numbers of people from different parts of Tibet enthusiastically migrated into Lo/Mustang (ibid.).

A-ma-dpal also reconstructed and renovated existing forts and sponsored the new walled capital township in Monthang and constructed the lofty and splendid fort-palace of mKhal-spyod rdzong, near the new walled township (ibid.). He also sponsored many other religious monuments, images, and objects, such as Buddhist sculptures, Stupas and texts including bKnl-sgyttr. or direct translations of Buddha's words, and bsTan-'gyur. or commentaries on Buddha's doctrine (MHR doc. 1 Tibetan, Tsarang Molla: 9a).

Even today, people of Lo/Mustang (or Glo-pa) consider A-ma-dpal, his chief minister (bKa'-blon) Zla-ba or Tshe-dbang bzung-po, and the religious preceptor, Ngor-chen Kun-dga' bzung-po, as the three great heroes, or gems, of the kingdom. Many Glo-pas still note that the kingdom of Lo/Mustang

13 These new positions included three Khri-dpon (regional commissioners), four rGyal-ba sgos (heads of higher gates) four Bn sgos (heads of smaller gates) of the royal palace, and other officials such as lhA-dpon (head of the religious arts and religious affairs), rdZong-dpons (commanders or garrison chiefs), and Tsho-dpons (chief of smaller districts) (Tsarang Molla: 9a). Among them, the three commissioners (Khri-dpon) were probably appointed to oversee the local administration of three major districts of Lo/Mustang, upper Lo (Tsarang and other northern areas), middle Lo (Gami, Gelung and nearby areas), and lower Lo (old Se-rib or modern Kag-Baragaun, Panchgaun, and the Thak areas).

14 As the word mKha'-spyod is translated as "heaven" or a "celestial object" (Das 1985: 181), we know that this fort was thought to possess attributes of a heavenly structure.

15 The Tsarang Molla, a genealogical description of the ruling family of Lo/Mustang, was updated from a sixteenth century text originally recorded from an official oral tradition and compiled by a native scholar from Monthang, named Kun-dga' grol-mchog 1507-1566). The activities of A-ma-dpal and his descendants described in the Tsarang Molla can be considered an official record of Lo as a state (Jackson 1984: 60-62, 72). Another document known as the Bems-chag (literally, "content," but more accurately translated as "account,") of Tsarang also describes the secular and religious accomplishments of the early Kings of Lo/Mustang, including A-ma-dpal (MHR doc. n. 1 Tibetan).

16 Various sources from around the same time include the names of two chief ministers with same last name, bZang-po (these are Zla-ba bzung-po and Tshe-dbang bzung-po). A document from Gelung village on the speechmaking tradition states that A-ma-dpal's chief
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang) itself was borne of the efforts of these men, who shared the same last name, bZang-po Glo-pa people still acknowledge them by the collective name bZang-po mam-gsum. King A-ma-dpal died in 1447. That year, his son A-mgon bzang-po invited Ngor-chen to consecrate the great temple and the huge (about fifty feet tall) statue of Maitreya Buddha (Jampa) (MHR: doc. no. 20, 17, Tucci 1956: 19).

Lo/Mustang Under Chos-rgyal A-mgon Bzang-po and the Territorial Expansion of the Kingdom (1447-late Fifteenth Century)

A-mgon bzang-po became the king of Lo/Mustang in 1447 as A-ma-dpal's eldest son and successor.17 After the formal independence of Lo/Mustang, A-ma-dpal began to prepare for his retirement and the power transition by gradually delegating the responsibility of the royal house (Drung-pa) to both of his sons, A-mgon zangpo and his younger brother, dMag-dpon A-mo-gha or Don-yod rdo-rje. A biographical source describes A-mgon as having been Drung-pa chen-po (senior authority) of the ruling family of Lo/Mustang, and his brother as the chief of the army (dMag-dpon) by 1446 (Vitali 1996: 485). As the Byams-pa dkar-chag confirms the year of his birth to have been 1419, A-mgon was twenty-eight years old when he ascended the throne (MHR: 36-37, doc. 20, Gurung 1986:216-17).18

Despite his prominence in the history of Lo/Mustang, not a single source is available to tell the actual length of A-mgon zangpo's reign. On the basis of his recorded deeds and the dates of his brother and sons, we can estimate that he ruled for about thirty-five years.19

17 He was also known by another name, bKra-shis bzang-po (MHR doc. no. 7 Tibetan).
18 David Jackson gives a tentative date of A-ma-dpal's death and A-mgon's ascendance to the throne as around 1450 (Jackson 1984: 133). After a careful assessment of the Byams-pa dkar-chag the most important dates of the history of Lo/Mustang, including those of A-ma-dpal and A-mgon bzang-po, have been confirmed. According to this document, the temple of Maitreya was constructed under the command of A-mgon bzang-po, 216 years before its first major renovation in the water-rabbit year (1663) commissioned by King bSam-'grub dpal-bar, his brother, and their wife (MHR 37-38, doc. 20 Tibetan, Gurung 1986: 216-17).
19 His brother, Amoghavajra (d. 1482) was a joint ruler of Lo/Mustang who enjoyed the title of dMag-dpon translated as army chief (Jackson 1984: 133). Since Amogha died in 1482 and he never became the king of Lo, it seems that his brother A-mgon was still Lo's primary
A-mgon's long reign is considered the most important period of Lo's territorial expansion. Although Lo/Mustang had already subdued the territory between Gu-ge, Pu-rang and the Nubri region during the reign of A-mgon, A-mgon seems to have re-subjugated those areas even more effectively. According to the account of Khochar (Kho-char or in Nepali Khojarnath), king A-mgon zang-po commissioned Nepali and Kashmiri artists to renovate the old Buddhist sculptures and images at Khochar in Pu-rang (Tucci 1956: 61-62). The Khochar account (dKar-chag) also states that king A-mgon extended his political authority northwestward, toward the Pu-rang and Gu-ge region (Petech 1980: 109, Tucci: ibid.). While subjugating Gu-ge and Pu-rang, and having seized control of the Digungpa order, A-mgon donated the monastery of Khochar to the Ngor abbot. Kunga zangpo (Petech 1980: 109). Like his father, A-mgon was also able to extend Lo's authority up to the Gu-ge and Pu-rang areas by appointing the commissioners of the Kar-dum fort, the administrative center founded earlier to dominate these western areas (TR: 1b, Jackson 1978: 216-217).

Because of its geographic location, Lo's authority from the 1450s through the 1580s must have extended into some of the bordering Himalayan settlements of the Karnali region. The geopolitical situation of Lo/Mustang was a favorable one for an ambitious ruler like A-mgon because Gung-thang was not in a position to maintain control of the Pu-rang region without Lo's support. Thus, the power vacuum resulting after the fall of Sinijā had not yet been filled, as the newly-emerged kingdom of Junla was still young and inexperienced. Consequently, A-mgon bzang-po became quite powerful and was able to directly subjugate the distant regions up to Gu-ge and Pu-rang in the west. He was able to remove the old ('Bri-gung-pa) order from the monastery of Kho-char in Pu-rang and donate the monastery to the Ngor-pa school. In light of this, A-mgon probably also controlled the nearby high Himalayan settlements including Dol-po, Ta-rap, Tshar-kha, Bar-rong, Bicher, Mu-gum, Hum-la etc. The Tsarang Molla vividly describes A-mgon's territorial expansion up to the domain of the lowland "Mon" (areas settled by the non-Tibetan Indo-Aryan origin hill people) and the areas of "Dol" (Dol-po), and "Ko" (Tsarang Molla: 9b). In addition, other local sources such as traditional treaty and agreement documents and annals from the lower Lo and Thak regions also acknowledge A-mgon as the ruler of those respective areas (MHR doc. 7, 21 Tibetan. Gauchan VE 2037: 11-15).

A-mgon bzang-po took on even more responsibilities than his father, who had focused on making Lo/Mustang an independent and self-sufficient kingdom. A-mgon had to protect the newly emergent kingdom from threatened external attacks, as well as expand it and further shape an
effective administration. Lo's immediate enemies, the Zhang-pa and gTso tsho-bar-pa), had already been crushed by the Lo/Mustang army in two different wars fought in 1441 and 1446. Although those wars occurred during A-ma-dpal's reign, both A-mgon and his brother were the main commanders at that time (dPal-ladan-bla-ma dam-pa: 27b-28a). About two decades after the final defeat of the Zhang-pa and gTso tsho-bar-pa armies, between 1461 and 1466, Lo/Mustang fought other wars, this time against the allied forces of La-stod lho-pa and Gung-thang (Vitali 1996: 531). Strangely, no information about their outcome has come to light.20

By the 1460s, as Gung-thang and La-stod-lho were still trying to resist the expansion of Lo/Mustang in the north, the northern frontier of A-mgon's domain may have only expanded to around gTso tsho-bar. However, until Gung-thang and La-stod lho began to resist the forces of Lo/Mustang in the north, A-mgon likely controlled the areas up to around gTsang-po valley.21 Hence, in terms of military success and territorial expansion, A-mgon bzang-po's reign was the most distinguished time in Lo's history. Subduing and maintaining control over such a vast territory between Gu-ge-Pu-rang and the Nubri area near Gung-thang, was not a simple task for an emergent kingdom such as Lo/Mustang, and the Tsarang Molla describes him as the most famed king in the history of Lo/Mustang. According to the Molla, his fame had reached to the distant lands of people of unfamiliar languages and ethnic origins. Apparently glorifying him, the authors of the Molla declare that the entire populace living under the light of the sun accepted a-mgon's order (Tsarang Molla: 9b). In context, this description of the Tsarang Molla can only be interpreted to mean that A-mgon bzang-po was a strong and successful ruler of a vast territory and that chroniclers wished to portray him as such.

King A-mgon bzang-po was also famed for his patronage of culture and religion as well as for his organized and enlightened governance (ibid.). Local written sources such as the Glo gdung-rabs, Tsarang Molla, and Tsang-drang bems-chag describe the unprecedented contributions of this king in making Lo/Mustang one of the better-administered and most militarily and economically vigorous kingdoms in the Himalayan and western Tibetan regions. Moreover, these sources describe a condition of peace and prosperity reaching every corner of the kingdom.

---

20 Nevertheless, the forces of Lo/Mustang were extremely powerful at the time, and as the villages in and around Marang and Nubri were mostly controlled by a weak Gung-thang, we can surmise that they probably came under Lo's rule after this war.

21 One of the major portions of the domain of Lo, known as "Ko," had not been located by recent scholars. It might, however, refer to the original core domain of Lo/Mustang already subdued by A-mgon's ancestors. The word 'Ko' is usually translated as "entire," or "same" (very original) territory (Das 1983: 32). Thus the 'Ko' region discussed in the Tsarang Molla must be the core territory of Lo/Mustang, and "Mon" and "Dol" were presumably the territories occupied by Lo/Mustang at a later time.
In order to further refine and reform the administration, A-mgon is said to have created thirteen high-ranking official positions, and then systematically appointed qualified nobles to those positions (Tsarang Molla: 10a). A-mgon's younger brother, Amoghavajra assisted in Lo's day-to-day administration and defense management. Amogha was officially designated as chief of the army beginning in his father's time (MHR: 41, Vitali 1996: 486, Lo-Khen-h: 5a, Jackson 1984: 120). Still, he never eclipsed his older brother. King A-mgon sponsored large projects of religious importance such as copying sacred scriptures and establishing or renovating monasteries (ibid.).

A-mgon's rule was distinguished by a strong interest in religious matters and he forged strong links with religious dignitaries in the region. At the outset of his rule, he received the sacred advice of Lama Ngor-chen, whom he invited to Lo/Mustang for the consecration ceremony of the temple and giant statue of Byams-pa (the Tibetan name for Buddha Maitreya, the coming Buddha). Kun-dga' bzang-po was the abbot of the Ngor monastery in central Tibet, and not a Lo/Mustang native. Still, he served as the religious preceptor of A-mgon's father and stands as one of the three founding notables of the kingdom of Lo/Mustang. After the death of this Lama, A-mgon venerated the other Ngor abbot, E-wan J'am-dbyangs shes-rab rgya-mtsho (1396-1474) as his spiritual mentor. This Lama had visited and worked in Lo/Mustang as the first abbot (mKhan-po) of the new Namgyal monastery during A-ma-dpal's reign (Tsarang Molla: 9b, Jackson 1984: 154). In 1457, he visited Lo/Mustang once again at A-mgon-bzang-po's invitation (Jackson 1984: 42 n. 6). Later, during a large religious council held between 1472 and 1474, he again stayed in Lo/Mustang (Lo-Khen-h: 9b). A-mgon also welcomed two other famous abbots of the Ngor and gSer-mdog monasteries of Tibet, Ngor abbot rGyal-tshab Kun-dga' dbang-phyug (1425-1478) and gSer-mdog-can abbot Shakya-mchog-ldan Dri-med legs-pa'i-blo-gros (1428-1507). Lama rGyal-tshab Kun-dga' visited Lo/Mustang twice, in 1466 and 1477-78, and died there during his second visit. Similarly, the gSer-mdog-can abbot visited Lo/Mustang in 1472 and stayed until 1474 (Lo-Khen-h: 10a-11a, Lo-Khen-c, Jackson 1984: 154).
Among the most important contributions A-mgon made to the propagation of religion were the completion of the temple of Byams-pa, the founding of Brag-dkar theg-chen-gling monastery, the production of a complete sets of gold and silver letter copies of bKa'-sgyur and bsTan-'gyur (words of the Buddha, and commentaries), and the compilations of works of the five Sa-skya founders and of Ngor-chen Kun-dga'-bzing-po (Tsarang Molla: 9a-10a, Tsarang Bems-chag: 4b-5a-b, MHR doc. 1 Tibetan). According to the biographical source on A-mgon's son, the monk Glo-bo mkhan-chen, Lo/Mustang king and officials arranged and sponsored a three-year-long religious council in Lo/Mustang between 1472 and 1475, which was devoted mainly to Buddhist teaching and debate. The council was so momentous that over nine hundred monks had attended the three-day-long inaugural lecture of mKhan-chen Yon-tan chos-rgyal of Tibet (Lo-Khen-h: 8b-9a).

Despite the many impressive aspects of A-mgon's rule, the biography of the Dol-po bla ma bSod-nams dbang-phug (1516-1581) is strikingly critical of him. It relates the story of an internal conflict, which ultimately led to massive killings, looting, and an overall state of insecurity throughout Lo/Mustang (Snellgrove 1967: 235-236). This Lama also records a serious dispute between the king and his officials; at that time, a high Lama of Lo/Mustang, Chos-dpal bzing-po, was also opposed to the king and his brothers. As a result of a confrontation between the palace and a minister from a local elite family, the minister and his relatives from Byi-phug (Byi-ba-mkhar), were killed (ibid.).

**LO/MUSTANG UNDER CHOS-RGYAL bKRA-SHIS MGON AND MGON-PO RGYAL-MTSHAN (LATE FIFTEENTH THROUGH THE MID-SIXTEENTH CENTURY)**

By about the middle of the fifteenth century, Lo's independence as a kingdom was fairly well established. Various sources describe a systematic succession, an efficient administration, and continued efforts to propagate a regional Buddhist tradition. The third independent ruler of Lo/Mustang was A-mgon's eldest son bKra-shis-mgon. who was also known from different sources as Tshangs-chen bKra-shis mgon dpal-bzing-po (Tsarang Molla: 10a, Jackson 1984: 120). bKra-shis-mgon was probably born in 1445 or only a couple of years earlier (Lo-Khen-h: 6b-7a). Fortunately, accounts (dKar-
The Foundation, Rise, and Struggle for Existence...

chag) of Gami monastery and Mani 'khor-lo provide some information about the dates of his reign (Appendix doc. no. 24 Tibetan). According to this document, the construction of Gami monastery was sponsored by this king in 1512 (water-monkey year) (Gurung, 1986: 234). 

bKra-shis mgon was very active from the early 1470s while his father and uncle remained the kingdom's official ruler and army commander, respectively. Since bKra-shis mgon's uncle Amoghavajra was alive until 1482 (Jackson 1984: 133), and that by all accounts he never ruled Lo/Mustang as his brother's successor, bKra-shis mgon's father must also have lived until about that year. Evidence indicates that bKra-shis enjoyed a prominent official role even before he assumed the throne. Since the system of voluntary retirement at their old age by father kings (Yab-rgyal-po or Yab sde-pa) from the state affair was common in Lo's history, king A-mgon must have been spending his time for meditation and other religious activities in the monastery. The Tsarang Molla asserts that bKra-shis mgon sponsored the construction of the great temple of Thub-chen (Thub-chen rgyal-ba'i pho-brang or Great sakyamuni Buddha's palace) in Lo manthang some time between 1470 and 1472 (Tsarang Molla: 10b). The Tsarang Molla also states that bKra-shis mgon had honored the Ngor abbot rGyal-tshab kun-dga', who had died during his stay in Lo/Mustang in 1478. Similarly, at the invitation of bKra-shis mgon, the-gser-mdog-can abbot Sha-kyà mchog-ldan also visited Lo/Mustang and participated in the great religious council of 1472-74 (Tsarang Molla: 10a, Lo-Khen-h: 10a-11a, Jackson 1984:154). These sources concur that bKra-shis mgon was already involved in both political and cultural affairs of the kingdom when he was still a twenty-five or twenty-six year-old rGyal-chung. The tradition of getting retirement by father kings and handing over the responsibility of kingdom's administration to rGyal-chung and his brothers was very popular in Lo's history (see footnote no. 41 below for further proof).

Two more of bKra-shis mgon's brothers, A-mchog seng-ge or rDo-rje brtan-pa and bDe-legs rgya-mtsho, assisted him in the temporal matters of the kingdom; yet another younger brother, mNyams-med bSod-nams lhun-grub (1456-1532), stood apart as one of the most famed Tibetan Buddhist

in the autobiography of this king's younger brother, Glo-bo mkhan-chen, that bKra-shis mgon was a small boy when Ngor-chen Kun-dga' bzang-po paid his final visit to Lo/Mustang in 1447.


26 Jackson by using the reference of a dGongs-rdzogs written by Glo-bo mkhan-chen calculates the date of bKra-shis mgon's death to be 1489 (Jackson 1984: 123, 141 n.37). However, the date given in the account (dKar-chag) of Gami monastery and Gami mani 'khor-lo contradicts this. Although believed to be linked with original historical tradition, the present texts of both dKar-chags from Gami were written only in the early eighteenth century and it is also not quite sure whether the available text of the dGongs-rdzogs by Glo-bo mkhan-chen is original copy or not so as the date/s described in it. Thus, further intensive work is essential to solve the problem related to the death of King bKra-shis mgon (please also refer foot-note no. 31 below.
scholars of his time, supervising the religious affairs of the young kingdom. This royal Lama was renowned throughout Tibet by the title of Glo-bo mkhan-chen, translated as "mahasthavira" or the "great abbot" of Lo/Mustang (Tsarang Molla: 11a, Lo-Khen-h: 7b). According to this Lama's autobiography, in his earlier days, his youngest brother, bDe-legs rgya-mtsho, was also a monk; however, in the later part of his life, he rejected celibacy (Lo-Khen: ibid.). Glo-bo mkhan-chen introduces his older brother, A-mchog seng-ge (A-seng) rDo-rje-brtan-pa, and the younger brother bDe-legs rgya-mtsho as the middle and junior commissioners (sDe-pa bar-pa and sDe-pa chung-pa) of Lo/Mustang (Lo-Khen-h: 6b-7a, Lo-Khen-d: 199.3). These two brothers have been addressed from time to time as Lo/Mustang governor (sDe-pa) (GSH: 153, 185, Lo-Khen-h: 6b-7a, Lo-Khen-d: 199.3).

From the titles these brothers enjoyed, it appears that both were active in the administrative affairs of the kingdom. At that time, a tantric saint known as gTsang-smyon he-ru-ka, established an important relationship with Lo's ruling house (GSH 1969: 153, 177, Vitali 532-537). He visited Lo/Mustang several times and met with king bKra-shis-mgon and his brothers, A-mchog seng-ge and bDe-legs rgya-mtsho, between 1482 and 1498 (GSH: 67, 153, 177, 185-186, 195, GSH-b: 102-104, Vitali 1996: 523, 532-536). The new king bKra-shis-mgon also received assistance from a capable minister named Tshe-dbang bzang-po, who was the father of a renowned native Buddhist scholar, Kun-dga' grol-mchog. According to Lama Kun-dga's autobiography, he was born in 1507 when his father, Minister Tshe-dbang was fifty years old and was actively working with the Lo/Mustang ruler (Jackson 1984: 154, n.17).

Although Glo-bo mkhan-chen occasionally acknowledged his brother bKra-shis-mgon as sDe-pa chen-po (a title of a head commissioner), it appears that, up until that time, Lo/Mustang was fully independent (Lo-Khen-h: 6b-7a). As Glo-bo mkhan-chen was also a Tibet-trained Buddhist traditional scholar, he conformed to the manner in which high Lamas and authorities of Tibet addressed the Lo/Mustang rulers. However, in other writings, Glo-bo mkhan-chen often introduced the Lo/Mustang king bKra-shis-mgon as a fully independent ruler, adorned with a title of Chos-rgyal (Lo-Khen-d). The biography of Lama bSod-nams blo-gros (1516-1581) of Dol-po also describes this king as an independent ruler. According to this biography, Lama bSod-nams' father and grandfather were appointed by bKra-shis-mgon as high officials in his court, ambassadors to various palaces in Tibet, and military commanders (Snellgrove 1967: 84-85).[28]

[27] Contrary to Lo's tradition, these two brothers married separate wives. A-mchog seng-ge married a princess of Gu-ge (GSH: 153, Vitali 523). As the youngest brother had abandoned the monkhood and plunged into worldly activity rather late in life, we can at least surmise that he also must have had his own wife.

[28] To Snellgrove's calculation of the date of this Lama's visit, we must add one more sixty-year cycle of the Tibetan calendar. Certain dating discrepancies might be accounted for
Like his father, bKra-shis mgon also subdued the territory between Ngari in the north and the capital of Parvat (Dhorāthānā or Beni) in the south (Tsarang Molla: 10a). His reign was distinguished by its successful wars against Gu-ge and Pu-rang (GHS 1969).

According to gTsang-smyon he-ru-ka's biography, Lo/Mustang fought at least five major wars with Pu-rang and Gu-ge between 1482 and 1497. (GSH: 67, 184-185, 187-188). The first of these was fought against Gu-ge in about 1483 and established Lo's supremacy over Pu-rang. bKra-shis mgon's second brother, A-mchog seng-ge, may have led Lo's army in this war, for at about this time, he enjoyed a close connection with influential families through his marriage to a member of Gu-ge's royal family (GSH: 153, Vitali 1996: 523). During this campaign, Lo/Mustang destroyed Gu-ge's large force, and severed heads of vanquished Gu-ge soldiers were brought and displayed at the main gate of Lo manthang; gTsang-smyon he-ru-ka had witnessed this display (GSH: 67). After this Lo/Mustang-Gu-ge war, bKra-shis mgon's youngest brother, sDe-pa bDe-legs rgya-mtsho, also known as bDe-rgyam-pa in gtsang-smyon's biography, assumed charge of the western affairs, particularly those of Pu-rang and rGyal-ti (a small area between Pu-rang and Lo/Mustang). During all four wars fought between Lo/Mustang and Pu-rang in the 1490s, he led Lo's army and later acted as its main representative in bilateral talks and agreements (GSH: 184-185, 187-188). Although Lo/Mustang was certainly trying to maintain its supremacy over Pu-rang, the immediate cause of the first war, according to gtsang-smyon's biography, was the supremacy of Lo/Mustang over rGyal-ti, a western Tibetan settlement located somewhere between Pu-rang and Gro-shod. This dispute was finally settled in an agreement, which gTsang-smyon himself had helped negotiate (GSH: 184-185).

Yet for a long time both rGyal-ti and Pu-rang appear to have disregarded the terms of the agreement. bDe-legs again attacked Pu-rang, and Lo's army, headed by the governor himself, was badly defeated by the allied force of Pu-rang and rGyal-ti. Many Lo-pa army men, including some generals, were then tortured and killed (GSH: 187). Still, Lo/Mustang would not concede rGyal-ti to Pu-rang and the yearly tribute it had produced, and again attacked Pu-rang, this time defeating it. Pu-rang was again forced to accept tributary status, agreeing to pay the same amount of yearly tribute to Lo/Mustang that it had once paid to the kings of gu-ge (GSH: 187). The final war between Lo/Mustang and Pu-rang erupted around 1497 when Pu-rang's governor, sNyan-grags-pa, rebelled. Lo's army crushed the entire Pu-rang force by the conversion of Tibetan dates to other. The Tibetan calendar consists of sixty-year cycles, combining the twelve animal signs of the Chinese calendar and the five Tibetan elements of fire, earth, iron, water, and wood. In traditional dating, a particular year is described according to its place in this cycle, making its identification according to the Roman calendar relatively simple as long as the sixty-year period embracing specific events can be determined.
marking the climax of the Lo-Pu-rang hostility, Pu-rang's governor and his family were brutally slain (GSH: 188).

During peacetime, however, the Lo/Mustang rulers and their high officials paid regular good-will visits to Pu-rang. Between about 1493 and 1503, one of bKra-shis mgon's brothers, several of his ministers, and various high officials of Lo/Mustang visited Pu-rang to inspect and participate in the renovation of the monastery and temple of Kho-char, near the border of Pu-rang and Jumla (JKK: 12a-13a, Vitali 1996: 537). Apparently, between the battles, Lo/Mustang was striving to preserve its conquered distant territories such as Pu-rang and Gu-ge.

Again like his father, king bKra-shis mgon was also accomplished many reforms, both spiritual and secular (Tsarang Bems-chag-MHR: doc. 1, 15 Tibetan). The Tsarang Molla insists that the contribution of this king to the spiritual and secular progress in Lo/Mustang was incomparable (Tsarang Molla: 10a). His reign has been widely described and remembered as a time of educational and cultural progress in Lo/Mustang. Lo/Mustang became a meeting place for Buddhist scholars, both native and foreign, and scholars from distant places, including Magadha (India), Simhala (Sri Lanka), Balyul (Kathmandu, Nepal), Kha-che (Kashmir), and Bod (Tibet) made pilgrimages to Lo/Mustang (Tsarang Molla: 10a-10b, Tsarang bems-chag: 4a-5b, MHR doc. 1 Tibetan, KGJ: 17b, 19b). Besides the king's own brother, some of the prominent visiting Buddhist scholars who translated texts and taught religious and philosophical discourses at that time were PañcitaSiromani Lokatārā of Magadha, Gu-ge pan-chen Grags-pa rgyal- mtshan, Simhalese Pañcita dharmadivākara (Chos-kyi byed), sNye-shang lotsha-ba, and the Lamas associated with king bKra-shis mgon (KGJ: 17b-19b, Tsarang Molla: 10b-11a, Glo-gdung-rabs, Jackson 1984: IX, 155, n. 26 etc.). During bKra-shis mgon's reign, Lo/Mustang was the site where many scholarly books on Buddhism were written and translated into Tibetan from Sanskrit for the first time (Tsarang Molla: 10b-11a). Most of these scholarly activities were carried out under the energetic monastic leadership of the king's brother, Zhabs-drung Lama Glo-bo mkhan-chen bSod-nams- lhungrub. As Glo-bo mkhan-chen was a royal abbot of the great monastic and educational center in Tsarang (Tibetan, Thub-bstan bshad-sgrub dar-rgyas-gling, he was able to bring many prominent foreign Pañcitas and monks to study at his institution. He himself was a disciplined and highly skilled teacher of Buddhist religion and philosophy and the author of more than a dozen scholarly works, including his autobiography (Tsarang Molla: 11a). Thus, Glo-bo mkhan-chen was recognized as one of the leading contributors to the Tibetan Buddhist writing of his time (Lo-Khen-h: 11a-11b, KGJ: 22a-24a, SDR: 548.3). He was also recognized by key authorities as an incarnation of a former abbot of the Ngor monastery (KGJ: ibid., and Lo-

In spite of the short length of his reign, king bKra-shis-mgon achieved remarkable religious, cultural, and educational gains. After witnessing the range of religious, educational, and cultural activities in Lo/Mustang, a prominent Buddhist scholar from India, Pāṇḍitaśiromani Lokatārā, once eulogized this king's fame as having travelled as far as the distant lands near the ocean. 30 Still, there is confusion over the date of bKra-shis mgon's death (Jackson 1984: 141). 31

KING mGON-po RGYAL-MTSHAN OR GRAGS-PA MTHA'-YAS AND HIS BROTHER bSTAN-PA'i-RGYA-MTSHO (FIRST HALF OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY)

King bKra-shis mgon had three sons. The middle one, mGon-po rgyal-mtshan, also known as Grags-pa mtha'-yas, was his father's successor. His elder brother, Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan, was a monk and abbot (Zhabs-drung) of the royal monastery of Tsarang. The youngest brother, bStan-pa'i rgya-mtsho, was a governor (sDe-pa) (Jackson 1984: 125). 32 mGon-po rgyal-

---

29 bKra-shis mgon is also credited with sponsoring various ambitious projects, like the building of temples and monasteries. Among these are the great temple and image of Thubchen (sākyamuni), the structure annexed to the monastic center known as Thub-bstan darrgyas gling at the old Namgyal monastery site, the monastery of Gami chos-sde in Gami, two huge Ma ni 'khor-lo in Gami and Tsarang townships, and two large Stupas in Lo Mnthang (Tsarang Molla: 10b, MHR doc. 1, 15a-b, Gurung 1986: 228, 234).

30 Jackson translates the statement of Pandita Lokatrā given in the GLo gdung-rabs as "O Dharmaraja, because your excellent fame exists as far as the distant shores of the ocean, to behold your face brings great happiness to the mind. Therefore, I have come in order to look [upon you]" (Jackson 1984: IX).

31 Several sources indicate that bKra-shis mgon died between 1512 and 1514, most probably in 1513. According to Lama Kun-dga' grol-mchog, the abbot of Ngör monastery was dKon-mchog 'phel, while Glo-bo mkhan-ch'en (bKra-shis-mgon's brother) left the monastery to return home (Lo) (KGJ: 48b). A record states that this Ngör abbot died in the year 1514 (Jackson 1984: 141). In his autobiography, Glo-bo mkhan-ch'en recalls that at the time of his arrival in Lo/Mustang from Tibet, bKra-shis mgon was dead (Lo-Khen-h: 13a). We are also informed by the account (dKar-chag) of Gami monastery that bKra-shis mgon sponsored its construction in 1512 (water-monkey year) (Appendix- doc. 24 Tibetan, Gurung 1986: 234). This means that only two years elapsed between the date of the last reference to bKra-shis mgon and the date of his brother Glo-bo mkhan-ch'en's arrival in Lo/Mustang. bKra-shis mgon must have died in this interval. Please also refer footnote no. 26 above.

32 Some sources refer to this king with two different names. For example, the account of 'Chi-med (Jackson 1984: appendix G) uses the name mGon-po rgyal-mtshan. The Tsarang Molla introduces him as Grags-pa mtha'-yas (fol. 11a). bCo-brgyad khrü-ch'en uses both of these names, as if the king were named mGon-po rgyal-mtshan grags-pa mtha'-yas (RCPT: 6). Among these names, the most prominent was mGon-po rgyal-mtshan, because two of the most respected spiritual figures, Glo-bo mkhan-ch'en (the king's uncle) and the royal nun Kun-dga' chi-med both use it (Jackson 1984: appendix G, 122, 125, 200, Lo-Khen-f: 5-28, Lo-Khen-b: 329-341).
mtshan's elder brother blo-gros was a disciple of the abbot of gSer-mdog-can Shakya mchog-lidan and the famous Tibetan tantric, gTsang-smyon he-ru-ka. Both had been in contact with Lo's ruling family since the time of king bKra-shis mgon (GSH: 177, Vitali 1996: 537). mGon-po-rgyal-mtshan is said to have successfully maintained the system of traditional patronage to the major monastic centers (Tsarang Molla: 11a-11b, Sri-mi'i-dbang-phyug, Jackson 1984: 126). This is corroborated by the latter's involvement in restoring the temple of Kha-char (Khojarnath) in 1495 (Vitali 1996: 537). Besides this royal monk, during the reign of mGon-po rgyal-mtshan, Lo/Mustang produced two other famed scholars of Buddhism, Padma dbang-rgyal (1487-1542) and his younger brother Rig-'dzin Legs-lidan bdud-'joms rdo-rje (1500-1577) (Dudjom Rinpoche and Yese Dorje 1991: 805-808, Smith 1970: 2, Padma-'phrin-las 1972: 305-376). The elder Padma dbang-rgyal was known in Tibet by the title of mNga'-ris pan-chen, the great scholar of Ngari (ibid.).

mGon-po rgyal-mtshan became the king of Lo/Mustang around 1513, after the death of his father. By that time, the neighboring kingdom of Jumli had gained power in the region and the relative prestige of Lo/Mustang began to wane. According to the Tsarang Molla, mGon-po-rgyal-mtshan maintained his rule over the traditional areas of Lo/Mustang but could no longer assume to control its more outward and recently subdued areas. No new structures of religious importance were constructed during mGon-po rgyal-mtshan's reign, and thus he only maintained the spiritual and secular order already established by his ancestors (Tsarang Molla: 11a-11b).

According to an old document found in the Thak region, the territory between Ko-ra-lha in the north and Ghansa (near the border of Myagdi district) in the south constituted the boundaries of the kingdom of Lo/Mustang during mGon-po rgyal-mtshan's reign, and the territory of Lo/Mustang must have shrunk (MHR doc. 7 Tibetan). Its authority over Purang and other western Tibetan frontier regions was probably abandoned as well. This was a result of the rising power of Jumli in the upper Kanjali region, and Jumli rulers by then were launching a military campaign against the upper Kâli Gaṇḍakî valley with the intention of capturing the vital north-south trade route that had sustained Lo/Mustang (Snellgrove 1967: 88-91). The local chronicles of Lo/Mustang also indicate, if indirectly, its demeaned condition during mGon-po rgyal-mtshan's reign, especially when compared to the glorious earlier days of the kingdom of Lo/Mustang. For example, the

---

33 Padma dbang-rgyal was one of the most prominent scholars of the rNying-ma pa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Gene Smith has collected information of a text of writings by this scholar entitled mNga'-ris pan-chen gyi gsung-rnam, a xylograph, 48 pages, rDo-rje brag blocks, catalogue available at the Himalayan and Inner Asian Resource Center, Trace Foundation, New York. Padma dbang-rgyal's one of the most important literary works is known as sDom-gsum rnam-par nges-pa'i bstan-beos (Dudjom Rinpoche and Yese Dorje 1991: 808, Padma 'phrin-las 1972: 374).
Tsarang Molla does not eulogize this king as it eulogizes his ancestors, as masters of a multi-lingual and multi-cultural kingdom. Nor is he lauded as king of an extended territory (Tsarang Molla: 11a). The Tsarang Molla reports that frequent external attacks forced mGon-po rgyal-mtshan into many defensive wars against local aggressors (Tsarang Molla: 11a). These attackers could be none other than the Jumli. A Lo-born Lama of Dol-po also recounts one of Jumli's invasions and the loss of Lo's grain and property to Jumli in 1544 (Snellgrove 1967: 91). We cannot ascertain whether mGon-po rgyal mtshan was the ruler of Lo/Mustang until that time; still, this event certainly occurred during the reign of either mGon-po rgyal-mtshan (generation four) or bKra-shis stobs-rgyas (generation five). The Tsarang bems-chag excludes the names of the Lo/Mustang rulers during these two pivotal generations (MHR: doc. 1 Tibetan). Perhaps the situation of Lo/Mustang deteriorated because of the Jumli occupation. Furthermore, the old monarchy had been reduced. for all purposes, to a position of local rulership.

STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE (1540s - 1788)

By the middle of the sixteenth century, the kingdom of Jumli began to launch its expansion in the upper Kali Gandaki region, including Lo/Mustang. Jumli emerged as one of the major successors of the Khasa/Ya-tshe kingdom. Its difficult terrain encouraged its forces to develop flexible, fighting techniques that could overwhelm forces from plateau areas. like much of the Tibetan region. Jumli's increasing strength in the wake of the Khasa's collapse, and the sophistication of its fighters, produced over two hundred years of travail for Lo/Mustang.

Lo's genealogical sources also indicate that Lo/Mustang fell after or during the reign of mGon-po rgyal-mtshan (Tsarang Molla: 11a). According to the Glo-gdung-rabs, king mGon-po rgyal-mtshan, like his father, had three sons. He reportedly had another male offspring of ambiguous status. This boy was probably the product of the king's brother brTan-pa'i-rgya-mtsho and their common wife or queen, and represented the fifth generation of Lo's ruling line (Jackson 1984: 121, 127). This complicated generation is omitted from the Tsarang Molla. Compared to the titles of independent rulers, such as A-ham, A-mgon, Mi-dhung, Sa-bang, these two less distinguished titles indicate that the ruling brothers of this generation were not able to claim any status higher than that of local chieftains. On the other hand, we are also told by other local sources that the titles Khri-thog-pa and sDe-pa were granted exclusively to the local governors appointed by or working under the main rulers of Lo/Mustang itself (MHR: 138-41). According to the Glo-gdung rabs, the three sons of king mGon-po rgyal-mtshan were Khri-thog-pa bKra-shis stobs-rgyas (also known as bKra-shis-stob-rgyal), sDe-pa Kun-dga' blo-gros, and Chos-mdzad bSod-nams dpal-
'bar (monk), respectively (Jackson 1984: 120, 127). Another royal personality of this generation was sDe-pa A-drung or 'Jam-dbyangs rin-chen rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po (Jackson 1984: 126-127, Lo-Khen-b: 329-341). The sons of king mGon-po rgyal-mtshan and his brother are not included in most of the sources: also, the Glo gdung-rabs introduces the main ruler of this generation only as Khri-thog-pa, a title commonly used for a local commissioner.

One explanation is that Lo/Mustang was captured by the Jumli forces, leaving the Lo/Mustang ruler only with a title of local chief. Even the royal abbot of this generation, Chos-mdzad bSod-nams dpal-'bar, is addressed without the traditional title of Zhab-drung or Chos-dpon (successor of the royal religious throne of the old monastery in Tsarang). Beginning in the early 1540s, the Jumlis intended to capture the most important north-south trade route of the upper Kāli Gandakī region and by the early 1550s, Jumli authorities had probably established a permanent military camp at Kagbenī in lower Lo.

After mGon-po rgyal-mtshan died, Lo/Mustang was troubled not only by Jumli's occupation but also by a serious internal power conflict and civil war. While his energetic brother brTan-pa'i-rgya-mtsho took charge of the kingdom, mGon-po rgyal-mtshan's sons were already waiting to succeed their uncle in due course. However, the son of brTan-pa'i-rgya-mtsho, probably born after his uncle's death, apparently grew ambitious and influential. Having given up monkhood, he assumed the title of sDe-pa (local governor), presumably of the southern districts of Gelung (dGe-lung) and Gami (Gad-smad). King mGon-po rgyal-mtshan's eldest son bKra-shis stobs-rgyal must have become the dPon-drung (head of the house hold) of the main palace in Monthang (Lo Monthang), while his younger brother Kun-dga' blo-gros probably became the district governor of Tsarang. Since the youngest brother bKra-shis stobs-rgyas was a monk, brTan-pa'i-rgya-mtsho's son A-drung, must have become the regional ruler of the other two southern districts. Because of his location and position, it is likely that A-drung made agreements with the Jumli governor, opposing his cousins in Monthang and Tsarang. A contemporary biography of Lama Chos-skyabs dpal-bzangs also describes some internal disputes in Lo/Mustang resulting from power conflicts among the regional governors of the lower, middle, and upper districts of the kingdom (Snellgrove 1967: 164-166). These conflicts in Lo/Mustang had given Jumli a convenient opportunity to invade Lo/Mustang and demote its ruler to the status of a local chieftain. Hence, the

---

34 Since the Glo gdung-rabs introduces this person as sDe-pa (Regional Commissioner) A-drung, and the work of Glo-bo mkhan-chen introduces him as a royal monk by another name, we can infer he was a monk in his earlier days and a secular person later. He must have adopted the nickname "A-drung," probably an abbreviation of the Tibetan phrase A-mgon-gyi drung-pa. This translates as "noble house-holder of the lineage of the ruling family of Lo/Mustang." As the Glo gdung-rabs refers to his son, he must have married at some point.
middle of the sixteenth century was the beginning of Jumli's penetration and the decline of Lo's prestige (MHR: 225-28).

After the loss of its heightened status, Lo/Mustang never recovered. Although its rulers, together with their allies and subjects, worked valiantly to win back their independence, they were almost always defeated. Jumli annexed the entire western and southern territories of Lo/Mustang, as well as Dolpo, Tarap, Tsharka, Lagumkhola, Bharrong, Gelung, and the Kāg-Bāragāun region of lower Lo. Consequently, the territory of Lo/Mustang shrank to a small area around its capital, Monthang.\(^{35}\) The Thak region, including most of the Pānchgāun area of lower Lo eventually came under the control of the kingdom of Parvat (Tibetan, gru) (MHR: 256-57).

Still, the Lo-pa authorities sought assistance in regaining their freedom from Jumli. They began the effort of seeking external assistance during the lifetime of king rGya-hor dpal-bzang (king c.1560). This phase of Lo's struggle with Jumli continued until the incorporation of Parvat and Jumli into Nepal by Gorkha in the late 1780s. Within this period of about 240 years, the Lo/Mustang rulers were occasionally able to regain independence for limited periods by joining forces with various allies, including Parvat, Ladakh, Gro-shod (in Tibet), and even Doti. Lo-pa rulers were also able to win the gracious support of the Dalai Lama of Tibet. One example of the resistance of Lo/Mustang involves several wars fought during the reigns of king bSam-'grub dpal-'bar, his son, and his grandson, Tshe-dbang lhun-grub and bKra-shis mam-rgyal, generations ten, eleven, and twelve of the Lo/Mustang ruling line. (MHR: 228-239). Loss of the income previously generated by the north-south trade and custom levies in lower Lo, prevented Lo/Mustang from maintaining a strong military presence along its frontiers. In order to fight against Jumli, external support was essential for Lo/Mustang. But after the mid-sixteenth century, external military support was neither constant nor reliable, and Jumli, the immediate strong enemy, invaded Lo/Mustang frequently (MHR: 224-239).

Before reviewing the details of Lo-Jumli conflicts, let us examine the genealogical history of Lo/Mustang after generation five. According to the Glo gdung-rabs, Khri-thog-pa bKra-shis stobs-rgyal's eldest son and successor was rGya-hor dpal-bzang (Jackson 1984: 127-128). He successfully regained the title of Chos-rgyal (Dharmarājā) or independent ruler.\(^{36}\) Still, there is a dearth of chronological evidence of king rGya-hor

\(^{35}\) This area comprises the traditional seven core districts of Lo/Mustang, known as Glo-tsho-bdun, the territory between Ko-ra-lha and Gami.

\(^{36}\) The Tsarang Molla skips the gdung-rabs' generation five and acknowledges King rGya-hor dpal-bzang and his brother, sDe-pa bKra-shis 'od-bar (or bSod-nams bKra-shis) as mGon-po rgyal-mtshan's sons (Tsarang Molla: 11b). Similarly, the Glo gdung-rabs also acknowledges the grandson of sDe-pa A-grung as a royal monk of this generation. But the sources are silent as to whether he was enthroned on the seat of zhabz-drung at Tsarang Monastery. This confusion arises particularly because a nineteenth-century manuscript,
dpal-bzang's reign. According to Jackson, this king may have ruled around 1550 (Jackson 1984: 1354). But based on the last available date of this king's great grandfather, bKra-shis mgon (1512) and the tentative date of the first Jumli invasion (1544), he apparently became king of Lo/Mustang only around 1560. It is clear that the invasion of 1544 was only the beginning of Jumli's occupation; its military campaigns continued through the following decades.

There is little mention of rGya-hor dpal-bzang's reign, except that he sponsored a large number of religious sculptures, Stupas, and books. According to the Tsarang Molla, this king did not make any noticable contribution to the kingdom's development but simply maintained his ancestors' traditions (Tsarang Molla: 11b). The Glo gdung-rabs recounts that the king's younger brother, bKra-shis 'od-'bar, who was a regional commissioner, assisted in ruling the kingdom (Jackson 1984: 120, 128, 134). According to the Glo gdung-rabs, king rGya-hor died without producing a son of his own: however, from the union of his brother and their common wife, there were three sons to succeed the throne (Jackson 1984: 128). rGya-hor probably ruled Lo/Mustang only briefly. He was succeeded first by his brother bKra-shis-'od-'bar, who may have ruled until about the 1580s. Until that time, Lo/Mustang had been severely afflicted by the Jumli aggression and the rulers of this generation could not preserve the embattled kingdom. Perhaps this turmoil explains why neither the Tsarang Molla nor Glo gdung rabs supply any substantial information about this generation.

bKra-shis-'od-'bar's son: Don-gn~b rdo-rje, ruled from c. 1580 to 1594, and like his father, uncle, and great-grandfather, he held the title of A-ham (Tsarang Molla: 11b, Jackson 1984:121). Although the exact date of his reign is not available, from dates of his son's and grandson's reigns, as well as chronological evidence in the biographical literature on Dolpo Lama Chos-skyabs dpal-bzang (1536-1625), we can determine that he ruled between about 1580 and 1594. Lama Chos-skyabs's autobiography mentions this king's brother (sDe-pa rab-brtan, nicknamed 'O-lo) as the Lama's devoted disciple, who died while visiting Dolpo in the spring of 1591, while Don-grub rdo-rje was still the main ruler of Lo/Mustang (Snellgrove 1967: dealing with the career and achievements of the royal abbots of Tsarang monastery, surprisingly omits this name from the list (Jackson 1984:198, appendix F).

King mGon-po rgyal-mtshan's brother, brtan-pal rgya-mtsho (generation four) may have ruled until around 1530s or the early 1540s, and then was succeeded by rGya-hor's father (generation five). If we calculate by giving each generation about fifteen to twenty years, rGya-hor dpal-bzang's time of ascension would fall between 1560 to 1565. This estimate is supported by the available dates of the reign of rGya-hor's nephew, Don-grub rdo-rje and his son bSam-'grub rdo-rje, as discussed below.

The main difference between generations five and six is the difference in titles of the Lo/Mustang rulers. For example, rGya-hor dpal-bzang (generation six) assumed the high titles of Chos-rgyal and A-ham but bKra-shis stob rgyal (generation five) was known only as Khri-thog-pa, a lower title (Tsarang Molla: 11b, Jackson 1984: 121).
In the summer of that year, Don-grub also visited Lama Chos-skyabs in Dolpo with his ministers and servants (ibid.). Don-grub made his final visit to Dolpo in 1594, during which he performed many spiritual functions under the direction of Lama Chos-skyabs (ibid.: 169). Since in 1594, both father (Don-grub) and son (bSam-'grub rdo-rje) were mentioned as ruling kings of Lo/Mustang, bSam-'grub rdo rje must have succeeded his father that year. Don-grub was the ruling king of record when he visited the Lama in Dolpo in the early part of 1594 (Snellgrove 1967: 169).

Lama Chos-skyab's biography tells that by the Jumli king's request, he had mediated a serious dispute in the early 1580s between the ruler of upper Lo and the Jumli authorities in lower Lo (Snellgrove 1967: 153). Lama Chos-skyab mediated again in about 1591, when the Lo king clashed with local governors, including those of Se-rib, or lower Lo (Snellgrove 1967: 166).

King Don-grub rdo-rje was assisted by his brother, sDe-pa rab-brtan in the secular duties of the kingdom. Religious aspects were supervised by his elder brother 'Jam-dbyangs-pa, the abbot (Zhabs-drung) of Tsarang monastery (Tsarang Molla: 11b, Jackson 1984: 128, appendix F).

The fact that Don-grub rdo-rje occupies a prominent place in various genealogical sources suggests that the position of Lo/Mustang during his reign was improved. The Tsarang Molla claims that king Don-grub defeated his enemies and the enemy-host by strengthening Lo's army (Tsarang Molla: 11b). This description probably refers to disputes between Lo/Mustang proper and and the governors of lower Lo, including the governors (sDe-pa and Khri-thog-pa) of Gelung, lower Lo and the people of Khang-kar, a village near Gami. Don-grub is also lauded as a king with great wisdom and intellect (Tsarang Molla: 11b). He sponsored the construction of strong forts and palaces such as bSam-'grub dge-'phel in Tsarang and the renovations of many monasteries, including the venerable one at Lo Gekar (Glo-bo dge-dkar) (Tsarang Bems-chag MHR: doc. 1 Tibetan, Tsarang Molla: ibid.). Although Lo/Mustang was still struggling for self-sufficiency at this time, the Tsarang bems-chag asserts that don-grub spread the fame of his kingdom to distant places.

According to these sources, Lo/Mustang may have defeated Jumli forces several times in lower Lo under Don-grub's leadership, but not without external help. Around this time, the Ladakhi army of king Tshe-dbang margyal conquered a vast territory, including Pu-rang, Jumla, and several other western Tibetan frontier districts (Francke 1926: 105). Although the Ladakhi royal chronicle claims that the Ladakhi army also conquered Lo/Mustang, 167). In the summer of that year, Don-grub also visited Lama Chos-skyabs in Dolpo with his ministers and servants (ibid.). Don-grub made his final visit to Dolpo in 1594, during which he performed many spiritual functions under the direction of Lama Chos-skyabs (ibid.: 169). Since in 1594, both father (Don-grub) and son (bSam-'grub rdo-rje) were mentioned as ruling kings of Lo/Mustang, bSam-'grub rdo rje must have succeeded his father that year. Don-grub was the ruling king of record when he visited the Lama in Dolpo in the early part of 1594 (Snellgrove 1967: 169).

Lama Chos-skyab's biography tells that by the Jumli king's request, he had mediated a serious dispute in the early 1580s between the ruler of upper Lo and the Jumli authorities in lower Lo (Snellgrove 1967: 153). Lama Chos-skyab mediated again in about 1591, when the Lo king clashed with local governors, including those of Se-rib, or lower Lo (Snellgrove 1967: 166).

King Don-grub rdo-rje was assisted by his brother, sDe-pa rab-brtan in the secular duties of the kingdom. Religious aspects were supervised by his elder brother 'Jam-dbyangs-pa, the abbot (Zhabs-drung) of Tsarang monastery (Tsarang Molla: 11b, Jackson 1984: 128, appendix F).

The fact that Don-grub rdo-rje occupies a prominent place in various genealogical sources suggests that the position of Lo/Mustang during his reign was improved. The Tsarang Molla claims that king Don-grub defeated his enemies and the enemy-host by strengthening Lo's army (Tsarang Molla: 11b). This description probably refers to disputes between Lo/Mustang proper and and the governors of lower Lo, including the governors (sDe-pa and Khri-thog-pa) of Gelung, lower Lo and the people of Khang-kar, a village near Gami. Don-grub is also lauded as a king with great wisdom and intellect (Tsarang Molla: 11b). He sponsored the construction of strong forts and palaces such as bSam-'grub dge-'phel in Tsarang and the renovations of many monasteries, including the venerable one at Lo Gekar (Glo-bo dge-dkar) (Tsarang Bems-chag MHR: doc. 1 Tibetan, Tsarang Molla: ibid.). Although Lo/Mustang was still struggling for self-sufficiency at this time, the Tsarang bems-chag asserts that don-grub spread the fame of his kingdom to distant places.

According to these sources, Lo/Mustang may have defeated Jumli forces several times in lower Lo under Don-grub's leadership, but not without external help. Around this time, the Ladakhi army of king Tshe-dbang margyal conquered a vast territory, including Pu-rang, Jumla, and several other western Tibetan frontier districts (Francke 1926: 105). Although the Ladakhi royal chronicle claims that the Ladakhi army also conquered Lo/Mustang,

39 Most probably, Don-grub visited this lama in order to conduct religious services commemorating the king's brother.

40 Lower Lo had always been part of Lo's geography and the greater Tibetan culture, but its location eventually made it an expanded territory of Jumla, and Indo-Aryan, frontier. Although regional politics did not disturb its local culture, this area became a political pawn.
descriptions of Lo's internal situation suggest that Ladakh's army had come to Lo/Mustang simply to assist it. The Ladakhi army was on its way back to Ladakh from a victorious campaign in the eastern frontier areas. At that time, Jumli activity in Lo/Mustang had become unbearable, and the request of the Lo/Mustang ruler brought the Ladakhi army to Lo/Mustang to fight against the Jumli force and to rescue the people of Lo/Mustang from the hegemony of Jurilä. Subsequently in lower Lo, the allied force of Ladakh and Lo/Mustang defeated the Jumli force and the king of Jurilä was compelled to ask for the mediation of the Dolpo Lama. If the relative position of Lo/Mustang to Jurilä had not improved, the Jumli king would certainly not have asked for mediation. It is clear that the Jumli army had invaded Lo/Mustang several times and worked hard to control the entire Lo/Mustang region, but not with lasting success. Consequently, with the help of religious leaders of the region, Jurilä and Lo/Mustang engaged in mediated dialogues and forged diplomatic agreements (Snellgrove 1967:153, 164, 166).

The Molla and other genealogical sources do not reveal much about bSam-'grub rdo-rje. However, Lama Chos-skyabs dpal-bzang's biography claims that the Jumli king and his officials were still attempting to gain this Lama's support, presumably for their political designs in Lo/Mustang. Instead, the Lama became highly critical of the suppressive policies of the Jumlis and expressed his hope that the devils, or non-human entities, of Jurilä would be destroyed, and that Jurilä's people would be filled with human wisdom (Snellgrove 1967: 170). Jumlis, therefore, must still have been an active, if threatening, force in Lo/Mustang and Dolpo.

King bSam-'grub rdo-rje was succeeded by his only son, bSam-'grub rab-brtan (also known as bSam-'grub rab-brtan phyogs thams-cad-las mam-par rgyal-ba) in about 1610 (Jackson 1984: appendix G). This king ruled for more than forty years.41

bSam-'grub rab-brtan married a highly educated woman, a Ladakhi princess named Nyi-zla rgyal-mo, according to Lama bCo-brgyad khri-chen Thub-bstan legs-bshad rgya-mtsho (RCPT). As the Tsarang Molla reports, his wife helped this king reform the kingdom's laws, as well as sponsor the usual plethora of sculptures, religious texts, and Stupas (Tsarang Molla: 41)

41 On the basis of a 1611 official order, the account of Byams-pa temple of 1663, and several documents regarding the subsequent king, bSam-'grub dpal-bar, we can estimate the dates of bSam-'grub rab-brtan's reign more precisely. A copperplate inscription of King Virabhadra Shahi of Jumla dated 1656 confirms that, in that year or a year before, bSam-'grub dpal-bar succeeded his father, bSam-'grub rab-brtan (Vajracarya and Shrestha VE. 2032: 22, MHR doc. 58-59 Nepali). The account of byams-pa temple on the other hand, tells that bSam-'grub rab-brtan was still alive and guiding his sons until 1663 (MHR doc. 20 Tibetan). The Byams-pa account also confirms that bSam-'grub rab-brtan and his wife were very old and the temple of Byams-pa was renovated by their sons, King bSam-'grub dpal-bar and his brother, dedicating it for their parents' long life. On this basis, we may be able to conclude that bSam-'grub rab-brtan ruled Lo/Mustang between about 1610 and 1655.
He was also lauded as a courageous ruler who defended the kingdom and intimidated its enemies, a leader of wisdom and virtue (Tsarang Molla: ibid., MHR doc. 3 Tibetan). Such praise suggests that Lo/Mustang may have defeated the allied forces of Jumla and lower Lo, perhaps several times. The biography of Lama bsTan-'dzin-ras-pa (1646-1723) and the royal chronicle of Ladakh describe several Jumli attacks on Lo/Mustang and counter attacks by the allied force of Lo/Mustang and Ladakh. The Ladakhi source claims that both upper and lower Lo were brought under Ladakh's control and that Ladakh also received gifts and other offerings from the rulers of Lo/Mustang. This does not automatically suggest that Ladakh had defeated Lo/Mustang, because no evidence exists of a state of enmity or warfare between them at any time (Francke 1972 II: 110, bSod-nams-tshe-brtan 1976: 375, 389). Rather, the Ladakhi account of Lo/Mustang may gesture to Lo's deference as a weaker ally in the fight against Jumli aggression in lower Lo. At least two or three times during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the royal houses of Lo/Mustang and Ladakh were bound by matrimonial relationships (MHR: 241-253).

Lama bsTan-'dzin ras-pa also recorded a war between Lo/Mustang and Jumla in 1652, precipitated by a dispute between the Lo/Mustang king and the Jumli-leaning commissioners of lower Lo. (TR: 2a-2b). During a diplomatic conference held at Kāgbeni, a local governor, previously an official of Lo/Mustang, was reportedly assaulted by the Lo/Mustang king himself. Following this incident, a large Jumli force—led by the king of Jumla himself—occupied Lower Lo, raising local taxes and levies on ordinary people. The occupying Jumlis killed a huge number of Lopa people, and, unusually, even the noble families of lower Lo suffered economically and politically. A disastrous food shortage throughout the entire Lo/Mustang region followed this war (TR: ibid., Jackson 1978: 220).

KING bSam-'grub dpal-'bar and his attempt to maintain Lo's independence

The tenth generation of Lo's ruling line assumed power when bSam-'grub dpal-'bar, the third son of bSam-'grub rab-brtan, took the throne in about 1656. According to Tsarang Molla, Glo gdung-rabs and other local sources, bSam-'grub dpal-'bar's younger brother, A-mchog brtan-pa, acted as joint ruler. They Glo gdung-rabs introduces him as Sa-dbang (Sanskrit, bhūpati, or lord of the earth) and the account (Bems-chag) written by Princess Chimed acknowledges him as Mi-dbang (Sanskrit, nareśa, or lord of human beings) (Jackson 1984: 121, appendix G).42

42 bSam-'grub dpal-'bar's second elder brother, 'Jam-dbyangs bSod-nams bstan-'dzin dbang-po, was a monk and abbot of the royal monastery of Tsarang (Tsarang-Molla: 12b, Byams-pa dkar-chag, MHR doc. 20 Tibetan, Jackson 1984: 121,129, 134, appendices F-G).
The reign of bSam-’grub dpal-’bar and his brother, A-mchog brtan-pa’i rdo-rje, is comparatively well covered by local and external sources. The earliest of them is a copper-plate order of king Virabhadra Shahi of Jumilā dated SE 1578 (1656), which probably marks the beginning of bSam-’grub dpal-’bar and his brother's rule in Lo/Mustang.\(^{43}\) The text of the inscription indicates that there was a popular tradition of issuing a new *dharmaapatra* from Jumilā at any time of royal transition in Lo/Mustang.\(^{44}\) The main purpose of this order was to renew or reaffirm terms or conditions fixed earlier by former rulers. The inscription apparently expresses Jumilā’s refusal to acknowledge Lo/Mustang as a kingdom; even the primary ruler of Lo/Mustang, bSam-’grub dpal-’bar, is addressed merely as a commissioner (MHR Doc. 1 Nepali, Vajracarya and Shrestha VE 2032: doc. no. 26).

The Jumli presence in Lo/Mustang was not only motivated by the ideas of physical conquest, but also of economic interest. Since Lo/Mustang was located along an important north-south trade route, Jumilā’s main goal was to capture the major trade centers of the upper Kāli Gandakī valley. Jumli rulers also intended to increase their revenue by imposing different kinds of extraordinary levies and establishing a tradition of collecting yearly and occasional gifts from Lo/Mustang (MHR doc. Khral-gyi Bems-chag 1-2). Thus, ever since the mid-sixteenth century Jumli occupation in the upper Kāli Gandakī valley, Lo/Mustang was economically and politically devastated. Jumli aggression in the Lo/Mustang region did not stop in the following centuries. Consequently, the old tradition of sponsorship of religious and cultural objects and structures in Lo/Mustang was adversely effected. Historical monasteries, palaces, forts, stupas, and other cultural objects were torn down and then slowly perished.

By the early 1650s Jumilā had achieved dominance in Lo/Mustang. The 1656 copper-plate inscription describes how a former Jumli ruler, Bhan Shahi (reign c.1629-1650) was also able to subdue Lo/Mustang and issue orders in the former Lo/Mustang ruler’s name. The Jumli king, Virabhadra, reminds king bSam-’grub dpal-’bar and his brother to be always prepared to act upon Jumilā’s orders, and to be faithful for the betterment of Jumilā. In return for such loyalty, Lo/Mustang rulers were granted the right to collect annual taxes from some of the high Himalayan villages of Dolpo, which

---

\(^{43}\) This inscription was in the custody of Nuwakot District Court and during my historical field survey of Nuwakot in the winter of 1985, I was able to verify the earlier reading of it through the courtesy of the Nuwakot district judge. In reading the entire text, I found some differences, particularly the date. The date previously read and published by Vajracarya and Shrestha is SE 1588 but I read this date to be 1578 (1656 A. D.) (Vajracarya and Shrestha VE 2032: doc. no. 26, MHR doc. 1 Nepali)

\(^{44}\) A *dharmaapatra* is an inscribed or written order issued by the more powerful ruler to a protectorate, expounding the rights and responsibilities of both parties.
traditionally had been under the control of earlier Lo/Mustang rulers (MHR doc. l Nepali).

During the reign of the Jumli king Prithivipati Shaha (Virabhadra's son), bSam-'grub dpal-'bar also made special agreements with Jumli, most probably after another of the many Lo-Jumli wars (Francke 1926: 230, Petech 1977: 90, Jackson 1978: 222). Jumli sources indicate that Prithivipati Shaha ascended the throne of Jumli only around 1703. Thus, bSam-'grub dpal-'bar must have retired only after that year. Again, a historical chronicle written in 1711 acknowledges this king as the existing ruler of Lo/Mustang (Gauchan VE 2037: 11. 18, MHR doc. 21 Tibetan). Contrary to this information, an official order of bSam-'grub's son, Tshe-dbang lhun-grub, issued from Tsarang palace in 1710, suggests otherwise (MHR: 65. doc. 5 Tibetan). In this case, we can infer that king bSam-'grub-dpal-'bar may have retired in or just before 1711.

bSam-'grub dpal-'bar's reign, apparently, was marked by dramatic vicissitudes. Lo/Mustang regained and then lost its independent status more than once. The Ladakhi royal chronicle also indicates that Lo/Mustang regained its power with the help of Ladakh's army. A famed Ladakhi minister, Shakya rgya-ntscho (chief minister of king bDe-ldan ram-mgyal, fl. 1650 and his son, bDe-legs ram-mgyal), accompanied a large Ladakhi force in order to rescue Lo/Mustang from Jumli control (Francke 1972 II: 243, Jackson 1978: 220). Anticipating more Jumli aggression, Ladakhis helped construct two new forts, in Kāgbeni (lower Lo) and in upper Lo (probably in or around Monthang) (ibid.).

Another agreement was reached after this most recent war, according to the Ladakhi chronicle, and it was favorable to Lo/Mustang. (Francke 1972: 230). As Lo's economy prospered in the early 1660s, we can cautiously infer that Lo's first defeat of Jumli forces had occurred several years earlier, probably in the late 1650s, and with the significant aid of the Ladakhi forces. Furthermore, with help from Ladakh and perhaps from Parvat as well, Lo's military force was reorganized and its entire defense system strengthened. Thus the century-long Jumli hegemony in Lo/Mustang had been resisted, at least temporarily by bSam-'grub dpal-'bar's efforts. The tax record of Lo/Mustang shows that Lo/Mustang was freed from Jumli taxes and levies several times—between the late 1650s and 1666, 1678 and 1684 and 1689, and finally between 1706 and 1710 (MHR doc. Khral-gj!. bems-chag.1.2.3).

This last four-year period was preceded by more sensational Jumli aggression. In 1693, with the help of Mongol force from Gro-shod, just northwest of Lo/Mustang, headed by dGa'-ldan tshe-dbang (also known as

---

45 Like his father, bSam-'grub dpal-'bar also ruled the kingdom for more than fifty years. His eldest brother Phun-tshogs rab-brtan's birth year (1635), and the first available reference to bSam-'grub dpal-'bar as king (1656), suggest that he ascended the throne at the age of about seventeen or eighteen. We might safely revise David Jackson's calculation of his reign i.e., from about 1675 to 1700 (1984. 134-135), to 1656 through 1710.
Se-chen), Lo/Mustang was again rescued from Jumli hegemony. However, immediately after the return of the Gro-shod force, Juruñá again attacked Lo/Mustang; the Lo/Mustang king bSarn-'grub dpal-'bar was forced to bring two gift-laden horses to Kägbeni and surrendered himself to the Jumli Crown Prince Prithvipati Shah (MHR doc. Kharal-gyi bems-chags 1: 6b, 2: 9b-10a, 3: 35b). This time, Juruñá's supremacy lasted until 1705. In that year, Lo/Mustang enlisted help from Parvat and defeated the Jumli forces again. An agreement signed by the representatives of Jumli, Parvate, and Lo rulers, dated SE 1627 (1705), claims that the order of the king of Parvat was honored by the Jumli and Lo/Mustang leaders (MHR doc. 4 Tibetan). Lo/Mustang recovered the entire territory of upper and lower Lo and traditional rights over the Thak-Thini area were restored. Hence, the reign of bSarn-'grub dpal-'bar was the first time since the Jumli occupation of the 1540s that Lo/Mustang proficiently asserted its will for independence.

During the second half of the sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth century, Lo/Mustang rulers and noble families of Monthang sustained a lasting dispute with the noble families of the Muktināth area of lower Lo. These nobles were the descendants of a popular Lo/Mustang official known as Khro-bo skyabs-pa of sKye-skya-sgang in Monthang and they were still known after the name of their old native settlement (Jackson 1978: 220-221). After a dispute with the royal family of Lo/Mustang in the late fifteenth century, completely abandoning sKye-skya-sgang, this noble family had migrated to the Muktināth area of lower Lo, where one of the nobles of this family had been working already as a hereditary commissioner to the lower Lo region. Later, this antagonism produced a convenient opportunity for the Jumliis to divide the people of Lo/Mustang proper and lower Lo and establish their hegemony in the entire Lo/Mustang region. An official order of the Jumli king dated 1671, addressed to the noble families of lower Lo, sheds light on the Jumli "divide and rule" policy in Lo/Mustang. In this letter, the Jumli king recognizes the local authority of the Khri-thog-pa noble family of the Muktināth or 'Dzar-rdzong area and eulogizes them for their services (MHR doc. 7 Tibetan). In addition to the sources mentioned above, Lama bSod-nams dbang-phyug (1660-1731) of Dolpo also recalled a dispute followed by a war fought between Se-rib (lower Lo) and Lo/Mustang in c. 1683 (Snellgrove 1967: 250).

During the half-century of bSarn-'grub dpal-'bar's reign, Lo/Mustang defeated the Jumli forces no fewer than four times and its economy remained resilient. Cultural and historical monuments were renovated and a number of structures and objects of religious and cultural value were produced (Tsarang Molla: 12b). Among such cultural contributions, the renovation of the great temple of Byams-pa was the most prominent (MHR doc. 20 Tibetan, Tsarang Molla: 12b). The conception, execution, and successful completion
of this project signalled Lo's recovery from Jumli hegemony, and highlighted the importance of king bSam-'grub dpal-'bar in the history of Lo/Mustang.

**LO/MUSTANG AFTER bSAM-'GRUB DPAL-'BAR: CONFLICT WITH JUMILA AND THE AGE OF JUMLI SUZERAINITY**

Lo's temporary recovery did not endure, however; Jumlā continued its efforts to dominate the Lo/Mustang region. At the end of bSam-'grub dpal-'bar's reign in 1710, Jumlā regained its full control of lower Lo and reinstated its annual tribute demand from upper Lo. bSam-'grub dpal-'bar was succeeded by his only documented offspring, Tshe-dbang lhun-grub. Aside from reliable and comprehensive genealogical sources such as the *Tsarang Molla* and the *Glo-gdung-rabs*, other local manuscripts relate the times and career of king Tshe-dbang. Among them, a manuscript from 'Dzar, the account of 'Chi-med dpal-'dren bzang-mo (Jackson 1984:136 n. 5, appendices G and I), the biography of Lama rTag-rtse-ba Mi-pham Shes-rab phun-tshogs (pt. Nga: 18), and an agreement (mChing-yig) from Thak, are important (MHR doc. 7). A stone inscription from a Tangya village prayer wall (Ma-thang ring-ma) also mention Tshe-dbang and his wife's sponsorship of that wall, as well as many other objects of religious importance in the eastern districts of the kingdom.

King Tshe-dbang energetically promoted the cultural heritage of Lo/Mustang and standardized laws in the kingdom (Tsarang Molla: 12b). He is also credited with defeating both internal (probably the fractious governors of Gelung and lower Lo) and external enemies. By defeating the Jumli force, Lo/Mustang regained its independence at least twice during Tshe-dbang lhun-grub's reign. A tax record suggests that a war was fought between Jumlā and Lo/Mustang after 1710; Lo's force must have prevailed because this document shows that Lo/Mustang paid no taxes or tribute to Jumlā between 1711 and 1714. Briefly, for about three years, Lo/Mustang lost its freedom again to Jumlā (MHR doc. Khral-gyi bems-chag 3).

The year 1719 was very important in the history of Lo, however, as Lo/Mustang was able to arrange an allied force from Parvat and Doti to fight against Jumlā. The Jumli army was decisively defeated in lower Lo at Garab rdzong, near Thini. The Parvat king Malebam Malla's copperplate inscription of 1719 bears a vivid description of this war (Srestha VE 2038: 76). During

---

46 Tshe-dbang was also known by several other names such as Tshe-dbang bsam-grub and Phun-tshogs gtsug-rgyan nor-bu (Jackson 1984: 129-30). An official order of Tshe-dbang lhun-grub issued from Tsarang palace in 1710 (iron-tiger year), indicates that King bSam-'grub dpal-'bar had retired but until that time was actively advising his son from the main palace of Lo in Monthang (MHR doc. 5 Tibetan).

47 The Research Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University has a copy of this inscription. An ink-rubbing copy with its transcription was collected during my fieldwork of 1982.
this war, the kingdom of Doti sent an army of 500 troops under the leadership of Commander-in-Chief Lal Shah, a brother of the Doti king (ibid.). Both Lo/Mustang and Parvat benefited from the outcome of this war because the Jumlis were driven out of lower Lo. The most important centers of north-south trade in lower Lo, including Thak, Thini and Kāgbeni, came under the authority of the Lo/Mustang ruler. Apparently the Jumlis were unable to rebound from this defeat for several years, during which Lo/Mustang was freed from Jumli taxes and levies (MHR doc. Kharal-gyi bems-chag-3).

Although he did not achieve the number of military victories as his father did, Tshe-dbang lhun-grub was an able military leader. At the same time, he worked diligently to please and include the people of lower Lo and, being more open to religious and noble figures of the region, to undermine the Jumli presence in that area. His order of iron-tiger year (1710) issued from Tsarang palace and addressed to a tantric Lama of Chos-khor (now Chengur village, near Muktināth) is an example of such efforts. Tshe-dbang guaranteed special privileges to families of a noble Lama (MHR doc. 5 Tibetan). An old treaty document from Thak also asserts that the people of lower Lo, including thāg-pa and som-po (Thakali and Pānchgāunle) were once under the command of this Lo/Mustang king. According to the local regulation, king tshe-dbang's permission was essential for introducing each and every new and important practice in the Thak and Thini areas (MHR doc. 7 Tibetan). After Lo's defeat of Jurilā in lower Lo, King tshe-dbang again held certain traditional powers in Thak-Pānchgāun and full authority over the rest of the lower Lo region. Lo's supremacy in Thak and Pānchgāun was not an absolute one, but was the outcome of Parvat's willingness to recognize the cultural and traditional rights of the king of Lo/Mustang.

Tshe-dbang lhun-grub ruled Lo/Mustang for only about thirteen years. Upon his father's retirement, he assumed charge of the kingdom around 1710. Ladakhi and Tibetan sources indicate that he retired from government immediately after his son bKra-shis rnam-rgyal's marriage, sometime between 1720 and 1723. The autobiography of Lama Si-tu pan-chen and the writing of Be-lo Tshe-dbang kun-khyab both relate possible dates of Tshe-dbang's retirement and death. According to these sources, on their pilgrimage to Mt. Kailash, Si-tu pan-chen and the eighth Zhva-dmar abbot had visited Lo/Mustang and were welcomed in 1724 by king bKra-shis rnam-rgyal and his retired parents. However, at the time of their return from the Mt. Kailash area, probably after 1725, those two Lamas saw only the Lo/Mustang ruler, bKra-shis rnam-rgyal, his wife (La-dvags-pa or the daughter of the king of Ladakh), and their little daughter (rJe-btsun-ma, an incarnate nun), not the retired previous ruler (Jackson 1984: 143, Petech
1977: 90). It seems that the retired ruler, Tshe-dbang lhun-grub probably died between 1724 and 1725.

Hence, after his marriage in the early 1720s, bKra-shis mam-rgyal succeeded his father. The Glo gdung-rabs presents a list of five sons of Tshe-dbang lhun-grub, among them, bKra-shis mam-rgyal was the eldest. The second was the abbot (Zhab-drung) of Tsarang monastery but his name is not given in the genealogical sources (Jackson 1984: 130). The other three sons, known as Zhur, Chos, and Kha-shes, were presumably illegitimate and this may account for the exclusion of their full names or titles in the Glo gdung-rabs (Jackson 1984: 121-122, 130).

There are a few other sources such as the the account of the palace of Gami (Gad-smad mkhar-gyi dkar-chag), written after 1734, and a literary text written in Sanskrit known as mallādārśa, which shed some light on king bKra-shis nam-rgyal and his time (Gurung 1986: 285, Yogi VE 2022: 545, MHR: 258, 259). The biography of Lama Ka-thog rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang norbu (1695-1755) also provides clues about the dates of bKra-shis nam-rgyal's reign. According to this biography, in the year 1729, king bsTan-'dzin dbang-rgyal, son of bKra-shis mam-rgyal, invited Lama Tshe-dbang to Lo/Mustang (Jackson 1984: 130, 144 n. 80). bKra-shis nam-rgyal probably died sometime between 1727 and 1729, after a short reign of about five to six years.

Although bKra-shis mam-rgyal did not rule for long, his reign was well known not only within Lo/Mustang, but also throughout Tibet. In 1724 and probably again in 1725, he hosted two leading Tibetan scholars, Si-tui panchen and the eighth Zhva-dmar abbot, while they were on their way to and from Kailash-Mānaśarovara (Petech 1977: 90, Jackson 1984: 143). Besides that, bKra-shis nam-rgyal also met with the seventh Dalai Lama in Lhasa (Petech ibid., Jackson 1984 130, 144). The other important historical event widely discussed by the external sources was the matrimonial and political relationship established between the kingdoms of Ladakh and Lo/Mustang. According to the royal chronicle of Ladakh and an official order of the seventh Dalai Lama, bKra-shis nam-rgyal married Nor-dzin bde-legs dbang-mo, the daughter of Ladakhi king, Nyi-ma nam-rgyal. Similarly, bKra-shis nam-rgyal's sister, Nyi-zla dbang-mo, was sent to Ladakh as the royal consort of the Ladakhi Prince bDe-skyong nam-rgyal (son of Nyi-ma

---

48 Petech cautiously suggests that Je-btsun-ma could be the widowed mother of the king of Lo/Mustang. Still, her full name given in the Glo gdung-rabs, indicates she was the daughter of king bKra-shis nam-rgyal and the sister of King bSud-nams bstan-'dzin dbang-rgyal. Similarly, the name La-dvags-pa can refer to none other than the queen of bKra-shis nam-rgyal, the daughter of the Ladakhi king bDe-skyong nam-rgyal.

49 As one leaf (fols. 13a-13b) of Tsarang Molla is missing, the Molla source cannot provide full historical information on this and next two (twelfth and thirteenth) generations. For these, we must rely on the Glo-gdung-rabs and scant other local and external sources.
mam-rgyal). This matrimonial relationship was established by the efforts of Dro-shod ruler, Da'i-cing ba'-dur and Lo/Mustang king’s father, Tshe-dbang (MHR doc. 6 Tibetan, Francke 1972: 120-21, 133, 230). This connection was, indeed, a renewal of the long-time historical relationship between Lo/Mustang and Ladakh.

The other important event of bKra-shis nam-rgyal’s time was the Lo/Jumlí war of 1723, which ended only after eighteen days of continuous fighting at Kāgbeni. As in earlier times, Lo/Mustang, with military help from Ladakh, Parvat, and Gro-shod, once again regained control over the entire Lo/Mustang region (MHR doc. 6 Tibetan, Francke 1972: 120-21, 233-34). According to the royal chronicle of Ladakh and a letter from the seventh Dalai Lama, this war was first fought, and lost, when the Lo/Mustang king and his wife, Nor-'dzin bde-legs dbang-mo, were on their way back home after visiting Ladakh. During this conflict, forty dignitaries from Lo/Mustang, including the retired ruler (father king) were captured and detained by the Jumli army at Kāgbeni) fort (MHR doc. 6 Tibetan, Francke 1926: 230). Although the earlier part of the war was lost to Jumlí, after the arrival of king bKra-shis and about seventy Ladakhi army men under the leadership of general Tshul-khrims rdo-rje, about 100 mounted Mongol soldiers led by the Mongol leader se-da'i-cing ba'-dur from Gro-gshod, and later another 1000 men from Parvat (Gru), the tide turned in the favor of Lo/Mustang. Finally, king Surath Shaha of Jumlí had to come out of the fort and offer a proposal for an agreement. The Jumli king agreed to the terms and conditions previously accepted by his father Prithvipati during the reign of Lo/Mustang king bSam-'grub dpal-'bar. The Jumlis were badly defeated

---

50 Although Lo/Mustang benefited politically from these matrimonial relationships, conjugal happiness did not last long. Within a couple of years, the Lo/Mustang princess and the Ladakhi prince divorced, and after only five or six years of marriage, bKra-shis nam-rgyal died, leaving his Ladakhi princess-bride a widow.

51 A careful treatment should be given here to better identify the two Ladakhi ladies known by similar names and married to Lo/Mustang kings (present and former). Of them, one is addressed on behalf of the Ladakhi king as ’gCes-ma’ (lovely younger sister) Nor-'dzin-bde-legs-dbang-mo and the other as his ipi (grand mother or queen mother) nor-'dzin. I think the latter must be the wife of a former ruler of Lo/Mustang.

52 Gro-shod or Bro-gshod was a small principality in western Tibet located between Gung-thang and Gu-ge. It was under the local rule of a family related to an old Mongol-Tartar general. Local sources of Mustang acknowledge the rulers of Gro-shod as Se-chen or Sog-po (MHR doc. Bems-chung 1. 7a, 2.9b, 3.34b, 35b). In around 1692, a Sog-po chief (of Gro-shod), dGa'-ldan tshe-dbang, is recorded to have arrived in Lo/Mustang with his army to help in its fight against Jumla. Another Mongol ruler of Gro-shod named Phang-byi is recorded to have been a benefactor of Dolpo Lama Chos-skaybs dpal-bzang in around 1590 (Snellgrove 1967: 166). A royal chronicle of Ladakh acknowledges these rulers with the reverent title of sKu-zhogs, whereas the rulers of Tibet address them as Se-chen, or merely as Se (MHR doc. 6 Tibetan). The title Se or Se-chen is directly related to the Tibetan name of the Tartar emperors of China (Das 1902: 1273).

53 The name Bi-sras is an abbreviation of Bira-hadra-gvi-sras, which is translated as son of Virabhadra, who is King Surath Shaha of Jumla.
in this battle, in which an important Jumli commander is reported to have been killed by an arrow shot by general Tshul-khrims rdo-rje of Ladakh (Francke 1972: 230, MHR doc. 6 Tibetan). The mallādāraṇī of Pandit Premnidhi Panta of Parvat corroborates this incident with the glorification of the power of the Parvate king Malebarn, who defeated the Jumli force in Kāgbeni and rescued the king of Lo/Mustang (Yogi VE 2022: 545-547. MHR: 258-59).

Surprisingly, the Tibetan authorities of Lhasa were also alarmed over Jumli occupation of Lo/Mustang. An official announcement by the seventh Dalai Lama, addressed to Tibetan local authorities and Jumli rulers, summarized the story of this war and announced a command to support and protect Lo/Mustang and its rulers (MHR doc. 6 Tibetan). The final outcome of this war was favorable to Lo/Mustang and, by this time, was broadly supported by the major powers in the region, including Parvat, Doti, and Tibet. After the Kāgbeni war of 1723 and for perhaps another decade, Lo/Mustang remained free from Jumli control.

As far as the religion and society is concerned, the royal abbot ( Zhabs-drung) of Tsarang monastery provided ample support to his brother, king bKra-shis mam-rgyal (Jackson 1984: 130). This king's wife, Nor-dzin bde-legs dbang-mo, is also referred to as someone who was highly educated and dedicated to social and religious services in the kingdom (Appendix doc no. 24 Tibetan, RCPT, MHR: 71, Gurung 1986: 235). Innumerable religious objects and structures sponsored by this Ladakhi princess can still be seen in and around the Gami area; some carry inscriptions bearing her name. The longest prayer wall ( Ma-thang ring-ma) at Gami was renovated and expanded by this queen. In this regard, she is also highly praised by the local sources for bringing a very precious crown known as rkym-tshen-mo (??) from Ladakh as a gift from her father (RCTP). During this time, the Princess Su-ga-siddhi (skt. Sukhasiddhi?) of Lo/Mustang (bKra-shis mam-rgyal's younger sister), and another learned nun of Lo/Mustang royal family, bSam-gtan bzang-mo were also involved in building important religious structures such as prayer walls around Gami and the Muktināth area of lower Lo (MHR doc. 101 Tibetan, Jackson 1984: 110, 129, 136 n. 5).

The Glo gdung-rabs reports that king bKra-shis mam-rgyal had two offspring. Of them, the first was his son and successor, bSod-nams bstan-'dzin dbang-rgyal and the second was the incarnate nun Kun-dga' 'chi-med dpal-'dren bzang-mo, or dpal-'dren dbang-mo (Jackson 1984: 122, 130, 200. RCPT). As folio thirteen of the Tsarang Molla is missing, we have to rely on

---

54 मुस्तादभुपतिनव्ग्निकल्लकाकृतिया स्वद्विधारितार्यान्येकपाल जिम्देश्वरेन।
सम्प्रोचायकरणाय स्वचमुखलेन। प्रत्यथविकृत-माहित्यजयास्यम्भर्राजा। (Yogi VE 2022: 545.)

55 The tax record of Lo/Mustang does not list the years between 1725 and 1735 under the account of revenues paid to Jumla (MHR doc. Khral-gyi bems-chag 1-3).
different fragmentary sources in order to collect historical information dealing with the reign of bsTan-'dzin dbang-rgyal.56

Although the exact date of bsTan-'dzin dbang-rgyal's ascension to the throne is unclear, the information given in the biography of Lama Tshe-dbang nor-bu suggests a beginning date for bsTan-'dzin's reign to be either 1728 or 1729 (TsBN: 90a). That Lama Tshe-dbang nor-bu visited Lo/Mustang in 1729, in response to bsTan-'dzin's invitation, suggests that bsTan-'dzin's father may have died around that time (ibid.). We are told by the biographical sources that until Lama Si-tu pan-chen and the eighth Zhvamdmar-pa's return visit to Lo/Mustang from Kailash/Mānāśarovara in c.1725, bKra-shis mam-rgyal was the King of Lo/Mustang. Similarly, the Rin-chen phra-tshom describes that bsTan-'dzin dbang-rgyal was only eleven years old at the time of his father's death and his widowed mother acted as his regent for the following six years (RCTP: 9-10); bsTan-'dzin was probably born in 1718; he was considered able enough to rule by himself only after his marriage at the age of seventeen. The account of Gami claims that by 1735 (wood-tiger year), bsTan-'dzin was ruling capably without his mother's help (appendix- doc. no. 24 Tibetan. Gurung 1986: 235). This document also acknowledges him as the ruler-sponsor of two large projects, the reconstruction of the Gami palace (dGa'-mi-mkhar) and also the construction of a huge prayer-wheel (Ma-ni-'khor-lo) in the same village (ibid.). On the other hand, as a regent of Lo/Mustang, his mother also installed and sponsored various religious sculptures (made of gold and other metals) in Gami and a huge prayer wheel inside the Tsarang palace during the same year (MHR: doc. 15b Tibetan).57 By 1735, therefore, the Regent Queen Nor-'dzin bde-legs dbang-mo must have officially handed over responsibility for the kingdom to her son.58

A letter of Lama Tshe-dbang nor-bu to king bsTan-'dzin dbang-rgyal written in the year 1749 verifies that until that year, bsTan-'dzin was still actively ruling (GRGM: 575). Similarly, Lama bCo-brgyad khri-chen mentions that like his father, this king also died at a young age, when his

56 Helpful sources for the study of Lo/Mustang during the reign of bsTan-'dzin dbang-rgyal include the biography of Lama Ka-thog rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu, the Bems-chag of Princess Kun-dga' chi-med, documents related to the widowed queen Nor-'dzin dbang-mo, the account of Gami palace, Jumli orders from lower Lo, a 1746 agreement document from Thak, Lo/Mustang tax documents, and a biography of Lama bSran-'dzin ras-pa.

57 Until the years of my field work in 1982-83, most of these sculptures were still preserved inside the room called the gSer-khang of the Gami (dGa'-mi) palace.

58 Local sources in Mustang maintain that a personal diary, known as the Phyags-dev chen-mo of the widowed queen, Nor-'dzin dbang-mo, was written in Lo/Mustang during those years but is no longer extant. It is believed that he have discussed the hardships caused by the untimely death of her husband and the continuous invasions of Jumli during the years of her regency and the reign of her son. This information is based on the personal communication between this researcher and the present Raja Jigs-med dpal-bar and Lama bCo-brgyad khri-chen rin-po-che, conducted during the summer of 1982 and the winter of 1983.
son, dBang-rgyal rdo-rje, was only twelve years old (RCTP). bsTan-'dzin probably died sometime around 1750 or a couple of years earlier.

bsTan-'dzin dbang-rgyal's short reign was full of miseries. According to the writing of his sister, Princess 'Chi-med, after their father and grandfather's time, Lo/Mustang was sunken into the proverbial darkness (Jackson 1984: appendix G). The Lo-Jumla war of 1723 had been Lo's last successful attempt to remain temporarily free from Jumla.

Shortly after the death of king bKra-shis mam-rgyal, Jumla recaptured the entire lower Lo region, including the fort at Kāgbenī. Under the leadership of bsTan-'dzin dbang-rgyal, Lo/Mustang continued to resist Jumli dominance, and its demands for yearly tribute and high levies, but without success. Popular folklore in Mustang still recounts the "twenty year conflict" between Lo/Mustang and Jumla and the serious crisis it caused.\(^{59}\) This period of twenty years of continuous struggle against Jumli suzerainty, described as such by the folklorists of lower Lo, could be related to the reign of bsTan-'dzin dbang-rgyal. Oral and written sources tell that during the reign of bsTan-'dzin dbang-rgyal, Jumlā fully annexed the lower Lo region between Gelung (dGe-lung) village in the north and the Kāgbenī area in the south. Subsequently, even the so-called core area of Lo/Mustang, known as Glo tsho-bdun in upper Lo, became a tributary of Jumlā. At the same time, Jumlā also imposed additional levies and compulsory gift giving on Lo/Mustang. In other words, Lo/Mustang lost both its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Contrary to earlier times, Jumli hegemony after 1735 apparently continued until Lo's dependency to Nepal was established in 1788-89. At that time, both the neighboring kingdom of Parvat and the other important old ally of Lo/Mustang, the kingdom of Ladakh, were becoming weaker and were no longer able to lend solid assistance.

The political situation of Lo/Mustang, particularly of the lower Lo region of this time, is well documented by the Jumli sources, written mainly in old Nepali but sometimes in Tibetan (MHR docs. 164-167, 229, 230, 241 Nepali and 2 Tibetan). An old treaty document (mchlng-yig) from Thak written in 1746 is also a most helpful as a source of information about that time. According to this document, in 1746, Lama Ka-thog rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu (1698-1755) mediated the regional dispute between Jumlā and the allied forces of Lo/Mustang and Parvat (MHR doc. 7 Tibetan). It also described the receding position of Parvat and the story of the unpleasant result of a matrimonial relationship established between Jumlā and Parvat. The document describes how king Sudarshan Shaha of Jumlā refused to

\(^{59}\) Such lore was collected by this researcher during field study conducted in the summer of 1983. Similar kinds of oral histories have also been collected by S. Schuler from the Baragaun area of lower Lo and by Omkar Prasad Gauchan from both Thak and Baragāun of lower Lo (Jackson 1978: 220, Gauchan VE 2037: 11-15, 17-19).
return his daughter Nanaju to Parvat, although she was married to Parvat king Shahibam Malla, and Lama Tshe-dbang had to mediate the matter (MHR doc. 7 Tibetan). The dispute was not only caused by the soured marital relationship, but was linked with several lingering political and financial disputes. Parvat finally agreed to give the village of Klu-brag to Jurmla and the Jumli king agreed to send his daughter back to her husband (ibid.).

Despite Parvat’s support, Lo/Mustang was unable to regain its control of lower Lo. Lo/Mustang could not maintain its territorial integrity shrank within the limited area of upper Lo (tsho-bdun) sticking with the name of its capital, Monthang. Then the old name Lo or Lo-bo (Glo or Glo-bo) began to be abandoned.

Most of the disputes with Jurmla in the lower Lo region which occurred during the reign of bsTan-’dzin dbang-rgyal, did not benefit Lo/Mustang. Rather, they served the interests of larger powers in the region. Jurmla and Parvat were fighting for their hold of the bordering territories of Thak and Baragau and also for the control of the north-south trade route, including income from custom centers in lower Lo. This situation continued until the annexation of Parvat by Gorkha into Nepal in 1786. An order by the Jumli crown prince, written in 1785 and addressed to the noble families of lower Lo, claimed that region as an integral part of Jurmla (MHR doc. 241 Nepali). Only after the annexation of Parvat did Jurmla’s suzerainty in the Lo/Mustang region weaken and it ended within a year of Gorkhali occupation in the Kali Gandaki valley. An official letter from a Gorkhali military commander, Amarsingh Thapa dated c. 1786, calls for the formal invitation of the nobles and the commoners of the lower Lo region (known by that time as Baragaun) to join hands with the Gorkhali force and to fight against Jurmla. Surprisingly, this letter does not mention the position of Lo/Mustang and its king (MHR doc. 154 Nepali). However, we can safely conjecture that Lo/Mustang must have at least verbally agreed to join hands with the military authorities of Gorkha-Nepal to fight against Jurmla and to become a dependent of Nepal. The tax record of Lo/Mustang shows that the authorities Lo/Mustang considered the earth-monkey year (1788) as the year of Lo’s inclusion into Gorkha (Nepal). The Jumli suzerainty in Lo/Mustang was, for all purposes, extinguished immediately after the incorporation of lower Lo into Nepal in the year 1787. It officially ended only after Gorkha annexed Jurmla into Nepal in 1789 (MHR doc. Khrals-gyi bems-chag 3, MHR docs. 1-2 Nepali).

Sources on various principalities in Nepal around the time of Gorkha’s military expedition do not mention the name Nepal; instead, they refer to “Gorkha.”
CHAPTER FOUR

LO/MUSTANG UNDER NEPAL (SINCE 1789)
CHAPTER FOUR

LO/MUSTANG UNDER NEPAL (SINCE 1789)

KING (sDE-PA OR RAJA) dBANG-RGYAL RDO-RJE, HIS POLICIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS, AND THE MILITARY CAMPAIGN OF GORKHA (NEPAL)

dBang-rgyal-rdo-rje ruled Lo/Mustang during Gorkha's military campaign of the late eighteenth century. Although the precise span of his reign is not known, dBang-rgyal seems to have ruled for many years. The latest available documents issued under his name are dated 1791 (MHR docs. 2, 45 Nepali) and the earliest available reference to his son bKra-shis snying-po is dated 1799 (MHR doc. 3 Nepali). Therefore, dBang-rgyal rdo-rje must have ruled Lo/Mustang from around 1750 to the late 1790s. A Nepali government order issued from Kathmandu after the death of dBang-rgyal rdo-rje indicates that he ruled Lo/Mustang until he was very old (MHR doc. 5 Nepali). According to the genealogical work of Lama bCo-brgyad khri-chen, after the untimely death of his father, dBang-rgyal rdo-rje had assumed responsibility for the administration of Lo/Mustang when he was only twelve years old. At that time, Jumli pressure in Lo/Mustang was increasing virtually daily. Only six years after his father's death, young dBang-rgyal rdo-rje launched a defensive war against Jumli after a Jumli force led by king Sudarshan Shah and his son, Crown Prince Shubhan Shahi, invaded Lo/Mustang and demanded increased yearly tribute (RCPT). Lama bCo-brgyad's work describes most of dbang-rgyal's reign as a time of relentless Jumli pressure and threats; it was only after the Jumli's incorporation into Nepal that king dBang-rgyal began to enjoy his local power by signing the treaty of dependence with Nepal (MHR doc. Khral-gyi bems-chag 3: 86b, Tsarang Molla: 14a-14b). Lo/Mustang's terms of dependence with Nepal were nominal (Yogi VE 2022: 55, MHR: 81, docs. 2-3), and after Jumli's collapse, Lo/Mustang was able to reclaim its lost territories, including all of lower Lo, Manang, Nar, Nyishang, Phug, Nubri, Rui, Namjar, and Dolpo (ibid.).

1 To its Jumli overlords, the name Lo signified its earlier existence as an independent kingdom. Therefore, they came to call it by the name of its capital, and by the middle of the eighteenth century, Lo was abandoned. Although tradition preserved its use, albeit discreetly, in the core area around Monthling, its indigenous rulers avoided using the old name while dealing with Jumla and Parvat. The Nepali authorities continued to use the name Mustang after the Gorkha annexation of Parvat and Jumla.

2 In 1786, Lo/Mustang had agreed to join Nepal as a dependency pending Jumla's defeat; Lo/Mustang assisted the Nepali forces in this effort. In turn, Nepal later returned to Lo/Mustang some of the captured Jumli areas. This was consistent with the Gorkhali policy of protecting smaller and weaker states who willingly accept dependency.
GENEALOGY OF LO/MUSTANG RAJAS AFTER 1789

14 dBang-rgyal rdo-rje became the first raja of Mustang under Nepal r. 1789 d. 1798

15 (a) A-ham bKra-shis-snying-po phyogs-las mam-par-rgyal-ba'i sde r.c. 1795-1815
(b) sPrul-pa'i sku rDo-rje-'phrin-las (monk, zhabs-drung)
(c) sDe-pa 'Chi-med phan-bde'i snying-po

16 A-ham 'Jam-dpal-dgra-'dul or Theg-mchog-seng-ge r.c. 1816-d. 1837

17 A-ham Kun-dga'-nor-bu r. 1837-c. 1858

18 (a) A-mgon 'Jam-dbyang dbang-dus or Kham-gsum dbang-dus (died in early age) r.c. 1858 d.c. 1863
(b) A-ham dNgos-grub-dpal-'bar or Siddhisrjvala (former monk and zhabs-drung) r.c. 1868 d. 1894
(c) Sa-dbang dBang-rgyal nor-bu

19 (a) A-ham 'Jam-dbyangs-rgyal-mtshan or 'Jam-dbyangs-dpal-'bar r. 1894-c. 1935
(b) sKu-zhabs dBang-rgyal-dpal-'bar (became rebel of his brother's authority)
(c) sKu-zhabs Rab-rgyas-dpal-'bar

20 (a) A-ham bsTan- 'dzin 'jam-dpal dgra-drul r.c. 1935 retire 1955 r. (second time) 1960 d. 1965
(b) 'Jam-dbyangs dbang-dus dpal-'bar

21 (a) A-ham dBang-dus-snying-po (died in his early age while his father was alive) r. 1955 d. 1960
(b) Ngag-dbang- 'jig-med thub-bstan-rgya-mtsho (former monk and zhabs-drung), d. 2000
(c) A-ham 'Jig-med dpal-'bar or 'Jig-med rdo-rje dgra- drul (present raja) r. 1965

Legends
c. = approximate
b. = birth
d. = death
k. = king (enthronement)
r. = raja (enthronement)
com. = commissioner

22 Rgyal-sras 'Jig-med-seng-ge-dpal-'bar Traditionally recognized as Rgyal-chung (jr. raja)
Because of Jumli hegemony, Lo's prosperity, both economic and cultural, had ended by the 1730s. At that time, even Lo's close and powerful allies, Parvat and Ladakh, could no longer challenge Jumli forces as they had earlier. Thus Jumli hegemony throughout the region went unchallenged, and Lo/Mustang was engulfed politically and became economically stagnant. Jumli established permanent regional headquarters in Kāgbeni from where its officials controlled the territory between Gelung (dGe-lung) and Thini-Pānchgāun. Major trade and customs centers in lower Lo were also lost to Jumli, and before 1789 only the upper Lo's traditional seven districts (Glotsho-bdun) region remained as the domain of the Lo/Mustang's king. Earlier in the 1720s, it also became a tributary or vassal state of Jumli and by the mid-1700s had lost its status as a kingdom, along with its original name.

Lo/Mustang's economy was systematically devastated by Jumli domination. Lo/Mustang not only lost its yearly income from northern Dolpo and Manāng, but the Jumlis had captured the entire lower Lo region, imposing a heavy yearly tribute obligation on Lo/Mustang itself. Jumli also imposed various yearly and occasional levies and fees (salānī). Lo/Mustang's internal and external trade virtually disappeared, and its regular income from external tribute and customs duties was lost. The biography of Lama bSod-nams blo-gros shows that Lo/Mustang also suffered from shortages of food and essential goods, and that Jumli officials frequently abused Lopa traders at the customs centers in lower Lo, through extortion, beatings, and imprisonment (Snellgrove 1967a: 91, MHR docs. 2, 4, 7, 14 Tibetan). In short, by the late 1720s or early 1730s, Lo/Mustang was plunged into a state of genuine alarm and misery (Bems-chag of princess 'Chi-med, Jackson 1984: 129-130, 200).

As a result, both the rulers and people of Lo/Mustang began seeking alternatives to Jumli's hegemony. Lo/Mustang finally accomplished its goal after formal talks with the rising power of Gorkha immediately after Parvat's incorporation into Nepal in 1786 (MHR: 75 and doc. 1, Nepali). The kingdom of Lo/Mustang pledged to become a dependent tributary of Nepal.

King Prithvinarayana Shah of Gorkha had led the foundation of Gorkha's military campaign (1754-1769) for territorial expansion. This campaign was strengthened and extended later by his son, Regent Bahadur Shah (Vajracarya 1992: 61-76). In order to complete his father's task, Bahadur Shah adopted a new "policy of dependence" in western Nepal, under which many smaller principalities of western Nepal were brought under the leadership of Gorkha, which then collectivized their forces to subdue relatively stronger and larger powers such as Jumli, Parvat, and Doti. Gorkhali forces were then able to expand the territory of Nepal up to the

---

1 The name of its capital "sMon-thang", "sMan-thang" or "Mos-thang" entered into wide use under its corrupt forms, Mustang, Mustang or Mustang, and came to represent all of its territory.
Bheri river to the west by the year 1786 (Yogi VE 2022: 55). To reach this river valley, Gorkhalis traversed the Gaṇḍakī valley, having defeated the kingdom of Parvat earlier that year.

Parvat had been one of Mustang's oldest allies and at the same time the most powerful of Jumlā's enemies. Although the southern Thak-Pānchgaun areas of Lo/Mustang had been seized by Parvat around 1687, the Jumli aggression and dominance in lower Lo (present-day Kagbenī and Bāragaun) had produced a compelling alliance between Parvat and Lo/Mustang. Jumlā's expansionism also challenged Parvat's territorial integrity as Jumlā laid claim to the northern districts of Thak and Thini, resulting in two wars fought between 1718 and 1723. By the early 1740s, Parvat was weaker than Jumlā. Parvat was not able to challenge the Jumli aggression and provide strong support to Lo/Mustang as it did in earlier times.

Lo/Mustang was very likely pleased by the emergence of the Gorkhali power to its south, as it was positioned to challenge, Jumlā vigorously. In fact, Lo/Mustang was seeking a new powerful ally in the region, and Gorkha, in turn, was seeking dependent allies who would augment its assaults against the Jumli forces.

After the Gorkhali defeat of Parvat in 1786, the Thak, Thini (Pānchgaun), and Lubrag areas reverted to Gorkhali control. For Gorkhali commanders, the other formidable power in the region was Jumlā. In order to gain Jumlā's cooperation, the Gorkha military authorities courted the attention of the local Khri-thog-pa chiefs of the lower Lo region. These Khri-thog-pa chiefs were also known as "Biṣṭa", a Hindu family name adopted by them. In earlier days, those local chiefs of dzar village used to live in sKye-skya-sgang, near Monthang and at that time, they were the ministers of the rulers of Lo/Mustang. Later, because of an internal dispute, this Khri-thog-pa family moved to dzar (present name Jharkot), near Muktināth and settled there. Again, after the improvement in relationship between the Lo/Mustang palace and this noble family, the Khri-thog-pas were appointed as regional governors of lower Lo. After Jumlis gained control in lower Lo, however, they aligned themselves with Jumlā and were thereafter known in Lo/Mustang as "enemy hosts" (Tsarang Molla: 11b). After Parvat's 1786 incorporation into Nepal, one of the Gorkhali commanders, Shivanarayan Khatri, reached an agreement with these Khri-thog-pa chiefs of lower Lo, and by the end of 1787, they were able to establish direct contacts with the royal palace in Kathmandu (MHR doc. 186 Nepali). In order to further

---

2 Largely because of its interest in the trade conducted through Lo/Mustang, Parvat had cultivated cordial relations with it.

3 Those local chiefs were known by their ancestors' title and name, Khri-thog-pa and Khro-bo dpal-mgon. The reference cited here is a rukka order issued from Kathmandu in Magh 14, 1844 VE (January 1888). The order acknowledges that the Khri-thog-pa Khro-bo dpal-mgon's sister had arrived in Kathmandu with a letter describing the political situation in
ingratiate themselves with the palace, they even assigned their young sisters as their messengers (MHR doc. 186 Nepali). Ultimately, the Khri-thog-pa chiefs were welcomed graciously into the Gorkhali fold and assured of the continuation of their traditional privileges, property, and prestige; and in return, they agreed to bear responsibility for leading the local force of lower Lo assigned to fight against Jumli, providing staples such as manpower and food (ibid.).

The Gorkhali commanders, meanwhile, were adhering to a set strategy. About a year after reaching agreement with these Khri-thog-pa chiefs, the Gorkha army's commander-in-chief in the west, Sardar Amarsingh Thapa, addressed a letter to the chiefs and the people of lower Lo (including Dolpo and the middle region (Tsho-bar), urging them to join the Gorkhali forces against Jumli. In this letter, Amarsingh Thapa assured lives of peace and stability for the people of the Thak, Pānchgāūn, and Bāragāūn areas, to be guaranteed by the Gorkhali forces, if they cast their lot with the Gorkhali power. The letter then called for their surrender on pain of military occupation. Furthermore, the people should accept the local leadership of the Khri-thog-pa chiefs of Bāragāūn and prepare to attack Jumli. Consistent with classic Gorkhali tactics, Sardar Amarsingh added that they faced violent destruction if they rejected this call (ibid.).

At about this time, Gorkhali commanders also contacted Gelung's local ruler (dGe-lung sde-pa) and secured Gelung's cooperation. A different letter issued only twenty days after that of Amarsingh announced that an agreement between the Gelung sde-pa and the Gorkhali commanders had already been reached and that the ruler of Gelung and his people were already enjoying special privileges guaranteed by the Gorkhali officials. These included the waiver of customs duties on their goods while traversing the lower hill areas and Kathmandu (MHR doc. 123). That the Gorkhali officials were able to entice, or coerce, the people of Thak, Pānchgāūn, Bāragāūn, northern Dolpo, and Gelung to their side by the end of 1786 shows the Jumli rule in lower Lo had been challenged by that time. Jumli authorities still controlled the lower Lo region between Gelung and Lubrak until 1785 (MHR doc. 241 Nepali).

---

4 Often these girls would reside at the palace in Kathmandu as official guests for extended periods; their role was likely that of courtesans, or at the very least something of that nature.

5 The villages addressed in Sardar Amarsingh Thapa's letter include Lagumkhola, Cyanam, Lakheyu, Tungyan, Tsharka, Samar, Gelung, and others in the Dolpo and Tsho-bar areas.

6 Gelung is a village in upper Lo/Mustang, locally governed by cousins of Lo/Mustang rulers. For further geographical information on Gelung, please see the "Physical Setting" section of chapter one.
By 1786, only the core domain (Glo-tsho-bdun) of the Lo/Mustang rulers, in the northern frontier region of Lo/Mustang, had yet to be brought under Gorkhali control. Mustang's tax records show that the yearly and occasional taxes, levies, and fees paid to Jumlā were eliminated by that year. This sudden freedom from Jumli taxation suggests that Lo/Mustang must have at the very least reached an oral agreement with the Gorkhali commanders pledging their cooperation. This occurred immediately after Parvat's incorporation into Nepal.

The main center of Jumli's strength in Lo/Mustang was in its southern region and the local Khri-thog-pa chiefs were the instruments of its power. Once they had joined hands with the Gorkhali commanders immediately after the defeat of Parvat, Jumlā lost any chance of maintaining its hold on northern Lo/Mustang. A tax record of Lo/Mustang cites 1788 as the year of Lo's incorporation into Gorkha-Nepal; this neatly follows the incorporation of Parvat in 1786 and precedes the Gorkhali defeat of Jumli in October 1789 (MHR Bems-chag 3: 86b). Another rukkā order issued from Nuwakot in VE Phalgun 1845 (March 1789) also indicates that Lo/Mustang was cooperating with the Gorkhalis even before Jumlā's incorporation. This rukkā order of the Gorkhali king reinstates and affirms the Lo/Mustang ruler's traditional rights or privileges to collect yearly taxes and fees (salānis) from Ruibhot, from the Namjar area of upper Gorkha, and from the Manāṅg areas in the east which were previously lost to Jumlā (MHR doc. 1 Nepali).

It becomes clear, then, that Lo/Mustang's king dBang-rgyal rdo-rje was in contact with the Gorkhali authorities and worked to bring the territories of Lo/Mustang back under his hereditary control. On the other hand, Gorkha's main intention was to incorporate the kingdom of Jumli by persuading the local Khri-thog-pa chiefs of lower Lo, Dolpo, and the king of Lo/Mustang to ally themselves with Gorkha. After their decisive defeat of Jumli in October of 1789, the Gorkhali commanders Kāji Shivanarayan Khatri and Prabal Rana issued an order from the capital of Jumli (Chinasim), addressed to the rājā dBang-rgyal rdo-rje of Lo/Mustang, declaring the return of the entire territory of northern Dolpo bordering east from a place called Bandarphadka (Yogi VE 2022: 55). About eight months after the incorporation of Jumlā, king Ranabahadur Shah of Nepal formally approved the rights and privileges provisionally offered to the rulers (rājās) of Lo/Mustang by the army commanders of Gorkha, issuing a khalipha-patra and a tamra-patra (MHR docs. 1a, 81 Nepali). With zeal, dBang-rgyal rdo-rje and his subjects joined the Gorkhali army's invasion of Jumlā; having done so, this rājā was able to retain Mustang's existence as a dependent state with greater freedoms and

---

7 A khalipha-patra is a sealed order written on a piece of cloth; a tamra-patra is an order inscribed on a copper plate.
local authority than when it had faced incessant pressures from its powerful neighbor.

Hence, the policy adopted by Gorkhali authorities and the strategies of the Lo/Mustang ruler are noteworthy. If dBang-rgyal rdo-rje had not accepted Gorkha's command, the very existence of Lo/Mustang, even as a tributary state, would have been jeopardized. For dBang-rgyal rdo-rje and his ministers, accepting Gorkha authority was a pragmatic choice and even a welcome opportunity; for there was virtually no prospect of recovering the vibrancy of old independent Lo/Mustang.

Although Lo/Mustang was culturally very close to Tibet, it had traditionally been its nominal tributary state, paying a modest amount annually to Gorkha-Nepal as a token of respect. Lhasa, however, chose to support Jumla during Gorkha-Jumla war 1789 and it wanted Lo/Mustang not to join the Gorkhali force. Relations between Tibet and Nepal had soured by that time for several reasons, including some trade disputes and a scandal in the 1760s over adulterated silver coins (Nag-tang) issued earlier for Tibet by the former Malla rulers of the Kathmandu valley. Even the Ambans (Chinese advisors and supervisors in Tibet) resented Nepal, probably over the coin fiasco (Stiller 1973: 192-200).

The harshness of the Gorkhali conquest and occupation of Jumla exacerbated Tibet's resentment of Nepal, and Tibetan authorities granted asylum to Jumla's defeated king, Shuvan Sahi. Despite vast cultural differences, political realities made Lo/Mustang's decision to side with Gorkha a practical and tactful one. dBang-rgyal rdo-rje knew that Lhasa would not protect Lo/Mustang, which it considered a distant area that had often ignored Lhasa's directives. Jumli pressure had also fragmented and weakened his state. At the same time, dBang-rgyal rdo-rje could not fail to note Gorkha's rising power and position in the Himalayan region.

---

8 An 1724 order of the Dalai Lama mentions that in earlier times Lo/Mustang used to pay a yearly tribute of seventy silver tanka (Rs. 70) to Tibet but this amount was increased later by an additional fifty tanka (Rs. 50) totaling an amount of 120 tanka (Rs. 120) annually (MHR doc. 6 Tibetan). But by 1789, Lo/Mustang was apparently paying only 71 tanka a year (MHR doc. 1a Nepali). In Nepali official documents, this amount is called a "simple tribute" (sadharana srito). The main tribute to be paid to Nepal, as in earlier times to Jumla, was also minimal: Rs. 929 and five fine-quality horses yearly (MHR doc. 1a).

9 Räjä dBang-rgyal rdo-rje was instrumental to Nepal during the Nepal-Tibet-China war of 1788-1792. At its onset, he led his Lo/Mustangi force as adjuncts to the Nepali (Gorkha) force, but later helped mediate a settlement between Nepal and the China-Tibet alliance. For his mediation, he was later recognized by the emperor of China and the King of Nepal (Tsarang Molla: 14a-14b, MHR docs. 18-19 Nepali, RCPT). An old tantric neck wear, believed to be protective in wartime and worn by dBang-rgyal rdo-rje during that war, is still reverently preserved in the palace of Lo/Mustang, along with a precious plumed and gold-embossed crown bestowed by the Emperor of China, along with a crest ornament after the war. The current Räjä of Lo/Mustang still wears these crowns during the colorful and energetic three-day-long Tiji and Yar-tong festivals, held annually. This crown, as well as the
As mentioned earlier, prosperity returned to Lo/Mustang palace after the defeat of Jumilä and Lo's dependence to Nepal. The local chronicles of Lo/Mustang note dBang-rgyal-rdo-rje's contributions to the land, mainly through the return of territory and customs revenue. (Tsarang Molla: 14a-14b, RCPT). He was also praised for his religious and cultural reforms, arranging for example, esteemed Lamas to resettle and work there (ibid.). Lo/Mustang also enjoyed the recovery of annual tribute and occasional fees collected from Thak and Panchgäun to its south, Nar, Nyishang, Manäng, Phug, Ruiibhot, and Nubri to the east, and many parts of Dolpo (including Lagum, Bharbung (Bhar-rong), Tsharka, Tarab, Cyanam, Lakhcyo, and Tungyan). The trade and customs centers of lower Lo at Kāgbenī and Thak were also returned (MHR doc. 1a). These revenues brought some prosperity in Lo/Mustang palace, and also enabled king dBang-rgyal rdo-rje to renovate monasteries and other religious monuments (Tsarang Molla: 14b). 10

King dBang-rgyal-rdo-rje's social and religious patronage was not limited to his own domain. He personally made pilgrimages as far as the Kathmandu valley (bal-yul) and to the central and western (Kailāśa-Mānasārovara) regions of Tibet. He sponsored the golden pinnacle atop the temple of Chos-skui'i mchod-sdong rin-po-che in the monastic center at Mānasārovara (mTsho ma-pham), and donated an enormous, very costly leather boat in which to ferry Buddhist pilgrims across the river Tsang-po near the place called Ye-ru (Tsarang Molla: 14a-b, RCTP).

Indeed, dBang-rgyal rdo-rje is acknowledged as one of the singular reformers in Lo/Mustang. He is widely credited with reforming older regulations and introducing new, more appropriate ones, according to the demands of the times (MHR doc. 22 Tibetan). Under one new regulation, Lo/Mustang's lay people had to provide the food and other necessities to their respective monastic communities, while monks were restricted from entering households or engaging in other worldly activities. Instead, they were required to provide educational and spiritual guidance (RCTP). Rāja dBang-rgyal rdo-rje was also the first Lo/Mustang ruler to offer land grants and other alternative sources of income to every monastic center in the kingdom, while at the same time issuing more stringent regulations to those

one presented by the King of Nepal, are now collectively known in Mustang as rTog-gsum (RCTP and information provided by the current Rāja of Lo/Mustang).

10 As in earlier days, Buddhist scholars of Tibet such as rNying-ma Lama rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu, and Sa-skya pan-chen Kun-dga' blo-gros and his son were invited to Mustang by dBang-rgyal rdo-rje. This king founded two important Buddhist temples at Lo Gekar known as bSam-'grub lha-khang and dBang-'dus lha-khang and several other monastic centers at Khyung-tshang, bSam-gtan chos-gling, and bSam-'grub-gling. He also sponsored the construction of the large Byi-ba mchod-rten in Monthang and a palace called 'Bam-mkhar located between the villages of Phuwa (Phug-phag) and Kimaling (RCTP, Tsarang Molla: 14a-b).
monasteries related to hours of study, chores, private trading by monks, and the like (MHR docs. 103, 104, Tibetan).

This period of dBang-rgyal rdo-rje's rule marked the first in which Lo/Mustang and its ruler were acknowledged widely in Nepali, Tibetan, and European sources. Of course, Lo/Mustang's dependency to Nepal and Nepal's relationship with British India and its military engagements against Tibet and China provided a strong impetus for increased cosmopolitan attention (Kirkpatrick 1811: 105).

Lo/Mustang was one of the three kinds of dependent states under Nepal: tax and levies exempted (sarvāngamārā rajya), states such as Salyan and Bajhang, simple tributary states (sirtobujhaunyā rājya) such as Mustang, and the states under annual contract (ijārā or ṭhekkāmā calekā rājya). Even though Lo lost its old name and independent status, the people of Lo/Mustang under dBang-rgyal rdo-rje enjoyed a novel sense of peace and security after a hectic and disturbed century. Although Lo/Mustang became a dependent state of Nepal with a new official name, Mustang, its terrain and physical distance from Kathmandu assured that for all practical purposes, the Nepali state did not or could not pressure Lo/Mustang unduly. For about twenty or thirty years, excepting the yearly tribute of Rs. 929 and five horses, Lo/Mustang enjoyed freedom from other obligations. The main responsibility of the ṭrājā of Lo/Mustang was to apply Mustang's full military strength against Nepal's enemies whenever needed, particularly in the northern region (MHR docs. 1a-3 Nepali). Similarly, the ṭrājās of Lo/Mustang were charged with defending the northern borders, and they did adhere strictly to the terms and conditions of the treaty of dependence. In two major wars, pitting Nepal against a combined Chinese and Tibetan force (1788-90) and a later one between Nepal and Tibet (1855), Lo/Mustang either mediated successfully, or served on Nepal's behalf (MHR doc. 18, 19 Nepali, Tsarang Molla 14b). In order to assist Nepal militarily, in the late 1780s the ṭrājā of Lo/Mustang ordered his people to provide compulsory military service. A Mustangi tax record describes the system of collecting cash (silver coins) and goods from those households, which could not contribute manpower during war-time (MHR Bems-chag 3). For such duties as border defense, the ṭrājās of Lo/Mustang were awarded honorary military titles by the kings of Nepal.

We have mentioned that Lo/Mustang paid a nominal amount of traditional yearly tribute of 70 to 120 silver Rs. (tanka) to Tibet. At the time of the Gorkha-Lo/Mustang dependency agreement, this traditional tribute was fixed at seventy-one silver tanka per year. In 1789, when relations were fairly cordial between Nepal and Tibet, the central authorities of Nepal urged

---

11 The Nepali text of the letter says: उत्तरमा र कै काज चल्नाको घरी जिउ धन समेत लगाई मुस्ताको आफ्नो दलबल खजाना नेपाली फौजसेग सामेल गराउनु... (MHR doc. 1a Nepali).
the rājā of Lo/Mustang to pay that nominal tribute and other traditional fees to Tibet. Still, at the same time, they warned the rājā of Lo/Mustang not to allow Tibetan officials to visit Lo/Mustang for collection (MHR doc. 45 Nepali). Mustang's main responsibility as a dependent state, therefore, was to manage problems along its northern border and to provide Nepal with its full manpower there if and when necessary.

Despite its military commitment to Nepal, Lo/Mustang revelled in its new-found freedom from crippling taxes, levies, and fees. The yearly tribute to Jumlā of Rs. 929 and five horses was a fixed one; in practice however, Jumlā had freely imposed additional levies and occasional fees. Jumli authorities, including kings and members of the royal family, had paid frequent ceremonial visits to Lo/Mustang, further draining Lo's coffers. By about the 1720s or early 1730s Jumlā had also captured almost seventy per cent of Lo/Mustang's main and tributary territory, including all of lower Lo's trade and customs centers. Thus, to provide only Rs. 929 and five horses a year to Nepal and enjoy virtually full authority over areas once mastered by his early ancestors was a great gain for the Mustangi rājā.

STATE OF LO/MUSTANG UNDER THE LOCAL LEADERSHIP OF THE RAJAS AFTER DBANG-RGYAL RDO-RJE (SINCE C. 1795)

Unlike most of the other dependent states of Nepal, Mustang's physical conditions—its temperature extremes, high winds, and lack of natural wealth—as well as its remote trans-Himalayan location, have enabled it to maintain

---

12 At the time of the Nepal-Tibet-China war, Nepal's government advised the rājā of Lo/Mustang to stop paying this nominal tribute to Tibet. The practice was revived after the 1790 agreement between Nepal and Tibet, and ended again after the Nepal-Tibet war of 1855.

13 Beginning in 1824, the tribute of Rs. 929 was reduced to Rs. 898, in compensation for Lo/Mustang's loss of yearly income from the levies and fees collected earlier from the monks of Bhutanese monasteries at Chodzong (chos-rdzong) and Namazhung (sNa-ma zhung) in Mustang. These had been waived by the government of Nepal as a token of friendship to the Dharmā Lama (Chos-bla-ma) of Bhutan (MHR doc. 11 Nepali, Dhungel 1989: 179). About twenty-three years later, the government of Nepal also reduced Lo/Mustang's horse liability from five to two, to compensate for distribution of state lands to high-ranking government officials under birtā (untaxed lands in lieu of salary) and khuvā (freedom from taxation). An order from Kathmandu palace issued in VE 1900 (1843) shows that Rs. 896 and five horses were still being collected from Lo/Mustang. An order from Prime Minister Janga Bahadur dated VE 1916 (1819) states that Lo/Mustang's yearly tribute to Nepal was Rs. 896 and now only three horses. This document also reports that because the eastern districts of Nar, Nyishang, Manāng, Nubri had been brought under the jurisdiction of Kaski and Lamjung districts, and taken away from Lo/Mustang, one more horse was eliminated from the total bill (MHR: 89). From this point on and until 1870s, Mustang paid Rs. 896 and two horses annually to Nepal (MHR doc. 84 Nepali). This arrangement ended after the establishment of the Thak-Dan Customs Office under the authority of the bhansārī subbās. All of lower Lo, and the adjacent areas of Kabāragāun and Thak-Pāngchāun, were placed under the authority of the chief subbā of the Thak-Dan Customs Office.
its traditional culture and practices. In terms of local administration, the rājās have remained powerful and have always issued their own orders as if they were independent rulers. Lo/Mustang's local chronicles and other literary sources since 1789 often acknowledge them as the Chos-rgyal (Dharmarājā) of Lo/Mustang. This old local tradition is strong even today. People of upper Lo believe that the rājā of Lo/Mustang is the true, actual ruler of their land and that the king of Nepal rules the people of the lowlands (rong). This constancy, or consistency, warrants a study of the Mustangi rājās after dBang-rgyal rdo-rje.

**RAJA BKRA-SHIS NYING-PO (REIGNED C.1795–C. 1815)**

bKra-shis snying-po was rājā dBang-rgyal rdo-rje's the eldest son and successor (Tsarang Molla: 14b). He must have succeeded his father some time between 1792 and 1797 and retired around 1815 or 1816 (MHR docs. 7-8 Nepali, doc. 8 Tibetan). Documents dated after 1817 acknowledge him as an advisor to his own son, who began to rule in about 1716 (MHR doc. 53 Nepali).

During the early years of bKra-shis snying-po's reign, Lo/Mustang was still relishing its recovered freedoms and prosperity after accepting dependency to Nepal. But later, the Khri-thog-pa chiefs of lower Lo began to challenge this ruler's power, after establishing closer contact with the central authorities in Kathmandu. Lama bCo-brgyad khril-chen reported that rājā bKra-shis snying-po was famed not in his own right but simply through his father's prestige (RCPT). By the time bKra-shis snying-po retired, his domain consisted only of the upper Lo (Lo-tsho-dun) area (Tsarang Molla 14b), and even internal criminal matters were escaping the rājā's personal adjudication and being reported to Kathmandu.

Even the Lo/Mustang palace was troubled once by a serious murder case that occurred in Monthang (RCPT). Although details are sketchy, the case involved a woman, probably from Mustang's royal family and certainly of questionable reputation, who later married a former monk (Gra-log). This

---

14 In local dialects, the rājā of Lo/Mustang is called Glo rgyal-po. To acknowledge the raja of Lo/Mustang as their ruler, the Lo-pa people call him Nga-tsha-gyi rgyal-po (our king). They call the king of Nepal Rong-gyi rgyal-po-che (the great king of the people of lowlands). This data is based mainly on personal discussions with Lo-pa traders and herders.

15 His two brothers were Lama rDo-rje'phrin-las and 'Ch'i-med phan-bde'i snying-po (Jackson 1984: 122). Although the Glo gdung-rabs places Lama rDo-rje'phrin-las in third position and 'Ch'i-med in the second, an official order (lālmohar) of King Girvanayuddha (of Nepal) dated VE 1865 (1808) confirms that the third lay son—probably 'Ch'i-med phan-bde'i snying-po, was born when dBang-rgyal rdo-rje was quite old (MHR doc. 5 Nepali). The Mollas of Namgyal and Monthang mention only two sons of dBang-rgyal rdo-rje. The so-called second son of dBang-rgyal, also named 'Jam-dpal rdo-rje and described by these sources, must have been the son of bKra-shis snying-po, not his brother (MHR docs. 28, 30 Tibetan).
woman or her relatives have apparently murdered the former monk. The case could have been settled quickly under the traditional jurisdiction of the rājā himself, but apparently Lo's old antagonists, the Khri-thog-pa chiefs of lower Lo (Bāragāun), learned of the case and reported it to Kathmandu. The case ultimately became very costly for the rājā of Lo/Mustang and strategically very beneficial for the Khri-thog-pa chiefs. Lama bCo-brgyad khri-chen also describes this as the event, which destroyed the financial strength of the palace of Lo/Mustang (RCPT). bKra-shis snying-po's rule is not remembered as a distinguished one, or even a successful one.

RAJA 'JAM-DPAL DGRA-DUL (REIGNED c. 1816-1837)

bKra-shis snying-po was succeeded by his son 'Jam-dpal dgra-dul, probably in 1816. He was also known by another name, Theg-mchog sengge (RCPT: 13-14). As his reign is better-documented than his father's, by his own orders and the orders and letters issued from Kathmandu, it probably boasted more successes. He was the first of Lo/Mustang rājā to ask for a special passport from the king of Nepal for trade and transit privileges with Tibet (MHR docs. 23-24, Panta and Pierce 1989: 77-79). He ruled Lo/Mustang for about twenty or twenty-one years. (MHR doc.: 59 Nepali).

'Jam-dpal's highly educated wife, rāni (rGyal-mo) Pad-ma bu-khrid, who came from a prominent Tibetan family, assisted him in day-to-day administration. Records show that she visited Kathmandu several times in order to solve local problems (MHR doc. 15, 57, 59). After her husband's death, she acted as regent for her son, Kun-dga' nor-bu. Because of her exceptional educational background, rāni Pad-ma bu-khrid's influence in Lo/Mustang's administration often exceeded that of her husband. Local orders from her husband often bear her name, as if she were a joint ruler--not a common practice in Lo's patrilineal tradition.

Still, 'Jam-dpal dgra-dul himself has been credited with great wisdom, intelligence, and righteousness (Tsarang Molla 14b). He ordered the renovation of Lo/Mustang's most important temples and monasteries, including Byams-pa and Thub-chen (RCPT: 13-15), and ordered a merger of the old Brag-dkar theg-chen gling monastery with the newer sMon-thang chos-sde monastery in Monthang township (RCPT: 14). He also invited religious figures from Tibet to give him religious instruction, although his formal, and primary, spiritual preceptor remained Lama Chos-kyi-nyi-ma of bSam-'grub-gling monastery (Tsarang Molla 14b, RCPT: 13-14). 'Jam-dpal sometimes even meditated inside remote caves (RCPT).

---

16 Rāni Pad-ma bu-khrid was born into the family of the rNying-ma-pa master Rig-'dzin rGod-kyi ldem-khru-can in the monastic residence (Bla-brang) of gTsang-phu stod at gZhis-ka rtse (RCPT: 13-14). The Nying-ma-pa order permitted monks to marry.

17 Ruins of this monastic center can still be seen in a place called Brag-dkar, which is located across the stream running past Monthang township.
At the petition of rājā-Jam-dpal and his politically talented wife, the king of Nepal established a tradition of granting an audience to the rājās and Rānis of Lo/Mustang every two years in Kathmandu, enhancing Lo/Mustang's recognition and prestige in the region (ibid.). The rājā was even granted additional powers in imposing and collecting local levies, fees, and taxes in lower Lo and the surrounding areas of Dolpo, Manāng, Nar, Nyishang, and Nubri (Panta and Pierce 1989: 49), and to issue official orders even in the long-estranged lower Lo region (MHR doc. 10 Tibetan). Consequently, collections from these southern areas subsidized improvements in monasteries and other cultural edifices, and cultural and religious activities proliferated, but only in the north. Lama bCo-brgyad khri-chen also claims that 'Jam-dpal dgra-'dul had assigned several scribes to write a book about activities in Lo/Mustang during his time, and to record his ideas about governance. The Lama claims that rājā 'Jam-dpal's prime intention in producing such a book was to guide his son and grand-sons during their reigns (RCPT: 14).

**RAJA KUN-DGA' NOR-BU (REIGNED 1837–C. 1858)**

After rājā 'Jam-dpal dgra-'dul's untimely death in 1837, his only son Kun-dga' nor-bu succeeded him (MHR doc. 59). Only fragmentary information of his childhood can be obtained from the *Molla* source. Nonetheless, Nepali foreign ministry archives and the genealogy compiled by Lama bCo-brgyad khri-chen record events in Lo/Mustang during his reign.

The *Tsarang Molla*’s concluding sentences describe the young Kun-dga' nor-bu as the junior rājā or crown-prince of Lo/Mustang, and say that he mastered two important meditations of Mahayana Buddhism, bsKye-rim and rDzogs-rim at a very young age. Because of his righteous character and kindheartedness, he was also compared with a Bodhisattva therein (*Tsarang Molla*: 15a). Until his maturity, Kun-dga' nor-bu's astute and formidable mother and regent nurtured and instructed him. Official orders issued from Kathmandu after 1857 are addressed to both rājā Kun-dga' nor-bu and his mother, Pad-ma bu-khrid. Like his father, Kun-dga' nor-bu also married a woman from a renowned Tibetan monastic family whose name was bKra-shis bu-khrid (MHR doc. 71 Nepali).

It was during Kun-dga' nor-bu's time that Nepal experienced a violent political turmoil in Kathmandu which established the strong family rule of the Ranas in 1847. This cataclysmic alteration in Nepali court politics directly affected the local administration of the entire nation, including all dependent principalities. Lo/Mustang faced serious difficulties in adjusting

---

18 *The Tsarang Molla* had ceased to provide thorough and reliable accounts during the reign of this raja's father. This was probably a result of the political Nepalization of the area, earlier, it was an important state document, commissioned by the rājā.
to the changes. Although Mustang's relationship with the center was sound during Pad-ma bu-khrid's regency, Kun-dga' nor-bu could not maintain direct relations, even though his traditional privileges and rights as the Lo/Mustangi ruler were extended during his mother's lifetime, which lasted at least until 1857 (MHR doc. 18 Nepali, Panta and Pierce 1985: 83). The Khri-thog-pa family (local rulers of lower Lo)\(^{19}\) of 'Dzar and the Thakali subbâs of Thak (Thakali traders who were appointed by the government of Nepal to the position of chief administrator and contractor of the Thak-Dâñ Customs Office) were more astute in this respect, and this eventually eroded the prestige and position of the râjâ of Lo/Mustang. In 1855, Nepal was engaged in a war with Tibet, and Lo/Mustang joined with the srivarakha battalion of the Nepali army led by Captain Amarsingh Rana to attack Tibet from the direction of rDzong-dkar (Jhunga in Nepali) in Gung-thang (MHR doc. 18-19 Nepali). Kun-dga' nor-bu personally led the Lo/Mustangi forces on behalf of Nepal.\(^{20}\) As the sources containing his son's name begin from 1859 (VE 1916), Kun-dga' nor-bu apparently died around 1858 (MHR docs. 20, 71 Nepali).

RAJA 'JAM-DBYANGS DBANG-DUS (REIGN C. 1858-C. 1853) AND RAJA DNOS-GRUB DPAL-'BAR (REIGNED C. 1868-1894)

Râjâ Kun-dga'-nor-bu had three recorded and legitimate sons. Among them, his successor was 'Jam-dbyangs dbang-dus, also known as Khamsgum dbang-dus (MHR doc. 20 Nepali). 'Jam-dbyangs dbang-dus must have succeeded his father at some point between 1857 and 1859 (MHR docs. 20, 71 Nepali) but then died at a young age without legitimate male offspring to succeed him.

The prestige and power of the Mustangi râjâs declined dramatically during the reigns of 'Jam-dbyangs dbang-dus (c. 1858-1863) and his brother and official successor, dNgos-grub-dpal-'bar (c. 1868-1894). In turn, these brothers were dogged by the Thakali traders of Thak, who had gained additional power through their relations with the Ranas. Usually, government officials took the ready advice of the Thakali subbâs, who, reputedly, affected shameless flattery and a false servility toward them. One

\(^{19}\) For more information about this Khri-thog-pa family please refer pp. 5-6 and footnote no. 5 of this chapter.

\(^{20}\) The aftermath of the Nepal-Tibet war of 1855 led to changes in the regulation of border trade and transit. An official letter from the Nepali foreign department (jaisi kotâ) dated VE 1913 (1856) and addressed to râjâ Kun-dga' nor-bu details changes brought about by the bilateral agreement signed after the war. According to the new regulations, the customs duties and related fees collected earlier by Tibetan authorities in Bhot-Patan from Lo-pa or Mustangi traders and from surrounding areas of Nepal would now be paid to Nepal alone. The râjâ of Lo/Mustang was authorized to collect the duties and fees in Lo/Mustang, and a receipt of payment would then be shown to the Tibetan authorities in Bhot Patan (MHR doc. 70 Nepali).
result was that Rana officials would not travel beyond Thak; instead, in imperious language they ordered the rājās of Lo/Mustang to meet them there. The impolite and hectoring language used indicates that the convenience of the location mattered less than the chance for Rana officials to assert their power (MHR doc. 73 Nepali).

The symbolism of these demoralizing arrangements was not lost on Lo/Mustang’s rulers, or its observers. The MontWang Molla does not even acknowledge 'Jam-dbyangs dbang-dus as a formal ruler but as prince (rGyal-sras) (MHR doc. 28). 'Jam-dbyangs dbang-dus died at a young age after a short reign, and he is not recorded to have accomplished any remarkable reforms, or else achieved anything significant, in Lo/Mustang.21 One recorded incident, which occurred during his reign, was the loss of revenue traditionally collected from the eastern districts of Manāng, Nar, Nyishang, Phug, and Nubri. In 1859, the Rana administration in Nepal included those areas in the jurisdiction of Kaski and Lamjung, areas newly recognized as the hereditary property of the Rana family. The central administration of Nepal compensated for the loss of Mustang’s yearly income previously collected from those areas by deducting one horse from the yearly tribute it demanded from Lo/Mustang.22 After ruling briefly, 'Jam-dbyangs dbang-dus died, and after his able widow, the rānī Tshe-mchog, had acted as regent for about five years, he was succeeded by his younger brother, the monk dNgos-grub dpal-bar.

Written sources on this rājā and social and monastic regulations under his authority are available in most of the villages of upper Lo; various Nepali official sources mention him as well.23 A Zhabs-drung, or royal abbot of Tsarang, dNgos-grub dpal-bar forsook his vow of a celibacy and assumed the position of the rājā of Lo/Mustang (MHR doc. 77 Nepali).24 Lama bCo-brgyad khri-chen recounts that ministers, dignitaries, and even ordinary

---

21 Nepali official orders related to Lo/Mustang after 1865 were issued in the name of rī Tshe-mchog grol-ma and her ministers, whereas the orders issued until 1862 are addressed to 'Jam-dbyangs (MHR docs. 72,74 and 76 Nepali). 'Jam-dbyangs must have died before 1865, after which the administration of Lo/Mustang was handed over to the rānī (rGyal-mo) and her ministers.

22 Two official orders sent from Kathmandu dated VE 1919 (1862) and addressed to 'Jam-dbyangs were recorded during the author’s field-work (MHR docs. 72-73 Nepali).

23 The first document to acknowledge dNgos-grub as the rājā of Lo/Mustang is the sanad order dated VE 1926 (1869) (MHR doc. 77 Nepali). This rājā was also known by his Sanskrit name Siddhisrijvala, which was used primarily in local orders written in Tibetan and issued from the palace of Mon-thang (MHR docs. 36, 140 etc.) The lives of dNgos-grub and his grandfather 'Jam-dpal dgra-dul were heavily documented in local written sources. A document dated VE 1950 (1893) announces dNgos-grub’s death that year after a rule of about 26 years (MHR docs. 30-31 Nepali).

24 A sanad order of Rana Prime Minister Ranodipp Singh dated VE 1937 (1880) indicates that dNgos-grub dpal-bar was the younger brother of rājā 'Jam-dbyangs dbang-dus (MHR doc. 25 Nepali).
people of Lo/Mustang pressured dNgos-grub dpal'-bar to abandon celibacy and embrace his brother's widow as his own wife, for the sake of continuing the royal line (RCPT: 14-15). Yet at that time, rââñi Tshe-mchog and the ministers rDo-rje nu-nu and Kun-bzang-lags were ably conducting the affairs of Lo/Mustang (MHR doc. 74-76).25 'Jam-dbyangs younger brother, named dBang-rgyal nor-bu, who was even given the royal title of Sa-dbang, was also alive and well (MHR docs 74-76 and docs. 21, 31 Nepali).26 Nonetheless, it was the Lama dNgos-grub dpal'-bar who finally succeeded his elder brother, and then promptly married the regent Tshe-mchog (MHR doc. 77 Nepali). But the rââñi died suddenly in 1871 (VE 1926), and râjâ dNgos-grub dispatched his minister and other officials to Tibet to find him an appropriate girl to marry. This attempt was not successful.27

Border problems in the north, which had festered since the Nepal-Tibet war of 1855 despite post-war adjustments, continued to trouble dNgos-grub. In 1878, Tibetan administrators of De-pung in Ding-ri expelled Lo/Mustang's chief minister Kun-bzang-lags and other officials while they were seeking a new bride for their râjâ. Later, following brief diplomatic discussions with Nepali and Tibetan authorities, a Lo/Mustang mission, including the chief minister, went to Tibet again, bearing an official Nepali passport and a Tibetan visa, but the results were even worse—the entire party was looted and then killed by Tibetans in a place called Holing (MHR doc. 24 Nepali). Later, the case was forwarded to the central administration in Kathmandu and finally, it had to be handled by Nepali and Tibetan foreign departments.28 Lo/Mustang's tradition of direct relations with Tibet ended after the recent Nepal-Tibet war; this incident typified its closure.

To maintain Lo/Mustang's status and prestige, râjâ dNgos-grub had to struggle with pleasing the Thakali subbas, Tibetan officials, and the central authorities of Nepal. An order of Prime Minister Dev Shamasher dated 1892

25 An order issued from Kathmandu dated VE 1922 (1865) authorizes the Chief Minister (Blon-chen) Kun-bzang-lags to travel to Kathmandu to pay the yearly tribute from Lo/Mustang (MHR doc. 74). In 1867 (the year VE 1924), the Lo/Mustang râni herself visited Kathmandu to pay the tribute (MHR doc. 75 Nepali).

26 A sanad order of Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher JBR dated VE 1958 (1901) states that the title of râjâ of Lo/Mustang was officially given to his brother dBang-rgyal nor-bu's son (MHR doc. 31). A local order of râjâ 'Jam-dbyangs dbang-dus provides the title and full name of his younger brother Sa-dbang (bhûpati, or lord of the earth) (MHR doc. 21 Nepali).

27 An official order sent from Kathmandu in VE 1926 (1869) refers to râjâ dNgos-grub and rââñi Tshe-mchog (sgrol-ma) as husband and wife (MHR doc. Nepali). As dNgos-grub was a celibate monk and Tshe-mchog was his brother's widow, he must have forsaken his celibacy and married his brother's wife. In Mustang, forsaking one's celibacy has always been considered somewhat disreputable, but adopting one's elder brother's wife was and still is very common there. Tshe-mchog apparently died during the winter of 1871, only a few years later, and dNgos-grub then had to remarry (MHR doc. 24, 79 and 91).

28 Lhasa eventually paid compensation, and blamed the attack on ordinary Tibetans and the negligence of their local administrations.
(VE 1949) reveals the Lo/Mustangi rāja's dwindling position. The rāja was called to appear forthwith in Kathmandu, even though officials knew that one of his hands was broken and he was unable to ride a horse (MHR doc. Nepali). He also had to deal regularly with three Thakali subbās, Balbir. Kabiraj, and Ramprasad, who were among the Ranas' favorites (MHR doc. 93 Nepali).

dNgos-grub's reign is not remembered as one of power, prestige, or glory for the state of Lo/Mustang. Still, this rāja achieved considerable monastic reforms within his domain. Among these, a complete renovation of the temple of Thub-chen in Monthang is the most important (MHR doc. 18 Tibetan). Like his great-great-grandfather dBang-rgyal rdo-rje, this rāja made special arrangements for regular financial contributions to almost all the monasteries in Lo/Mustang, especially Tsarang.

RAJA 'JAM-DBYANGS RGYAL-MTSHAN (1894 - c. 1935)

'Jam-dbyangs became the rāja/king of Lo/Mustang after dNgos-grub died in 1894 without having produced a legitimate son and heir. 'jam-dbyangs was the eldest son of dNgos-grub's younger brother, Sa-dbang dBang-rgyal-nor-bu. who had died earlier. This king was known by two interchangeable names, 'Jam-dbyangs rgyal-mtshan and 'Jam-dbyangs dpal-'bar (MHR docs. 28, 98b Tibetan, 30-43 and 109-118 Nepali). In the beginning of his rule, his brothers sKu-zhabs dBang-rgyal-dpal-'bar and sKu-zhabs Rab-rgyas dpal-'bar assisted him in administration (MHR docs. 31-32, 34, 111, 114 Nepali). However, the second brother, dBang-rgyal, later rebelled, seeking equal status and power, and the Nepali government had to adjudicate the matter (MHR doc. 30, 31). Despite dBang-rgyal dpal-'bar's insurgence, the youngest brother Rab-rgyas always worked cooperatively with 'Jam-dbyangs (MHR doc. 34 Nepali). As the latest Nepali government documents regarding 'Jam-dbyangs rgyal-mtshan are dated until 1933, he must have ruled Lo/Mustang until the early 1930s (Doc. 43 Nepali).

During 'Jam-dbyangs-rgyal-mtshan's forty-year reign (c. 1894-1935), six Rana Prime Ministers served in Nepal's central administration. Among them, Chandra Shamsher (1901-1929) was the longest-serving (Sever 1993: 237). Among the Thakalis, the Sherchan family had always been the most prominent customs contractors in Lo/Mustang during the Rana administration. Because they were the leading trading families in the

---

29 About twenty-five Nepali and fifty Tibetan documents related to this rāja were collected during field-work (MHR, pt. II and III).
30 When addressing local issues within their dependencies, documents were often issued by the Nepal government in the name of local rulers.
31 Earlier, the Thakali contractors were not known by their last name, Sherchan. Their ancestors were known by their original Tibetan names such as Pad-ma rig-'dzin (MHR doc. 8 Tibetan).
region and had command of the Tibetan and Nepali languages, no one else in the region could compete with them in winning the customs contract of the Thak-Dan Customs Office, and after winning this contract the Thakali subbās were very seldom removed.\(^{32}\) The Gurung contractors seemed less aggressive to the Mustangi rājā at first, but they were also considered uncouth. Imitating the tactics of Thakali contractors, Subba Mani³al Gurung eventually established a ritual friendship (mita) with 'Jam-dbyangs rgyal-mtshan (MHR docs. 105, 115 Nepali), but then went on to intimidate and harass both the rājā and the people of Lo/Mustang (MHR docs. 115, 116).\(^{33}\) Chandra Shamsher's term as Prime Minister, during the first three decades of the twentieth century, marked the zenith of the rule of the Ranas in Nepal, and during that time, Subba Hitman Thakali established an irrevocable tie with him and the Nepali government. (He is also said to have established a ritual friendship (mita) with Chandra Shamsher.) As a result, the traditional power and prestige of the rājā of Lo/Mustang was utterly undermined during this time. Meanwhile, Subba Hitman Sherchan for all purposes controlled the lower Lo and Thak region from the Thak-Dan Customs Office, claiming most of the traditional rights of the rājā of Lo/Mustang as if he were its legitimate ruler. Although people of lower Lo largely respected their nominal rājā in Lo/Mustang, they recognized the power of Hitman for all practical purposes. (MHR: 117)


After 'Jam-dbyangs-rgyal-mtshan's death in 1935, his younger son, bsTan-'dzin 'jam-dpal dra-'dul, assumed the hereditary seat of the Lo/Mustang rājā, as his elder brother 'Jam-dbyangs dbang-dus dpal-'bar had already died. This deceased brother had been recognized as the future rājā of

\(^{32}\) Following continuous reports of monopolies and corruption among the Thakali subbās, the contract was offered to two powerful Gurungs of Lamjung, Mani³al and his son Narajang, between about 1903 to 1908 (MHR docs. 105, 111, 115, 117, 174, 213 Nepali and doc. 105 Tibetan). This arrangement was implemented on a trial basis because subbā Balbir's descendants (the Sherchan family) were very powerful, not only through their contacts with the government, but also through wealth accumulated from the north-south trade. Even before Balbir, the ancestors of these Thakalis had established a special relationship with the Tibetan authorities of different trade centers, and later around 1748 were given an official letter from the central authorities of Tibet, stating appreciation and granting formal privileges (e.g., herding livestock into Tibet, and freedom from ferry and grazing fees) (MHR doc. 8 Tibetan). The new Gurung contractors were unable to handle the competition from these Thakali traders, and the Rana administration of Nepal again offered the contract back to Thakalis (MHR: 116, 430).

\(^{33}\) Perhaps exemplifying the Gurung subbās' practices, two letters dated VE 1965 (1908) sent from Thāk-Dān Customs Office to the raja of Lo/Mustang demonstrate subbā Mani³al Gurung threaten²ing the raja with direct consequences unless he followed all Gurung directives.
Lo/Mustang not only within Lo/Mustang but also by Kathmandu; the government of Nepal had already offered him the honorary position of captain, and a yearly salary, in the Nepal army (MHR doc. 34 Nepali).

Lama bCo-brgyad khri-chen describes the internal problems within the Lo/Mustang palace after 'Jam-dbyangs rgyal-mtshan's death. He writes that bsTan-'dzin was only twelve years old when his father died (RCTP). Yet other records do not support this; bsTan-'dzin's father is recorded to have ruled Lo/Mustang until around the 1930s. bsTan-'dzin's uncle dBang-rgyal had opposed the family of 'Jam-dbyangs rgyal-mtshan, as he was claiming equal rights and powers with his brother. However, he was restricted officially by Nepal's central authority and made to stifle his dissent until his brother's death. After this event, he agitated again to make his own son the rājā of Lo/Mustang on the basis of seniority. As sKu-zhabs dBang-rgyal's son was older than bsTan-'dzin, his claim to the royal succession was more valid. According to Lo/Mustang's tradition, joint rule of two or more brothers and age-based seniority were the deciding factors in royal succession. In fact, lay brothers of the king were considered as junior or deputy kings in Lo/Mustang, and in most cases, two or more brothers shared a single household and wife. The eldest brother of the king used to succeed immediately.

sKu-zhabs dBang-rgyal, however, lived in the age of Rana autocracy in Nepal and Lo/Mustang's traditional rule of succession was dictated by the central authorities of Nepal, as mediated through the Thakali subbās. Unfortunately and unnecessarily, the Nepali tradition of royal succession was imposed on Lo/Mustang. As only the king's son can succeed the throne in Nepali tradition, the former rājā's son bsTan-'dzin 'jam-dpal dgra-'dul was named official successor. During bsTan-'dzin's rule in Lo/Mustang from 1935 to 1955 and 1958 to 1964 Nepal underwent many changes; no fewer than three Rana Prime Ministers (Judda Shamsher, Padma Shamsher, and Mohan Shamsher) served. More important, the successful democratic revolution of 1950-51 ended the 104-year-old family regime of the Ranas. Under the command of King Tribhuvan and King Mahendra, interim governments ruled Nepal for about eight years. Finally, in 1958, an elected democratic government was formed, to be crushed by a royal coup and the institutionalization of the Panchayat system in 1961.34

Rājā bsTan-'dzjin actively managed the local administration of Lo/Mustang until 1955, when he announced his official retirement, and his administrative responsibilities passed to his elder son, dBang-dus snying-

---

34 During these eight years the key political figures and king promised a parliamentary system but never implemented one; no elections were ever actually held. No legislature was ever convened and the king freely re-arranged his government without checks.
bsTan-'dzin then moved to an old, small palace at Phre-mkhar (now known as Thengkar), but could not remain in retirement long--dBang-dus snying-po died in 1958 and his younger brother 'Jigs-med dpal-'bar suffered debilitating poor health (Peissel 1967: 257). Therefore bsTan-'dzin reassumed the title and administrative power of the rājā of Lo/Mustang, but he never moved back to the main palace of Monthang (ibid.).

During rājā bsTan-'dzin's reign western industrialization and modern trends made significant inroads in Nepal. Although Lo/Mustang was and still is a remote land of inhospitable terrain, the influence of modernity traveled into the upper Lo region through the so-called "new Nepali" (really, English-patterned) school system. bsTan-'dzin himself advocated bringing this educational system, and outlook, to Lo/Mustang. As records show, he was attracted to Nepali language and literature and even used his personal income to patronize literary works published in Kathmandu (Tiwari VE 2012). Another impact of modernity was the revolution of 1951, in which the younger generation of educated Thakalis, while working under the leadership of the Nepali Congress party, influenced the local people of Lo/Mustang to oppose the rājā and old Lo-pa traditions and culture. bsTan-'dzin, therefore, can best be viewed as a transitional figure—one who adhered to tradition by retiring to spiritual life and by issuing orders in exactly the same way as his forefathers had on one hand, and on the other, was attracted to the so-called new Nepali (western) education system.

After the introduction of King Mahendra's Panchayat rule in Nepal, rājā bsTan-'dzin established direct contact with the king of Nepal and was able to revive his local traditional rights, including celebrating the cultural and religious festivals banned after the revolution of 1951. Slowly, Lo/Mustang regained its status and prestige under the Panchayat regime. Because the old north-south trade had dwindled after the Chinese occupation of Tibet, the Thakali subbās' importance and power had virtually ended as well. After the revolution of 1951, new land acts abolishing the old contract system were introduced and the local administrative power of Thakali contractors had officially ended. Again after 1961, in the process of administrative reform and under the new land reform laws, the remaining traditional powers and rights of such contractors (jimmāvāls and jamindārs) were completely abolished. On the other hand, the rājā of Lo/Mustang was made an ex-officio member of the rājāsava (Royal council), an honorary colonel of the Nepal army, and the Coordinator of ten village panchayats of Lo/Mustang located

35 Official orders issued by dBang-dus snying-po from the main palace of Monthang in the late 1950s can be found throughout upper Lo and are readily available in village boxes, or the records of local governments, usually kept by village headmen. Copies of several of them were collected during the field-work supporting this project (MHR doc. 150 Tibetan).

36 bsTan-'dzin expresses his realization of the need for "New Nepali" schools in Lo/Mustang in the preface of a book written by a prominent Nepali poet Bhimnidhi Tiwari and published by the rājā himself (ibid.).
in the north of Kagbeni. Such recognition of the rājā and the demeaned position in which the Thakalis were placed certainly elevated the prestige of the rājā of Lo/Mustang.

In 1964, rājā bsTan-'dzin died and was succeeded by his youngest son, 'Jigs-med dpal-'bar (Bisṭa), the current rājā of Lo/Mustang. bsTan-'dzin's second son, Ngag-dbang 'jigs-med thub-bstan rgya-mtsho, was a celibate monk and Zhabs-drung of the royal Monastery of Tsarang. However, he broke his vow of celibacy by establishing sexual relations with a woman of a noble family in Tsarang. After a brief connubial life she died suddenly, and he moved to Dolpo and lived there with another wife for more than two decades. Later, he moved to upper Mustang’s Choshar area, near Monthang and after living for a few years with his family in an old palace at Phrenkhar died in 2000.

This monk and the noblewoman produced a son, 'Jigs-med seng-ge dpal-'bar, who today is the designated successor to the traditional throne of Lo/Mustang. He is the only male successor in the Lo/Mustang royal family and also the adopted son of the present rājā. A businessman and social worker in Kathmandu, he is recognized as the rGyal-chung, or junior rājā, of Lo/Mustang. The people of Lo/Mustang currently address him as such.

**MUSTANG’S POSITION AFTER DEPENDENCY TO NEPAL**

After its dependency to Nepal, Mustang enjoyed about twenty years of relative freedom, economically better situation, and even influence in adjacent areas. But political reversals and turmoil in Kathmandu slowly affected all of Nepal; Lo/Mustang was no exception. Mustang’s southern, eastern, and western territories, which were once seized by Jumla and returned to Lo/Mustang in 1789 by the Gorkhalis, were again being harassed.38

---

37 The paternity of this "junior raja," as he is still called, went unrevealed until he was a young boy, and his mother named his father. In the wake of the scandal, the royal monk left the monastery and lived with the woman and the boy until the woman’s sudden death.

38 For example, the northern regions of Dolpo, including the sizable villages of Tsharka and Lagumkhola, were taken from the raja of Lo/Mustang and given to the Khri-thog-pa chiefs of Baragaun under contract (MHR doc. 207 Nepali). These areas were under the local authority of the Khri-thog-pa Biṣṭas for a considerable period of time, perhaps about fifty years, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (MHR doc. 250 Nepali). Also, local Khri-thog-pa chiefs of Baragaun (mainly of Jharkot or 'Dzar) had worked energetically with the Gorkha army commanders to defeat Jumla and incorporate it into Nepal. Administrative responsibility for Baragaun, including the customs office at Kagbeni and authority over Nar, Nyishang, Manāng, and other smaller townships was given to the Khri-thog-pa chiefs under yearly contract (MHR docs. 186-187 Nepali, Dhungel VE 2044a: 10-15, VE 2044b: 25-30, Pant and Pierce 1989: 23). Later, during the administrations of the Thapa and Pande families in Nepal, from the late 1700s to 1846, the Khri-thog-pa family became very powerful in lower Lo (Baragaun). Still, some of the traditional levies and fees demanded by the rājā of Lo/Mustang continued, according to custom. However, as close associates of
By about the 1820s, Kathmandu had begun to view Lo/Mustang as a comparatively ungainly acquisition. Nepali authorities therefore decided to exchange seven districts of upper Lo for Pu-rang (ITag-la mkhar) in Tibet, located along its own northwestern frontier; and a flurry of official correspondence between Kathmandu and Lhasa followed. Nepali authorities were eager to relinquish Lo/Mustang to Tibet and the Tibetan authorities considered the proposal seriously and favorably; the Dalai Lama is thought to have asked his officials to investigate the revenues generated by the areas considered for this exchange. But the Chinese representatives known as Amban, in Lhasa directed Tibetan authorities to approach the Chinese emperor in Beijing and Beijing then rejected the idea, citing a traditional Chinese dictum that "the territory of a kingdom cannot be exchanged" (Nepal VE 2044: 361).

Even today, this incident is widely viewed by the people of Lo/Mustang as the greatest diplomatic insult in Lo/Mustang's history. Once a close ally and a faithful dependent state which had eagerly assisted in the Gorkhali military campaign, Lo/Mustang had practically been discarded by Nepali authorities for reasons of political expediency.

The Khri-thog-pa families of lower Lo (Bāragāun) had often opposed the Lo/Mustang rulers. Earlier, they had fought against the royal court of the Lo/Mustang kingdom and migrated to lower Lo from Monthang, and later joined with Jumla, becoming Lo/Mustang's main "enemy hosts." Now, in the 1820 and 1830s, they were circulating inflammatory stories about the Lo/Mustang rulers. Their intention was to end the dependent status Lo/Mustang, incorporate it, and extend their contracted territory up to the Tibetan border. A petition (binti-patra) drafted in Jharkot (‘Dzar), the center of the Khri-thog-pas, and addressed to king Ranabahadur Shah of Nepal, details one such plan (Nepal VE 244: 251-53). This letter claimed that the ājā of Lo/Mustang commissioned a tantric ritual intended to produce Ranabahadur's death. The letter details the history of the alleged conspiracy and produces the supposed verifications by a Nepali official, Indraman Khatri, and the conspirator Lama Norbu of Jharkot (possibly a brother or cousin of the Khri-thog-pa Biṣṭas). It petitions for the dismissal of the Mustangi ājā from his hereditary position, the abolishment of Lo/Mustang's tributary status and the appointment of Lama Norbu as the new administrator of Lo/Mustang on a yearly contract basis (ibid.). Endorsing this position, one

Nepal's central administration, the Khri-thog-pa chiefs usurped the authority of the Lo/Mustangi raja and eroded Lo/Mustang's traditional authority in northern Dolpo, Manāng and Nyishang valleys during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Khri-thog-pa chiefs even claimed the right to collect occasional fees and levies (salamis) from those areas. Their contracts (salbasal sirto) with Nepal during this time exceeded the yearly tribute derived from Lo/Mustang, whose annual tribute was fixed. Thus at that time, for the central authorities of Nepal, the Khri-thog-pa chiefs were more important than the ājā of Lo/Mustang.
Nepali historian argues that the Lo/Mustangi rāja was working with the defeated king Sudarshan Sahi of Jumli against the Nepali maharājā and the Gorkhali authorities in the region (Nepal VE 2044: 251-54). This accusation, however, is insupportable.

Except for that particular petition letter, every other single local and government document contradicts these accusations against the rāja. First of all, Lo/Mustang suffered greatly under Jumli's pressures; that it might enter into a secret alliance with Jumli later is highly questionable. Furthermore, it had joined the Gorkhali campaigns against Jumli with great zeal. A variety of accounts indicate that Lo/Mustang followed the terms and conditions of the treaty of dependence scrupulously, and enjoyed material and cultural prosperity during the post-Jumli era of rāja dBang-rgyal and his son bKra-shis snying-po. Thus, the accusations of Mustang's conspiracy against the king of Nepal appear to be little more than duplicitous, even spiteful, tactics by the Khri-thog-pa Biṣṭas of Bāragāun.

When Lo/Mustang was an independent kingdom, it always included the northern region of Dolpo, lower Lo (Bāragāun, Pānchgāun, and Thāk), and most of the settlements of Manāng and Nyishang valleys, sometimes even up to Ruibhot of Northern Gorkha in the east. Later, Jumli gained control of lower Lo. The areas between Gelung and Lubrag, including the eastern areas of Manāng, Nar, and Nyishang and the western districts of northern Dolpo, came under Jumli administration; meanwhile, the entire area of Thāk and Pānchgāun was lost to Parvat. Gelung at the same time was controlled by the cousins of the rājas of Lo/Mustang. Following Parvat's incorporation into Nepal, all of lower Lo, including Thāk, Pānchgāun, Dolpo, and Manāng, Nar, Nyishang in the east, were given to the local Khri-thog-pa chief of Jharkot by contract. Although lower Lo was distributed among the local contractors, the government of Nepal had retained the hereditary rights of the rāja of Lo/Mustang to collect regular levies, occasional fees and traditional and customary tokens of respect from those areas. Gelung was freed from such fees and levies, as the local rulers of Gelung belonged to the old ruling family of Lo/Mustang. Therefore the local ruler of Gelung was asked to pay only a nominal yearly tribute of Rs. 70 to the central government of Nepal, even while Jumli occupied Lo/Mustang (MHR doc. 149 Nepali). Later, around 1837 or 1838, when the Commissioner (sDe-pa) of Gelung died leaving no male offspring to succeed him, Gelung's local ruling line eventually ended and the contract of Gelung was given back to the rāja of Lo/Mustang for a yearly tribute of Rs. 101. After the death of sDe-pa Khams-gsum rgyal-po of Gelung, no local ruler was appointed in

39 A document dated VE 1892 (1835) shows that sDe-pa Khams-gsum rgyal-po of Gelung was paying Rs. 70 annually to the government of Nepal. Another document dated VE 1896 (1839) tells that the Lo/Mustang rāja was asked to pay a yearly contract amount of Rs. 101 from Gelung (MHR doc. 61 Nepali).
Gelung until it was given under contract to the rājā of Lo/Mustang, and at that time, the yearly tribute was collected from the village headmen (rGan-pa) of Gelung. An official receipt from VE 1892 (1835) indicates that the elderly sDe-pa of Gelung was unable to travel to Kathmandu to pay the yearly tribute to Nepal. The document dated VE 1896 (1839) affirms that the old sDe-pa had died in that year or a couple of years before; in that year, Gelung was given to the rājā of Lo/Mustang on yearly contract (MHR doc. 61 Nepali). By the late 1830s, therefore, the territorial authority of the rājā of Lo/Mustang seems to have extended again down to the village of Sa-mar or even up to Chelep.

At any rate, after its formal dependency with Nepal, Lo/Mustang maintained its improved status for approximately twenty years, until it was again eroded by the rise of the Khri-thog-pa chiefs of Jharkot. After that, Lo/Mustang hardly maintained even its former status of a provincial dependency.

In 1847, Nepal experienced an upheaval in its central administration. The family-based autocracy of the Ranas was established by Janga Bahadur Rana (Sever 1993: 61). This change in the central administration affected Lo/Mustang adversely. In the earlier days of Mustang’s dependency, the rājās of Lo/Mustang were addressed with respect and suitable salutations even by the maharājā of Nepal. The Rana Prime Ministers and generals, however, dispensed with such courtesies.40

Despite the machinations and pressures of the powerful Khri-thog-pa Bīstas of Bāragāun, the rājās of Lo/Mustang maintained their traditional right to collect customs duties, fees and, levies from the people of lower Lo, Dolpo, and the Manāng and Nyishang areas until 1847 (MHR doc. 7 Nepali, Panta and Pierce 1989: 83).41 This situation did not last after the establishment of the Rana regime, because the subbas of Thak-Dan established special contact with the Rana Prime Ministers of Nepal and their relatives in Kathmandu.42 After that, Thāk, Pānchgāun, Bāragāun, Manāng, Nar, Nyishang and most of northern Dolpo were gradually included into the jurisdiction the subba of Thak-Dan.

---

40 For example, the first copper-plate inscription of King Ranabahadur Shah of Nepal uses the second high-grade honorific, timi, to describe rājā dbang-rgyal rdo-rje (आर्य राजा शाह). The lower-grade honorific, tā (ता) became common only later.

41 An order of King Rajendra Vivakram Shah dated VE 1898 (1842) renews the traditional right of the rājā of Mustang to collect such duties, levies, and fees (…हाम्रा मुलुकमा रैल्ने बटातहस्त अधिक परालुङ्गहे तरा बाबु बाजायहरुले बाईपाइँदैत्रै शाहिन्दै फली पानुः…).

42 The Thak Customs Office was formally reestablished in Dāna around 1816 and awarded its contract to an official named Hemakarna Khadga (MHR doc. 331 Nepali). During the Rana Period the position of contractor Subbā was replaced by the more locally influential Thakali merchant Balbir. Thereafter the Dāna Customs Office was known as the Thak-Dān Bhansār.
Consequently, the traditional levies, fees and other income of the rājā of Lo/Mustang were lost to those Thakali Subbās. As the Thakali Subbās became more powerful, influential, and wealthy in the region, they adopted high-handed tactics, even insulting the rājās of Lo/Mustang; once, Subbā Balbir even detained rājā dNgos-grub dpal-’bar’s (1868-1894) very trustful people in the Thak-Dan Customs Office for fourteen days (MHR doc. 91 Nepali). The Rana administration relied upon these Subbās so much, and permitted them excessive authority, that the rājās of Lo/Mustang were virtually denied access to the central administration in Kathmandu (MHR docs. 72, 73 also see above, under rājā’jam-dbyangs dbang-dus and dNgos-grub dpal-’bar). In addition, as the rājās of Lo/Mustang did not speak or understand Nepali, they had to rely on bilingual Thakalis while meeting with the Nepali authorities in Kathmandu.

The Rana period in Nepal was the climax of the distribution of tax-free lands to high officials and the relatives of Rana Prime Ministers. Lo/Mustang’s Tsharkabhot and Gelung areas were turned into private sources of income (khuvii) for the chief priest (bādāgurujyu) of the Rana Prime Ministers and the commanding general of the northern region (one of the brothers of the Rana Prime Minister) (MHR doc. 130-140 Nepali). Even Lo/Mustang proper was registered under the salary (Khangi) of the commander-in-chief (the next-youngest brother of the Rana Prime Minister) (MHR doc. 75 Nepali).

Meanwhile, the Subbās of Thak-Dan dominated the rājā and the people of Lo/Mustang in an authoritarian, even harassing manner, and frequently interfered with its trade. In order to benefit from trade with Tibet, the Subbās feigned good relations with the Lo/Mustang rājās, even conducting a ritual friendship ceremony establishing "mita" (ritual friendship) from time to time. Still, for the duration of the Rana regime in Nepal, lasting until 1951, the political alliance between their Prime Ministers and the Thakali Subbās eroded Lo/Mustang’s prosperity and morale. It had been, for all purposes, diminished from a respected dependency to a subjugated and marginalized locality.

After the revolution in Nepal in 1950-51 (VE 2007), Lo/Mustang’s position dwindled further. The younger, educated generations of the Thakali Subbā families who were active in the Nepali Congress party enjoyed such influence in Lo/Mustang that even the low-ranking workers and servants of

---

43 These displays of friendship were entirely cynical. After Subbā Balbir had imprisoned his "mita" rājā dNgos-grub in the customs house and confined him to a damp and cold room (chimdi) the rājā had to petition Kathmandu for relief from the subbā’s cruelty (MHR doc. 81 Nepali). Some key informants from the Thakl and Mustang areas even told of a conspiracy between Rana Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher and Thakali Subbā Hitman Sherchan to dismiss the Lo/Mustangi rājā from his hereditary position and replace him with the subbā.
The kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

The palace of Lo/Mustang rebelled against the old, traditional system.\footnote{Personal communication with the current rāja, 'Jigs-med dpal-bar of Lo/Mustang.} These young activists not only distributed letters and pamphlets calling for the abolition of Lo/Mustang's feudal system; they even convinced poor Phal-pa and mGar-pa people to stop paying customary fees and levies to the rājā and to boycott the main festivals of Lo/Mustang. These traditional festivals, including tiji (brTan-spyi'i-rim-gro) and Yar-tung (dByar-tong), were portrayed as the main instruments of feudal exploitation.\footnote{Papers and pamphlets documenting such activism have been preserved in the villages of upper Lo. I was permitted to see a paper issued from the Thak office of the Nepali Congress party. It featured an illustration of M. K. Gandhi on Nepali Congress Party letterhead in the Dh village public document box in the custody of the village assembly. This particular letter calls for a social change in Lo/Mustang, condemning the traditional rights of the rājā. Other information mentioned here are collected from the personal communication with the present raja, the head Lama bKra-shis bstan-'dzin, and other key informants from Monthang, particularly high-ranking Lamas and Amchis (traditional pharmacists and medicine men).} By 1951 these festivals were officially banned and the rājā's traditional rights to free labor and occasional levies were abolished. These changes dismantled Mustang's traditional internal administrative system.

Still, despite such anti-traditional and pro-modern activism and the changes they brought in Lo/Mustang, several honorary awards, and medals, and duties bestowed on the rājā were retained even after 1951. These included the honorary rank of colonel of the Nepali army, for example, and prestigious responsibilities related to border issues--namely intelligence work.\footnote{The tradition of offering honorary positions to the rāna and his eldest son or younger brothers was established in the late Rana period and it continued even after the revolution of 1951. In 1955, the honorary position of army captain, awarded to the rājā's eldest son, was accompanied by a salary of Rs. 3, 400 a year--higher than the salary of a genuine captain in the Nepali army (MHR doc. 323 Nepali).}

Nepal experienced another political alteration in 1961, when King Mahendra of Nepal demolished the elected parliament and introduced Panchayat rule. Exerting his absolute powers, King Mahendra reinstated certain traditions and practices, including the suspended festivals and some traditional rights of the rājā of Lo/Mustang were also revived, including occasional compulsory labor as well as levies of cash and grain at festival time. Although the hereditary old states (rājya-rājāuta) of Nepal were officially abolished in 1961, the rājā of Lo/Mustang was awarded with membership in the Royal Council (rājjsava) of Nepal, the honorary title of colonel in the Nepal army, and made coordinator for ten Panchayats of the Lo/Mustang and Bāragāun areas.

Hence, the social prestige of the rājā of Lo/Mustang improved again after the introduction of Panchayat rule in 1961. The present rājā of Lo/Mustang exercised almost absolute power within the seven traditional districts (Lo
Lo/Mustang under Nepal... 145

tsho dun) of upper region until the legalization of political parties in 1990. After 1951 the new land reform act officially ended the rājā’s traditional unlimited rights to land. In practice, however, the old system has always persisted, because the rājā's approval is still required after any transaction involving the transfer of land. In addition, virtually no legal cases in Lo/Mustang, both civil and criminal, are ever presented in the government court at Jomsom; rather, they are heard exclusively at the court of the rājā himself (MHR: 188-89). Very seldom do the Lo-pa people attempt to evade the rājā’s justice and his traditional rights. In sum, the rājā of Lo/Mustang is still the de facto ruler of Lo/Mustang, although such practice is now limited within the Lo-tsho-dun region in upper Lo.47

47 The lower Lo or old Se-rib region, popularly known today as Bārāgaun, Pāncgāun, and Thākkhol, has been dominated by the political culture of its southern neighbors. When Lo/Mustang was founded as a kingdom, this region was an integral part of it, and in traditionally cultural terms, it was an area influenced more by Tibet than by its Indo-Aryan-speaking neighbors. Later, after the establishment of contract system in Nepal, the Bārāgaun, Pāncgāun, and Thāk areas were included under different yearly contracts, whereas the Lo/Mustang proper (Lo tsho-dun) always remained as a dependent tributary state.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It is remarkable that the history of an important frontier province and kingdom, famed at one time as one of four major centers of the Bon and Buddhist cultures in western Tibet, is so little known. Even within the kingdom, fewer than a handful of educated monks and members of the old ruling family know that Lo/Mustang was once so distinguished.

Lo's early historiography is dominated by genealogical, chronological, and Tibetan biographical sources, preserved by monastic and ruling elites but not generally transmitted outside of monasteries and palaces. These richly-detailed, sources have shaped the present study, producing a genealogical and political perspective.

In order to discuss the history of the kingdom up till the Jumli occupation in the 1540s, this present work has utilized the sources on Lo/Mustang such as the Tsarang Molla, the Glo-gdung rabs, the Byams-pa dkar-chags, and the Tsarang hem-chags. In dealing with the history of Lo/Mustang after Jumli's occupation, this study has benefited equally from Jumli, Parvate, Nepali and other local documents written both in Tibetan and old Nepali, housed in the Lo/Mustang palace, in monasteries, in village assembly boxes, and with elite families.

When Lo became a vassal state of Jumli in the mid-sixteenth century, this kingdom's original name began to fade from usage after more than a thousand years. In order to demean this proud old kingdom, the Jumlis renamed it Mustang, reducing it symbolically to the area around its capital. By the time Mustang became a dependent tributary of Nepal in 1789, the original name Lo had been completely erased from the political geography of the region, to the extent that Nepali authorities in Kathmandu were probably not even aware that Lo had been an independent kingdom. No available records on Lo/Mustang's dependency acknowledge it. Within Lopaha society, however, the name "Lo" continued.

Much of Lo/Mustang's past is now forgotten, not only by the people of upper Lo but also by the settlers of the lower Lo region. Similarly, a collective name for the entire lower Lo region (including Bārāgāun, Pānchgāun, and Thākkholā), "Thags-Se," has been corrupted and Nepalized into "Thāksāse" or even "Thāksātsaye."

1 The name "Thags-se" was originally derived from two different Tibetan words, Thags and Se-rib (for an etymological description please refer to the appendix).
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It is remarkable that the history of an important frontier province and kingdom, famed at one time as one of four major centers of the Bon and Buddhist cultures in western Tibet, is so little known. Even within the kingdom, fewer than a handful of educated monks and members of the old ruling family know that Lo/Mustang was once so distinguished.

Lo's early historiography is dominated by genealogical, chronological, and Tibetan biographical sources, preserved by monastic and ruling elites but not generally transmitted outside of monasteries and palaces. These richly-detailed, sources have shaped the present study, producing a genealogical and political perspective.

In order to discuss the history of the kingdom up till the Jumli occupation in the 1540s, this present work has utilized the sources on Lo/Mustang such as the Tsarang Molla, the Glo-gdung rabs, the Byams-pa dkar-chag, and the Tsarang hem-chag. In dealing with the history of Lo/Mustang after Jumli's occupation, this study has benefited equally from Jumli, Parvate, Nepali and other local documents written both in Tibetan and old Nepali, housed in the Lo/Mustang palace, in monasteries, in village assembly boxes, and with elite families.

When Lo became a vassal state of Jumli in the mid-sixteenth century, this kingdom's original name began to fade from usage after more than a thousand years. In order to demean this proud old kingdom, the Jumlis renamed it Mustang, reducing it symbolically to the area around its capital. By the time Mustang became a dependent tributary of Nepal in 1789, the original name Lo had been completely erased from the political geography of the region, to the extent that Nepali authorities in Kathmandu were probably not even aware that Lo had been an independent kingdom. No available records on Lo/Mustang's dependency acknowledge it. Within Lo-pa society, however, the name "Lo" continued.

Much of Lo/Mustang's past is now forgotten, not only by the people of upper Lo but also by the settlers of the lower Lo region. Similarly, a collective name for the entire lower Lo region (including Baragaun, Panchgaun, and Thakkholā), "Thags-Se," has been corrupted and Nepalized into "Thāksālše" or even "Thāksāsaye."¹

¹ The name "Thags-se" was originally derived from two different Tibetan words, Thags and Se-rib (for an etymological description please refer to the appendix).
Using early Tibetan biographical literature and chronicles, we have been able to sketch a general political picture of the Lo/Mustang region until its emergence as an independent kingdom. A careful review of such biographical and chronological sources suggests that the Lo/Mustang region, until its emergence as an independent kingdom in the middle of the fifteenth century, was one of the major cultural centers of western Tibet, also called Ngari. We now also know that the sporadic references to Lo/Mustang at that time suggest that there was a general trend of describing the whole Ngari region, including Lo/Mustang, as a single cultural world. Thus, the early history of Lo/Mustang is directly linked with the history of Zhang-zhung (Gu-ge), the Khaša/Ya-tshe kingdom, and Gung-thang. Even before its independence, as one of Ngari's major cultural centers, Lo/Mustang played an important role in promoting Buddhist scholarship and traditions by producing esteemed Buddhist scholars such as Lama sTon-pa yang-rab and Lobo lo-tsa-ba Shes-rab-rin-chen. Lo/Mustang also produced several great Bon masters, who were renowned not only in Lo/Mustang but also throughout greater Tibet. Politically as well, prior to the early Tibetan Yarlung conquest of Ngari in the seventh century, Lo/Mustang was one of the bordering provinces of Zhang-zhung and an area of Bon influence. After the Tibetan expansion into Ngari, Lo/Mustang eventually became one of the prominent centers of Buddhist culture in the region.

Until the beginning of the Lo/Mustang ruling line in the late fourteenth century, we find only a few sporadic references to the local rulers of upper and lower Lo (Se-rib). In the 1370s, however, the grandfather of king A-ma-mdpal, the first recorded local commissioner of Lo/Mustang, began a distinguished military career in and around the Lo/Mustang region. One conclusion that emerges despite limited earlier sources is that even before its independence in 1440, Lo/Mustang had established a local political and cultural identity under various names such as Lo/Mustang, lower Lo (Glosmad) or occasionally even Se-rib.

Lo's rise as a region and as a separate cultural and political entity was primarily a result of its north-south trade. The Lo-pas controlled virtually all of the north-south trade between India, Tibet, and Nepal, through a famed old route running along the bank of the Kāli Gaṇḍakī river.

In earlier days, Lo/Mustang's location protected it from frequent outside attacks. Until the rise of the kingdom of Jumli in the sixteenth century, Lo/Mustang was either an independent Tibetan frontier kingdom or a provincial region under the loose control of stronger neighboring powers. Lo/Mustang's location and its trans-regional trade enabled its rise as a separate regional political and cultural entity. However, because of its small population and limited territory the Lo/Mustang region was unable to claim full independent identity until 1440. Stronger powers of the region such as Ya-tshe's Mongol chieftains, the Khaša/Ya-tshe kingdom, Gu-ge, Gung-thang, and even Ladakh claimed, time after time, that Lo/Mustang was either
their tributary or a provincial state. However, because of its remoteness from the powers surrounding it, its rulers could exercise the equivalent of absolute local power.

Lo/Mustang's location and frontier status decided its various political affiliations with stronger powers in the western Himalayas and Tibet. As discussed earlier, prior to the Tibetan conquest of Ngari, Lo/Mustang was a political and cultural extension of Zhang-zhung, or Gu-ge. After the seventh century, it became one of the bordering provinces of Ngari. By the tenth and eleventh centuries, different local Mongol warlords dominated this area. Later, when Gu-ge became Ngari's main political and cultural center, the Lo/Mustang region came under Gu-ge's influence. Under Gu-ge's political and cultural umbrella, Lo/Mustang actively took part in the Buddhism revitalization movement in western Tibet. Toward the end of the eleventh century or at the beginning of the twelfth century, one of the three major branches of the old Tibetan ruling line in Ngari established a separate kingdom in Gung-thang. As it was situated at Gung-thang's southwestern frontier, Lo/Mustang became one of its vassal provinces. However, beginning in the late twelfth century, the Khaśa/Ya-tshe power appeared to be the major political force in the western Himalayas and western Tibet. Having overthrown the local rulers installed by Mongol warlords and the Tibetan rulers of Gu-ge, the dynasty of the Khaśa/Ya-tshe chief Nagarājā established itself as the strongest trans-Himalayan power in the region. As one of the bordering provinces located between western Tibet and the western Himalayan region, Lo was then included under the political umbrella of the Khaśa/Ya-tshe kingdom.

The rulers of Gung-thang, however, did not tolerate the Khaśas' domination of Lo and the surrounding Himalayan frontier areas. A power struggle emerged. Both of these powers claimed Lo, Dolpo and other frontier areas as their tributary provinces. Although Gung-thang alone was not strong enough to challenge the rising power of the Khaśas, the matrimonial relationship established between the ruling family of Gung-thang and the Saska 'Khon family of Tibet enabled Gung-thang to acquire military support from Tibet and the Mongol rulers of China; consequently, various wars were fought between Gung-thang and the Khaśa/Ya-tshe kingdom for regional supremacy.

As Lo was situated between these stronger powers, it bore the pain of political uncertainty and was compelled to accept the overlordship of one greater power after another. Finally, around the beginning of the fourteenth century, when the Sa-skya power in Tibet began to wane, Gung-thang lost Tibet's support. By then, however, the early Mongols in China had been succeeded by the Yuan dynasty and the Khaśa/Ya-tshe power in the western Himalayas and western Tibetan frontier regions went once again unchallenged. All of the Himalayan frontier provinces, including Lo, were recaptured and turned into tributaries of the Khaśa/Ya-tshe kingdom.
During the 1360s, the Khaša/Ya-tshe kingdom collapsed, mainly because of a succession conflict. Then, for about twenty to thirty years, the primary successors of the Khaša/Ya-tshe rulers, the Chatyal Varman family (also known as Sinjāpatis), struggled to maintain Sinjā's power and prestige in the region. Still, they could hardly rule a small territory in the upper Karnāfī region. Having noted the diminishing power of Gung-thang, these Varman rulers of Sinjā tried to reclaim supremacy over Lo/Mustang and the surrounding areas. But the outcome of that effort was all too temporary.

Hence, the sudden collapse of the Khaša/Ya-tshe power in the western Himalayas allowed Gung-thang to reopen the door of its western expansion. Although at this time Gung-thang was not as strong as it had been, the power vacuum resulting from the fall of the Khaša/Ya-tshe rulers enabled the Gung-thang ruler to once again dominate the Lo/Mustang region and its adjacent areas of Dolpo, Manāng, and the Nyishang valley. However by this time the Lo/Mustang rulers wanted to create their own independent kingdom, and after crushing the local force of Men-zhang and defeating the forces of the Shi-sa-pa, Lo/Mustang's commissioner, A-ma-dpal, declared Lo/Mustang as his own sovereign domain. This was also about the time at which dozens of smaller principalities emerged in Nepal's western hill districts. This trend toward fragmentation of a once-strong power into smaller principalities certainly influenced A-ma-dpal in declaring Lo/Mustang's independence.

For hundred years and perhaps slightly more, Lo/Mustang emerged as a very strong power in the region. Beginning in the 1540s, however, Lo/Mustang lost its southern territories to its neighboring kingdoms of Jurilā and Parvat and eventually became a small vassal state of Jurilā. This ushered in a long period of harassment, exploitation, and frustration.

The people and the rulers of Lo/Mustang worked hard to free themselves from Jurilā. Having called for outside military support, Lo/Mustang fought many wars against Jurilā, restoring its status time after time but without any lasting result, and Lo/Mustang mostly remained a tributary state of Jurilā. Ladakh, Parvat, Doti, Gro-shod, and even Tibet, were Lo/Mustang's main supporters, and all of them but Tibet repeatedly sent their armies to Lo/Mustang. However, Lo/Mustang's proximity alone enabled Jurilā's army to achieve the strongest presence. It finally occupied lower Lo and established its regional headquarters in Kāgbeni. Jurilā exploited Lo in many ways, fixing a heavy yearly tribute, demanding regular gifts for its officials and members of the royal family, and levying supplies for the occupying Jurli army. Lo's income from the north-south trade and customs duties were also lost to Jurilā.

In 1786, the Gorkha army defeated Parvat and by 1787 it incorporated the entire Kāli Gaṇḍalākī valley, including most of lower Lo/Mustang, into Gorkha/Nepal. Jurilā simply withdrew its grasp on the lower Lo region. The
Lo/Mustang ruler committed his forces to the Gorkhali army commanders and in 1788 Junilâ was crushed, and it too forcibly incorporated into Gorkha/Nepal. Lo/Mustang was then declared a dependent tributary of Nepal. The Gorkhali authorities guaranteed regional local rule for the Lo ruler, if provided a nominal tribute of Rs. 929 and five horses a year.

Hence, despite its long-standing cultural links with Tibet, incessant political pressures from the upper Karnälî region's stronger powers, the Mongol chiefs of Ya-tshe, and the Khaša/Ya-tshe and Jumli rulers, Lo/Mustang eventually became an integral part of Nepal. Still, Lo/Mustang's cultural dissimilarity from that of the main middle hill culture of Nepal shielded it from the direct socio-cultural influence of Nepal. Nepali authorities have always allowed the Lo-pa rulers and people to maintain their traditional cultural link with Tibet. Consequently, until the Chinese occupation of Tibet, the Lo-pa people were culturally linked with Tibet as in earlier times. However, when the Chinese army occupied the length of the Tibetan border, a new and impenetrable barrier was erected against Lo/Mustang's ability to conduct trade.

Lo/Mustang is now undergoing a period of cultural isolation. In the north, the Lo-pas deal with Chinese army personnel and provide them with useful goods. In the south, a brand of western modernity, in the name of tourism development, is penetrating this "Shangri-la." After the opening of upper Lo to foreigners, cultural artifacts have been stolen, and presumably directed into European and American markets (Shackley 1995: 178).

After the incorporation of Junilâ into Nepal both the rulers and the people of Lo/Mustang felt free, as if they were really emancipated from the clutches of a devil. Local chronicles and tax records of Lo/Mustang clearly attest to such feelings. To become a dependent of a stronger power, however, cannot constitute real emancipation. Changes in the central administration in Kathmandu began to affect the status of all of the dependent states in Nepal, and Lo/Mustang was no exception. When Gorkha/Nepal's territorial expansion campaign ended after the Anglo-Nepal war of 1815-1816, the power elites in Kathmandu felt they would no longer need military help from dependent principalities, including Lo/Mustang. Kathmandu's main interest after 1816 was its financial resources. As Lo/Mustang's yearly tribute to Nepal was so small, Kathmandu paid little attention to it. Consequently, Lo/Mustang had to struggle with the challenges of the local power elites of lower Lo, the Khri-thog-pa chiefs of Jharkot and after the establishment of the Rana regime in Nepal, with the Thakali Subbâs of the Thak-Dan Customs Office. The yearly income generated from lower Lo and the Thak-Dan Customs Office was much higher than the amount of yearly tribute collected from Lo/Mustang proper to the north. Furthermore, both of these local elites had maintained closer contact with the central administration of Nepal by means of their financial strength and, reputedly, their flattery. Lo/Mustang thus lost both its status and income accumulated from trade and
custom duty from lower Lo. The Rana regime in Nepal proved even worse for Lo/Mustang. During a century-long Rana autocratic regime, the traditional local power of the rājās of Lo/Mustang were diminished even further. The Thakali Subbās of Thak-Dan Customs appeared to be the actual regional powers in Lo/Mustang. Many of the traditional economic and political powers of the rājās of Lo/Mustang were gradually seized by the Thakali Subbās.

The revolution of 1951 further shook the establishment of upper Lo/Mustang. The rājā again lost his traditional status. Being backed by the young and educated Thakalis, the low-status Lo-pas fought against the rājās traditional right to levies and compulsory labor. One result of this activism was that even the old festivals of Lo/Mustang such as Tiji and Yartong were banned.

After Nepal's royal coup of 1961, King Mahendra established closer and more direct links with most of the traditional institutions in the kingdom. The Lo/Mustang rājā was one recipient of these attentions. Mahendra offered several higher honorary positions to the rājā of Lo/Mustang. Through a special royal decree, the festivals of Lo/Mustang, which were banned earlier, were also revived.

As the custom contract system was already abolished after the revolution of 1951, the Thakali elites were no longer the competitors of the rājās of Lo/Mustang. The rājā then reasserted his traditional status and power within the region. He was made a Pancha Coordinator (a new position designated by the Panchayat Government of Nepal) for ten village Panchayats of Mustang located north of Jomsom. After the democratic revolution of 1990, the local position of the rājā of Lo/Mustang has been, to some extent, diminished again. On the other hand, after the opening of upper Mustang to foreigners in 1992, the rājā of Mustang has been famed internationally as a symbol of very old and important historical Tibetan ruling dynasty. Locally too he still has a profound traditional influence within the Lo-tsho-dun area of upper Mustang and it is not of much surprise because the Lo/Mustang region has been continuously ruled for more than five hundred years by the same dynasty.2

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study cannot claim to be more than the political picture of a small frontier province and kingdom, which emerged, developed, and survived in a trans-Himalayan river valley and was often controlled by the

---

2 In 1982, when this researcher and colleagues informally interviewed the raja at the palace, the cries of a man being disciplined traditionally in another room could clearly be heard. Afterwards, members of the palace staff quietly informed us that the man had taken a legal matter to the local Nepali court at Jomsom, without informing the raja. Later, we learned that he was heavily fined.
stronger powers of western Tibet and the Himalayan areas of Nepal. Although this study is the first attempt to draw an overall picture of the political history of the Lo/Mustang region, other important aspects can, and should, be studied.

Future research on Lo/Mustang will have to include separate studies on surface archaeology. These should examine the art and architecture of forts, palaces, monasteries, and caves housing marvellous Buddhist paintings. These Buddhist and pre-Buddhist paintings and related structures might even constitute the most important venues for future research on Lo/Mustang. In order to construct a comprehensive picture of the region's religious history, such a study would also need to be supplemented by a matching study of contemporary Tibetan biographical literature. Many manuscripts containing the biographies of Buddhist scholars and Bon masters of Lo/Mustang are still preserved in Lo/Mustang, mainly in the Lo-tsho-dun area.

A separate economic survey can also be undertaken along with an investigation of nineteenth and twentieth-century trade activity in the Thāk region. In terms of anthropological work, however, some of Mustang is perhaps oversubscribed. It is true that over the past thirty years or so, European and American scholars have shown tremendous interest in the Thāk (Thākkholā) region and the Thakalis of Thākkholā. Consequently, dozens of academic works (articles, dissertations, and books) on Thakalis and the Thāk region are now available in libraries. However, until today, not a single research work covering the Lo-tsho-dun area of upper Lo and its links over time with the people of lower Lo has been produced. In order to investigate the cultural practices of the Lopa people and to elucidate the distinctions between the peoples of lower and upper Lo a separate ethnographic survey is essential. In addition, a more comprehensive work using the voluminous bibliographical sources available could follow. In short, various sources and approaches have yet to be tapped in studying aspects of Lo/Mustang, and of Himalayan studies more generally.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
BIBLIOGRAPHY


----. 1903. "The History of Nepal and Surrounding Kingdoms (1000-1600

----. 1905 and 1906. The History of Nepal and Surrounding Kingdoms (1000-1600) Vols. I-II. London: CPMDN.


----. 1988a. "svayambhusthita syāmarpā lāmā dasauriko tibbati abhilekha


Bibliography


The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

Contributions to Nepalese Studies 4: 57-75.


----. "To Be Kings of the North: Community Adaption and Impression Management in the Thakalis of Western Nepal" (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1978).


----. 1966. *Mustang, A Lost Tibetan Kingdom*. London: Collins and
Harvill Press.


Pettech, Luciano. 1953. *Missionari Italiani nel Tibet e nel Nepal* Vo. II. Roma: IsMEO


----. 1995. "For the Last Time Indology." A discussion paper presented to a talk program organized by the Department of Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures, Columbia University.


----. VE 2037 (1980). śāhakālaka abhilekha (Inscriptions From the Shah


Vitali, Roberto. 1996. The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang, According to mNga'.ris rGyal.Rabs by Gu-.ge mKhan.chen Ngag.dbang Grags.pa. Dharmasala: Tho.ling gTsug.lag khang.


174 The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)


Tibetan Language Sources

An agreement (written in Tibetan) signed in 1901 between Nepali and Tibetan officials regarding Nepal-Tibet border problem and issues related to Lo. MS from Mustang, 10 pages.


Blo-bo chos-rgyal rim-byon rgyal-rabs mu-thi-li'i ' (History of Lo). MS from Mustang, 64 folios.

Blo-bo rgyal-khab-kyi lo-rgyus (Historical Account of the Kingdom of Lo). MS from Mustang, sixteenth century, 16 pages.

Blo-rgyal khab-kyi khral-gyi bems-chag le-hu (The Tax Record of Lo, Including the Tribute Paid to Jumla). MS from Mustang, sixteenth to eighteenth century, 3 vols.


'Bri Yul gyi dkar-chags (An Account of Dhi Village). MS from Dhi, Mustang, 16 pages.
Bibliography

BSod-nams 'grug-rgyas, bla-ma. ed. Khu-nu brcis-min bstan-'jin chos-bzang-gyi lo-tho (The Khunu Calendar of Tibet).


----. Bla-ma'i rnam-thar rin-chen phreng-ba (Biography of rgyal-tshab Kundga' dbang-phyug). MS from Mustang, 32 pages.


----. Mkha-pa rnam-'j -pa'i sgo'i rnam-par bshad-pa'i rig-gnas-gsal byed. Tokyo: Toyo Bunko Vol. 43. (Printed from a 302 ff manuscript).


----. Rnal-'byor-gyi dbang-phyug rje-btsun bstan-'dzin ras-pa'i rnام-thar

Bya-btang stag-rtse sku-skye'i mgur-m'i phros-gu yangs rig-pa'i rtsed-'jo zhe-bya-ba (Biography of Lama Bya-btang-stag-rtse-ba). Xylograph from Mustang, fifteenth century.

Byams-chen gtsug-lag-khang-gi-ritsis sprod ban-phyag (A Descriptive Account of Religious and Other Objects of Byams-pa Temple of Mustang). MS from Mustang, eighteenth century, 15 pages.


Dga'-mi mkhar-gyi sprod-yig (A Descriptive Content of Religious and Other Objects Preserved in the Palace at Gami Village). MS updated until early nineteenth century, 29 pages.


Dpal-lidan bla-ma dam-pa [Dbang-phuyug dpal-lidan]. Chos-legs mtshan-can gyi rnam-thar yon-tan 'brug-sgra zhes-ba bzhus-so (Biography of Lama Chos-legs). Xylograph from western Tibet, originally written in 1520 and completed in 1524 by Chos-dbang rgyal-mtshan.


Glo'-lang gru thag-sum pung-khri dang dol-po yul sde rnams-kyi tshong-'grul skor du 'god-pa'i mchings-yig (An agreement signed in 1705 Between Lo, Jumla, and Parvat Concerning the North-south Trade and Transit). MS from Mustnag.

Gor-bod gnyis-kyis mthun 'brel chings yig (A Tibetan Copy of Gorkha-Tibet Border Agreement of 1847). MS from Mustang palace, 4 pages.


Inscriptions (inscribed on walls with fifteenth century frescos) from the Temples of Byams-pa and Thubs-chen in Mon-thang.


*Mgar-phug dgon-pa'i bca'-yig* (The Regulation of Gar-phug Monastery Issued by King Dngos-grub-dpal'-bar). MS from the personal collection of Pad-ma Lama of Gar-phug, Mustang.


Ngag-dbang khon-rab Thub-bstan legs-bshad rgya-mtsho, Bco-brgyad khri-chen. *Rin-chen phra-tshom* (Genealogical History of Lo (Mustang). MS, 38 pages from Mustang. A Nepali version of this text known as *mustanako rajaitihasa* is also availabe in the library of the raja of Mustang.


Ngag-dbang-'phrin-las rnam-rgyal (Karma wa-gindra [bi-dza-ya]). *Jo-bo
rin-po-che dngul-sku-mched-gsum rten-brten-par bcas-pa'i dkar-chag rab-dga'i glu-dbyangs (The Kha-char Kar-chag). MS written at the Kha-char monastery in Purang).


Rig-'dzin kun-bzang nges-dong-klong-yangs gsang-ba rtsal. 1976. A

Rnam-rgyal-dgon-gyi mo-lha (The Namgyal Molla). MS from Mustang eighteenth century manuscript by Bstan-pa-rgyal-mtshan of Mon-thang.

Rtsang-drang chos-sde dgon-gyi bca'-yig (A Royal Order Concerning the Regulation of the Tsarang Monastery, Mustang). MS from Mustang, nineteenth century.


Rtsang-drangs mol-gtams (The Tsarang Molla: Genealogy of Lo Ruling Family). A manuscript originally transcribed in Lo/Mustang from its oral form in the sixteenth century and updated later in the nineteenth century, 52 pages.

Rtsa-drang-rdo-rje gden-gyis bem-chag gsal-ba'i me-long (Historical Account of the Tsarang village). MS from Mustang, 12 pages.


Sangs-rgyas-phun-tshogs. 1976. Rgyal-ba rdo-rje-'chang Kun-dga'-bzang-


----. *Bod-rje lha-btsad-po'i gdung rabs mnga'-ris smad mang-yul gung-thang du ji-itar byung-ba'i tshul deb gter dwangl-long* (Genealogy of Gung-thang rulers). MS from Mustang. Another similar text (collected from the Library of Dujom Rin-po-che) is now preserved in the Himalayan and Inner Asian Resource Center at Trace Foundation, New York.

APPENDICES
APPENDIX I
ETYMOLOGY OF PLACE NAMES

LO OR LO-BO

The name Lo or Lo-bo has been in use for over fourteen hundred years. Although the Lo region is now known as Mustang, this name has no etymological link with the name 'Lo' or 'Lo-bo.' Tibetan sources provide at least five different spellings of the name Lo or Lo-bo: Glo, Glo-bo, Blo or Blo-bo, Klo, Klo-bo, Klo-yul, and IHo or IHo-bo. Of these, Klo, Klo-bo or Klo-yul are comparatively recent and less common (Wylie 1962: 10, 63; Jackson 1984: 6-7, 11 and notes 29-30, Vitali 1996: 532-536). The word Klo may likely have derived from the spelling of a different place name, Klo-yul in the southern frontier of Tibet. Authors of these sources in which the spelling Klo, Klo-bo or Klo-yul have been used for the names Lo or Lo-bo thus seem to have been confused with different place names.

In identifying the Lo region as one of the southern frontiers of the Tibetan speaking domain, the Ladakhi scribes used the name IHo. It is true that Lo was situated in the southern frontier of Tibet and the meaning of the Tibetan word IHo is south. However, Lo's local literary and Tibetan historical sources do not use this spelling. The pronunciation of Lo in most Tibetan dialects is quite distinct from that of IHo.

The two other spellings, Glo and Blo are used commonly in old Tibetan and local historical records. Of these, Glo is the oldest and most extensively used by both Tibetan and local scholars (Jackson 1984: 6-7, MHR: 3-10).

To determine the standard spelling of the name Lo or Lo-bo, one has to know the exact meaning of the original Tibetan word Glo and try to establish its relationship with the geo-political history of the kingdom. The Tibetan-Sanskrit translators (Lo-tsa-ba) have translated the Tibetan word Glo as frontier or a side of a larger object-state, country, region or even human body (Das 1979: 26, 712, Dhungel 1987: 6). Both Tibetan and the local people of Lo commonly identified the Lo region as a bordering area to the Tibetan cultural domain. The particle or suffix po and its spoken form bo with the name Glo may have been used to identify the state, rulers, and the people of Lo because in Tibetan, this particle signifies the agent. Thus, the meaning of Lo-po or Lo-bo would be the people, rulers, or state of Lo.

The other variety of spelling of the name Lo is Blo. Historical records related to Lo suggest that the trend of using this spelling is not as old as Glo. Tibetan writers never used the word Blo to identify the Lo region. In fact, the spelling Blo was adopted later by the local Lo-pa scholars. The word spelled in this manner is defined in the dictionaries of classical Tibetan by the terms 'mind,' 'intellect,' 'self' or 'soul' (Das 1983: 902-903). It seems likely that the spelling Blo was introduced at a later date by local scholars of Mustang, who, in fact, were trying to glorify their native land and its people.
However, some seventeenth-eighteenth century Ladakhi chronicles and the biographical scriptures from Dol-po have also used this spelling (Jackson 1984: 6, Namdak 1972: 455, Francke 1972: 83, 90, 96, 105, Snellgrove 1967: 286). In these cases, it seems that the authors were copying the spelling initiated earlier by the native scholars of Lo/Mustang, who were influential throughout both Lo/Mustang between the fifteenth and seventeenth century (Chapters 2 and 3).

In any case, both of these spellings Glo and Blo were in common use and they are identical in pronunciation. Both of them are meaningful in terms of Lo’s geographical situation, cultural and historical background. Because of the intensity of Buddhist religious and cultural activities in the region, Lo may have been identified with the word Blo or Blo-bo. In other respects the spelling Glo or Glo-bo is equally meaningful as a geographical demarcation.

**MUSTANG OR MONTHANG**

The present name Mustang is a corrupt form of the original Tibetan name of the capital of the Kingdom of Lo, which is traditionally spelt in Tibetan as sMon-thang and pronounced commonly in standard Tibetan as Mon-thang or in local dialect, Mondang or Modang. The name of the medieval capital township of Mon-thang now has been renamed as Lo manthang. There is no doubt that the name Lo manthang is derived from two different old Tibetan words Lo (Glo) and Mon-thang (sMon-thang). It is important to understand that the name Mustang was not synonymous with the name Lo as a region or kingdom. The older designation sMon-thang can not be equated with the Nepali district of Mustang as it appears on the map of modern day Nepal, though this covers the major part of the territory of the old kingdom of Lo.

The Indo-Aryan speaking Jumli and Parvate authorities later corrupted the original Tibetan name sMon-thang to either Mastang or Mustang. They intended to restrict the use of the older name Lo because Jumla and Parvat had snatched away the southern territory of Lo, leaving only a small area of upper Lo (the Lo-tsho-dun area) under the local administration of the Lo rulers. Jumlis and Parvate authorities then recognized the Lo rulers just as local governors (sde-pa) of upper Lo, which by then was more commonly known as Mostang or Mustang (MHR doc. 2, 4, 6-8 Tibetan).

With respect to the designation, sMon-thang, two Tibetan spellings appear in old written sources: sMon-thang and sMan-thang (Tsarang Molla: 9a, Wylie 1962: 10, 63. MHR docs. 15, 17, 20, 26-28, 30, 97, 154-155 Tibetan). The literal meaning of the Tibetan word sMon is "aspiration", "blessing", or a "good desire" (Das 1983: 992) and the word Thang means plain or flat land or surface (Das 1983: 568). Thus, the meaning of these two words together would be the 'flat land of aspiration.' In order to further glorify the history of their capital, local authors of Lo introduced their capital as Yid-smon-thang, which can be roughly translated as 'flat land of mind's aspiration' (Tsarang Molla fol. 9a, Jackson 1984: 11, n. 34. Das 1983: 1134).
This spelling has been supported by a popular legend of Mustang. The legend says:

Once when king A-ma-dpal was meditating, he saw the God (Buddha) blessing him. Having blessed the king, Buddha instructed the king to send his auspicious white goat with a bagful of gold towards the flat field near the residence of the king and to follow the goat until the goat would take a rest in the field. Then, the lord Buddha advised the king to build a palace in the spot where the goat took rest and slept. The king followed the divine advice accordingly. He freed his white goat to wander around the flat field with a bagful of gold. The goat began to descend from the mKha'-spyod-rdzong (where the king had his residence at that time) down towards the field. The king followed the goat. Having reached the field, the goat began to wander from one place to another. After grazing for several hours the goat got tired and took a rest in the middle of the field and fell asleep. Then the king ordered his people to build his palace there. The place then became popularly known as the place of divine blessing and the king's fulfilled aspiration (the story is transcribed and translated from an old legend retold by Lama bKra-shis bstan-'dzin, the abbot of Monthang chos-sde monastery).

The other spelling sMan-thang does not provide such a direct correspondence to Lo's geographic reality. In Tibetan, the word sMan means "medicine" (Das 1983: 989). If we accept this spelling, the meaning of sMan-thang would be 'the plain or flat land of medicinal herbs.' But no historical evidence has been discovered that suggests that Mon-thang area had an abundance of medicinal plants in history nor do the local traditional medicinal practitioners (Am-chi) believe that their ancestors were able to fulfil the demand of herbal plants from their own land. On the contrary, they say that the local traditional herbal/medical practitioners of Lo/Mustang have been collecting and importing medicinal herbs mostly from the mountain areas across the Tibetan border and in few cases, from distant mountains of Lo itself but not from the vicinity of Mon-thang proper. The local herbal practitioners believe that this practice has been followed by their ancestors for many centuries. Local historical sources of Mustang also supply ample information that Lo did not even have abundance of grassy fields. People of Lo had to take their grazing animals (cattle, yaks, mules, goats etc.) across the border to the Tibetan areas (MHR docs. 8, 31, 37 Tibetan). Furthermore, the word sMan-thang is not even close to the local pronunciation of the original name of Mustang because most of the Lo-pa people pronounce it as Mo-dang. Besides these, some authors of outside sources have spelt the name Mustang as Mon-thang or Mo-sdang (Francke 1926: 120). But these spellings are corrupted just to make easy to write and pronounce. In Tibetan,
the word *Mon* can be used to identify the people of other cultures especially the cis-Himalayan or southern mountain people (Das 1983: 976). It is clear that the people of Lo never considered themselves outsiders from the broader Tibetan cultural world. The other spelling, *Mo-sdang* is western Tibetan slang, used by the Ladakhi scriptures, but for a long time, it has been very common in local spoken dialect as well. Even though the Lo-pa people pronounce the name *sMon-thang* as *Mo-dang*, they never write it this way.

**OTHER PLACE NAMES**

After the incorporation of Lo/Mustang into the Kingdom of Nepal as a dependent state, the upper Lo region was also known as *Mustangbhota*. Nepali government documents dating between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries describe this name frequently. This name can also be seen in the maps prepared and published by the Survey of India. Early editions of Nepali maps have followed the same name. The appendage *Bhota* is a Sanskrit and Nepali name for Tibet and other places where ethnic Tibetans reside and maintain their cultural traditions.

The Mustang or Lo region has also been known to some outsiders as *muktiksetra* or *Grol-ba'izhing* (place of liberation), *Chu-mig-brgya-rtsa* (the hundred and some springs), *Sa-la-me-bar, rdo-la-me-bar, chu-la-me-bar* (place of blazing earth, stone, and water) (Jackson 1984: 7-8), 11-12, n. 39-41, MHR doc. 6, Dhungel 1987b: 1-15, Dhungel 1987c: 19-30).

The lower Lo area was also known by some other old names. Of them, *Se-rib* is the most ancient one. During and after the seventh century, the entire area of present day Baragaun, Panchgaun, and Thag or Thakkhola was known by a single symbolic name *Se-rib* (Jackson 1984: 198-99, Bacot 1940-46: 29-30, 41-42, Francke 1926: Pt. II: 83, Stein 1972: 60, Snellgrove 1967: 166, 250). But after the rise of Lo/Mustang as an independent kingdom, the name *Se-rib* of lower Lo faded from use. Today, the local, people of the region are unfamiliar with its old name. Yet, at least remains of this name can be found in the oral tradition of the Hindus of the middle-hills of Nepal. These middle-hill people still use a common term *Thagsebhote*, for all longhaired and *Phyu-pa* (bakhkhu in Nepali) wearing Tibetan or Tibetan origin *Bhotia* people. As most of these middle-hill people migrated eastward from the Karnali region, they were quite familiar with places and people of Thag and Se-rib (abbreviated together as *Thag-Se*) of the upper Kali Gandaki valley. In course of migrating to the east, these Indo-Aryan Hindus, seemed to be confused whether the old word *Thag-Se* was related to the place and people of Thag and Se-rib of the upper Kali Gandaki valley or it was just a derogative word used by them to identify all the Tibetan and high Himalayan Bhotiya people.

It is interesting to note that some Tibetan scholars of the eighteenth century have used a word *Ta-mang-se* in order to identify the people of the Thag area (Jackson 1978: 212, GDR: 5a-5b). The Thakali people of Thag
still introduce themselves by an old term Ta-mang. Similarly, the Tibetan speaking Lo-pa people of both upper and lower Lo still call the non-Tibetan language of the Thag area and several villages of Baragaun as Se-skad or Se dialect. Thus, the ethnic names Tamang-Se, Thag-Se, and the name of the dialect Se of Thag-Baragaun or lower Lo must have original link with the old regional name Se-rib. The Nepali name Thakasatasaya or Thakasatasae of the Thag region may have also been corrupted from the same old Tibetan name Thag-Se or Thag-Se-rib because the meaning of the Nepali word satasaya is "seven hundred." But not a single satisfactory logic behind the renaming of the Thag region as Thakasatasaya can be found in historical sources. This name may have arisen during the period of enforced Nepalization of the area through the ambitious Thakali custom contractor subbas of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These Thakali subbas tried their best to identify themselves as a distinct ethnic group, and always tried to link their origin with the Khasa rulers of the Karnali region. To prove their ancestral link with the Khasas, they invented different stories and pretended to be of Indo-Aryan Hindu origin. In doing so, they distinguished themselves from other Tibetan origin communities of Lo/Mustang. However, as the Thakali people of Thakkhola are still known as Ta-mang and the name Ta-mang has direct link with the name Se, they are still identified with the descendants of the people of old Se-rib, who probably had ancestral link with one of the six early tribes of Tibet, popularly known in Tibet as Se (Das 1983: 1273). An official letter issued from Potala palace in 1747 to a Thakali chief named Pad-ma rig-dzin introduces the Thakali community as the people of pure Tibetan descent and followers of Tibetan Buddhism (MHR doc. 8). However, it is also possible that they have crossbred throughout their migration to the south.

Other names of Tibetan and Nepali origin such as Kag-Baragaun, Thini-Garab-rdzong, Sum-po or Panchgaun were also popular in the lower Lo area. Of these, the names Baragaun and Panchgaun are Nepali numerical terms originally used by the Jumli, Parvate, and later by Nepali administrative authorities in order to identify the area of twelve major villages between Samar and Klu-brag and the area of five major villages between Klu-brag and Tukche. The Baragaun area thus includes the major villages known as Samar, Chelep, Chuksang, Tetang, Tangbe, Dzar (including the Muktinath area), Dzong, Choskhor, Purang, Tiri, Kag, Klu-brag etc. Kagbeni, Dzar, and Dzong were the major administrative centers in Baragaun. All of these village names are Tibetan by their origin and that were adulterated later in Nepali writing. In different historical times, Kag (Nepalized as Kagbeni) was famous for its north-south trade and custom check post established by the rulers of Lo/Mustang and Jumla. The name of this place is a Hinduized form of Tibetan word bKag (MHR doc. 2 Tibetan),

---

1 For map, please refer p. 11.
which means a checking or blockaded place on a major transit route (trail) (Das 1983: 59). Though this name alternatively appeared with the spelling sKag in local and Tibetan sources (Francke 1972: 230), etymologically, the spelling bKag offers a more meaningful reference to Kagbeni's history as a place of local check-post and custom office.

The collective name, Panchgaun is simply a Nepali name for five local villages: Thini, Shang, Marphag, Chero (Tshad-ro), and Nabrungrg. The custom of naming regional entities according to the total number of encompassed villages in that area was Tibetan rather than Nepali. For example, until the early nineteenth century, the Panchgaun area did not have five villages and Thini-Garab area was known as a district of three villages (in local writing Sum-po, a corrupted spelling of Tibetan numerical word gSum-po). In some sources this name is also written as Som-po.

Like Kagbeni, Thakkhola is also a Nepalized version of the original Tibetan name Thag. The latter part of this name Khola is a pure Nepali word for river. In Tibetan, Thag means 'a distant, remote, or abandoned place' (Das 1983: 566). It is quite understandable that, in the eyes of central Tibetans, the Thag region cannot be other than a remotest frontier district of the greater Tibetan cultural world. An official order concerning the Thakali trading community, issued from the Potala palace in 1748 identifies the Thag region as one of the "remote and abandoned province of darkened frontier" of Tibetan cultural world (MHR doc. 8 Tibetan).
Appendix II
Nepali Documents

Document No. 1 (MHR document no. 154, Nepali)

An order of Sardar Amarsimha Thapa to the people of Upper Mustang and Upper Dolpo area concerning general order to join hands with the Gorkha Army, date: circa 1788 (1845).

1. स्वस्ति श्री सदर अमर सिंह थापा कस्य पत्रम् ........
2. आगे लांच्चो. व्याहाम्. पाल्मा ये लागुम. तुर्या का घा
3. दु बुढा सभ प्रजा प्रति. गोर्ष को प्रताप बढन्यैछ. आज
4. ताहा अनप्रतापि पछि लाग्रा.हाम्रो अस्वल हुदाको
5. दिन.लक्ष्मीकामु हुदामा.रुगवनु.सकिन्या छै
6. न.तस्वर्ण आज अधि तिम हेतु लाई हाम्भ्रा जानिमको
7. पाउ भनिन पिंछा पति आया. पर तिम्रा धन जिय मान म
8. ज्यादा.स्थिति विनि पति पाउला.रहला.पति काजि को
9. दसपति पति अधि तिम हेतु लाई पढाउर्कोमहो पु
10. यहो हो.पत्र देशत. एक मन एक चित गरि ठिठुवा र
11. भड्डारी माफ्त गरायो गरि आब सर्वथा ३ ताइ
12. गाउल्याले फौज ढोन्याइ.लेऊ अधि मान्या र.उन्नो
13. वन्याकै छ आज पति तिम्रा तस्वी गरी बन्न्या छ.वैसा
14. छ. शुद्धि ५. रोज ७ शुभम्.............

Measurement: 18.5 x 22.5 cm
Collection: Tharchin Ghale, Samar, Mustang

Document No. 2 (MHR document no. 164, Nepali)

An order of Jumli King Virabhadra Shahi regarding free labour (porter) from Chuksang and Tetang villages, dated 1701 (SE 1622)

श्री बदरी नाथी जयति ।
श्री मुक्ति नाथ सहाय।

1. (स्वस्ति) श्रीमान्के १६२२ चैत्र मासे दिन गता भावन
2. कृषि पक्षे अदृष्टामाया निथी उत्तराष्ट्र नक्ष
3. वे शुक्रवासरे खिन्नाशिम रजस्थाने श्री मा
4. हा राजा विर मद्रा शाहि ज्य कि मया. छुकाल
5. उपर मया येशि भैछ इसका ...... आदि:
6. का अन्त लगू बक्किश दियाछौ: जस्ता गरि
7. तेताल: ताइति: पुन्नजानको हुलाकृ दिन्ना: उ
8. स्तो गरि छुकाल ले दिनु छ: गन्निक उजो फि
9. रि जा: काणु शेतो होइ जात: यो आफ्ना फि
10. रि जा विन्न्या र ज्यु साइ ज्यु: ठिठोपुका नम्
11. ग्यालु विद्या लिखित शाळिङ पशुपति जोधिङ

Collection: Traditional Village Assembly, Chuksang

Document No.3 (MHR document no. 165, Nepali)

An order of Jumli King Surath Shaha concerning the dispute related to the use of natural salt by Chuksang and Tetang villages, dated 1725 (SE 1646).

श्री वद्रि नाथो जयति
श्री मुक्ति नाथ सहाय

Black Conchshell Seal

1. स्वस्ति श्री शाखे १६४६ मा ..... 2. तिथिः १२ वासरे २ नक्षत्रे १३ 3. छिं ना शिम् रजस्थाने श्री माहा 4. राजा शुरु चाह ज्यु कि मया 5. वेष्ण शैच्छ छुकाल तेताल उ 6. पर छुकाल तेताल को नु 7. न्या पानिको लामिको राडो के 8. दि मया शैच्छ तुन्या पानि दु 9. हूँ कै शाज्ञा को पापि म या शैच्छ 10. तुन्या पानि वेष्ण शानु भया दु 11. हुइँले वेष्ण शानु छ नु 12. न्या पानि को पाऊतु शानु छुका 13. न को शानु छुकाल ले शानु 14. तेतालको शानु तेताल ले शानु 15. पिटा पिटा राडो दुइँले नगरुन 16. नोलाका पानि लागि र नै कु 17. लो तेताल ले नकाडनु पुरा 18. नु कुलो छुकाल ले नथकुन्तु 19. जो ठिठोपुका शैत्र विप्स्नान ले गरि 20. दियोछ त्येइ राष्टु मिनि जुठि छाप 21. नु शेहा शाहबा गनु जो तलिङ्प्रि
An order of Jumli Prince Suryaman Shahi to the people of Chhuk Village concerning the decrease of yearly levy payable in grain, dated 1765 (SE 1686).

1. (in Tibetan letters) गर्लु-पो छेन-पो-यी सुत-प सह-च छग-यी चि-रे चिन्
2. सविंत्र श्री साके ९६८६ श्री सुर्ज साहब
3. ज्यु को आयया पुराना धान बाला मा न
4. रि येस छापु पात को सैराथि मया पैछ ज्या
5. केंड्र बाटु दस का आठ पाचका चार गाँरि
6. हुए रोया दुबाउन् हुकम् तारु छः या दे
7. यि अदिक केन्ले गनु नाइः हुकम्या ठिठु
8. कुण विस्तार भडारि ले थां दैष अदिक
9. गनु नाइः विनुत्या रुखारा ज्यु शुभम्
10. लिषित सात्तिय विशुभाध्या .........

An order of the Prince of Jumla concerning special custom facilities to the traders from Tetang, dated 1782 (SE 1703).

श्री वद्रि नाथो जयति
श्री मुद्रि नाथ साहय

Black
Conchshell
Seal

1. कौँ सविंत्र श्री शाहेबजु को आयया ..... 
2. श्री शाके १७०३ .... दिन मारो: तेताल उपर म 
3. या वेसः ९ वर्ष से मा दिया को जी छापु
4. मछल्त्र: तसः छा ......... । त को शैछ्छ त्योछापु 
5. पात् किसले फाल्नु नाइः थाक नुन्तानें
Document No. 6 (MHR document no. 167 'kha', Nepali)

An order of the Prince of Jumla concerning special privilege to the residents of Tetang village.

An order of the Prince of Jumla concerning special privilege to the residents of Tetang village.

Additional lines written vertically in the left hand side of the document

1. दानका मानिषमा दिया हो
2. चा वर्षस लगु दुःख नदिया धाक ब्यापार बेल्या नुनको मा
3. नु गानु नाई

Measurement: 30 x 16.5 cm
Collection: Nherpa, Tetang.
Document No. 7 (MHR document no. 186, Nepali)

An order of King Ranabahadur Shah of Nepal concerning special privilege to Thithogpa Palgon of Jharkot, dated 1788 (VE 1844).

Measurement: 15 x 17.9 cm
Collection: Chhimi Dorje Bista, Jharkot.

Document No. 8 (MHR document no. 194, Nepali)

Document concerning monetary and slave transaction between Thakali Subba Balbir and Thithogpa Subba Dorje of Jharkot, dated 1857 (VE 1914).

Measurement: 15 x 17.9 cm
Collection: Chhimi Dorje Bista, Jharkot.
Document No. 9 (MHR document no. 196, Nepali)

Document related to monetary transaction and slave between Thakali Subba Balbir and Thithogpa Subba Dorje of Jharkot, dated 1861 (VE 1918).

1. लिपित सुब्जा बलबी आये सुब्जा धौर्ज्य विष्टे ले अंध पेम्बा ल्हामो कमारी
2. आमा छोरा २ ज्यू मलाइ घटक गरी दीया मा नीज कमारी ले उजुर ग
3. दौ कमारी सहर गराई दीनु सकीनो भन्ना नीज कमारीका आमा
4. छोरी ४ ज्यू को ह ३०० तिरीला भनी सुब्जा बलबी लाई तस्मूक लेयि
5. दीया मा आज कमारी सहर गरी मलाइ दीदा निज कमारी आ
6. मा छोरी बुम्बि लि तिन संये हृप्या को तस्मूक तपाउदा तस्मू
7. क वेसरद गरी फारख लेयि दी यू साच्छी सुब्जा ठोपकेल को
8. पंच कचरह रुपमु उ रुहु न लोक दोजिय महादी ग

Measurement: 13.2 x 18.8 cm
Collection: Chhimi Dorje Bista, Jharkot.

Document No. 10 (MHR document no. 229, Nepali)

An order of Jumli King Surath Shah concerning the regulation related to the use of common grazing field occupied by Chhengur and Jharkot villages, dated 1733 (SE 1655).

| Black Conchshell Seal |

1. ढो झस्ति श्री महाराजको राज्यक्ष
2. श्री शाके १६५४ श्रावण मासै दिन गता ११ येका
3. दया तियो अनुराधा नखेत्रे वृक्षबाट र निकु
4. ग टुवा डांडा रजस्थाने श्री महाराजा सुरथ साह
5. ज्यु फिक म्यारेरिय झिङोरि उपर म्यारेरिय बैछ
6. कटुकको माफ गरी म्याबैछ मुण्डि र पुडन
7. वशागो बोडाको म्यालारीपि म्या मयाको
8. झो काप्ल झाटाक ठिकोक्प ले जोत्याहाल
9. न्ते झिङोरिले हिदुनु धार्मिक घोडा गो
10. झापा पाठा बाप्रा ज्याके इ लिणतम बाप्रा यो
11. ज्या गयादिन विद्यायको झिङोरि दियाको धी
12. यो त्येक गरुँदु अर्थात नौलो गरु छैन प
13. ते शाच्छि शाताधन शाइ गोसाङ्ग हितराज भ
14. ति राजा विष्टा जलाल महात्र हुक्या नाथु पा
An order of Jumli Prince giving special privilege to the people of Chhengur village concerning the regulation related to grazing field, trail etc., dated 1751 (SE 1673).

श्री बदिनाथो स्वतिः
श्री मुक्तिनाथ शहाय

१. ऊँ स्वति श्री शाहेब ज्यु को आया
२. श्री शाहके नौटौँ आयाद माछे दिनगता ५६
३. छिङोरी उपर मयायेशिमै; दूलो न
४. हुक्म; नानु: ... शैर दाउरा लगु: ज
५. स्तो पुरानु बाटो शो; तस्तै गरी छिङोरिले
६. दिनु; माग्नाले माग्नु; पुरानु बाटो
७. छिङोरिले नघाटाउँ; पुराना बाटादेशि
८. अदिको गरी छिङोरी कन कलिले दुः दि
९. नु घैन; हुक्मा कन येक फिल्लापु काक
१०. पुराण दुईनु छ; येक फिल्लापु; हुक्मा मु
११. गु छेत्र गया होलि गाउँलाई दुईनु छ अ
१२. र केड दुईनु नाई भन्दाछुन; दुवसाति
१३. गाई थपालाको लेषोगारी मुबाकोरनताक
१४. आउन्याहो; छिङोरबाट गाई आउन्या हो
१५. इन भन्दा छन; लिल्यां जान्या जोल्या वटा
१६. ला; पुरा शरमन्या हुन् छिङोर; रहन्या
१७. हुइन भन्दाछ्नु; पांजो उघाइना को; थ
१८. पाणी पांजो हुयाहो; गाउँ पांजो हुया हो
१९. इन भन्दाछनु र; जस्तो पुरानुबाटो हो
२०. त; छइनु नाई; पुराना बाटादेशि अर्
२१. याल गरी; छिङोरी कन दुः दिनु नाई
२२. शुभ मस्त
Document No. 12 (MHR document no. 241, Nepali)

An order of Jumli Crown Prince dated 1786 (SE 1707) giving custom privilege to the people of Kagbeni particularly to import grain from south.

श्री बंग नाथो जयति
श्री मुक्ति नाथो सांय

1. ऋतू स्वास्ति श्री गोसाई ज्यो को आयर्या ...........
2. श्री साके १७०७ जेड़ मासे काकिगाउल्या उपर भं
3. या रेसि मैच्छः ९ छ वर्ष लगु: दान को मान्यु: उदा ले
4. ष को नुन को मान्यु भन्यु: उबा लेखको : अन को मान्यु
5. न भन्युः दान ले ये कुरै मान्यु छानुः काकि गाउ
6. ल्या दुः दियु चाइइैन छ्छ मा हामिले दिद्याभ्यासः जो
7. का कि माउल्या दुः देला: ल्यो राजाको साईदयो छ शुभम्य

Measurement: 18 x 15.5 cm
Collection: Angyal Bista, Kagbeni.

Document No. 13 (MHR document no. 264, Nepali)

An order of Jumli Prince known as Hitaraj Bhaktiraja Bista dated 1740 (SE 1661) concerning disputes between different villages of Baragaun.
Document No. 14 (MHR document no. 265, Nepali)

An order of Jumli Crown Prince concerning dispute between Muwakot (Zong) and Tetang villages.

श्री बड़े नाथो जयति
श्री मुक्ति नाथ साहाय
वड़ाज्यू

1. उं त्वरित श्री साइजू को आया
2. सरदार सहित सब जान्या परंत्वा
3. ति उपअंग्या वेंस बं लग मूल्यां
4. को दि तेताल राडिया का छण्ट भनिं सु
5. न्यु र, जस्तो गारि पूणा शाय आन्या
6. थियौ तस्ती गारि पानुङ्ग, जब यौस
7. धल नजुड़ाया हलिर, अध्यार ..... 
8. को वर्गित भयाको छाप पात
9. मूल्या कोटिपन्न छ मंद्रा छण्ट, ते ता
10. नु पनछ मंद्रा छण्ट र, ति छापु
11. पात हेरि दिनु छ, छाप पात हेन्या
12. उपान्तित जस्तो निकल हा मुर्थि भ
13. ति हाल्या शुभमस्त

Measurement: 22.2 x 13.3 cm
Collection: Ghemba and Katuwal, Zong Village.

Document No. 15 (MHR document no. 266, Nepali)

An order of Jumli King concerning dispute between Muwakot (Zong) and Tetang.

1. उं स्वरित श्री माहाराजका रजाइशु .........
2. ठिटोक्स्का हृद्याय भंडारि दाँनि प्रति याका शामा
3. चार .... फिकिपिले भला छुन्न तां का शामाचार भ
4. ला चाइन्तेताले र मुगाकोटिका राडा का अर्थ
An order of King Shahibam Malla of Parvat concerning regulation over Thini-Panchgaun and pilgrims to Muktinath, dated 1667 (SE 1589) [This document is written in Tibetan and Nagari scripts but language is parbate (old Nepali)].

9. लक्ष्मीमी नारायण सहाय देफता (देवता) मानु
10. देवोदा गो शेवाय गन्नु अंड सप्त ग्री महाराजा
11. धिमारः साही मलग्छी (को) आया छो ठिन्याल, पा
12. च, दीयाँच थिए सो खो को हेक लागोछ पाँच
13. ले हावायो घो राजा गन्नु ज्याआयाय (गाव) हो
14. सो मानु ब्राम्न मानु लामा मानु श
15. न्याशी जोकी (जोगी) मानु तीर्थ मानु अन्
16. न दारुक्का दिनु भावाद गन्नु मीठो कुरा गर
17. नु यो निति चलनु येसो गरे ना (मा) जी
18. हा होला सुगु (सुख) पाउला खेती वेपार स्प्राला
19. येसे निति चलनु छ राजा रानी आहुं
20. ता (दा) रामोरी गरी फर्छुँ लामा ले छुट्टे (छुटैः)
21. पर्छुँ ठिन्याल, लोमुस्ता (को) हायालिं हुट (छुटैः) पर्छ
22. नु सोसैनीलिछुट (छुटैः) परछुँ लस खस
23. नही गन (गन्नु) जोहो सो गरी परछुँ दुईई
24. से रहुँसे डाँँनु राजा आये भन्नु
25. ने सुन्दा डा दुईई तीर्थ दिनु अघ्य न (ने) टोसामा
26. गन्नु तस परछुँ उ सरन नामाः

(text after this line can be completed properly from Nepali section)

Nepali section (text above this line is missing but it can be completed from Tibetan script section)

9. (जो मा) निसु (माराला जो बचा चो) रि लुकाई वेचला उ एके हो
10. उस कन मार्नु उसका परीबार दुमिनु भावदिनु यो म
11. ज्याको पाप उसका सिर रासिन्य छिरिको विति गर्दी थाकुँ
12. सि पाप अंतर पस्माछ्नु जो जियाउँ गर्नु बुडा बुढा उनी (क)
13. न मार्नु धारानु यो पाप उनेरको सिरु एसु नितिमाहा जो र
An order of Parvate King Kirtibam Malla concerning land grant to Sangliram of Thak, dated 1766 (SE 1688).

Document No. 17 (MHR document no. 308, Nepali)

An official letter issued by the Department of Finance to Gulmi District Land Revenue Office concerning the position and privilege of Mustangi Raja, dated 1955 (VE 2012).
An order of Parvate King Kirtibam Malla concerning border dispute between Marpha and Thak villages, dated 1763 (SE 1685).

1. Parbat Rajkale lepideyakako nalkal
2. Svarup Shrimaharaj kirtimamalajsukulako aaja
3. Sab aadha hajari vashe chakshu pudyalako saad heri voldo su
4. Thani charo chhadwa saad sahaji dechampu vadey vawang saaja garir ch
5. Tho thalimeko thala thakshule odhun thalimeko gori soyamat
6. Pus pudyalare kamaun dorchamako dafaako saad raheyu fadey
7. V wange jana thicho pudyaarile nahto puddyalare hini jo diewako
8. Vashe dinko duw rupayu dino bhan saad raheyu yees watawa jho
Collection: Mukhiyas of Thakhalga, Kopang

1. भाषा गर्न अर्थ गर्दा गर्ने
2. अन्य संदिग्ध नेका भएका यामा पटकर गर्ने
3. विवेक लाई गर्ने
4. स्थान र विषयक जानकारी
5. समय र वर्तमान
6. नयाँ निर्णय
7. नयाँ विषयक
8. नयाँ विषयक
9. नयाँ विषयक
10. नयाँ विषयक

(शुल्कमारी)

पुनः प्राप्त गरिएको

टिप्पणी:

झस्लाई आदेश सम्बन्धमा, १७८९ (सं. ७१०)

An order of Parliament King Kirtipram Mahal concerning the settlement of a case related

Document No. 20 (MIN document no. 326, Nepal)

Collection: Mukhiyas of Thakhalga, Kopang
Document No. 21 (MHR document no. 334, Nepali)

An old document concerning the agreement between Lhasa and Jumla to exchange territories of Taglakhar and Mustang.

9. हाम्रा वाज्या विरवत साहि र ल्हासाका राजा कालिद्वारि ल्हासा
10. मा वसि ताक्कापार मस्तको व्यहोरा भिनाउन्या जुमला लाई दिन्या
11. वुसाउन्या कराको वन्दोवस्त र धर्म गन्याका व्यहोराका पोजी पछि
12. लैधान, हाम्रे स्न्यासिले अधि हाम्रा पुर्याले। गन्याको वन्दोवस्ता
13. भोट्याले रायाको रहेन छ भन्या हाम्रे स्न्यासिले गन्याको कृ
14. केहि पुंग आउन्या छैन, स्न्यासिका प्रिस्ति तत्त्वाय वस्तनु भो भन्या
15. दियाको बन्या र अझायको गन्यार हजुरकी हो, अफ्ना वुढ्र अनसार
16. जाजट भरको टहल गरिन्छै छ।


Document No. 22 (MHR document no. 45, Nepali)

An order of King Ranabahadur Shah to Mustang Raja Wanggyal Dorje concerning yearly tribute to Kathmandu and Lhasa.

9. स्वास्ति श्रीगरिण्या चक्रवर्द्धिति नर्नारायण्यात्यादि विविधविद्वादवी
10. विराज्ञान मानोस्त्वत श्रीमन्महाराज्ञाधिराज श्रीश्रीमहाराजे रण-
11. वहादुर शाह वहादुर सस्मेजु देवाना सदा समय विजयीनाम - -- -
12. स्वास्ति श्रीस्वामामा योपेत्यादि राजभरासामार्थ, श्रीमुखिमादिवा बाय्या-
13. लु दोजेको सलाम पूबक पत्रसिद्द जहाँ कुशल ताहा कुशल चाहि
14. ये आगे जाहाँको सम्चार भरो छ उप्राण्त लासा चीनसंग घा भरो
15. तस्मथ तिम्या तेसू देवसिक हिजो पर्यापडेल्प लासालाई केहि द-
16. स्तूर दि आयाको भया हिजोका रिसंग लासालाई दिन्या गर पर-
17. तु लासाका मार्नस्तिम्रा अमलमा आईकन तहीलुन नया-
18. उन्न लायाको तिमले दिन पठाउन्या गर जो जुमलालाई दिन-
19. वहाँ धाङ्कभन्नसाल भस्तु हाम्रा हजुर ल्याउन्या गर हिजो दु-
20. वर्तिकाको हाम्रा हजुर ल्याउनु गरी पत्रमवस्ता धर्म आज लासालि-
21. र जो जाछ खस्को मिनाहा उसप्लामा लेखियामाख्येकस्तोला कि-
22. मधिकु मतिभ आचार युद्द १६ रोज १ मुकाम कालिपूर शुमभू

Collection: Raja of Mustang, Currently at CNAS, T.U.

Document No. 23 (MHR document no. 64, Nepali)

A letter of P.M. Phatyajang Shah to the Village Heads of Nar and Nyshang villages concerning yearly tribute from those villages to Mustang, dated 1846 (VE 1902).

श्री
9. स्वास्ति श्रीमोहितीया फत्तबज साहाकस्त्व पत्रम् … … … … … …
10. आगे नार निस्तानका वार मुषिया भला मानिस गैढको यथोचित उप्राण्त परापुर्व दे
3. Collection: Raja of Mustang, currently at CNAS/TU.

**Document No. 24 (MHR document no. 73, Nepali)**

A letter of Thakali Subba Balbir to Raja Jamyang Wangdi, dated 1862 (1919)

श्री

श्रीजनरल श्री मृत्युनाथ

1. व्यस्तश्री मुस्ताइका राजा ज्येष्ठा ओंदीका चरण सुखा वल्लोरको सल
2. मृ उपान्त तपायावट चिह्नि र मानीस समेट ् पठाउनु हुँदा स्वच्छि ठूबो
3. जीम मित डिहालाई बितीपत्र लेख्याँ र ... का दरसन निमित्या जाहा
4. पालनुभो धिङ्गुमा र जानन भेन्नुहुँ: साक्ये लामालाई आवोल
5. नलाङ्या मुस्ताइन्ग राजालाई थाक्का आवोल लाग्न्याले ...... ।
6. साहिकाको दस्तक् समेट पोसीन्या भयो: मलाई नमानाको हो
7. इन २ साहिकाका नेटवारकोहो भनी भेन्नु हुँदा तपाईका
8. नाउमा वेहोरा वरावर अर्जिनेवारको पनि रहेछ; इस जानी मै
9. ले धुन्दा ४५५ दीनलाई .... मा थामीराख्याको छु आजका
10. ३४ दीन सम्म ... मा तपाई पालनु हवस् अर्जिनगायणी था
11. मृन्या वेहोरा गरला भगदापानी अस्थ्या केही छैन जाहा पा
12. लुङ्छुन्छु भनि तपायलाई केहीकुरोमा पनी गाठोपार्न दीन्या छैनी भ
13. गहा पनि ४५५ दीन मा छैनुभा वेहोरा गरला: पालनु भेन्नी भन्या पद्ध
14. तपायलाई विध्यास पन्नलाजा स्व बुबनुभे: आजका ३४ दीन
15. मा .... मा पालनु होला ज्यादा कहातक लेख्या १९९९ साल:
16. श्रावण सुदी १९ रोज ३ काक्षेनी शुभम् .... ... ... ...

Collection: Raja of Mustang, Currently at CNAS/TU

**Document No. 25 (MHR document no. 91, Nepali)**

A petition letter to Subba Chandrakanta Arjyal from Mustangi Raja Ngodup Palbar concerning Thakali Subba Balbir's suppression against Lo (Mustang).

श्री

1. व्यस्तश्री ब्रह्माकर्म चारवेद म = ् न मादेपु श्री ३ बाजे सुभा चन्द्रकान्त
2. दका चरण इत श्रीमस्तागी राजा इदेश्पपवर्को कोटी सेवा पा
3. उ लागी सतम् पुर्वकापत्र मीघ इत नीका तहा चरनका पाउ
Document No. 26 (MHR document no. 116, Nepali)

A letter from Thak-Dan custom office to Mustangi Raja Jamyang Palbar concerning the order of presence, dated 1909 (VE 1965).

Collection: Raja of Mustang; Currently at CNAS/TU.
APPENDIX III

TIBETAN DOCUMENTS

Document No. 1 (MHR doc. no. 1, Tib.)
Tsarang Bemschag (An Account of the Temple of Tsarang)

Page 464-467

[Text in Tibetan script]

Page 468

[More text in Tibetan script]
208 The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
Appendices 209
Appendices 211

Total Folios: 7, Measurement: 33.5 c. m. X 8 c. m.
Document No. 2 (MHR doc. no. 3, Tib.)
The dKar-chag Related to the Death of Prince Phuntsog rab-rten

The ringdroni of i,lo (hiustan&

Docunlerlt

No. 2 (MHR doc. no. 3, Tib.)
The dKar-chag Related to the Death of Prince Phuntsog rab-rten

The

dKar-chag

Related to the Death of

Yrirrce

Phurltsog

rab-rten

The dKar-chag Related to the Death of Prince Phuntsog rab-rten

The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
Appendices 215

མི་ཁོང་གི་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

91. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

57. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

41. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

1. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

6. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

11. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

16. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

21. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

26. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

31. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

36. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

41. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

46. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

51. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

56. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

61. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

66. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

71. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

76. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

81. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

86. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །

91. རྡོ་རྗེ་འཕྲིན་གཤེགས་པར་མངོན་གྱི་དབང་པོར་གྱི་ཐོན་པའི་ཤེས་བསྡུས་སོ། །
བོད་ལ་མུ་པོ་

The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
Appendices 217
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

8.18 The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
Appendices 221
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
Appendices 223
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
Document No. 3 (MHR doc. no. 4, Tib.)
Trade Agreement Signed Between Lo, Junila, Parvat, Thak, Thini, Marpha and Dolpo

"......"

"......"

"......"

"......"

"......"

"......"

"......"

"......"

"......"

"......"

"......"

"......"

"......"

"......"
This Document is from the Palace of Mustang
Document No. 4 (MHR doc. no. 5, Tib.)
A Royal Order Issued from Tsarang Palace bSam-grub dge-’phel in the Name of the Family of a Royal Priest from the Village of Chengor (Chos-khor)

This Document is from the Traditional Village Assembly of Chengor.

Document No. 5 (MHR doc. no. 6, Tib.)
An Order of the Dalai Lama Issued in the Name of Religious and Village Authorities of Different Tibetan Cultural Regions Related to Mustang-Junla Relitions
This Document is from the Palace of Mustang.

Document No. 6 (MHR doc. no. 7, Tib.)
Traditional Agreement Signed Between Mustang, Parvat, Jumla, Thak and Panchgau

This Document is from the Palace of Mustang.
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
Document No. 7 (MHR doc. no. 8, Tib.)
A Royal Order Issued from the Potala Palace to Pema Rinzin of Thakkhola

This Document is from the collection of the traditional village assembly of Thakkhola.
This letter is from the collection of Shankarman Sherchan of Tukche.
This document is from the collection of the traditional village assembly of Chenggor.

Document No. 9 (MHR doc. no. 13, Tib.)
A Letter from Sa-skya Abbot Jam-dbyangs bstan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan Related to the Construction of the Smon-chos dgon-pa in Lomanthang

This document is from the collection of the Monastery of Lomanthang.
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

Document No. 10 (MHR doc. no. 15, Tib.)
The Tsarang brGyad-stong-pa dKar-chag (Preface to the Manuscript Text of the Prajñāpāramitā)
Appendices 235
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

Document No. 11 (MHR doc. no. 15 'kha', Tib.)
The dKar-chag of Tsarang Ma-ni 'khor-lo chen-po (An Account of the Great Prayer Wheel from Tsarang)

In the year seventeen of the reign of King Songtsen Gampo, the Great Prayer Wheel of the village of Tsang-don was built in memory of Khyung-po Chodron, the old lama. The轮 was the gift of the people of Tsang-don. It was built with copper and bronze, and it contains a thousand sounds. The lamas of Chubung, a village near Tsarang, provided many prayers for it. They included prayers for the king, the queen, the minister, the charwoman, and the numerous lamas who were present. The轮 was built in the year seventeen of the reign of King Songtsen Gampo. It is a wonderful work of art. The people of Tsang-don are very proud of it.
Document No. 12 (MHR doc. no. 16, Tib.)
An Inscription from the Beginning Page of the brGyadstong-pa Deposited in the bKa'-'gyur Lha-khang of the Palace of Mustang

Document No. 13 (MHR doc. no. 17, Tib.)
Inscriptions from the Wall Painting of the Byams-pa lha-khang (Maitreya Temple) in Lomanthang

Ground-floor (southern wall of the circumambulatory passage, from right to left)

Ground-floor (frontside of the northern wall of the circumambulatory passage)
Ground-floor (eastern wall, righthand side of the main gate of the circumambulatory passage)

Inscriptions from first-floor
The Dkar-chag with golden letters, righthand side of the door
བོད་སྲིད་ལ་དོན་གྲོང་གི་དོན་དུ་མི་རོལ་བར་མཐུན་པས།

1. སྐྱེན་པའི་དོན་དུ་བལྟ་བཟང་བོད་པའི་དོན་པ།
2. སྐྱེན་པའི་དོན་དུ་བཟང་བོད་པའི་དོན་པ།
3. སྐྱེན་པའི་དོན་དུ་བཟང་བོད་པའི་དོན་པ།
4. སྐྱེན་པའི་དོན་དུ་བཟང་བོད་པའི་དོན་པ།
5. སྐྱེན་པའི་དོན་དུ་བཟང་བོད་པའི་དོན་པ།
6. སྐྱེན་པའི་དོན་དུ་བཟང་བོད་པའི་དོན་པ།

སེམས་དཔེ་གཅིག་གི་དོན་པ།

1. སྐྱེན་པའི་དོན་དུ་བཟང་བོད་པའི་དོན་པ།
2. སྐྱེན་པའི་དོན་དུ་བཟང་བོད་པའི་དོན་པ།
3. སྐྱེན་པའི་དོན་དུ་བཟང་བོད་པའི་དོན་པ།
4. སྐྱེན་པའི་དོན་དུ་བཟང་བོད་པའི་དོན་པ།
5. སྐྱེན་པའི་དོན་དུ་བཟང་བོད་པའི་དོན་པ།
6. སྐྱེན་པའི་དོན་དུ་བཟང་བོད་པའི་དོན་པ།

སེམས་དཔེ་གཅིག་གི་དོན་པ།
First-floor (eastern wall, lefthand side of the door)

Note: Among these five lines, inscription of line no. 3 and 5 has not been published by G. Tucci (1956: 23) but there is some difference in reading.

First-floor (from the same wall as above)

Note: Among these five lines, inscription of line no. 3 and 5 has not been published by G. Tucci (1956: 23) but there is some difference in reading.
Note: Tucci has published this inscription except line 1 and the last sentence of line 3 (1956: 22) but there is also some difference in reading.

First floor (Inscription from northern wall)
1. First floor (Inscription from northern wall)
2. First floor (Inscription from northern wall)
3. First floor (Inscription from northern wall)
4. First floor (Inscription from northern wall)
5. First floor (Inscription from northern wall)
6. First floor (Inscription from northern wall)
7. First floor (Inscription from northern wall)

First floor (Inscription from western wall, righthand side from the main deity)
1. First floor (Inscription from western wall, righthand side from the main deity)
2. First floor (Inscription from western wall, righthand side from the main deity)
3. First floor (Inscription from western wall, righthand side from the main deity)
4. First floor (Inscription from western wall, righthand side from the main deity)
5. First floor (Inscription from western wall, righthand side from the main deity)

First floor (eastern wall, righthand side from the door)
1. First floor (eastern wall, righthand side from the door)
2. First floor (eastern wall, righthand side from the door)
3. First floor (eastern wall, righthand side from the door)

Note: Line No. 2 of this inscription has also been published by Tucci (1956: 23).

First floor (from the same wall as above)
1. First floor (from the same wall as above)
2. First floor (from the same wall as above)
3. First floor (from the same wall as above)
4. First floor (from the same wall as above)
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

Note: Tucci has published this inscription but there is quite difference in reading particularly in line no. 1.

First floor (southern wall, from left to right)

1. [Inscription]
2. [Inscription]
3. [Inscription]
4. [Inscription]
5. [Inscription]
6. [Inscription]
7. [Inscription]
8. [Inscription]
9. [Inscription]

Note: Tucci has also published this inscription (1956: 23-24).

First floor (western wall lefthand side of the main deity)

1. [Inscription]
2. [Inscription]
3. [Inscription]
4. [Inscription]
5. [Inscription]

Note: Tucci has published this inscription except line no. 3.
Appendices

Document No. 14 (MHR doc. no. 18, Tib.)
Thubchen dTseg-lag-khang (temple of the great statue of Shakyamuni Buddha) dKar-chag

1 Thuhchen dTsu-lag-khaag (temple of the great statue of Shakyamuni Buddha)

2 Document No. 14 (MHR doc. no. 18, Tib.)
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

246 The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
Appendices 247
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

Note: In the beginning of this inscription there is a Sanskrit sentence written in Tibetan script which reads "mangalam bhavantu sarvada."

Document No. 15 (MHR doc. no. 19, Tib.)
Inscription from Thub-chen gtsug-lag-khang wall painting
Inner wall, lefthand side of the door (written in golden color)

Note: Line no. 2 & 3 of these have also been published by Tucci (1956: 22).

Inscription from the same wall describing sutra and deities above the previous inscription

Note: Tucci has published this inscription but there is some difference in reading

Inscription from western wall behind the mChod-rten attached to the wall, lefthand side of the main deity
Appendices 251

Document No. 16 (MHR doc. no. 20, Tib.)
The dKar-chag of the Byams-chen gtsug-lag-khang (mahamaitreya temple) in Lomanthang

The dKar-chag of the Byams-chen gtsug-lag-khang (mahamaitreya temple) in Lomanthang
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
Appendices 253
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
Appendices 255

Appendices

255

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
Appendices 257
258 The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
Document No. 17 (MHR doc. no. 21, Tib.)
An agreement letter (dharmapatra) from the Thakkhola area

An agreement letter (dharmapatra) from the Thakkhola area

An agreement letter (dharmapatra) from the Thakkhola area
Appendices 261
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
Appendices 265

Note. This very long and rolled document is from the collection of the village assembly of Marpha and it has 153 lines all together.

Document No. 18 (MHR doc. no. 23, Tib.)
A letter from the Sakya Lama of Sa-skya phun-tsogs pho-brang to the Lo ruler
A Royal order of King dNgos-grub dpal-bar issued to the lamas of Tsarang Gonpa of Mustang (date 1886 A.D.)

Note: The original letter is in the possession of CNAS, Tribhuvan University.
Appendices 269
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
Appendices 273
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
অন্যদিকে যে ফল্যর ক্ষেত্র স্পর্শ করে তা দেখতে পাওয়া যায়। যদিও মানের পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়। সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  সেহেতু এই পদ্ধতির উপর নির্ভর করে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদ্ধতির ক্ষেত্রে সমান মান প্রদান করা হয়।  

Appendices 277
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

Note: This letter is from the collection of the Tsarang Gonpa in Mustang. It has all together 158 lines and its measurement is 66X28.5 cm.

Document No. 20 (MHR doc. no. 31, Tib.)
A document related to the settlement of the border problem between Tibet and Lo (Mustang), date: c. 1901

A document related to the settlement of the border problem between Tibet and Lo (Mustang), date: c. 1901
280 The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)
Note: This document is from the collection of the family known as gZimkhang in Lomanthang.
Border treaty signed between Gorkha (Nepal) and Tibet, date 1847

Document No. 21 (MHR doc. no. 37, Tib.)
དེ་བོད་དང་། རྣམ་པའི་ལས་དེ་བོད་ནི་ཐོན་པོ་མ་བོད་འཐོང་བེད་བཞི་བོད་དང་། དེ་
རྩེ་བོད་དང་། རྣམ་པའི་ལས་དེ་བོད་ནི་ཐོན་པོ་མ་བོད་འཐོང་བེད་བཞི་བོད་
དང་། རྣམ་པའི་ལས་དེ་བོད་ནི་ཐོན་པོ་མ་བོད་འཐོང་བེད་བཞི་བོད་
"ཐོན་པོ་མ་བོད་འཐོང་བེད་བཞི་བོད་དང་། རྣམ་པའི་ལས་དེ་བོད་
དེ་བོད་དང་། རྣམ་པའི་ལས་དེ་བོད་ནི་ཐོན་པོ་མ་བོད་འཐོང་བེད་
དང་། རྣམ་པའི་ལས་དེ་བོད་ནི་ཐོན་པོ་མ་བོད་འཐོང་བེད་
"ཐོན་པོ་མ་བོད་འཐོང་བེད་བཞི་བོད་དང་། རྣམ་པའི་ལས་དེ་བོད་

"Appendices 283"
Document No. 22 (MHR doc. no. 42, Tib.)
An appeal issued by the 16th Karmapa regarding public donation for the renovation of d Gonpa bSam-drub gling in Mustang

Note: measurement: 132.5X30 cm.


Appendices 285
Document No. 23
The dKar-chag (introductory description) of Gad-smad gom-pa (Gami monastery in Mustang)

The Kar-chag (introductory description) of Gad-smad gompah (Gami monastery in Mustang) (1734 A.D.)
An Order of Jumli King Birbhadra Shahi concerning border dispute between Kag and Jhar-Zong villages of Baragaun, dated 1671

This document is from the collection of Khenpo (abbot) of Monthang Chodhe, Mustang.
PHOTO PLATES AND FACSIMILES
Township of Lomanthang under the majestic domination of five hundred year old forts, big and small Khachoye.
Fifteenth Century Palace of Lomanthang Known as Tashigephel.
Sixteenth Century palace of Tsarang, Samdup Gephel and The Tsarang Gonpa Shedupdargyeling.
Ghami Mathang (mani wall) believed to be the second longest in the whole Himalayan region and Tibet.
Tsarang Gonpa and old Jyangchub Chorten

Gyetongpa Front page of the (Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita) from the palace of Mustang
An old sculpture of Lo-bo Khenchen, Royal monk and Zhabdung of Tsarang Gon-pa, brother of the third independent Raja of Lo, sculptured in the 15th century.

An old sculpture of King Agon Sang-po, second independent ruler of Lo, sculptured in the 15th century.
Tsarang Old Gonpa wall painting and ground floor structure, Lomanthang
Old but historic caves from the Choshyar area.
The present Raja Jigme and Rani of Mustang in traditional royal dresses and ornaments.
Present Raja Jigme (in yellow dress and crown) and his security guard Ngodup participating in the Tenchi (Tiji) festival.
Present Gyalchung (Junior Raja) of Mustang in royal (left) and traditional (right) dresses
The author standing at the main entrance of the Lo-bo Gekar Gonpa.

The author standing at the Darlha pass near Lomanthang; behind the author is the walled township of Lomanthang and the mountains of the border area.
Present Raja Jigme inspecting the Royal library of Lo located inside the Kagyur Lhakhang of the palace in Lomanthang.

The Getongpa (Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita) from Tsarang with gold letters.
Present Raja Jigme holding mTshon-srung, a protecting tantric necklace like object used by his ancestors at war time.

A girl of Mhrang village standing by her cave dwelling where she was born, raised and is still living.
Remains of old Luri Gonpa, Ghangra Village.

The author examining historical documents of Dhi village with the traditional assembly.
Menchi Lhakhang (cave monastery from seventh/eighth century A.D., Chuksang)

Stone sculpture of Tara from Menchi Lhakhang, Chuksang, 7th/8th century (the oldest sculpture found in the upper Kali Gandaki valley)
An Order of King Surath Shah of Jumla dated 1733
(SE 1655) Doc. No.10 Nepali
The author standing at the gate chorten near Tsarang village

Village head and assembly members of Chuck village opening the old record box of the village for the author.
Order of Shahibam Malla of Parvat to the people of Thini-Panchgaun, dated 1667, doc. no. 16 Nepali.
Order of Jumli Prince to the people of Choskhor (Changur) village dated 1751 (SE1673), doc. no. 11, Nepali.
Order of Jumli king Surath Shah to the people of Chuktsang and Ttang village dated 1728 (SE 1649), doc. no. 3, Nepali.
Sardar Amarsingh Thapa's letter to the people of upper Kali Gandaki and Dolpa, dated circa 1787 (VE 1845), doc. no. 1, Nepali
Order (lalmohar) of King Ranabadur Shah to Raja Wangyal of Mustang
doc. no. 22, Nepali.
Order (laimohar) of King Ranabahadur Shah to Thi-thog pa Bista of Jharkot, dated 1805 (VE1861)
Order of King Girvanyudha to the Raja of Mustang dated 1810 (VE1867).
Order (lalmohar) of King Girvanyuddha to the Raja of Mustang.
Order (lalmohar) of King Rajendra to Mustang Rani Pemabuthi and Raja Kunganorbu (Son), dated 1837 (VE 1894).
Order (laimohar) of King Mahendra to Mustangi Raja Jigme, dated 1965 (VE 2022)
Old tax register of the Kingdom of Lo popularly known as Bems-Chag.
Sample from Bems-Chag-1
An old land tax record of Lo (Mustang)
The seal at the end of the document is the royal stamp and emblem.

The final page of a register of occasional levy impose and collected by the palace of Muste'a.
An old document related to the details of food and material collected and distributed on the occasion of a socio-religious function. The seal at the bottom is the official seal of the Raja of Mustang.
An annal of religious history of the Kingdom of Lo (Mustang), pages 16 & 17 from an incomplete old text.
INDEX
## Index (English)

Anglo-Nepal war ........................................ 12, 153  
Bacot .......................................................... 25, 43  
Bendal .................................................................. 23  
Boeye and Marullo ............................................. 35, 36, 54  
Bon 12, 15, 44, 45, 46, 48, 52, 53, 54, 119, 150, 155  
Buddhist 3, 12, 14, 16, 19, 20, 23, 25, 27, 28, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 54, 57, 61, 86, 87, 89, 92, 93, 94, 96, 97, 126, 119, 150, 155  
Buddhist Himalaya ............................................ 27  
C. Jest .................................................................. 32  
Central Asia ....................................................... 49, 57  
Chinese 16, 23, 43, 44, 45, 50, 95, 125, 127, 138, 140, 153  
CNAS ..................................................................... 6, 31, 39  
Cooke ................................................................. 6, 24  
Crossette ............................................................. 32, 34, 35  
David Jackson 18, 24, 29, 30, 38, 88, 107  
Discovery Communications ................................ 32  
Douglas and Bays ............................................... 45, 46  
E. G. Smith ........................................................ 32  
Feigcn .................................................................. 23  
Francck 23, 25, 32, 33, 37, 43, 47, 55, 62, 103, 105, 107, 112  
Giuseppe ................................................................ 23, 24  
H. Kitamura .......................................................... 32  
Haimendorf ......................................................... 6, 16, 24, 32, 39  
Hamilton ............................................................. 22, 23, 25  
Hedin ................................................................. 22, 23, 25  
Heide .................................................................... 24  
Himalayan Continent Secret .................................. 30  
Himalayan Pilgrimage .......................................... 27  
Himalayan Traders .............................................. 39  
Hodgson .............................................................. 22  
Ijima ................................................................... 24, 32  
Indiana Jones ....................................................... 37  
James Fisher ...................................................... 24  
Jest ...................................................................... 24  
Journey to a Remote Himalayan Kingdom-Mustang ....................................................... 32  
Journey to Mustang ............................................. 25  
Kawaguchi .......................................................... 23, 25  
Kiernan ............................................................... 23  
Kirkpatrick .......................................................... 22, 23, 25, 127  
Lamas of Dol-po ................................................ 27  
Landon ............................................................... 23  
Levine ................................................................... 6, 24  
Luciano Petech ................................................... 32, 33  
M. Sackley .......................................................... 32  
M. Vinding and C. Thakali ...................................... 32  
M. Vinding and S. Gauchan .................................... 32  
Marullo and Boeye .............................................. 32  
Mathiessen and Laird .......................................... 32  
Merritt Cooke ..................................................... 32  
Michael Aris ....................................................... 24  
Michel Peissel ..................................................... 24, 28, 39  
Miller ................................................................. 35, 38  
Montgomery 22, 23, 25  
Mustang, The Forbidden Kingdom  
Exploring a Lost Himalayan Land ......................... 29  
National Geographic ........................................... 34  
Nepal-Tibet war ................................................... 27, 128, 132, 134  
New Red Annals ................................................ 26  
Oldfield ............................................................. 22, 23, 25  
Oppitz ............................................................... 6, 24  
Ortner ............................................................... 6, 24  
Peissel ............................................................... 24, 28, 29, 30, 54, 138  
Pierce 32, 39, 130, 131, 132, 139, 142  
Preliminary Report on Two Scientific Expeditions in Nepal ........................................ 25  
RCTP .................................................. 83, 113, 114, 115, 126, 137  
Readers Digest ................................................... 34  
Riccardi ............................................................. 23  
Roberto Vitali ..................................................... 32, 33, 81  
Roerich 23, 25, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51, 56, 62  
Smith .............................................................. 22, 23, 25, 33, 51, 52, 98
INDEX (NEPALI & TIBETAN)

A-ham ........................................ 4, 84, 99, 102
A-ma-dpal 28, 70, 75, 79, 83, 84, 85, 
86, 87, 88, 90, 91, 150, 152
A-mchog seng-ge 93, 94, 95
A-mgon 4, 28, 84, 85, 88, 89, 90, 91, 
92, 99, 100
A-mgon bzang-po 85, 88, 89, 90
A-mgon-gyi drung-pa 100
A-mo-gha .................................. 88
A-pan ........................................ 91
A-rgyal ..................................... 91
Áditya Malla 61, 62, 63, 65
Am-chi ........................................ 8
Amarsingh 116, 123, 132
Amarsingh Thapa 116, 123
Abhay Malla 68, 70
Amoghavajra 88, 91, 93
Anga .......................................... 66
Avalokitesvara ................................ 66
Badagurju ................................... 143
Balirája 71, 81, 82
Bal-yul ....................................... 96
Banga ........................................ 66
Bäglung ....................................... 7
Bäisi .......................................... 12, 75
Bäisi-caubisi .................................. 75
Bäragan 7, 15, 21, 24, 43, 46, 101, 
115, 116, 122, 123, 128, 130, 140, 
141, 142, 144, 145, 119
Bco-brgyad khri-chen 97, 104, 114, 
116, 129, 130, 131, 133, 137
Bde-legs rgya-mtsho 93, 94, 95
Bde-skyong nam-rgyal 111
Beijing ...................................... 140
Bems-chag 14, 19, 20, 87, 92, 96, 
103, 105, 106, 112, 114, 121, 124, 
127
Beni .......................................... 17, 95
Bhansāri subbas ................................ 128
Bharung ...................................... 126
Bharrong .................................... 101
Bhupati ..................................... 105, 134
Bheri river ................................... 122
Bira-badra-gyi-sras ................................ 112
Birta .......................................... 128
Bi-sras ........................................ 112
Bkra-shis dge-'phel ......................... 14
Bkra-shis mgon89, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 
96, 97, 102
Bkra-shis mam-rgyal 101, 110, 111, 
112, 113, 114, 115
Bkra-shis snying-po 129
Bkra-shis stob-rgyas 99
Bkra-shis-'od-bar 102
Bla ma bsTan-'dzin ras-pa 85
Bla-ma Chos-legs 80, 81, 84, 86
Bod ........................................ 14, 96
Bod-grub-pa .................................. 14
Brag-dkar rdzong 15
Brag-dkar theg-chen gling monastery 130
Bragkyab ..................................... 19
Brag-mar ..................................... 19
Brtan-pa'i-rgya-mtsho 100
Brtan-spyi-nim-gro 144
Bsam-'grub dge-phel 14
Bsam-'grub dpal-'bar 88, 101, 104, 
105, 106, 107, 108, 119
Bsam-'grub lha-khang 126
Bsam-'grub rab-brtan 104, 105
Bsam-'grub rdo rje 103
Bsam-'grub-gling 51, 126, 130
Bsam-gtan chos-gling 126
BsTan-'dzin 85, 105, 111, 114, 115, 
116, 136, 137, 138, 139
BsTan-'dzin dbang-rgyal 111, 114, 
115, 116
BsTan-'dzin jam-dpal dra-'dul 136
BsTan-'gyur ................................ 87, 92
BsTan-pa'i rgya-mtsho 97
Buddha Maitreya 91
Bumde-gon .................................. 59
Byams-pa dkar-chag 14, 47, 50, 83, 
88, 105, 119
Byams-pa gtsug-lag-khang ....... 25
Byang-chub-bum 44, 50, 57
Byi-ba-nkhar ................................ 92
Caubisi ..................................... 4, 12, 71, 75.
Chos-legs 11yi-ma

China

Chos-rgyal

Chos-rgyal A-mgon bzang-po

Chungjung

D. B. Biśta

Dahala

Dolpo Lama

Dus-ma

Dus-rgyal rdo-rje

Duchen

Dzongkha

Gad-smad

Glam bo Lo-tsa-ba Shes-rab

Glo-bo Lo-tsa-ba Shes-rab

Glo-bo.rnkhan.chen

Gok-in

Gok-lari javari

Gop~lari

Gorkha

Gra-pa

Gru-rtse

Dolpo

Don-grub

Don-grub rdo-rje

Don-yod rdo-rje

Don-či

Dpal-lchas-khrims

Dpon-drung Khro-rgyal rdo-rje

Drung-po chen-po

Duchen Chulthum

Duchen Tshulthim Gyalchen

Dudjom Rinpoche

Dun-huang

Dzarg-sho

Gad-smad mkhar-gyi dkar-chag

Gaganirāja

Gami

Garhwal

Gces-ma

Gdung-rabs

Ghansa

Glo-bo dge-dkar

Glo-bo Lo-tsa-ba Shes-rab rin-chen

Glo-bo-mkhan-chen

Glo-gdung rabs

Glo gdung-rabs

Glo rgyal-po

Gopālārajavānśāvalī

Gorkha

Gorkhali

Grags-pa mtha'-yas

Gron

Gro-shod

Gru-rtse
Index 337

Gser-mdog-can............................ 91, 93, 98
Gshin-rje-gshed-dmar-po.............. 51
Gtsang.. 12, 17, 43, 44, 48, 86, 89, 90, 94, 95, 98, 130
Gtsang-po................................ 17, 86, 90
Gtsang-smyon he-ru-ka89, 94, 95, 98
Gts tso-bar................................ 86, 90
Gu-ge.. 12, 14, 33, 43, 47, 48, 49, 52, 55, 57, 58, 59, 62, 68, 69, 72, 85, 86, 89, 90, 94, 95, 96, 112, 150, 151
Gu-ge pan-chen Grags-pa rgyalmtshan.................. 96
Gung-thang... 4, 5, 12, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 75, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 89, 90, 112, 132, 150, 151, 152
Gurjara.................................. 66
Gurung.... 32, 35, 83, 88, 93, 97, 111, 113, 114, 136
Gyangtse................................. 14
Gzhis-ka-rtse................................ 14
Helambu.................................. 24
He-ru-ka................................. 95
Hevajratantra............................ 64
Humla.................................... 24
Ijārā....................................... 127
Jagatibum................................ 81
Jālandhara................................. 66
Janga Bahadur........... 27, 128, 142
Jharkot.. 122, 139, 140, 141, 142, 153
Jhunga.................................... 132
Jomsom.................................. 21, 145, 154
Judda Shamsher......................... 137
Jyangchub Gyalchen... 64, 69
Jyibakhar................................. 53, 54
Kagyu...................................... 52
Kailāśa........... 12, 50, 52, 60, 69, 126
Kailash................................... 80, 110, 111, 114
Kāg.......................... 15, 17, 37, 43, 101
Kāgbdeni .... 6, 31, 34, 100, 105, 107, 108, 110, 112, 115, 121, 122, 126, 139, 152
Kāji Shivanarayan Khatri............. 124
Kāli Gandāki 3, 8, 16, 17, 21, 25, 58, 60, 71, 75, 79, 98, 99, 100, 106, 116, 150, 152
Kalinga...................................... 66
Kalyāṇa Malla............................. 65
Kanakaputra.............................. 61, 66
Karnāḷi. 12, 13, 25, 33, 44, 48, 71, 79, 89, 98, 152, 153
Karnāṭa.................................. 12, 13
Kaski....................................... 133
Kaskikot................................. 66
Ka-thog rigdzin Tshe-dbang norbu................. 111, 114, 115
Kerala..................................... 66
Kha-char.................................. 98
Kha-che................................... 96
Kham....................................... 14
Khang-kar................................. 103
Khar-nag.................................. 19
Khar-rag.................................. 14
Khaśa: 4, 5, 12, 13, 22, 25, 33, 34, 47, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 75, 79, 81, 99, 150, 151, 152, 153
Kha-shes.................................. 111
Khe-stod.................................. 19
Khojarnath................................. 89
Kho-char.................................. 96
Khojarnath................................ 89, 98
Khon........................................ 57, 58, 59, 64, 151
Khral-deb................................ 7
Khral-gyi bemgs-chag.... 33, 107, 109, 113, 116
Khriz-ka................................ 84, 87
Khr-mthog-pa... 4, 8, 85, 99, 101, 102, 103, 108, 122, 123, 124, 129, 130, 132, 139, 140, 141, 142, 153
Khrbo-dpal-mgon......................... 122
Khrbo-skys-bas-pa of skye-skys-gang................. 108
Khr-rgyal................................. 85
Khuva................................. 128, 143
Khyung-tshang........................... 126
King bSams-grub rdo-rje.............. 104
King Mahendra.. 137, 138, 144, 154
King Prithvinarayana Shah............ 121
King Tribhuvan.......................... 137
Kirati.................................... 35
Klu-brag.................................. 15, 53, 116
Ko 12, 21, 50, 85, 86, 89, 90, 98, 101
Kokarna................................. 66
The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)

Ko-mangs ........................................... 21
Kora .................................................. 22
Kumaun .............................................. 4, 22, 34, 56, 57, 58
Kun-bzang-lags .................................. 134
Kun-dga' grol-mchog ......................... 87, 88, 94
Kun-dga' nor-bu ..................... 130, 131, 132
Kun-dga' rdo-rje .......................... 55, 65
Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan ................. 57, 91
Kun-dga' rin-chen ............... 44, 50, 57
Kuti .................................................. 14
Kyirong ........................................... 48, 57, 59, 60, 63, 66, 67, 69, 70, 81
Ladakh ............................................ 3, 12, 25, 36, 43, 47, 48, 49, 55, 56, 101, 104, 105, 107, 110, 111, 112, 113, 115, 121, 150, 152
La-dvags rgyal-rabs ....................... 3
Lagum .............................................. 126
Lagumkha ................................. 101, 123, 139
Lama bCo-brgyad khrì-chen rin-po-che .... 114
Lama bSod-nams blo-gros .............. 94, 121
Lama Chos-skyabs dpal-bzang ....... 100, 104
Lama Kun-dga ................................... 94, 97
Lama rDo-rje 'phrin-las .......... 129
Lama rGyal-tshab Kun-dga' ........... 91
Lama rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu .... 126
Lama rTag-rtses-ba Mi-pham Shes-rab phun-tshogs .... 109
Lama Sherab Rinchen ............. 51
Lama Tshe-dbang ......... 111, 114, 116
Lamjung ....................................... 75, 128, 133, 136
Langdarma ................................. 45, 48, 52
Lar-dzong ...................................... 17
La-stod Iho-pa .............................. 90
Lâ'tta ............................................. 66
Lha-bris-pa .................................... 8
Lhachen Utpal ............................ 55
Lhasa .... 14, 47, 48, 66, 111, 113, 125, 134, 140
Licchavi ......................................... 12
Limi .............................................. 24, 53
Lo Gekar .............................. 46, 50, 103, 126
Lo rgyal-po ............................... 22
Lobo Khenchen ......................... 51
Lobpon Gyalchen-bum .............. 53
Lo-pa .... 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 29, 35, 36, 38, 45, 50, 54, 95, 101, 129, 132, 138, 145, 119, 150, 153, 154
Lo-smad ........................................ 14
Lo-tsho-dun ................. 8, 19, 21, 129, 145, 154, 155
Ltag-la mkhar .................... 82, 140
Ludhakpa Tashi gyalchen .......... 53
Magadha ................................. 62, 96
Magar .......................................... 35
Mahâmaandalika ......................... 68
Mahâmaâalesvara ......................... 68
Mahâmaâtya ..................................... 68
Maharâjâ ........................................ 141, 142
Mahâstabava .................................. 94
Makawanpur ...................... 13
Malayavarman ............. 68, 69, 71, 79, 82
Mallâdârsa .................................. 111, 113
Manânhbot ...................................... 13
Mang-yul ................................. 12, 46, 47
Mani-bka'-bum ....................... 45
Ma-âni-khor-lo ......................... 114
Manâng ........ 7, 13, 24, 27, 48, 56, 58, 59, 61, 64, 67, 70, 81, 90, 116, 121, 124, 126, 128, 131, 133, 139, 141, 142, 152
Mandalika ...................................... 68
Mar-lung-pa nam-thar .............. 44, 50
Marpa .......................................... 50
Mar-pa Lo-tsa-ba ....................... 50
Ma-thang ring-ma ................. 109, 113
Mchings-yig .................. 7
Mchod-ten ..................................... 27
Mdo-khams ................................. 14
Medini ........................................... 81, 82
Men-zhang ......................... 52, 71, 80, 83, 152
Mgar-pa ................................. 14, 16, 144
Mi-dbang ......................... 4, 99, 105
Milarepa ..................................... 50, 52, 86
Miðilâ ........................................... 66
Mkhan-chen Yon-tan chos-rgyal .. 92
Mohan Shamsher ....................... 137
Mol-gtam ...................................... 7
Molla .... 7, 29, 30, 33, 80, 86, 87, 89, 90, 93, 96, 98, 99, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 108, 111, 126, 130, 131
Mon ...................................... 19, 85, 89, 90, 133
Mongol ......................................... 44, 56, 57, 58, 59, 62, 63, 64, 69, 75, 107, 112, 150, 151, 153
Monthang .................................... 3, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 25, 38, 54, 80, 83, 84, 87, 97, 100, 101, 107, 108, 109, 116, 122, 126, 129, 130, 133, 135, 138, 139, 140, 144
Monthang Molla .................................... 133
Muktikṣetra ......................................... 43
Muktināth ........................................... 7, 39, 44, 47, 52, 55, 56, 85, 108, 110, 113, 122
Murala .................................................. 66
mustānibhot ........................................ 13
Myāgdi ............................................... 7, 59
Na-ka ............................................... 14, 15
Namashung ......................................... 18, 22
Namgyal .. 19, 29, 81, 87, 91, 97, 129
Namgyal Molla ...................................... 29
Namjar ............................................. 116, 124
Nanaju ............................................. 116
Nar ... 13, 24, 58, 63, 64, 70, 81, 116, 126, 128, 131, 133, 139, 141, 142
nareśa ............................................. 105
Nepāla .................................................. 66
Newar ............................................... 35
Ngag-dbang-grags-pa ............................. 56
Ngari .... 4, 5, 12, 28, 31, 34, 3, 4, 3, 43, 44, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 64, 69, 72, 95, 98, 150, 151
Ngor ... 26, 37, 75, 83, 86, 87, 89, 91, 92, 93, 96, 97
Ngor-chen Kun-dga' bzang-po 26, 86, 87, 93
Ngyamdo ........................................... 19
Nhenyol ........................................... 19
Nor-'dzin-bde-legs-dbang-mo .... 112
Nubri ... 13, 27, 58, 59, 61, 63, 64, 67, 89, 90, 116, 126, 128, 131, 133
Nuwakot ............................................. 106, 124
Nyanyul ............................................ 22
Nyel Thulme zigpo ................................ 53
Nyelton Thulme zigpo ............................ 53
Nyishang .... 13, 24, 61, 81, 116, 126, 128, 131, 133, 139, 141, 142, 152
Nyil-zla dbang-mo ................................ 111
O-rgyan gling-pa .................................... 45
Omkar Prasad Gauchan ....................... 115
Padma bka'-chems ............................... 45
Padma bka'-thang ......................... 45, 47
Pad-ma bu-khrid .................................. 130, 131, 132
Padma Shamsher ................................ 137
Padma-‘phrin-las .................................. 98
Padmasaniḥbhava ................................. 45, 46
Padma-thang-yig ................................... 45
Palpa ... 13, 25, 75
Panchayat ...................................... 137, 138, 144, 154
Pāṇcagāṇu ... 7, 15, 21, 44, 56, 101, 110, 121, 122, 123, 126, 128, 141, 142, 145, 119
Paṇḍit Premnidhi Panta ....................... 113
Paṇḍita ........................................... 51, 57, 58
Paṇḍita Jayānanda ............................... 51, 57
Paṇḍitaśiromani Lokatāra of Magadha ...... 96
Paramabhatāraka .................................. 67
Parvat ... 4, 7, 16, 33, 56, 60, 75, 95, 101, 107, 108, 109, 110, 112, 115, 116, 121, 122, 124, 141, 152
Phagmoru .......................................... 64
Phal-pa ............................................ 14, 20, 144
Phen-lag .......................................... 15
Phug-phag ....................................... 19, 126
Phuru .................................................. 15
Phuwa ............................................... 126
Phyags-dev chen-mo ........................... 114
Phyag-tham ....................................... 7
Phyag-yig ......................................... 7
Piti .................................................... 86
Prabal Rana ....................................... 124
Pratāpa Malla ..................................... 65
Princess 'Chi-med ................................ 115
Prithivi Narayan Shah ...................... 36
Prithivipatī Shaha ......................... 107
Prthvi Malla ....................................... 65, 66, 67, 68, 70
Punya Malla ....................................... 61, 65, 66
Pu-rang 12, 14, 33, 47, 48, 49, 52, 53, 55, 58, 59, 60, 62, 65, 66, 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 79, 81, 82, 85, 89, 90, 95, 96, 98, 103, 140
Rab-brtan mgon-po ......................... 85
Rājāsava .......................................... 138
Rājya-rājāuta .................................. 144
Rājyarahajātā aina-2017 ...................... 38
Raktayamanantaka .............................. 51
Sdom-gsum rnam-par nges-pa'i
  bstan-bcos ............................ 98
Sena ........................................ 12, 13
Sgo-pa ...................................... 8
Shahibam Malla ................................ 116
Shakabpa ..................................... 59, 69
Shakya rgya-mtsho .......................... 107
Shakya-mchog-idan Dri-med legs-pa'i-blo-gros 91
Sherpas ...................................... 6, 24
Siddhisrijvala ................................ 133
Simhala ....................................... 96
Simhalese Pandita dhamadiväkara 96
Simraungarh .................................. 13
Sirtobuhaunü rägya .......................... 127
Si-tu pan-chen ................................ 110, 111, 114
Skag .......................................... 21
Sku-drag-pa ................................. 14, 19, 20
Sku-zhabs dBang-rgyal ........................ 135, 137
Sku-zhabs dBang-rgyal-dpal-bar 135
Sku-zhabs Rab-rgyas dpal-bar ....... 135
Sku-zhogs ..................................... 112
Skye-skya-sgang .............................. 108, 122
Smad-kyi lha-khang ........................... 17
Sogpo .......................................... 62
Sprod-yig ...................................... 7
Spu-rang ...................................... 14, 33, 47, 86
Spyi-khyab-pa ................................ 8
Sri nspa ...................................... 81
Srivarakha .................................... 132
Srol-deb ...................................... 7
Strong-btsan ................................. 8, 43, 45
Strong-btsan sgam-po ........................ 8, 43
Subbä ........................................... 136, 142, 143
Subba Manilal Gurung ........................ 136
Sudarshan Sahi ................................ 141
Sukhasiddhi ................................... 113
Surath Shahla .................................. 112
Taglakhar ...................................... 70, 71
Tamang ......................................... 35
Tamra-patra ................................... 124
Tang-be ........................................ 21
Tangye ......................................... 19
Tarap .......................................... 101
Tashigon ....................................... 48
Tenzin-nam-dag ................................ 45
Te-tang ................................ 21
Thakali ....... 16, 24, 32, 110, 132, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 142, 143, 153, 154
Thäkkholä ....... 17, 24, 59, 119, 155
Thaksâtsaye ................................ 119
țhekkâmâ calekâ râjya .............. 127
Thini ...... 14, 15, 17, 21, 108, 109, 110, 121, 122
Thâk ........................................ 7
Thophu Lotsaba ................................ 51
Thub-bstan bshad-grub dar-rgyas-gling monastery ............... 86
Thub-chen ...... 14, 20, 25, 92, 93, 97, 130, 135
Thub-chen rgyal-ba'i-pho-brang ...... 92
Tiji ......................................... 125, 154
Tinyug ....................................... 53
Tirahut ..................................... 13
Tsang ...... 44, 52, 54, 69, 86, 90, 126
Tsang-drang bems-chag ............... 90
Tsang-po .................................... 86, 126
Tsharka .......... 51, 101, 123, 126, 139
Tshe-dbang bzang-po .............. 86, 87, 94
Tshe-dbang lhun-grub .. 101, 107, 109, 110, 111
Tshe-mchog ..................... 133, 134
Tshero ..................................... 44
Tsho-bar ..................... 19, 123
Tsho-dpons .......... 87
Tsho-shar ..................... 18, 22
Tshug ....................................... 21
Tshul-khrims rdo-rgje .............. 112
Tshum ...................................... 61, 64
Tun-huang Annals .......... 3
Vajrásana ..................... 62
Varman ...................... 67, 68, 71, 152
Vikramasīlāmahāvihāra ............ 49
Vinding and Gauchan .......... 6
Yab sde-pa ..................... 93
Yab-rgyal-po ..................... 91, 93
Yar-ra ..................... 19
Ya-rtse ..................... 4
Yar-tung ....................... 144
Ya-tshe .......... 4, 5, 12, 13, 22, 25, 33, 34, 44, 47, 48, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 75, 79, 81, 99, 150, 151, 152, 153
Yeru Wensakha ..................... 54
Yese Dorakha ..................... 98
Zangpo-pal ..................... 59
Zhabs-drung ...... 91, 96, 97, 100, 103, 111, 113, 133, 139
Zhang-pa ............. 80, 81, 83, 84, 90
Zhang-zhung .... 14, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 52, 53, 150, 151
Zhang-zhung snyan-brgyud .......... 53
Zhur ..................... 111
Zhva-dmar ............. 110, 111, 114
Cultural Historian specialized in Himalayan and South Asian Studies, Ramesh K. Dhungel holds Ph.D. and M. Phil. degrees from Columbia University, New York. Originally trained in Ancient History, Culture and Archaeology (NeHCA) from Tribhuvan University (TU), Dhungel also did M.A. in History at George Mason University, Virginia. His publications include Economic History of Nepal-1, Ancient Economy and Economic History of Medieval Kathmandu Valley. In addition to these books, there are about six-dozen research and general articles published to his credit in national and international journals.

Dhungel joined CNAS, TU in 1981 as a lecturer of Culture and Himalayan Studies and continues his academic endeavour to date. He taught classes of culture and languages of South Asia and Himalayan Buddhism to graduate and undergraduate students in different universities and colleges in Nepal and abroad. Dhungel is awarded with distinctive recognitions including the Presidential Award of Columbia University, PHI ALPHA THETA History Honor, USA, Gokulchand Shastri Gold Medal, TU Nepal, The Rotary International Graduate Fellowships for International Understanding, USA, etc. Concurrently, Dhungel is a research fellow (Hodgson Project) and adjunct faculty of Languages and Cultures of South Asia at SOAS, University of London. He has recently been appointed as Chairman of the Scientific/ Academic Board of the Muktinath International Foundation, an INGO founded in the Netherlands in 2001. Tibetan and Himalayan Studies are his preferred academic fields these days.
Ramesh Dhungel's book on "The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang): A Historical Study" in upper Mustang marks an important milestone in the development of Nepali historiography. It is a laudable attempt by a Nepali historian to attempt to study the history of Nepal's bhot region, with such felicity and a high degree of professional skill for the first time ever, and by tackling the Tibetan documents and other source materials first hand. The study of Nepal's northern regions along the high Himalayas and its trans-Himalayan valleys has remained an exclusive domain of Western Tibetologists and anthropologists by and large. This monopoly is now happily broken by Dhungel's work. His book should be inspirational for future scholars from Nepal to take up research of Nepal's Himalayan regions in an increasing number that is necessary to generate a local perspective. While dealing with the history and culture of Nepal's bhot regions, Western scholars have consciously or unconsciously tried to see a dichotomy in it with the rest of Nepal's history and culture. The mainstream history of Nepal is dismissed usually as comprising the "history of the Gorkhas", making unwanted intrusions into them now and then. Importance is given only to bhot's interaction with centres in Tibet. Ramesh Dhungel's history of Lo, however, amply demonstrates how its history has been intricately intertwined with the history of the Nepali-speaking state of Nepal's lower hills of Ya-tshe (Khasa kingdom based in Semja), and subsequent Jumla and Parbat states later on, thus deeply affecting its political fortunes from early on. Dhungel's historical tools derive from the Indo-Aryan as much as from Tibetan language, which he has deftly handled. This combination, I believe, is what makes an enduring value of the book.

Prayag Raj Sharma  
Professor of Ancient History and Archaeology  
Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

It is a legitimate attempt to employ hither to unused sources, Tibetan as well as Nepali, to write a history of the Kingdom of Lo/Mustang, a small but extremely interesting area that is part of Nepal politically but culturally and linguistically part of Tibet.

Dhungel has collected a large number of documents and has used the linguistic tools with command to read them. He has also attempted the difficult task of sifting through much of the collected materials for historically important data in order to give a continuous narrative of the different periods through which Lo/Mustang has passed. Dhungel's attempt of a critical review of the previous literature on this area, an area as with all Tibetan areas, has become the focus of explornography. "Mustang" has recently replaced many areas of Tibetan culture as the romantic destination.

Theodore Riccardi Jr.  
Professor of Asian Languages and Cultures  
Columbia University, New York